

Cassava Intervention in the Niger Delta

COVID-19 PANDEMIC



In 2020, COVID-19 limitations hit the market actors severely because the outbreak occurred during the main planting season in the region. Farmers faced difficulty sourcing for inputs and getting services, markets were locked, and there was no buying and selling of produce as a result, the number of off-takers was reduced.

There were restrictions on social gatherings which prevented the farmers from accessing face-to-face cassava GAP training and demonstrations from the service providers. Cassava farmers had to go late to the farm and return early to meet the curfew times. Most banks were closed with only a few branches open, and lenders were reluctant to provide credit due to the supposed high risk of a pandemic business environment.

SURVIVING THE COVID-19 THREAT:

The beneficiaries of PIND cassava intervention survived the threat of the pandemic, the cassava value chain project enabled them to increase their yield, and sales and earn more income through the adoption of improved methods of cassava production, access to market, and linkages. The service providers adapted their services to ensure continuous delivery, even in the face of movement restrictions. They adopted the use of technology and digital agro-tech platforms, the mass media, to communicate with cassava farmers while relying on their members who live close to farming clusters to provide needed services in person and observe all COVID-19 guidelines.

THE SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT OF THE CASSAVA INTERVENTION IN 2020

- CARA supported PIND collaboration with the Building an Economically Sustainable, Integrated Cassava Seed System II (BASICS II) project to train, certify and onboard 80 new cassava seed entrepreneurs (VSEs) in Delta, Abia, Imo, Akwa Ibom, and Cross Rivers States to scale up PIND's intervention on access to improved cassava seeds in the region, with over 2200 bundles of improved stems sold by VSEs in 2020.
- 22,064 cassava farmers and MSMEs were reached by input suppliers and agro-dealers with their adaptive services that helped alleviate their most significant COVID-19 induced challenges—access to market, funding, inputs, and information. This enabled them to take advantage of the late planting season.
- CARA team supported the service providers to provide various services to farmers across the region, these activities, include training, demonstrations and the sale of agro-inputs reaching 4,465 farmers (1,752 males and 2713 females) across the rural communities in the region, enabling them to fully utilize the late planting season to minimize the effect of the pandemic's distraction to their planting activities in earlier quarters.
- The adopting farmers created 890 new jobs (exceeding the annual target of 600 jobs) to provide land clearing, tillage, planting of the stem, application of fertilizers, weeding, and other field services triggered by their increased production.



- The team supported the harvest of 11 demo plots established across Abia, Cross River, Imo, and Ondo States by input companies, (Harvest Field Industries and Bayer Crop Science) planted in 2019 under the demo plot program. Extrapolating 0.07ha per plot into 1ha to align with the demo plot established practice, the plots attained significantly higher than the average yields of around 10-12 tons/ha from farmers' plots, attaining an average yield of 34 tons per hectare.

Challenges

- Communities across the region canceled market days and controlled the number of sellers per market day, leaving farmers with no place to sell their harvested produce.
- Cassava farmers could not easily access labor for land preparation. Overall, they faced increased costs limited availability of input, and an inability to take advantage of increased industrial demand for cassava.
- There were restrictions on social gatherings which prevented the farmers from accessing face-to-face cassava GAP training and demonstrations from the service providers.
- Most banks were closed with only a few branches open, and lenders were reluctant to provide credit due to the supposed high risk of a pandemic business environment

To address the above challenges, the service providers adopted the use of technology and digital agro-tech platforms, the mass media, to communicate with cassava farmers.



PIND collaborated with the Building an Economically Sustainable, Integrated Cassava Seed System II (BASICS II) project to train CSEs in Delta, Abia, Imo, Akwa Ibom, and Cross Rivers States to scale up PIND's intervention on access to improved cassava seeds in the region, with over 2200 bundles of improved stems sold by CSEs in 2020.

PHOTOS



Harvest Field Industry Limited (Input company) conducting Good Agronomic practices using Demo plots

2020 ANNUAL REPORT


CARA DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

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Special Thanks to PIND Foundation For the Support.





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