

BENIN ACTIVITY REPORT

Q1, 2015

A. OVERVIEW

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Organizing and hosting the visit of the President and CEO of The Hunger Project, Asa Skogstrom Feldt, in Benin from March 6 to March 12, 2015
- The President and CEO of The Hunger Project, Asa Skogstrom Feldt, took part in the official national celebration of the 20th edition of the International Women Day in Bénin with the President of the Republic.
- Organizing and hosting two investors' visit to Benin, one from March 3 to 7 and the other from March 10 to 14
- Inauguration the epicenter of Lahotan by the investors from the Netherlands on 12 March 2015 in presence of the mayor of Savalou, members of the local government, notables, traditional leaders and the community.
- THP-Benin took part in a Forum on Benin Women on 6 and 7 March 2015
- Implementation of the pilot phase of the Have-it-Done Contract funded by Benin government through the Ministry of Literacy
- Consolidation of the VCA level 1 among partners of Dasso and Lahotan as well as training animators on level 2: mastering of concepts and organizing relays in the poles. These activities have been carried out as part of preparing the investors' visits and will be reported in that framework.



Investor addresses epicenter partners and staff at the inauguration of Lahotan epicenter



THP-Benin Credit Officer, Mr. Innocent Domavo, and Social Entrepreneurship Officer, Ms. Gisèle Ouinsavi, prepare the ribbon to be cut at the inauguration of Lahotan epicenter

- Organizing a visit to Songhaï center for the winners of the agricultural production competition. The object of that visit is to allow the winner – farmers to exchange experiences with the managers of the Center.
- Organizing a visit for experience sharing on the common management of farming equipment for Northern epicenters' partners.
- Organizing a tour to explore experiences aiming to introduce cassava varieties biofortified in Vitamin A into the Southern Regional Agricultural Center at Niaouli.
- ABMS (Association Béninoise pour le Marketing

Social et la communication pour la santé, or Beninese Association for Social Marketing and Health Communication) built the capacities of THP-Benin’s health unit personnel in Reproductive Health with the support of THP-Benin.

- Making a “snapshot” of all THP-Benin epicenters with the tool iFormbuilder

CHALLENGES

- Preparing the participation of the President and CEO and the Vice-President Africa Department of the The Hunger Project in the official national celebration of the International Women Day (IWD) 2015 in Benin with the president of the Republic, the Ministry of Family and other eminent authorities has been very challenging.

On the occasion the President delivered a message to Benin people and the whole world. The whole celebration was broadcast live by the national television and radio (ORTB) and relayed by many other local and international channels.

THP-Benin seized the opportunity of this visit to increase its visibility and establish new partnership bases.

- Another important challenge lied in positioning Hunger Project on the board of the National Committee for Nutritional Education as a representative of International NGOs. In fact, THP-Benin had to use leadership skills to get the position because another NGO was about to take the position.

INNOVATIONS

- During the visit of the President and CEO and the Vice-President of The Hunger Project in Benin (6 – 12 March 2015) and as part of the official celebration of the International Women Day, a peculiar stress has been put on making communication items and communicating. Communication items like conference bags, pens, briefcase have been made with the logos of “THP-Benin, the Netherlands Embassy in Benin and the Ministry of Family”. In short, useful communication items have been made and convey key information advocating for change of behavior towards women at all levels.
- These communication items have been used during the national forum on women organized by the Ministry of Family on 06 – 07 March 2015 and which gathered more than 200 people from various horizons. The same items (briefcase) were also used on 08 March during the official celebration to carry the documents distributed to the official guests at that ceremony.
- During this quarter, the main innovation of the ground has been to give pole committees as much responsibility as possible in the organization of investors’ visits. Indeed, as part of the investors’ visits, contrary to past practices, pole committees have been trusted with mobilization activities which they led by themselves with the monitoring of THP-Benin’s mobilization team in the visited epicenters. THP mobilization team has played a role more in the vein of facilitation. This role can be seen as an “acting leadership” in the perspective of self-reliance.



THP-Benin Country Director, Mr. Pascal Djohossou alongside the THP’s CEO and VP for Africa and other distinguished guests at the celebration for International Women’s Day



Epicenter partners greet THP's CEO, VP for Africa, and the Country Director of THP-Benin during a visit

- The dried leaves of Moringa, a by-product of Moringa, has been initiated and put on the market by THP-Benin in order to cater for demands. In detail, dried Moringa leaves were produced and packaged by THP-Benin in order to satisfy the numerous demands – many partners were requesting dried Moringa leaves. This is an innovation because before, THP-Benin only produced Moringa powder that was packaged and provided to partners.
- Active involvement of Micro Finance Program stakeholders (chiefs of village, heads of districts, and presidents of epicenter committees) in

raising partners' awareness at the epicenter level with the view of increasing the market share of the rural banks' products.

B. LESSONS LEARNED

- The main lesson drawn from the implementation of the quarter's activities lies in the results obtained and the partnerships established during THP-Benin's participation in workshops/meetings organized by development stakeholders who deal in the same themes like THP. For example THP-Benin took part in a workshop organized by the Tchaourou sanitary zone located within the same region of Beterou epicenter. During that workshop THP's staff signed an MOU with the sanitary zone and decided in agreement with the people in charge of the sanitary zone to ensure a rigorous monitoring of the health units to make them work well. Also, new orientations, challenges and useful information in the areas of health and nutrition have been itemized during this workshop.



Epicenter partners sending warm greetings to guests during the epicenter visit

ADVOCACY & ALLIANCES

During Q1 2015, THP-Benin has actively participated in the activities of various networks and alliances namely.

- RENOPAL
- Agrihub Bénin
- FNPEEJ
- ABEPEC
- Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement
- Working Group Food and Nutrition
- Consortium of International NGOs for accelerating the MDGs (Aide Action, Care Bénin/Togo, Plan Bénin, Right To Play, SNV Bénin, THP Bénin)

In addition, THP-Benin has undertaken exchanges with other development stakeholders.

The following chart shows the organizations involved and opportunities for collaboration.

Audiences / Stakeholders	Results / Opportunity for collaboration
Audience with the Minister of Family on Tuesday 17 February 2015	« Partnership agreement » to be established in the coming days between the Ministry of Family and THP-Benin to formalize and strengthen the existing partnership.
Audience at the European Union Commission on Wednesday 18 February 2015	Between the EU and THP, partnerships are possible through calls for proposals at the local level or through facilities for unused funds.
Ministry of literacy	Signature of the contract for implementing the 2 nd phase of the Have-it-Done literacy strategy which will impact (Zakpota and Ouinhi) out of the 5 communes targeted.
World Food Program	THP-Benin's wish to enroll in a multi-stakeholder partnership which looks for the resilience of communities facing the challenges of food and nutrition security.

Finally, THP-Benin participated in various workshops and seminars the most important of which are mentioned in the following chart.

Theme	Organization	Date and venue
Official installation ceremony and general assembly of the National Network of Public and Private Organizations for Reverting and Inserting the Youth (RNSPPRIJ)	Ministry of Secondary School	27 january 2015 in Cotonou
National multi-stakeholder workshop for sensitization and political dialog on the regulatory framework of food norms related to post-harvest management in Benin	Platform of Benin's Civil Society Stakeholders (PASCIB)	31 march and 1 avril 2015 at Hôtel KTA Cotonou
Expert consultation workshop for assessing needs in nutritional education in Benin	Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Abomey-Calavi	17 and 18 march 2015 at INFOSEC Cotonou
Workshop for launching the Alliance of Civil Society for Intensifying Nutrition in Benin (ASCINB)	Platform of Benin's Civil Society Stakeholders (PASCIB)	10 February 2015 in the BIO GUERA room of AZALAÏ hotel in Cotonou
Participation in a teleconference of the SUN movement	Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement	26 March 2015 in the conference room /UNICEF

PARTNER STORY

THE HUNGER PROJECT, through its Entrepreneurship Development Program, encourages food processing activities. These activities employ a large number of women groups in rural areas. For this purpose, THP-Benin put emphasis building the capacities of women, on the best processing practices including quality standards and conditioning. Among the women groups supported by the Program, we have the group **"MEWESOMAHOU»** of Wawata epicenter, represented by Mrs. GOUDJO Béatrice (on the left in the picture) who tells us about their experience with THP-Benin.



I am GOUDJO Béatrice, President of the Group **"MEWESOMAHOU"**. Our group is created out of the dream and the will of some brave women who joined efforts in order to carry activities out together with the purpose of improving incomes of the members. This wish became concrete through the establishment of the group in 2005, a group that includes only women. Apart from periodical the meetings that we held to discuss issues of cleanliness and sanitation of our living environment, we also carried out income generating activities such as the production of cassava products (gari and tapioca) and palm oil processing. We used to make these products in a very ordinary way and we sold them on the markets of Wawata and Zè. When we compare the profit we made to the effort we deployed it was not stimulating enough and some members left the group. We are current 22 members. Things were going that way when in 2013 we discovered THP-Benin's Entrepreneurship Development Program which allowed us to take part in training on how to make gari ALITECH (the price of a kg of it is 500F compared to 200F for the ordinary gari). The quality of the product gave us other opportunities. In 2014 we participated in the Independence Fare in Cotonou where we sold out all our stocks.

Many visitors asked for other by-products like sugared gari and tapioca or enriched with coconut milk. Likewise, in a move to expand our activities, we have now discovered other food products well-conditioned and labeled. We requested the expansion from THP-Benin and they supported us.

Currently we have expanded our market. Now we receive demands from Cotonou. In addition, we have benefited from many other training opportunities offered by The Hunger Project in Entrepreneurship. The most recent training took place in Bohicon and was moderated by management and marketing consultant Mr. Marcellin Koba. These achievements have fundamentally changed our perception of things because we have been initiated to notions of company creation, personal and collective development, organizational and financial management and how to look for markets. After the various training, we have been able to correct management mistakes and we have started using management tools such as books for sales and expenses. Through these books we now know how we invest and how much we earn from our activities.



After many monitoring visits, we applied for the educational support funds to strengthen our activities and to cater for the needs of our clients. We were granted a sum of 120,000FCFA which will be used to buy a cassava processing machine, two bowls and cassava. Loan terms have been met and we have made a new application to renew the educational support fund that is on hold.

Admittedly, since the advent of Entrepreneurship Development Program, activities in our group experienced a remarkable advance. The various training in which we took part allowed us to take new initiatives and to significantly advance our activities. The pedagogical support funds have been and remain invaluable for our group to the extent that they allow us to meet expenditures related to our activities (purchase of raw materials in particular) and promptly respond to customer demands.

With THP-Benin's support, both technically and financially, our group went from producing 2 bags of 150kg / month to more than 4 bags of 150kg / month of gari. This is not only for Gari but also for the production tapioca. Our products are currently well packaged and labeled indicating the group's contacts. Now we are even ready to export our products across the sub-region.

We can now say with pride that our products cross the borders of Benin and are sold abroad in Mali where we continue to receive orders from. We owe this to THP-Benin.

E. 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>The Head of the Administration and Finance Department took office on 23 March 2015</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>Short-leave training in Micro Finance with a focus on Micro Credit for the credit officer of the Micro Finance Program</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 (16) • Avlamè (18) • Bétérou (7) • Daringa (5) • Dékpo (4) • Gbégourou (6) • Guinagourou (6) • Tré (19) • Wawata (20) • Kpinnou (7) • Ouissi (6) • Gohomey (5) • Kissamey (23) • Klouékanmè (8) • Zakpota (6) • Lahotan (11) • Dasso (7)
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F. Next Quarter Priorities

- Establish a roadmap for the epicenters in the process of self-reliance
- Organize a training workshop for model mother clubs of the priority epicenters on “leadership and communication techniques”.
- Improve the visibility of THP and entrepreneurs through mass commercial action (Ouagadougou Fair)
- Revival of literacy activities to the benefit of epicenters partners with the wish that this time operational programs suggest the targets rather. This could better give value to the investment and allow capitalizing the results better.
- Make the nutrition unit of the epicenters of Gohomey, Dasso and Lahotan operational
- Organize a thinking workshop for coordinating doctors of sanitary zones on health units’ movement towards self-reliance
- Take part into the PADEV’s execution study