

# BENIN ACTIVITY REPORT

## Q3, 2013

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### A. Overview

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

##### HEALTH & NUTRITION

- Commissioning Gbegourou epicenter's health unit. Three health agents (a nurse, a caregiver, and a tenant of the pharmacy) are recruited to run the unit with the permanent technical support from the Gbegourou commune's health coordination team.
- Members of the health unit managing committees of Ouissi , Klouékanmè and Tré epicenters were elected and trained to ensure better management of the health units. A total of 10 men and 7 women were trained, with the technical support of health zone supervising teams of Klouékanmè - Toviklin - Lalo and Dassa- Glazoué.
- A total of 36 women have adopted a Family Planning method as part of an awareness raising campaign on Family Planning at Daringa epicenter. The awareness raising campaign was organized in collaboration with the Agence Béninoise pour le Marketing Social (ABMS / PSI) of Djougou which installed a mobile clinic at the epicenter of Daringa in partnership with THP- Benin.

##### PRIORITY OF THE FIRST 1,000 DAYS OF LIFE

1) Awareness raising on the importance of the first 1,000 days of life

- **Celebrating World Breastfeeding Week at the epicenter of Klouékanmè from 23 to 29 August 2013.**

In partnership with the City Hall of Klouékanmè and the health zone of Klouékanmè - Toviklin - Lalo, THP- Benin celebrated from 23 to 29 August 2013, the World Breastfeeding Week at the epicenter of Klouékanmè .

The activities planned for the celebration were officially launched by the Country Director of THP- Benin on Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 at the epicenter of Klouékanmè . This ceremony has recorded the effective and active participation of the Mayor of Klouékanmè's commune and all the municipal council, the Coordinating doctor of Klouékanmè - Toviklin - Lalo health zone and his colleagues, chiefs of villages and notables of the five (05) partner villages of Klouékanmè epicenter.

The theme of the 2013 edition is : « **A key action during the window of opportunity of the first 1,000 days of life: let's support the promotion of breastfeeding.**»

This celebration helped raise public opinion's awareness on the importance of the window of opportunity of the first 1000 days of life and to educate rural populations, particularly women and mothers on (i) the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and its continuity until the age of 2; (ii) the importance of Family Planning and the various methods

of contraception; (iii) the early detection of breast cancer through the method of self palpation.

Vaccination sessions through the target catch-up method from hamlet to hamlet also took place during that week.

In total, 200 partners, including 76 men and 124 women in Klouékanmè epicenter took part in this celebration and 23 women adopted a contraceptive method.

The launch ceremony was relayed by the private television channel Canal3 Bénin, the daily paper *Le Matinal* and two local radio stations (Adjahonmè and Lolo) which consistently broadcast on the implemented activities throughout the week from August 23 to 29, 2013 .

- **Awareness raising campaign on the first 1,000 days of life**

As part of an awareness raising campaign on the window of opportunity of the first 1000 days of life at the epicenter of Bétérou, a total of 360 partners were sensitized on the Essential Nutrition Actions. The Mayor of Tchaourou, partners of the epicenter, animators, the health unit's agents and a few THP- Benin staff members were actively got involved that event.

In Daringa , where the same event was held , a total of 450 people were sensitized on the same themes.

This campaign will continue in the partner villages of 02 epicenters with the support of animators of nutritional monitoring.

- **The initiative "5 minutes with patients on the importance of the first 1,000 days of life"**

A total of 1397 partners were sensitized on the importance of the first 1,000 days of life through the initiative called "5 minutes with health unit patients on the importance of the first 1,000 days of life" in the epicenters of Guinagourou , Ouissi , Tré , Daringa and Bétérou .

This initiative allowed informing directly and providing nutritional counseling to all patients who attended the health units of those epicenters

- **Communication on the importance of the first 1,000 days of life in City Halls**

As part of the continuation of the second edition of the initiative "TMT -Days Campaign", a panel discussion was held in the City Hall of Klouékanmè to inform the public which included local authorities on the importance of the window of opportunity of the first 1,000 days of life for the harmonious development of human beings and Moringa as a nutrient for the food of the mother and child during the first 1,000 days of life.

In total 70 people including 47 men and 23 women took part in this session. The Mayor and his municipal council, the City Hall staff and some partners of Klouékanmè epicenter took part in the panel discussion.

Following the discussion, 450 moringa plants were put to ground in the compound of Klouékanmè city hall and a composed kit of toilet items for kids and some Moringa flour packets were offered to the first child born in the health unit of Klouékanmè epicenter.

## **MICRO FINANCE**

As part of securing the licence for the rural bank in pursuance of the new regulation in force, were organized Ordinary General Assemblies for the rendering of accounts, extraordinary general assemblies for the dissolution of the managing bodies of the former rural banks and for the designation of the general assembly's new members.

Following those assemblies, the constitutive general assembly was organized on Wednesday, 21 August to Friday 23 August, 2013 in the conference room of the Stade de l'Amitié de Cotonou. During this assembly, the basic documents including the rules and regulations, the statutes and the manuals were in particular revised and adopted. After the adoption of the documents, the presidium that led the sessions kicked started the electoral process for new members of the various managing bodies. Following the process, 17 members including only women were elected to manage the various bodies of the rural bank with 07 members for the Board of Directors, 05 members for the credit committee and 05 members for the Supervisory/Surveillance council. Each body is led by a team including the President, the Vice-President and a Secretary. In total, 178 delegates from the epicenters of Akpadanou, Avlamè, Bétèrou, Daringa, Dékpo, Gohomey, Kpinnou, Kissamey, Ouissi, Tré, Wawata and Zakpota took part in that constitutive assembly.

## **FOOD SECURITY & ENVIRONMENT**

THP-Benin started the implementation of warrantage in seven (07) epicenters in the center and south of Benin (Avlamè, Kissamey, Dékpo, Tré, Ouissi, Klouékanmè and Zakpota). In total, 569 men and 603 women were sensitized/informed on warrantage through 46 workshops organized to that effect.

THP-Benin has facilitated access to 1,150 selected cashew seedlings for Gbegourou and Guinagourou epicenter partners. Young people were trained in the techniques of establishing and monitoring of cashew plantations. The purpose was to create, in each epicenter, due local expertise that may technically support farmers in establishing perennial crop plantations. A total of twenty (20) youngsters from 02 epicenters (Gbegourou and Guinagourou) were involved.

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

A total of 212 animal farmers of the epicenters of Ouissi, Tré, Dékpo, Kissamey, Kpinnou, Akpadanou and Wawata were trained on how to use Moringa leaves in the food of the animals they breed. The aim of the activity is to led farmers to considerably reducing the cost of veterinary products through the use of Moringa leaves, a plant that is available and rich in vitamins, mineral salts, and additional food in the animals' food.

The 27 primary entrepreneurs who were trained and who benefited from the pedagogical support funds last quarter were visited and monitored on the basis of a monitoring form designed to that effect. The objective of that activity is to evaluate the results obtained by those primary entrepreneurs following the use of the pedagogical funds.

## **YOUTH MOBILIZATION INITIATIVE**

Celebration of the **Youth International** Day at the epicenter of Wawata with youngsters from all epicenters.

The celebration centered around the theme: **"Youth migrations: make development progress"**, a theme chosen by the United Nations on this 14<sup>th</sup> edition of the celebration of the **International Youth Day**. A total of 537 youngsters from all THP-Benin epicenters were mobilized for that day.

On the occasion, many activities were conducted namely:

- Projecting an hour movie to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmissible diseases. The title of the film is 'Epidemics of shade'.
- Projecting a 6 minute film on youth entrepreneurship
- Introducing representatives of the youth of three epicenters for experience sharing on their respective entrepreneurial activities
- Exchanges with other invited stakeholders (Right to Play and ANPE)
- Organizing a soccer match
- Organizing a cultural evening

The ceremony was covered by the media. As a matter of fact, two television stations (ORTB and CANAL3) covered events. The national radio was also involved. In total, proceedings were relayed in 06 languages by the Radio.

## **CHALLENGES**

## **INNOVATIONS**

- The initiative "5 minutes with patients on the first 1,000 days of life" in the epicenters' health units has allowed not only raising awareness of partners directly and individually, but also reaching progressively more households that way.
- The organization of holiday activities namely soccer matches between villages in the epicenters, organized by the youth themselves allowed coupling these fun activities with awareness raising on topics like care, rural exodus, entrepreneurship and HIV / AIDS. These were times when young people mutually exchanged on their experiences in taking part in the Hunger Project- Benin's various activities. That activity also allowed assessing the organizational capacity of the youth, which all contribute to the epicenters' self reliance.
- Innovation this quarter is concerned with the availability of lists of all program committees **on the ground along with their phone numbers for the 8 epicenters mentioned above**. The lists have been created in an excel file and relayed to all program officers. This falls in line with the new working scheme that is being put in place with a view to an effective and efficient work link between program officers and the leadership on the ground mostly with the epicenters self-reliance in view.

## **B. Lessons Learned**

The involvement and active participation of mayors and health zone coordinators in the process of awareness raising on the window of opportunity of the first 1,000 days of life led to spreading the message more easily and encouraging partners for a real behavioral change.

The results of the pedagogical support fund's experience revealed that that experience is a necessary step to effectively identify entrepreneurial attitude among epicenter partners and significantly reduce the risk of outstanding credit. Despite the good reimbursement rate of the pilot experience, it can be noticed that some have reimbursed with difficulty. Sometimes the effort was made because they simply hope for a renewal of credit. But others, on the contrary, have used it to grow their business and reimburse easily.

## C. Advocacy & Alliances

- Active participation of Hunger Project-Benin in the workshop for developing a communication plan in nutrition organized by the National Association of the Communes of Benin (ANCB) at LOKOSSA from the 13 August to 14, 2013
- The Tré-Dassa rural bank signed a partnership with the Dutch Organization for Development (SNV) which requested the bank's services to grant credits to cashew nut producers in the departments of Zou-collines and this for 40 village committees of cashew nut producers (CVPA). For 2013-2014 cashew nut campaign, a total amount of 22 850 000 CFA F was granted in credit to those producers. To cater for this demand, the SNV put at the disposal of the rural bank of Tré-Dassa, a credit limit amounting 15,000,000 CFA F refundable without interest over a 6 month period. This partnership makes it possible for the rural bank to diversify its products and allows it to have a new type of customers and in the long term to have consistent financial products, token of an expected self-reliance.
- THP-Benin was granted an audience by the authorities of the Centers for Regional Actions for Rural Development (CARDER) in the departments of Mono-Couffo and Atlantic-Littoral. The purpose of those meetings is to (i) make THP known to grassroots development stakeholders, (ii) request and obtain the implementation of a multi-actor partnership for the development of grassroots communities and especially for stepping up the achievement of MDGs, (iii) induce the involvement of People in charge of Rural Development (RDR) and their collaborators in the operational device of THP-Benin on the ground and (iv) establish a concerted "multi fronts" action plan whose implementation is validated and followed by the hierarchies of the institutions involved.
- Organizing three (03) working sessions with the focal Points of the Ministry of Family, Social Affairs, National Solidarity, the Disabled and Senior Citizens (MFASSNHPTA), the Ministry of Micro-Finance and Youth and Women's Employment (MMEJF) and the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Leisure (MJSL). The sessions aimed to develop a network of partnership for the WEP. These meetings allowed a better knowledge of the ministries as far as gender focus interventions are concerned; in particular it allowed a better knowledge of the success and failure of actions developed.
- The Hunger Project-Benin, through its Entrepreneurship Development Program, got into contact with the people in charge of the social Support Project 'Businesses Promotion Center', a government promoted project designed to provide technical and financial support to micro, small and medium-sized companies. The purpose of these exchanges is to materialize a partnership with the Organization so that the primary entrepreneurs in the epicenters get oriented and benefit from the actions of the Project.

- A joint awareness raising activity on nutrition and the need for sending children to school was organized for women in the epicenter of Tré by the Center for Social Advancement of Dassa, the Dassa branch of the NGO “SOS village of Children” and THP-Benin's Regional Office of Bohicon. This activity which mobilized more than 150 women at TRE epicenter was a true success.
- A working session was held with the Headmaster of CEG Akpadanou (secondary school of Akpadanou). The meeting focused on the activities of the youth of Akpadanou epicenter, particularly on the use of the ICT Training Center of the epicenter. The meeting concluded on decision that another meeting, open to other school officials, students' representatives, be organized in a near future to agree on the terms of attendance and use of the ICT Training Center as well by students as by teachers of CEG Akpadanou.
- Last August, THP-Benin took part in a series of workshops organized by the National Council for Education in preparation of the forthcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> National Forum on Education. Through its participation, THP-Benin has contributed to an efficient preparation of the forum and will definitely take the credit for contributing to the improvement of the educational system in Benin through its involvement both at the kindergarten level and the adult education level. It should be mentioned that the National Council for Education is the highest authority in Benin as regard Education as a whole and directly operates under the leadership of the Head of State himself.

## D. Partner Story



**Ibrahim LAFIA GAWÉ**, approximately thirty years old is married and has four children. Elected to the epicenter committee of Gbégourou as the Environment Officer, he joined the epicenter as a representative of the village of Alafiarou. Today, he works alongside his peers (members of youth committees and village committee) for the emergence of a new association dynamic in his village.

### *He testifies*

The Hunger Project Benin's intervention through the VCA tool and other forms of supports (fertilizer, pedagogical funds, training etc.) helped induce a new association dynamics among the population. A dynamic that translates into the operation of a collective community farm (photo-cons)



Today, instead of leaving my village for the city in search of livelihood, I prefer staying in the village because with about 0.30ha of land cultivated, I am confident to produce a significant amount of corn. The incoming generated by this operation will certainly allow me to ensure my children's education and the improvement of the social and economic conditions of my family. I thank Hunger Project's Country Director and the animators for the numerous efforts and sacrifices they make every day to alleviate hunger and poverty in our communities.

## E. Human Resources & Travel

<p><b>Staff Changes</b></p> <p><i>Please list any arrivals or departures and a brief</i></p>	-																
<p><b>Extended Absences</b></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><b>Staff Development</b></p> <p><i>Please list any staff member trainings or professional development activities.</i></p>	-																
<p><b>Epicenter Visits</b></p> <p><i>Please list the epicenters and the number of staff visits in parentheses next to them.</i></p>	<table> <tr> <td>Akpadanou (11)</td> <td>Gohomey (7)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Avlamè (15)</td> <td>Kissamey (18)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bétérou (16)</td> <td>Klouékanmè (14)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Daringa (16)</td> <td>Kpinnou (9)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dékpo (9)</td> <td>Ouissi (7)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gbégourou (17)</td> <td>Tré (10)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Guinagourou (15)</td> <td>Wawata (15)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zakpota (13)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Akpadanou (11)	Gohomey (7)	Avlamè (15)	Kissamey (18)	Bétérou (16)	Klouékanmè (14)	Daringa (16)	Kpinnou (9)	Dékpo (9)	Ouissi (7)	Gbégourou (17)	Tré (10)	Guinagourou (15)	Wawata (15)	Zakpota (13)	
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## F. Next Quarter Priorities

- To continue training and raising awareness on the Essential Nutrition Action (ENA)
- To celebrate of the **World Day against AIDS** in the epicenters
- To finalize all the agreement paper work to be submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Economy for the Caisse Communautaire Rurale du Bénin (CCR-Bénin).
- To continue the operationalization of warrantage across the epicenters
- To identify and train animators of some local NGOs through the 'have-it-done' approach so that they may support the coach of primary entrepreneurs;
- To organize and structure the women groups who deal in shea butter processing in the epicenters of Bétérou and Daringa;
- To complete the paper work and make operational Klouékanmè epicenter's kindergarten
- Finalize the social project proposals submitted by partner villages and come up with funding the said projects for achievement.