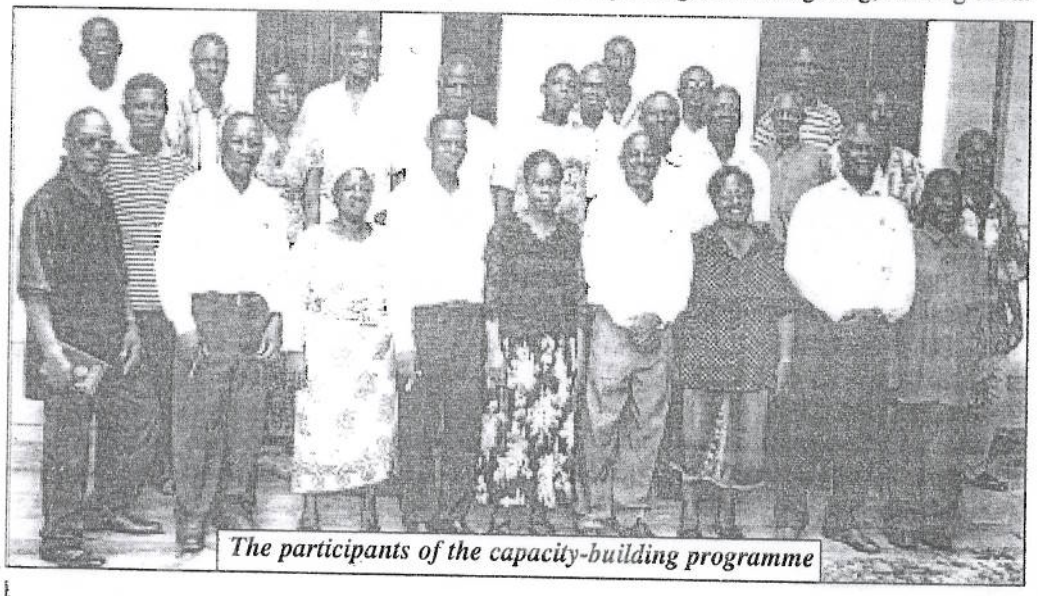
Juabeng outgrowers undergo capacity training

From Nana Odoom, Juaben-Ash

TWENTY FIVE leaders of the Juaben Oil Palm Outgrowers Co-operative Society (JOPOCOS) have undergone a three-week capacity building training of trainees programee at Juaben in the Ejisu-Juaben municipality of the Ashanti Region, recently.

They were taken through topics such as Leadership, Basic Knowledge of Accounting, Importance of Group Leadership and Group Development, Origin of Meetings and Meeting Skills, Conflict Management and Co-Operative Principles and Practices, which include clearing, nursing of seeds, transplanting of seedlings and the right application of fertiliser to crops.

The rest were financial record keeping and reporting, farm budgeting, costing of far products, accounting responsibilities of farmer groups and associations, and preparation of farmer group financial reports.



The participants of the capacity-building programme

The workshop was organised for the chairmen and financial secretaries of the twenty-member associations, that come together to form the Juaben Oil Palm Outgrowers Co-operative Society (JOPOCOS).

The Co-operative Society was established about eleven years ago, and has about 627 farmers, coming from 25 communities, whose members are currently cultivating oil palm on various lands totaling about 2,750 acres.

Mr. Felix Fynn, Manager of JOPOCOS, disclosed that it was through the good counsel of Daasebre Nana Otuo Siriboe II that the co-operative was formed.

He said initially, members were growing oil palm as individual farmers with the sole aim of selling to the Juaben Oil Mills Company, but Nana thought it wise that a very dynamic Co-operative Society is formed in order to be able to receive external assistance when the need arises.

Mr. Fynn explained that through the wise counsel of Nana Otuo Siriboe II, two years ago, the Society has received massive assistance from United States-African Development Foundation (USADF), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in the US.

The manager disclosed that after giving them several capacity training programmes, the USADF has rented an office complex for JOPOCOS for two years.

In addition to furnishing the office with modern equipment, the NGO has acquired a generator, employed an accountant, and a security personnel to man the newly-acquired office.

"We have received all these assistance, due to our dynamism and our desire to exist as a vibrant Co-operative Society," Mr. Fynn intoned.

The manager mentioned the desire to practice good farming cultural practices, good leadership, how farmers in the group would handle their monies, know how to budget for every farming season, and also know how to undertake costing of their farming activities, proper application of insecticide, weedicide and fertilizers, as some of the reasons why the workshop was organised for the leaders of the twenty associations forming JOPOCOS.

"Most farmers do not undergo the sort of training that our farmers have received over

the years, and that is why they remain poor, despite the fact that they are hard working people," Mr. Fynn lamented.

Mr. Francis Konu, Deputy Programmes Manager of Development Solution Centre, implementing partners for USADF, said the USADF decided to sponsor the training programme, because the NGO had realised that JOPOCOS operates on transparency.

He said the Capacity Development Programme for the members of JOPOCOS was to impart Agronomy Practices, Farmer Leadership and Basic Accounting Knowledge to the farmers.

Mr. Konu therefore appealed to the leaders to urgently organise their members and train them for them to also benefit from what they had acquired from the three weeks capacity development programme.

He stressed that it was only through this that the USADF could continue to assist them in all their endeavours, since it was the wish of the NGO that JOPOCOS exists till eternity.

The Chairman of the eleven-member central executive of JOPOCOS, Barima Okyere Ampadu, on behalf of the society, expressed their gratitude to the sponsors, and also assured them that the knowledge they had acquired would be put to good use, and that the rest of the farmers would also benefit.