

BENIN ACTIVITY REPORT

Q3, 2014

A. OVERVIEW

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Training of community representatives in Avlamè, Klouékanmè and Kissamey epicenters on testing techniques for malnutrition among infants. This activity aims at building participants' capacities as part of testing people suffering from malnutrition.
- In total, 60 community representatives have been trained for the door-to-door testing of children in 29 villages.
- Launch of the malnutrition testing campaign in Avlamè, Klouékanmè and Kissamè epicenters. The objective of this operation is to identify malnutrition cases with the objective of referring them to health centers for the improvement of their nutritional state. A total of 5123 children have been measured by the Brachial Perimeter (BP) – also known as the Mid Upper Arm Circumference or MUAC – and 4930 were green, 164 yellow and 29 red.



Animator session at Avlamè epicenter

The children that were identified as suffering from acute and chronic malnutrition (less than 4% of children measured) were sent to sanitary areas for care and treatment.

Nurses and animators have organized themselves for the monitoring of acute malnutrition cases in collaboration with head of Centers for Social Promotion.

A summary of the campaign's results has been written and made available to health zones and people in charge of the Centers for Social Promotion (CPS) of the areas concerned who were actually strongly involved in the implementation of activities (training of community representatives, supervision and debriefing session)

- Women’s education remains a priority in THP-Bénin’s programs, as clarifying their roles and responsibilities in their communities and households is essential, in order to improve the



Women from the *Model Mothers Club* from Bétérou epicenter with their children

well-being of families and overcome women’s weak representation in decision-making processes. Putting in place the *Model Mothers Club* and the *Women Leadership Team* in the priority epicenters (Avlamè, Bétérou and Kissamey) helps to target this objective and build capacities in the 1000 Days initiative; the team plans to progressively expand these programs to

the other epicenters. In total, 31 women participated in such activities (14 women from Kissamey, 8 women from Avlamè and 9 women from Bétérou). THP-Bénin confirms that women in the *Model Mothers Club* are volunteers and “role-model” mothers from their community, who are chosen by their respective communities. These women occupy the role of promoting discourse in households (and in the community), surrounding the following topics: the protection/defense of rights for girls and women, economic capacity building for women, the fight against adverse social constraints and the development and empowerment of women, and the improvement of health and nutrition of families; in other words, this club serves to strengthen the actions of WEP animators at the household level.

- Starting pre-schooling activities at the level of Gohomey, Gbé gourou, Dékpo, Klouékanmè and Akpadanou epicenters. In total, 319 children between 3 and 4 ½ years of age including 157 girls are registered in the epicenters.
- Training of epicenter youth in Wawata, Akpadanou and Kpinnou on the Information and Communication Technologies (ITC). A total of 80 young partners (including 27 girls) have been trained in using computers and the Internet for research and useful information.
- Awareness raising sessions on the theme: “ITCs to support personal development of the youth and epicenter self-reliance” have been held in the epicenters of Bétérou and Daringa. In total, 268 young partners (including 60 girls) were sensitized on the importance of ICTs in the development of their epicenters and in their own development.
- A total of 75 partners from the epicenters of Dékpo, Kissamey, Klouékanmè, Zakpota and Avlamè took part in two workshops organized by the Food Security Program in order to exchange on the level of food insecurity in those areas and to think of priority actions to be

taken to improve the situation. Proceedings allowed agreeing on an intervention road map. This activity is planned to be replicated in the other epicenters during the following quarter.

- A total of 64 farmers and 32 women farmers were selected to take part in an agricultural production competition initiated by THP-Benin in the epicenters of Kissamey and Avlamè. This competition aims to award the more productive producers and to capitalize local good production practices. The major factor that helped select the best producer is productivity.
- Implementation of the data collection phase as part of the outcome evaluation in the epicenters of Avlamè, Bétérou, Kissamey and Zakpota.

The collection of data from the ground happened in 02 phases. The first phase consisted of a survey among households through iPods and Tablets and with the iFormbuilder tool. The second phase was centered on focus-groups (i.e. group interviews) on the basis of an interview guideline designed before the interviews; this will allow supporting and adding to data analysis.

In the epicenter of Avlamè, Bétérou and Kissamey, three (03) villages were covered by the survey: theoretically one village with strong impact, another with weak impact and a third with average impact. The choice of the villages was firstly done in agreement with village communities on the basis of a theoretical classification done by those communities. The epicenter of Zakpota was an exception in the choice of villages because of its large scale activity coverage. Thus, 06 villages were included in the data collection: theoretically 02

villages with strong impact, 02 villages with weak impact and 02 villages with average impact.

The use of the iFormbuilder tool has considerably allowed to save time and to save resources insofar as (i) doing the survey through the questionnaire has been rather quick and easier for the interviewers, (ii) developing the database is instantaneous (directly generated through tools), thus avoiding having to manage many papers and to spend days to



WEP session with a community partners

log the data onto the system.

In total, 1054 households were interviewed as part of that data collection phase in the 4 targeted epicenters; respectively Avlamè (225 households), Bétérou (296 households), Kissamey (276 households) and Zakpota (257 households).

CHALLENGES

- Capacity building for women remains a priority in order to make visible their roles and responsibilities within their households/communities, for the well-being of families and to make up for their weak representation within decision making bodies. That is the objective pursued through the establishment of “Clubs of Model Mothers” and “Women Leadership Team”.

- That experience started with the priority epicenters and will be progressively expanded to other epicenters. In total, the “Clubs of Model Mothers” include 14 women in Kissamey, 08 women in Avlamè and 09 women in Bétérou. They are volunteer women, who stand out as examples and who are chosen by communities themselves. Their role is to lead advocacy campaigns across households for the protection/defense of girls/women’s rights, economic capacity building for women, the fight against unfavorable social impediments to the development and self-reliance of women, the improvement of family health and nutrition, the prevention of violence inflicted upon children and women etc. The active involvement of model mothers in the process has been very crucial in raising populations’ awareness with the intent of improving women’s socio-economic status.

- Another challenge taken during this quarter was making local stakeholders take ownership of the concept of food security and being able to discuss in a multi-stakeholders’ framework. In effect, food security was perceived by most stakeholders as being a permanent availability of food. Discussions allowed participants to better understand all the aspects of the concept (availability, stability, accessibility and use) and to measure efforts that need to be made to improve the situation in the intervention zone of The Hunger Project Benin.

INNOVATIONS

- The idea of having partners involve themselves in a process and leading it from end to end was materialized this quarter. This has to do with awareness sessions organized by WEP animators in partner villages of priority epicenters. This initiative recorded a real success in the epicenters owing to the strong involvement of local authorities and notables as well in the preparation as in the implementation proper. The average number of participation per village was 105 people. The sessions, planned to last 1h30mn at most, sometimes ran longer than 2 hours because of partners’ interest in the theme. The initiative deserves to be supported not only for the well-being of populations, but also in order to really get closer to self-reliance.

- The creation of a framework for discussion and experience sharing for entrepreneurs from the same sector of activity constitutes for the entrepreneurship development program an innovation in the quarter. Activities in that framework will allow members to exchange on the challenges that their corporation faces and to find sustainable solutions to the various issues they face together.



- With the permanent intent of ensuring a good functioning in order to facilitate the operational self-reliance of rural banks, the Micro Finance Program organized training for members of the epicenter committees on the key notions of the functioning of a rural bank in order to draw their attention to the roles that they could play in their capacity as epicenter committee members in improving the performances of rural banks to ensure self-reliance. That activity is an innovation because it was the first time ever that epicenter committee members are trained on key aspects of micro finance.

- The experience of village poles, that is to say a gathering of villages, on the basis of common interest for epicenter development and self-reliance, constitutes an innovation as part of the social mobilization and organization of epicenters. Through those discussion frameworks, the populations determine their needs themselves; they underline the problems that they face in order to identify a concerted, democratic and sustainable solution for the development of the respective communities.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The participation of THP-Benin in the workshop, initiated by AFRI-PROFOCUS, on the learning and coaching trajectory for active professionals in the areas of supporting value chains for the consideration of the gender dimension in development activities permitted the team to draw two great lessons:
 - ✓ The fight against poverty is quite impossible when gender is not considered ;
 - ✓ Gender inequalities within value chains affect performances in the sector and resources mobilization.

- Another lesson learnt during this quarter is that young people are key stakeholders in the epicenter strategy, because of their ability to be active and self-reliant. This matches the overall objective of the “ICT/Youth-Project” whose priority is to ensure the involvement of the youth in the implementation of the epicenter strategy. Currently, awareness raising and mobilizations are prepared by the youth with THP-Benin’s technical and financial support. In addition, training on using computers in the ITC Centers at Akpadanou, Wawata and Kpinnou epicenters has been led by the youngsters who were previously trained in those epicenters. This shows the capacity of the youth to implement not only the epicenter strategy but also their promptitude to become self-reliant. They have showcased this promptitude to become self-reliant by paying 2,000FCFA representing part of the training fees (10,000FCFA). This will also allow for coverage of the basic operational charges of ICT Centers.

B. ADVOCACY & ALLIANCES

- The participation of THP-Benin in the call for tender by the Ministry in charge of Literacy and Adult Education for the continuation of the implementation process of the ‘have-it-done’ strategy in literacy and adult education. This has been done and the necessary contractual, logistic and organizational steps are being made for the activities to start. It must be specified that 02 THP-Benin epicenters are included in this government program this time around.
- Participation of THP-Benin in the launch of the gender trajectory and value chains workshop.

AFRI-PROFOCUS has initiated learning and coaching trajectory for professionals in the domain of supporting value chains. The objective of this trajectory is to build organizational capacities for them to take the gender dimension into account in developing their value chains activities. The initiative includes customized support (coaching) and experience exchanges among organizations on the legitimacy to take a gender approach into account in the value chains for a better performance and economic self-reliance of women.

The first session of the trajectory took place in Cotonou (at Chant d'Oiseau) from 24 to 26 September 2014. This workshop marks the launch of the gender and value chains trajectory in Benin. It has recorded the participation of six (06) institutions which are THP-Benin, DREDRAS ONG, ANaF-BENIN, HELVETAS, IFDC and INCRA.

- Participation of THP-Benin in a capacity building workshop for businesses and organizations on quality-approach.

The workshop, organized on 25 June 2014 at Pantagruel Hotel in Cotonou as part of the Independence Fair, was on the topic "Implementation of the continued quality approaches improvement". This training workshop, organized by the Beninese Agency for Promoting Commercial Exchanges (ABePEC) in partnership with The International Framework for Development and Quality Insurance (EIDAQ), recorded the participation of about twenty stakeholders coming from various institutions such as Générale des Assurances du Benin (GAB), Africaine des Assurances, Office National du Bois (ONAB), Groupe "Tincy" Boulangerie, Pharmacie de l'Abattoir, Fludor, Comptoir de Distribution de Produits Alimentaires (CDPA). THP-Benin took a significant participation in this workshop with five (05) staff members. It was pointed out, during the various presentations, that quality-approach requires financial, technical and particularly motivated-human resources. Continuous improvement refers to "zero fault" every time and in everything.

- The partnership between Tré-Dassa rural bank and the Dutch Organization for Development (SNV) has continued in the context of the 2014-2015 campaign. Thus, credits have been granted to cashew nut producers for the well upkeep of cashew plantations.

For the 2014-2015 campaign, the total amount of credit disbursed for cashew nut stands at fifty six million, three hundred and fifty thousand (56350000FCFA) for 1515 recipients including 1144 women (37800000FCFA) coming from 125 cooperatives for the upkeep of 2254 hectares of plantations.

To meet all the demands for cashew nut credits, Tré-Dassa fund has received a series of credits from Afokatan Genèse Benin (AGB) which is a cashew nut processing firm for an amount of twenty three million FCFA (23000000FCFA). This series of credits has been obtained for a period of six (06) months and will be paid off with the monthly interest rate of 0.6%.

This partnership allows the fund to diversify the category of clients and activities and to draw incomes that could ensure operational self-reliance.

- Participation of THP-Benin in the official launch ceremony of the 22nd World Breastfeeding Week organized by the ministry of Health at the Hôpital de la Mère et de l'Enfant Lagune (HOMEL) on Monday, August 18th, 2014.
- Participation of THP-Benin in a workshop to validate management tools suggested by National Funds for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment. The workshop took place from 13 to 14 August in Covè.

- Participation of THP-Benin in a working session with the Agrihub Benin team on the implementation of activities planned by THP-Benin in the Agrihub's 2014 action plan. The session took place on August 25th, 2014.

Participation of THP-Benin on September 15th, 2014 in a working session with the "Partners for Development" and Agrihub-Benin team on the possibilities of including market garden entrepreneurs supported by THP-Benin in the Market Information System (SIM).

B. HUMAN RESOURCES & TRAVEL

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| <p>Staff Changes</p> <p><i>Please list any arrivals or departures and a brief summary of the reasons.</i></p> | <p>Recruitment and office taking of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administrative Secretary in charge of human resources - Northern region EPO |
| <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>-</p> |
| <p>Staff Development</p> <p><i>Please list any staff member trainings or professional development activities.</i></p> | <p>-</p> |

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| <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 (08) • Avlamè (19) • Bétérou (12) • Daringa (02) • Dékpo (09) • Gbégourou (04) • Guinagourou (03) • Tré (12) • Wawata (04) • Kpinnou (08) • Ouissi (11) • Gohomey (10) • Kissamey (22) • Klouékanmè (09) • Zakpota (14) • Lahoton (08) • Dasso (06) |
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C. Next Quarter Priorities

- Pursuing and finalizing of the establishment of village poles in the other epicenters and the launch of the process elaborate regulatory texts for a consensual way of running village pole activities.
- Organizing the World AIDS Day at Klouékanmè epicenter
- Training Lahotan and Dasso epicenter partners on the notions of business creations and the notions of a product unit management.
- Conducting reference studies in THP-Benin new epicenters
- Organizing an information and awareness raising campaign on reproduction health in priority epicenters :
 - Advocacy with local leaders to obtain their support in the implementation of the campaign on reproduction health;
 - Information and awareness raising session on Sexually Transmissible Infections, the risks related to sexuality/ early motherhood in 1 school /priority epicenter town hall ;
 - Building the capacities of key stakeholders groups of priority epicenters on reproduction health;
 - Organization of awareness raising campaigns on reproduction health in priority epicenters ;
 - Broadcasting programs on reproduction health with young people.