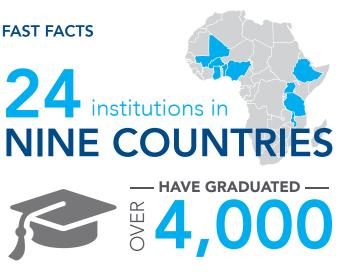


SASAKAWA AFRICA FUND FOR EXTENSION EDUCATION

Twenty-five years ago, Winrock International and the Sasakawa Africa Association launched a small agriculture education pilot project in Ghana. Called the Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE), it was designed to address two pressing



MID-CAREER EXTENSION AGENTS

WINROCK

issues in rural development in sub-Saharan Africa: how to best equip frontline extension agents with the skills to teach farmers new skills, and how to integrate African agricultural universities into the effort to improve the lives of those same farmers. Since then, 24 institutions in nine countries have graduated over 4,000 mid-career extension agents who have returned to their positions able to better understand and address the needs of the farmers they serve.

SAFE originated out of the belief that many technologies exist that could improve the productivity of small farmers in Africa. However, extension agents, those employed by agriculture ministries as well as by the private sector, lacked the education and skills to communicate effectively with rural populations. Simple scholarships were not enough. Agricultural universities also needed to refocus their existing programs to better meet the needs of students and the agriculture sector in each country.

To implement these changes, SAFE convenes stakeholders including agricultural schools, farmer

organizations, ministries of higher learning, and the private sector to identify a shared vision of a more responsive extension education. From



2101 Riverfront Drive, Little Rock, Arkansas 72202 +1 501 280 3000 | winrock.org there, SAFE conducts a training needs assessment and works with stakeholders to design curricula that respond to the needs of students and farmers, encourage experiential and lifelong learning, and promote rural leadership development.

A few characteristics make SAFE particularly innovative. First, the curriculum revitalization projects are partnerships between employers and schools. Employers pay students' salaries and tuition, while the schools tailor their curricula to address demonstrated educational needs via practical, hands-on classes. In addition, each student, in consultation with employers and farmers, conducts a "supervised enterprise project," a six- to nine-month on-farm technical practicum. This gives students a chance to use their newly acquired skills and educational institutions an opportunity to gauge the effectiveness of their new curricula by observing real life situations.

More about Winrock's role:

SAFE emerged out of conversations between Norman Borlaug, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Winrock board member; Japanese philanthropist Ryoichi Sasakawa; and former President Jimmy Carter. They tapped Winrock International to lead the partnership and provide technical guidance. In the intervening 25 years, Winrock has staffed SAFE with highly respected African agricultural educators who have expanded the organization to include 24 institutes of higher learning. For the last 10 years the Winrock field advisory team consists of three senior Ph.D. educators, one in East Africa, one for Francophone West Africa and one for Anglophone West Africa. Funding for this work has been provided by the Nippon Foundation.

FROM A GRADUATE:

Working with farmers on the field in real life situations was life changing. You become tenacious and confident... you are able to think out of the box and refine your project as you move along. [SAFE] gives you the opportunity while in the field to draw from within yourself potential and unconventional ideas to achieve your goal."

- DR. PEARL ADDO-TEYE, SAFE ALUMNA

9 COUNTRIES

BENIN BURKINA FASO ETHIOPIA GHANA MALAWI MALI NIGERIA TANZANIA UGANDA

For more information on SAFE and its methodology, see MEAS Case Study #1:

https://agrilinks.org/library/sasakawa-africa-fund-extension-education-safe

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