

Socio-Economic Study of an Implemented Agroforestry Project with Small Scale Cocoa Producers in Honduras

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Introduction

Cocoa cultivation has a long tradition in Honduras. The general knowledge about cocoa, the genetic traits of Honduran cocoa, and the particular environmental conditions of the country have been driving the interest of several organizations and countries to encourage sustainable cocoa production.

Deforestation is a major problem, particularly in the Olancho region. Seeking for environmental and economic alternatives, The Honduran Association of Organic Cocoa Producers from Olancho (APROSACAO) reforestation project, supported by private investments from Chocolats Halba and PurProjet, aims at organizing the farmers and providing training in production, transformation and commercialization of organic cocoa as well as technical assistance.

The main goal of this study was to identify the socio-economic impact of the agroforestry program from APROSACAO/PurProjet among cocoa producers.



Methodology

Survey-interviews using snowball sampling were conducted in 5 villages in the Olancho region based on open and multiple choice questions. A total of 55 representative cocoa farmers (i.e. 14% of the population) were interviewed.

Descriptive statistic was used to analyze the data and to:

- Determine differences between the 5 villages regarding the livelihood conditions of the APROSACAO cocoa farmers.
- Define local knowledge variables about cocoa production.
- Estimate the cocoa producers' awareness of the reforestation program in terms of benefits, constraints and use of timber.
- Assess the overall performance of the APROSACAO as organization.

Results

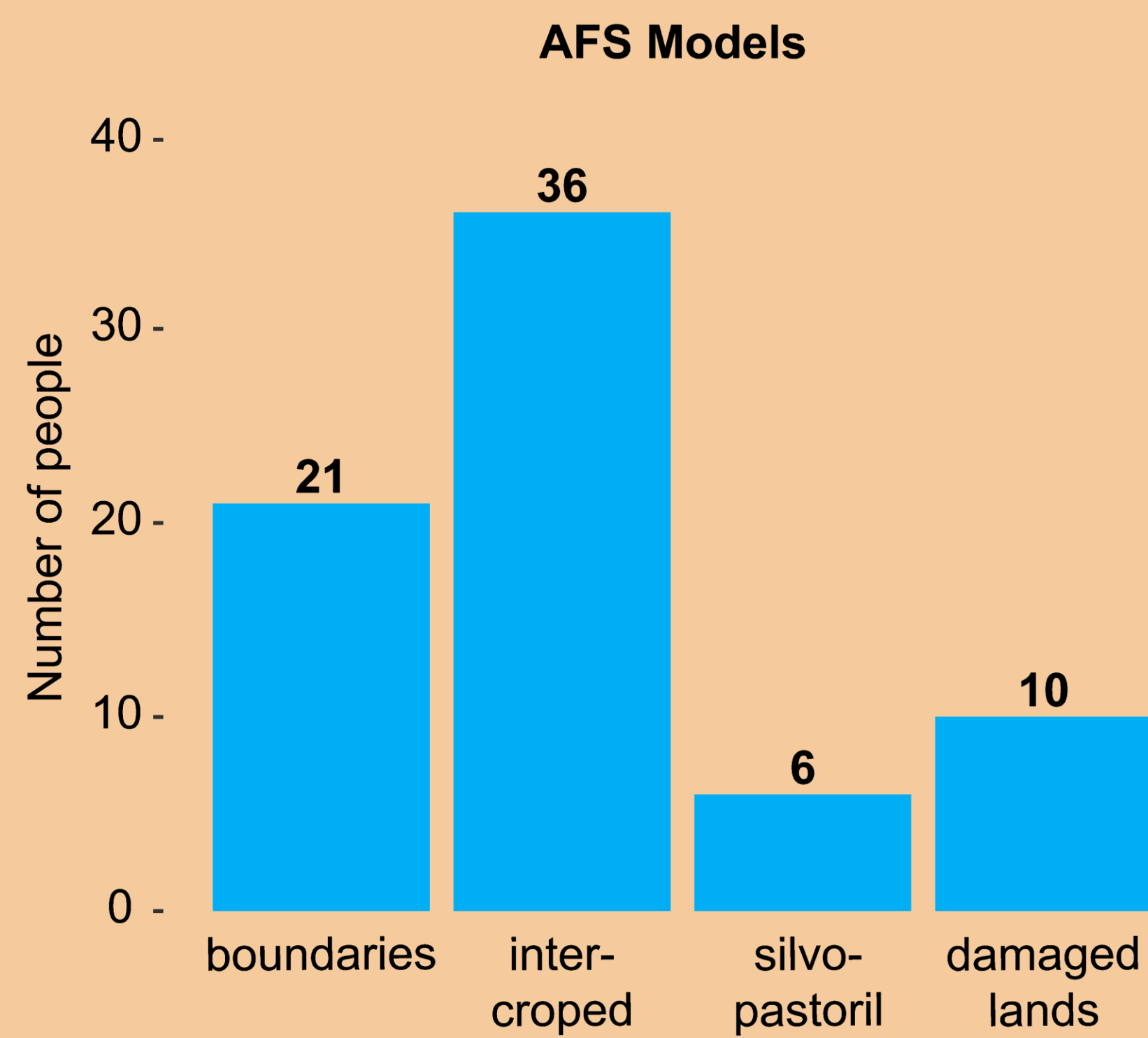
Profile of APROSACAO farmers

Characteristics	Results
Cocoa farmers affiliated to the APROSACAO agroforestry project	300
Cocoa farmers that belong to the agroforestry project	190
Average age	40 years
Gender representation	85% male and 15% female
Land ownership (average)	1.4 ha for cocoa
Level of education (average)	Basic
Gross Monthly Income (average)	8229 HNL (323 EUR)
Monthly Household Expenses (average)	6102 HNL (239 EUR)
Household energy	Only 67% of the farmers has electricity
Water supply	Only 27% of the farmers has access to safe water

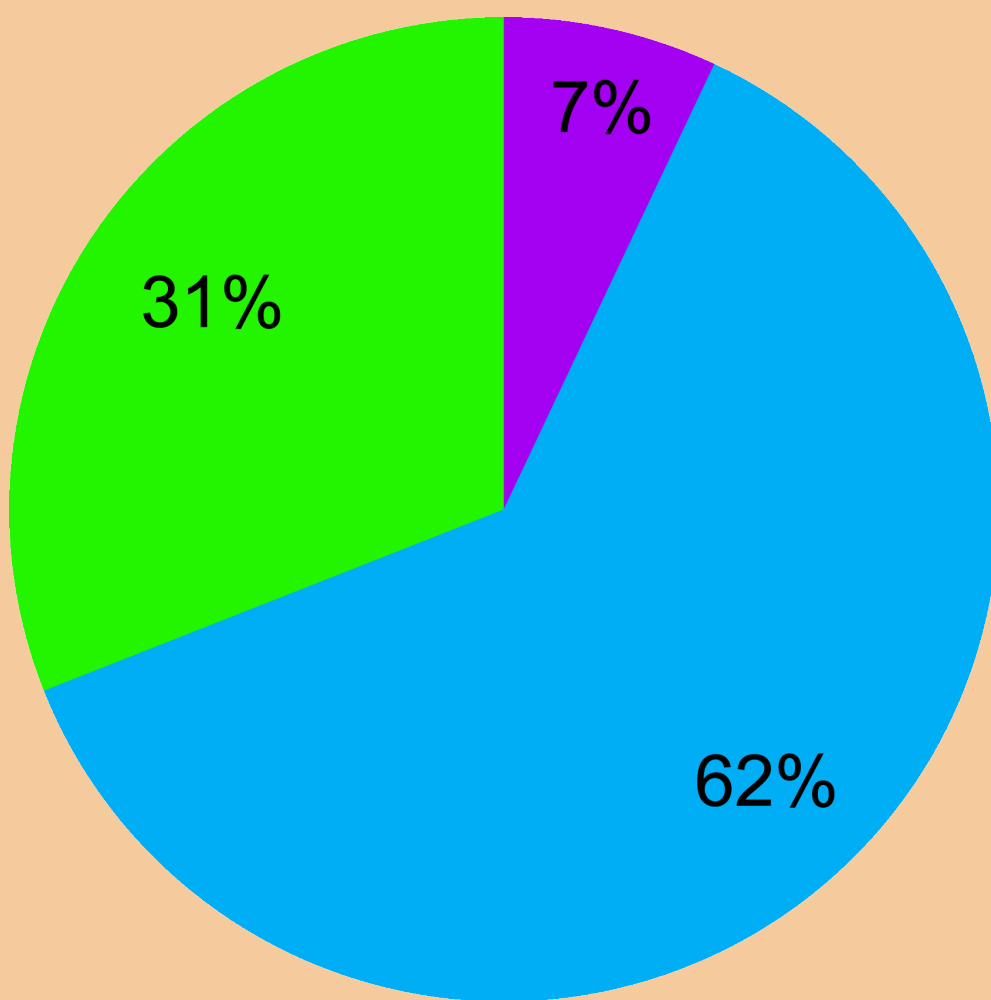
ha= hectare
HNL=Honduran Lempira
EUR= Euros

In terms of financial security, 78% of the cocoa farmers assert that their income is not enough to cover the households needs. Thus, all of them either engage in another remunerated activity or rely on remittances. Even though only 36% of the farmers had harvested cocoa at that time, 55% of them stated that food security had improved compared to 6 years ago.

89% of the cocoa farmers belonged to the agroforestry project and 83% of them stated being grateful with what it provided. The project offers four different models adapted to the type of field. The farmers can chose a model and the plant species according to their own preferences.



Time associated with APROSACAO



Categories

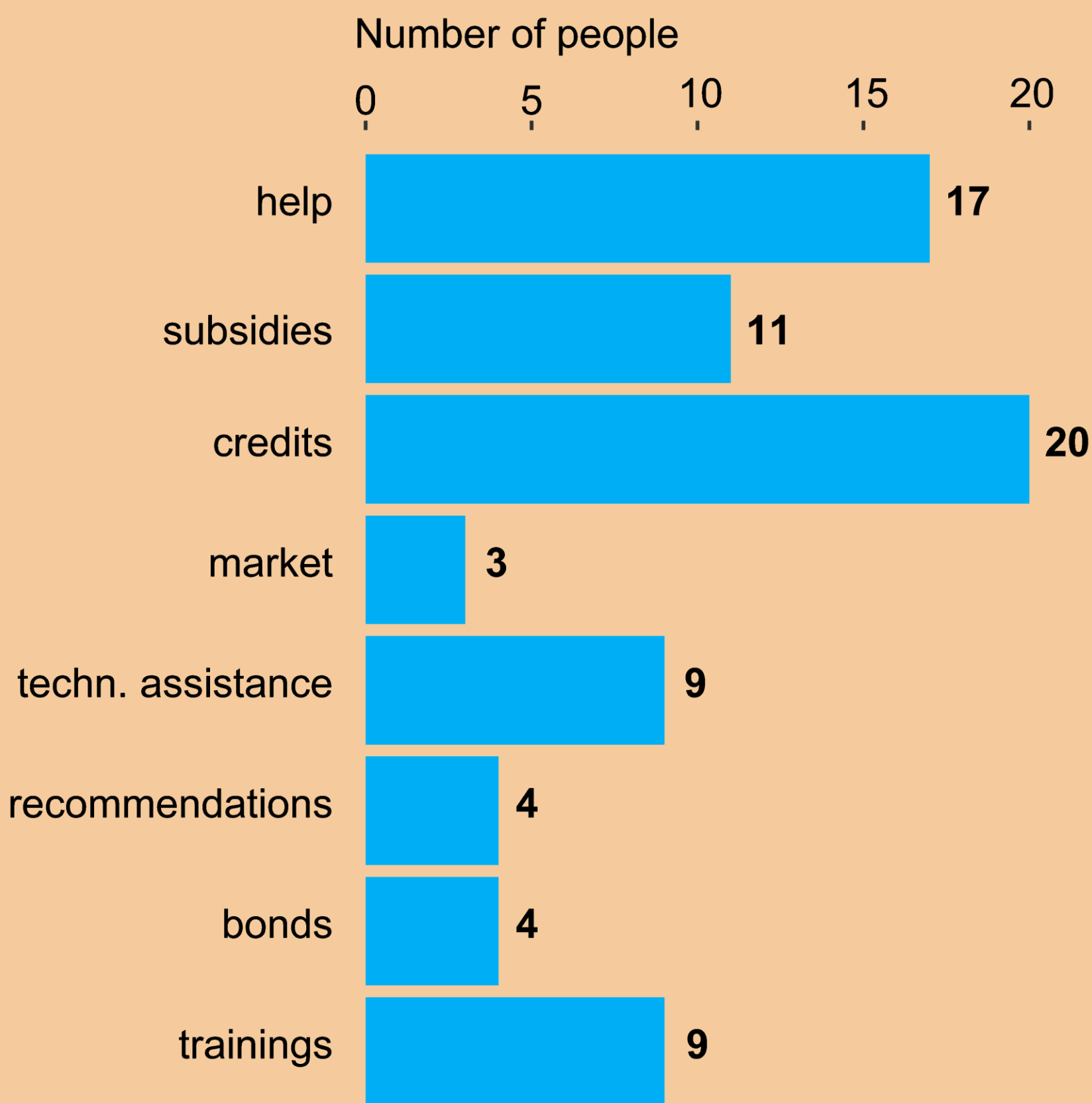
- months to 1 year
- between 2 to 3 years
- more than 3 years

Before APROSACAO existed, no other entities were present in Olancho. There is a sense of belonging amongst the farmers. The main 3 reasons for belonging to APROSACAO are:

- Curiosity (29% of the answers)
- Social aid (20%)
- Access to cocoa market (17%)
- Technical assistance (16%)
- Organic cocoa purchase price (11%)
- Environmental protection (7%)



The performance of the APROSACAO is positive (77%) according to the farmers. However, there is space for improvement in terms of future interventions, as it is shown below:



Conclusions

There was **no direct effect of the reforestation program on the income or cocoa yield improvement at the time, because cocoa trees were not yet in the productive phase.** Nonetheless, cocoa producers had more income than expenses, but those values are a function of the number of people that contribute financially per household.

There was a **positive influence of the reforestation program** on food security and cocoa producers' contribution to the environment and future generations. This program is an

opportunity to boost local economies, create employment, reduce poverty and environmental protection.

Supporting strategies are required to meet the future cocoa farmers' needs, such as the procurement of soft loans (e.g. via financial assistance) and support for their crops (e.g. provision of pruning tools, sowing tools, input purchases, and increase of grafted cocoa plants).

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Chocolats Halba for financial support and PurProjet for their logistic support.

