



# Digital Extension

## Within Cocoa Sector Farmer Training

“We have to think hard about how to start taking advantage of the digital revolution that is multiplying the rate of agricultural innovation.” —2012, Bill Gates at the “International Fund for Agricultural Development Governing Council”

As Mr. Gates asserts, the digital revolution around the world provides opportunities to accelerate agricultural outcomes in rural areas. The World Cocoa Foundation and its partners are at the forefront of enabling digital technology information transfer to and from cocoa farmers to be a part of regular farmer training through the CocoaLink program.

Technology use requires strong partnerships and dedication to unleash its potential. CocoaLink Partners, with a lot of experience to share, provide their perspectives on opportunities, future visions, and lessons learned on digital mobile extension.

» **Access and Outreach** Large distances, rough terrain, and variable farmer schedules create serious challenges for extension services to reach out to beneficiaries. Mr. Kablan from ANADER pinpoints the mobile benefits for reaching a “larger audience and faster dissemination of information.” For national agricultural extension services and their farmer training programs, employing digital mobile technology such as CocoaLink make such benefits a reality.

» **Capacity and Preparedness** Empowering cocoa farmers to benefit from new technology increases their future potential to interact efficiently with innovation. Digital mobile technology facilitates capacity development in all areas. For instance, this innovation enabled World Education, Inc., an international NGO and CocoaLink partner, to deploy teaching media directly to local trainers and offer efficient guidance on curricula via messaging, videos and voicemail.

» **Data and Integration** Dissemination of information is important – and so is understanding what types of information cocoa farmers need. When literate farmers or household members can ask questions and send information directly via mobile technology, we can improve their and our own abilities to make better decisions. Service providers link existing databases with mobile extensions to seamlessly connect sources of information.

In the future, the digital component of mobile technology will continue to evolve. Videos and voicemail have potential to increase program outreach to farmers who struggle to read and write. More sophisticated features like spatial sensing will push the boundaries of conventional farmer tools and allow them to experience new perspectives towards farm management.

At the same time, as CocoaLink partners like Noah Ssempijja from Grameen Foundation explain “technology is no replacer, but a complement” to training of farmers. Having a facilitator to reflect and discuss digital technology with farmers is helpful because they answer questions and provide deeper knowledge. People will remain central amidst digital developments. To realize the full potential of the digital revolution in Mr. Gates’ vision will be a continued task for strong partnerships and understanding. CocoaLink partners are positively looking towards the future with us and are convinced that the best is still to come.

### Voices of our Partners

For World Education Côte d’Ivoire:  
Country Director, Mr. Seni Diop

For ANADER Côte d’Ivoire:  
Coordonnateur National Filière Café-Cacao,  
Mr. Alexandre Kablan

For Grameen Foundation:  
Capacity Development Specialist,  
Noah Ssempijja

### Potential of Mobile Expansion

Côte d’Ivoire: about 70% of the 800,000 cocoa farmer units use or have access to mobile phone technology.

Ghana: about 80% of the 500,000 cocoa farm units have access to mobile phone technology. Between 2011 and 2013, CocoaLink in Ghana enrolled about 18,000 farmers, sending more than 300,000 units of information in 550 rural communities and reaching about 35% of female beneficiaries.