
EXPLORING A NEW MODEL OF FARMER ENGAGEMENT:

From training to coaching

BARRY CALLEBAUT



Cocoa Fertilizer Initiative

Why did you prototype coaching?

Challenge:

While partnering with the cocoa fertilizer initiative, Barry Callebaut became aware that farmers need additional coaching to help ensure that benefits from the inputs are maximized, and that the farmer secures the return on investment. Conventional training alone has led to an unsatisfactory adoption rate, in particular of yield-enhancing techniques such as pruning and fertilizer application.

Solution:

The required support can be given by working with farmers to define and implement their farm development plans, a service provided through trained coaches. For this purpose, Barry Callebaut developed tailor-made training materials for coaches, and communication materials to support the coaches and farmers. This has assured the availability of tools to support the coach and the farmer in the decision-making process as well as in the monitoring of the farmers' return on investment.

Summary of prototyped coaching approach

In the center of excellence in Pacobo, farmer trainers from cooperatives and Biopartenaire village coordinators were trained as coaches. Multiple sessions were held during one cocoa season. For this purpose, the Barry Callebaut sustainability

The pilot program had two main objectives:

- Gain experience with an alternative know-how transfer methodology that takes specific farm-level necessities and circumstances into account.
- Create a pool of about 100 coaches capable of serving as a one-stop shop for farmers who are ready and willing to apply fertilizer on their cocoa farms.

team developed—together with the farmer trainers and village coordinators—specific coaching modules that explain the difference between ordinary training and coaching.

Upon returning to their farming communities, the newly trained coaches selected high-potential farmers via Farmer Field Schools—for cooperatives—and via individual meetings for the village coordinators. The coaches used the knowledge and techniques learned at Pacobo to coach their selected farmers towards adopting the practices of the high productivity scheme. For this purpose, the coaches had received technical training on pruning and fertilizer application.

The first coaching visit, the goal of which was to subscribe farmers to the productivity package, ended with participants elaborating and distributing 3,853 (132 women) farmer development plans as the first milestone of coaching. Out of these 3,853 farmers initially coached, 1,609 farmers (71 women) agreed to participate in the second coaching visit. During this second session, the main aim was to discuss the credit contract presented to the farmers, which covers the pruning equipment and training for pruning. Finally, 1,499 farmers signed up for the credit contract. A third coaching visit with these farmers took place between April and early July 2016, when the coach followed up on the application of fertilizer and crop protection product.

Key facts & figures



*These farmers received the complete coaching package

Most important lessons learned

- The management team has developed a coaching manual and training regimen. These encompass three important components, notably agronomy, adult education, and entrepreneurship.
- Farmer selection is critical.
- Linking of different data sources is critical for program effectiveness. Traceability must be linked to survey data and GIS data.

Next Steps

The project has allowed the on-the-ground sustainability implementation teams to evolve from training farmer groups to coaching individual farmers. Training manuals for coaches have been developed and implemented that aim for coaches to be better teachers, in part by ensuring they account for factors such as adult education and entrepreneurship. The project's results and achievements are firmly built into the future of Barry Callebaut sustainability efforts.

Biggest Challenges

- The subscription and mobilization of farmers to the input services was a challenge this year, as the process with Mobile Money has been harder and took longer to put in place, resulting in program delay.
- The biggest challenge remains building capacity with our farmer trainers to enable them to have the solid agronomic skills that allow them to make a proper diagnostic of the farm.
- Although we have a good idea about the skill set required for coaches, we don't yet know how to select the right person for this role. Meaning: What characteristics and what type of person has what it takes to become a coach?

FARMER IMPRESSION



The farmer and coach are proudly showing the replanted section of the farmer's plantation. It's been positioned close to the main road such that others can also observe the process and results.