

# Regional

## Vegetable farming in Teberebie improves livelihoods

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**T**HE AngloGold Ashanti Iduapriem Mine has introduced vegetable farming in one of its host communities, Teberebie, to help deal with the high incidence of unemployment in the community.

Known as the Teberebie Vegetable Cooperative Project, the initiative is set to satisfy the growing demand for vegetables for domestic and commercial purposes across the country.

The project, which started at about a year ago, has been structured with identified off-takers of the produce after harvest and supplies to caterers, dealers and hotels in the Tarkwa municipality and beyond as well as the mine itself, which happens to be one of the huge consumers of vegetables.

### First phase

Speaking to the *Daily Graphic*, the Senior Manager in charge of Sustainability of the Iduapriem Mine, Mr

Stephen Adjai, said the first phase of the project involved a total of 14 farmers



• Mr Stephen Adjai (right), the Senior Manager in charge of Sustainability of the Iduapriem Mine, presenting the accruing income to Mr Frank Peah, one of the beneficiaries

who cultivated vegetables such as cabbage, watermelon, green pepper, lettuce, carrots and cucumber on an eight-acre land area.

With the successful take off of the project, the next phase of the agriculture initiative will cover 20 community farmers who will also be ushered into vegetable cultivation on a 20-acre land space.

According to Mr Adjai, under the initiative, the farmers in the cooperative would retain some of the revenue after selling to enable them to continue farming activities while the rest of the amount realised would go into savings for them.

After a year of farming, he said the beneficiary farmers in the cooperative realised an excess of GH¢40,000 from the sale of vegetables from the farm, which was shared among them.

### Off-takers

The cooperative farmers who are

enthusiastic about the project say hitherto, after harvesting, they were faced with how to market their produce, but with the project ready off-takers provide hope and sustainable farming activities.

Currently the beneficiaries under the first phase of the project are growing cabbages, watermelons, green pepper, lettuce, carrots, and cucumber.

The beneficiaries have lauded the Iduapriem Mine for the initiative and described the project as successful, which has helped to boost their income levels and improved upon their livelihood.

### Traditional ruler

The Chief of the Teberebie Community, Nana Kojo Minnah II, commended the mines for the intervention.

He stated that through sustainable management and a ready market for the produce, the farmers would see a lot of

success.

"I must say that at present one interesting thing is to ensure companies work with their host to ensure that they improve the local economy which would go a long way to ensure social and industrial harmony," he said.

Nana Minnah commended the mine for the unflinching support and cooperation, which he described as healthy, and advised the beneficiary farmers to invest the money realised in ventures that further improve their lives.

"I must say you should, as the first phase defined the path of success, work harder than before and tell the success stories of agriculture to the youth," he said.

He added: "Agriculture is not the preserve of the aged, therefore, the Teberebie Vegetable Cooperative Project which is structured to easily market the produce is a good story to motivate the youth."

### Technical assistance

The Municipal Agriculture Officer of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Mr Karol Senker, pledged the ministry's readiness to support the efforts of the mine to improve on the initiative.

He indicated that they would continue to provide the technical assistance and support to ensure successful implementation of the full project cycle.

One of the beneficiaries of the project, Mr Moses Hagar, on behalf of his colleagues said the project held prospects and commended the mining company for the support.

Mr Hagar appealed to the company to extend the project to cover many other farmers in the Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipality, saying: "This project has really been a blessing as I have been able to build a house from the sales I have made."

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The introduction of farmers in Teberebie, a community in the AngloGold Ashanti Iduapriem Mine operational area, to vegetable farming and the provision of a ready market for the crops harvested has improved the livelihoods of the indigenes, some of whom were hitherto unemployed.