

BENIN ACTIVITY REPORT

Q2, 2014

A. OVERVIEW

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Health & Nutrition

- Launch of the 3rd edition of the initiative “Three Moringa Tree (TMT) Days Campaign” at the epicenter of Akpadanou: The theme of the current edition is “**Moringa for the nutrition of the mother and child during the window of opportunity of the first 1000 days of life**”. Indeed, given the importance of the window of opportunity of the first 1000 days of life in the nutrition



THP-Burkina CD Pascal Djohossou delivering speech at launch ceremony for TMT Days

of the mother and child, the theme of the initiative's second edition has been maintained because the concept still remains inadequately exposed mainly among vulnerable groups that include women and children in rural areas.

The official launching ceremony, placed under the patronage of the Representative of the President of the Republic within the Council of Food and Nutrition (CAN), was attended by the local, municipal and administrative authorities with a panel of technical and financial partners of THP-Benin. The national press widely reported the event nationally.

A total of 400 partners including 285 women and 04 mayors of various municipalities took part in this event.

- Continued production of Moringa leaf powder at the epicenter of Wawata: A total of 97,700g of powder has been produced and made available to the health units of the epicenters of Kissamey, Klouékanmè, Bétérou, Guinagourou, Gbégourou, Ouissi and Daringa.

Food Security & Environment

- A total of 143 tons of mineral fertilizers (NPK + urea) has been made available to 1113 partners including 375 women across all THP-Benin epicenters for a total of 538 hectares of farm. This operation aims to support the production of food through a contribution to the improvement of soil fertility.
- A total of 14,480 seedlings of selected oil palm and 5,000 orange plants have been acquired by 377 partners of the epicenters of Wawata, Akpadanou, Kissamey, Dékpo, Avlamè, Kpinnou and Klouékanmè. This operation, which is facilitated by

THP-Benin, is part of the promotion of perennial crops in association with food crops. This operation will continue in the epicenters of the Northern zone during the 3rd quarter and will focus on facilitating access to cashew plant.

Micro Finance Program

- Organization of general meetings for account rendering at the rural banks (CCR-Benin) to present the activities of fiscal 2013, receive the approval of members and record their suggestions and recommendations for improving operations during the year 2014: In total, 2,883 women members of the epicenters of Avlamè, Akpadanou, Bétérou, Daringa, Dékpo, Tre-Dassa, Kissamey, Ouissi, Wawata and Zakpota took part in these meetings.
- A total of 150 members from all epicenters attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for synthesis which was held on Thursday, June 26, 2014 at the epicenter of Akpadanou. During the AGM, the activity report for the year 2013 was presented by the Board of Directors followed by questions from members. After answering the various concerns, recommendations were collected and can essentially be summarized as reorganizing the credit portfolio and renewing credits to customers in a reasonable time.

Community mobilization

- Information and awareness raising sessions on the constitution of "village points" of development in THP-Benin's epicenters and mainly, their pertinence in view of epicenter self-reliance in the epicenters of Kissamey, Avlamè, Akpadanou, Zakpota & Bétérou: In total 5456 partners including 3240 women took part in 68 workshops, 59 of which were facilitated by committees.



Partners from the Akpadanou epicenter present at launch ceremony for Three Moringa Trees campaign

- A total of 14 village points were thus created in 05 epicenters in the following numbers: Kissamey (04 points), Avlamè (03 points), Akpadanou (04 points), Bétérou (03 points).

Youth mobilization

- A total of 963 young partners including 244 girls, members of THP-Benin epicenter village committees, were trained on leadership.
- A total of 3666 youngsters including 760 girls were impacted by VCA sessions in all THP-Benin's epicenters. During the VCA sessions, the youth were spoken to on topics such as early marriage and unwanted pregnancies of which girls are more and more victims in the epicenters. In addition, the use of mobile phones as a

development tool, the importance and utility of environment promotion, civic community actions leading to voluntarist action, the issue of self-reliance, as well as the role of the youth in this process were also discussed.

Entrepreneurship Development

- A total of 290 holders of entrepreneurial initiatives including 108 women from the epicenters of Kpinnou, Kissamey, Gohomey, Klouékanmey, Avlamè, Zakpota, Ouissi, Tré, Wawata, Akpadanou, Daringa, Bétérou and Gbégourou, took part in technical and managerial capacity building workshops as part of the management of their micro-businesses.

Those workshops aim to:

- (i) Raise awareness of holders of entrepreneurial initiatives on business plan assessment techniques, the need to formalize their income generating activities, the importance of maintaining management tools, the need to focus on demand markets, quality and availability of products, customer loyalty;
- (ii) Provide holders of projects with organizational, economic and financial management tools and with business plan development techniques.

To that effect, tools have been developed and put at the disposal of holders of business projects to encourage reflections on the presentation of their project, analysis of supply and demand on the market, the ability to position on the market, and analysis of the profitability of the business. Tools designed and numbered from 1 to 9 have been summarized at the end of the session and made available to them in order to facilitate writing.

- A total of 20 entrepreneurs including 5 women from the epicenters of Kissamey, Dékpo, Klouékanmey, Gohomey and Kpinnou were trained in farming techniques of edible fungi through a partnership with the "MIALEBOUNI" Association of Dogbo whose expertise is recognized in the region.

The objective of this training was to support the initiative of entrepreneurs to diversify their activities with a view to meet the growing demand for the product and thus contribute to improved nutrition of populations given the nutritional qualities of edible fungus.

- A total of 2.27 million CFAF was disbursed to meet the needs of 16 primary contractors (including a woman and a group of women) as part of the renewal of pedagogical support funds. This support was designed to detect entrepreneurial ability and to prepare primary contractors to meet the demands of decentralized financial systems.

Women Empowerment Program

- A total of 141 partners, including 69 women, were mobilized through the process of setting up of the "Women Leadership Team" and the "club of model moms" at the epicenter of Bétérou. It was marked by the organization of two working sessions with partners and local officials of the epicenter. These meetings helped to give more

information on the objectives targeted through these meetings, mandates / activities of members and their modus operandi, their links with WEP facilitators and governing bodies of the epicenter.

- A total of 44 partners (29 of whom were women), comprising of WEP male/female facilitators, the President and epicenter committee members in charge of mobilizing women and men in the epicenters of Avlamè, Kissamey and Bétérou, were trained on the VCA tool and communication and animation techniques.

CHALLENGES

- Women's access to land for large-scale farming is one of the major challenges. To meet this challenge, the women facilitators of WEP in priority epicenters took the initiative to organize information and awareness sessions in the partner villages, in efforts to build commitment of men in order to facilitate access to land for women. In preparation for this activity, a series of trainings was conducted for the facilitators on "the VCA tool and communication and facilitation techniques." These trainings aimed to equip the facilitators on specific topics to socio-cultural and economic realities of the epicenter partner villages.

The information and awareness session will continue during Q3.

- Developing a Business Plan is in itself another challenge for the primary contractors. To meet this challenge, epicenter primary contractors drafted their own business plans through sessions initiated and supported by the Entrepreneurship Development Program. This is intended to enable each primary contractor to master all aspects of his/her plan to better defend it before anyone willing to finance his/her business.

INNOVATIONS

- The visit of THP-Benin's epicenters jointly organized with the Embassy of the Netherlands in Benin, the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, Beninese Association for Social Marketing and Communication/Population Services International (ABMS / PSI), Beninese Association for the Promotion of the Family (ABPF), Platform for the Participation of Women in Decision-Making (PFID) Benin and THP-Benin from 17 to 19 April 2014 was an innovative initiative because it allowed the multidisciplinary team to better understand the epicenter strategy and to experience firsthand the socio-cultural, economic, environmental, nutritional and sanitary challenges of the epicenter communities, in efforts to find **innovative and collaborative solutions**. Thus, on July 18, a meeting will be held between THP-Benin, ABPF and ABMS / PSI to draft clear and appropriate strategies for improving reproductive health in the epicenters. Such an initiative to share experiences and good practices should be taken again given the results obtained in terms of analysis of actions engaged in the epicenters, THP strategy of interventions, and partnership building with other development actors. This will certainly allow the establishment and strengthening of joint planning for sustained actions to consolidate together the epicenter strategy and invite other stakeholders for its replication.

- The other innovation that has marked the life of the programs during the second quarter is the one based on the relocation of centers of interests and gathering of epicenter partners. The new operation aims to:
 - Create a de facto solidarity of partners and stakeholders of the epicenters,
 - Promote the village unity in the mechanism that must facilitate the epicenters' self-reliance;
 - Promote competition as an incentive element and generator of progress and innovations.

This relocation process induced the need for Unitary Hubs which are actually village development hubs for self-reliance. After this process, it is planned to set up a Consortium of epicenters duly registered at the Ministry of the Interior, administered by a Board of Directors comprising of representatives from city halls among others.

- Another new initiative is the implementation of a joint project with the theme: "Moringa for Improved Nutrition and Income Generation." This project is initiated by Inter-Church Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO), Fair and Sustainable Advisory Services (FSAS) and The Hunger Project (THP) to further inform the holders of entrepreneurial activity around the opportunities related to Moringa.

LESSONS LEARNED

One of the lessons learnt during this quarter is the participation of 04 mayors of various municipalities in the celebration of the 3rd edition of the initiative "Three Moringa Tree Days campaign" at the epicenter of Akpadanou. This was welcomed by the various actors who took part in the event. It should be emphasized that this support of Mayors in the activity has aroused enthusiasm and commitment among the population regarding the awareness messages conveyed within this framework. Photo of the Mayor of Klouékanmè planting moringa on large billboards and posters is proof of the determination of local elected officials and their communities to promote essential and nutritional values of Moringa.



Mayor of Klouékanmè planting moringa tree at Wawata epicenter

B. ADVOCACY & ALLIANCES

Component "Event participated in by THP staff"

- Participation of THP-Benin at National Institute for Social, Economic and Civil Training (INFOSEC), Cotonou in a consultative workshop on Monday, May 5, 2014 on the theme: "A national action plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325 of the United Nations in Benin: Why and How?" This workshop was organized by the Ministry of Family, Social Affairs, National Solidarity, in charge of the Disabled and Senior Citizens with the assistance of the West African Network for Peace Building in Benin (WANEP-Benin) and technical and financial support of GIZ. The meeting aimed to define the strategy leading to the National Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325 of the United Nations in Benin. About fifty people from various ministries, public and private institutions, Civil Society Organizations took part in the work.
- Participation of The Hunger Project-Benin in a workshop organized by the Council of Food and Nutrition (CAN) at the INFOSEC, Cotonou, on Friday, May 9, 2014 to assess the progress made by the movement SUN-Benin from April 2013 to April 2014.
- Participation of THP-Benin in the meeting between Benin's Technical and Financial Partners in Health (PTF) and CAN, in regards to scaling up nutritional interventions - SUN-Benin at UNICEF on May 21, 2014
- Participation in a meeting organized by NGOs Plan Benin, BORNE fonden-Bénin, and Terre des Hommes in connection with the celebration of the African Child Day in Abomey and Bohicon on June 16, 2014.
- Participation of Hunger Project-Benin in a workshop on the assessment of the status of land governance in Benin: Organized by Agrihub and the Laboratory for Analysis of Social Dynamics of Development (LADYD). This workshop, held on June 9, 2014 at Chant d'oiseau, Cotonou follows an initial assessment of land management in Benin made in 2008. Discussions allowed to:
 - Inform participants about the scourge of massive acquisition of agricultural land in rural municipalities. Through two case studies (located in the municipalities of Allada and Djougou), participants were able to realize the extent of the problem with its obvious consequences for food security and poverty;
 - Make an assessment of the current state of land governance in Benin following the format set by the World Bank.
- Participation of Hunger Project-Benin in a workshop on the issue of post-harvest grain, fruits and vegetables in Benin: Organized by CARE Benin / Togo on June 19, 2014 in Cotonou at Chant d'Oiseau, Cotonou, this workshop brought together various stakeholders involved in the post-harvest link of the production chain. The goal was to create an opportunity for researchers and producers from Benin to

share with researchers from the United States on post-harvest policies. Various papers have been presented at the workshop. Among others, we can name:

- Paper on the results of the collection of information on post-harvest;
- Presentation of research topics and results of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Abomey-Calavi on post-harvest;
- Paper on research topics and results of National Institute for Agricultural Research in Benin (INRAB) and Agricultural Food Technology Program (PTAA) on the post-harvest;
- Assessment of post-harvest losses in the value chain "vegetables" in urban areas in Benin and Ghana:
- Presentation of the constraints met in Ouémé-Plateau on post-harvest
- Paper on research topics and results of the Horticulture Department at Cornell University on post-harvest (Prof Watkins).

Component « Pleas and Alliances »

- The partnership panel developed by THP-Benin with institutions involved in promoting entrepreneurship in Benin enabled the "Entrepreneurship Development" program to participate in Agri-hub's activities on land management in Benin on 04 and 05 June 2014 and in the activities of the National Funds for the Promotion of Enterprise and Employment of Young People (FNPEEJ) related to the signing of contract between FNPEEJ and the Decentralized Financial Systems (SFDs) selected as part of the revival of credit operations to holders of business initiatives on 1 July 2014.

- In recognition of the performance of THP-Benin as part of the experimental implementation of the strategy of "Faire-faire" (or "Getting it done" in English), the Ministry in Charge of Literacy and Adult Education has renewed in THP-Benin confidence for the further process. THP-Benin is therefore high on the list among NGOs to lead the second generation of the experimental phase of the "Faire-faire" strategy in literacy and adult education in Benin. The conditions and modalities of work related to the new contract will be specified later.



President of CAN delivering his speech at TMT launch ceremony

- A major feature has emerged from the organization of the third edition of the TMT-Days. This feature is the implementation of a joint project whose theme is: "Moringa for Improved Nutrition and Income Generation." This project is initiated by ICCO Cooperation, Fair and Sustainable Advisory Services (FSAS) and The Hunger Project (THP) to further inform the holders of entrepreneurial activity on moringa.

Component "Press statements" (TV, radio, newspaper, etc.)

- Press Conference organized by THP-Benin at the Institute of Applied Biomedical Sciences (ISBA) of the Faculty of Health Sciences (FSS), University of Abomey-Calavi as part of the celebration of the 3rd edition of the initiative "Three Moringa Tree Days" campaign. This conference was relayed by 12 newspapers, 05 radio channels, and 02 television channels.
- A press release on the initiative of "TMT Days Campaign" was broadcasted on 09 local radios and the National Radio (ORTB) for two days at the rate of four broadcasts per day on average in French and local languages.

Component "Advocacy sessions held with (govt., NGOs, universities)"

- THP-Benin's contribution to the implementation of the government project "10 Million Trees 10 million Souls" in the Commune of Klouékanmè. This has resulted in the planting of 200 plants on the road Adjahonmè -Klouékanmè with the support of the Municipality of Klouékanmè and the municipal Environment Protection Division.
- A THP-Benin delegation led by the Vice President of the Africa department of THP Global and the National Director was received in audience by Madam Resident Representative of UNICEF in Benin on Thursday 12 June, 2014.
- A THP-Benin delegation led by the National Director was received in audience by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries on Monday, June 16, 2014.

Component "Visits to epicenter communities by potential partners/investors"

- A joint mission including representatives from the Embassy of the Netherlands in Benin, the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, ABMS/PSI, ABPF, PFID Benin visited the epicenters of Tré, Bétérou and Klouékanmè from 17 to 19 April, 2014. The visit aimed at experiencing firsthand constraints to the development of communities in order to arrive at a collaborative and innovative solution following the epicenter strategy.
- Specifically, the mission aimed to :
 - a) Highlight the innovative practices developed by Hunger Project-Benin, which can be replicated elsewhere to give added value in the context of improving the living conditions of the population;
 - b) Identify aspects of the living conditions on which each member institution of the mission can act to strengthen Hunger Project-Benin's actions;
 - c) Assess the mechanisms put in place to make Hunger Project-Benin's actions sustainable and contribute to the improvement of these mechanisms.

HUMAN RESOURCES & TRAVEL

<p>Staff Changes</p> <p><i>Please list any arrivals or departures and a brief summary of the reasons.</i></p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Extended Absences</p> <p><i>Please list the Senior Management Team's vacation dates, as well as any other staff members' long-term absence, including maternity leave)</i></p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Staff Development</p> <p><i>Please list any staff member trainings or professional development activities.</i></p>	
<p>Epicenter Visits</p> <p><i>Please list the epicenters and the number of staff visits in parentheses next to them.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akpadanou (11) • Avlamè (13) • Bétérou (12) • Daringa (6) • Dékpo (8) • Gbégourou (7) • Guinagourou (3) • Tré (15) • Wawata (10) • Kpinnou (10) • Ouissi (6) • Gohomey (6) • Kissamey (11) • Klouékanmè (13) • Zakpota (13) • Laboton (5)

C. Next Quarter Priorities

- Organize a contest of agricultural production to allow for good farming practices to emerge and be disseminated
- Organize multi-actor consultations for ownership taking of food security assessment in various areas of intervention
- Produce a radio (interactive) show on land tenure in Benin on a local channel in each THP-Benin's priority epicenter;
- Equip and put on the nutrition unit of Gohomey epicenter
- Organize the celebration of World Breast Feeding Week at Gohomey epicenter
- Organize the celebration of World Youth Day
- Organize the data collection phase of the evaluation of outcomes in the epicenters of Kissamey, Avlamè, Bétèrou and Zakpota.