

## Script Podcast Aron Gunkelman

My name is Aron Gunkelman. I am currently a Peace Corps Volunteer serving in the South West region, the village name is Menji and I am an agricultural business volunteer. I have been serving there for a year and a half.

The African cocoa initiative aimed to harmonize private and public alliances to provide support in terms of sustainable cocoa farming, food security.

Firstly when I arrived at my post, I took the initiative to work with the local community and we organize the active farmers group. We have around 400 members and through this group, we were then applying for services and so forth. Some of the services are field training schools to improve quality.

When you talk about production it is a really two folds subject. You have pre-harvest and post-harvest. Through pre-harvest work, we have tried to create classes that involved modern farm management, proper chemical applications, the differences between toxic and environmental friendly chemicals. We have gotten the info out to and sensitize about the toxic chemicals that are being sold on the market and how you should perhaps see the differences. Some of the things we have also done are creating these linkages with chemicals distributors of environmental friendly chemicals.

We also created linkages with Sic Cacao Cameroun to build a massive drying facility at the local village level.

Now on the post-harvest side, now we can talk about marketing the products. You know as the market is now, there is a lot that needs to be done in general, but however through some of these linkages we were able to find a relation for a buyer, locally Cameroonian buyer to purchase the federations cocoa, the farmers group at improved price. And we hope to also encourage further services and solutions through these linkages.