



Issue 40

September 2015

# ACA Begins Three New Projects Aimed at the Cashew Value Chain

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Since its inception in 2006, the African Cashew Alliance (ACA) has made a great impact in the industry through multiple projects in both East and West Africa. These projects have been generously supported by donors, such as USAID, and have enabled ACA to extend its reach to all aspects of the value chain. This month, we want to highlight activities being implemented by three exciting and recently signed projects.

### 4 Walmart Foundation

With the support of the Walmart Foundation, the ACA has partnered with Self Help Africa to empower rural cashew communities in Ghana and Kenya. The project uses two low-cost community-based extension approaches: 1) 'lead farmers', where farmers are linked to district agricultural departments for on-going support, and 2) 'farmer field schools', an approach that empowers communities with skills to undertake improved agricultural practices. Overall, this project will aim to reduce poverty for 35,000 households.



By diversifying the livelihoods of farmers, through various methods such as intercropping and cashew by-products, communities will be less vulnerable to economic shocks. Farmers will also benefit from trainings on sustainable agricultural practices and the facilitation of market linkages. The project will focus specifically on women within the cashew value chain and will run from January 2015-December 2017.

### USAID West Africa Trade Hub (WATH)

The USAID WATH has granted ACA the resources to strengthen the capacity of its members and own staff in order to support the entire value chain. This two-year project, titled "Capacitating Value Chain Actors to Strengthen International Competitiveness of the Cashew Industry in West Africa" is ramping up activities in the coming months. It targets a wide range of West African countries, such as Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and The Gambia. One of the biggest obstacles that the African cashew industry faces is the absence of evidence-based

decision-making. This challenge stems from two sources: the lack of quality information available in the industry and the technical abilities of cashew stakeholders processing managers to effectively handle available information. This project seeks to support the capacity of managers and stakeholders to make economically informed decisions through the provision of intensive trainings. In the two-year time frame, ACA will train 35 industry leaders and 10 internal staff members in order to strengthen technical knowledge in the industry.

Cashew is a business of small profit margins in which efficient use of resources is vital. By providing the necessary knowledge and teaching essential skills, this intervention will contribute to increased productivity and thus improve the overall competitiveness of African cashew value chain.

### AfTra Project

The African Development Bank has granted ACA project funds under the Africa Trade Fund to strengthen the value chain in East and West Africa. The objectives of this project include 1) improving product quality and marketing development according to international best practices for poverty reduction, 2) increasing the competitiveness, income, and employment prospects for cashew processors and 3) to promote the participation of women in cashew processing.

An essential element of these activities includes the promotion of environmentally sustainable cashew processing and having an overall positive impact on the environment. This has become a significant issue for processors as cashew waste threatens overall productivity and international competitiveness. By implementing environmentally sustainable practices, ACA hopes to foster the long-term success of the industry in the global market. The project seeks to improve rural livelihoods and enhance rural living standards by generating rural employment and improved incomes.





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## A Master Training Program on Cashew

Written by: Ann-Christin Berger , African Cashew Initiative (ACi)

From 10th to 14th August 2015, the African Cashew initiative (ACi) together with the African Cashew Alliance (ACA), supported by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) with funding from CORAF/WECARD/World bank held the second session of the second Master Training Programme for cashew value chain promotion. This time around, 62 participants from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Sierra-Leone and Togo met at Tyco Hotel Sunyani in the Brong Ahafo Region - the main cashew growing region in Ghana. Working along the cashew value chain and in supporting institutions, half of the participants are employed in the public sector as trainers, policy advisors, lecturers and researchers; meanwhile one third works in the private sector as farmers, processors, service providers, traders and exporters, and finally another third represents nongovernmental organizations (NGO) or work as consultants.



The Master Training Programme creates a pool of experts in West Africa with in-depth knowledge on the cashew value chain. It is a unique and comprehensive training program linking theoretical knowledge with live demonstrations through expert presentations and peer learning exercises. The Master Trainers have become the nucleus for country and regional networking.

Rolled out in seven months, the Master Training Program is divided into three successive one-week sessions to be held in Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire. In so called "inter-sessions," the participants return to their host organizations to conduct fieldwork, either individually or in groups to deepen their knowledge on a selected topic. After completion of the program, the participants become acknowledged cashew experts. They either train farmers, provide assistance to processors, or advice companies, organizations, and institutions in their home countries. The Master Training Program has become a quality brand for training on cashew in the West African cashew sector.

The first session was held in May in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso and it introduced the trainees to the cashew value chain concept, cashew market dynamics, and training material development for cashew farming. The second session reunites all to learn and exchange on topics such as improved planting material development, pest and disease management as well as the importance of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs). As part of the participants' learning journey, MOFA and CRIG experts organized a field trip to the Cashew Research Station in Wenchi and a visit to Ghana's leading cashew farmers in order to showcase the positive effects of applying GAPs.

Seth Osei-Akoto, Deputy Director Cashew Desk, MOFA states: "We, in Ghana, are amongst the first to develop and distribute improved planting materials in a carefully planned and sustainable manner. In collaboration with CRIG, we have so far supplied at least 400,000 improved cashew grafts to farmers in the Northern, Volta, and Brong Ahafo regions and we have planted 4,000 hectares of new cashew plantations."

At the heart of the Master Training Program are facilitators and technical experts who teach, evaluate and potentially re-design each training session according to participants' needs. All sessions include cross-cutting issues such as climate change, policy development, and sector regulations. On the agenda are also self-reflection and perception management trainings to sensitize participants on behaviors, values, and communication skills that affect learning and teaching abilities. The training content is developed with great support and commitment from various ACi partners. They use stimulating presentations, interactive role-playing, and lively discussions to deliver trainings. "I believe that our success is creativity and flexibility in adapting the program to participants' learning needs", says Andre M. Tandjiékpon, Manager of the Master Training Program, ACi.



## ACA Co-Hosts Competitiveness & Sustainability Workshop



From the 17th-18th of August, the African Cashew Alliance (ACA) co-hosted the "Cashew Business Competitiveness & Environmental Sustainability Workshop" in Ilorin, Nigeria, together with the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), and the USAID Nigeria Expanded Trade and Transport Project (NEXTT). This workshop gathered over 30 Nigerian Cashew industry stakeholders and focused primarily on processors.

The first day kicked off with issues of environmental sustainability. ACA Seal Coordinator, Dorcas Amoh, launched a new USAID Trade Hub Network study on the opportunities and challenges in environmental management within West African cashew processing. The session was followed by a meeting with stakeholders from the Nigerian cashew industry on the development of a national strategy.

The second day, Business Advisory Manager, Sunil Dahiya, ACA Seal Coordinator, Dorcas Amoh, and Finance Director, Akwasi-Adom Dankwa, delivered intensive trainings for processors on the subjects of productivity and competitiveness, food safety, and market information systems.

This workshop sought to increase the competitiveness of cashew processing in Nigeria through crucial issues of competitiveness and sustainability. Discussions by participants called for the establishment of a Cashew Board to boost the Nation's economy and that of the farmers as well.



## NEW ACA MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

### Raw Indulgence Ltd.

Based in the United States, Raw Indulgence Ltd. joined ACA as a corporate stakeholder in May of 2015. The company has been in business for approximately 12 years. Since their inception, they have sought to strive for excellence in taste, nutrition and quality in order to create a path of transforming the health of people and the planet.

Nearly all of their super healthy and mostly-certified organic products have been based on cashew nuts. Raw Indulgence Ltd. prides itself on inventing and manufacturing some of the world's most delicious healthy food products. Their main products include branded nutritional bars called Raw Revolution and Raw Rev Glo. The products are sold worldwide, mostly in major supermarkets and health food stores, as well as online. The company owner, who is a previous chef and thus understands the market and consumer preferences, creates all of the products.

The company is a small women-owned business who got their start through product sampling, marketing, attending industry trade shows,

and driving website traffic. With the help of their dedicated sales team, they have been able to expand channels of distribution to both national and international markets.

As a small company in an international market, their biggest challenges include rising commodity prices and intense competition. Raw Indulgences joined ACA to overcome some of these challenges and to work more directly with suppliers of purchased ingredients. They seek specifically to use the membership to establish a direct link between the US-based factory and growers and processors in Africa. Through contracting new suppliers on the continent, the company hopes to eliminate intermediaries and ultimately generate greater profit, both for the supplier and for the company itself.

To learn more about this company, please visit their website at [www.rawrev.com](http://www.rawrev.com) or email them at [cashews@rawrev.com](mailto:cashews@rawrev.com). ACA welcomes Raw Indulgence Ltd. as well as all our new members!

## HAPPENING THIS MONTH...

### The 9th ACA World Cashew Festival & Expo!



Setting Sustainable Standards



ACA World Cashew Festival & Expo 2015  
Maputo, Mozambique  
21-24 September 2015



Find more information about our upcoming conference at  
<http://www.africancashewalliance.com/en/world-cashew-festival>

## The Recipe Room: Cashew & Veggie Pie

### INGREDIENTS



- 4 tomatoes
- 2 carrots( about 2 medium carrots)
- 3 small onions
- 1 red bell pepper
- 2 garlic cloves
- 3 eggs
- 1/4 cup rice flakes
- 3 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoon puréd cashew
- 1 teaspoon rice (or barley) miso
- 1 teaspoon sugar cane
- 2 teaspoons mild paprika
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley leaves

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350° (175°C).
2. Deseed tomatoes and dice. Set aside.
3. Peel carrots and dice. Set aside.
4. Dice pepper and set aside.
5. Thinly slice onions, mince garlic and sauté in a deep saucepan on low heat for 10 minutes with 3 tablespoon olive oil and a pinch of salt.
6. Add tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes on medium heat while stirring.
7. Finally, add carrots, pepper, sugar and pinch of salt and cook on medium heat uncovered for about 20 minutes.
8. Remove from stove and add rice flakes, paprika, chopped herbs and pepper. Mix well and leave to stand covered for 10 minutes.
9. Add cashew puree and miso to vegetable mixture and mix well.
10. Add whipped eggs, mix again and pour in a pie pan (26cm). Sprinkle the pie with sesame seed and bake for 45 minutes.
11. Serve warm or cold.

### Cashew Calendar 2015

#### September

21-24 2015 ACA World Cashew Festival & Expo  
Maputo, Mozambique

#### November

3-4 ACA Workshop in Cotonu, Benin (WATH)  
22-23 ACA Workshop in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (WATH)



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