

## A. OVERVIEW

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Organization of a workshop to validate the conclusions of the study on the topic “Analysis of a value added chain: the Powder of Dried Moringa oleifera leaves for the Beninese Market”. This study aims to:**

- analyze and map out the stakeholders (micro, medium and macro) of the Moringa value chain: “the Powder of Dried Moringa oleifera leaves for the Beninese Market”;
- evaluate the demand in Moringa leaves powder at all levels: epicenter, national and international;
- evaluate the feasibility and profitability of the production of Moringa leaves powder, as a business activity for specific and vulnerable entrepreneurs and groups (women and young people).

It has been agreed at the workshop to establish a dynamic platform whose main missions will consist in the following:

- define social and ecological norms of health security which must govern the production processes of the leaves and their processing into powder in Benin;
- conduct the needed lobbying/advocacy for the adoption of those norms by authorities;
- define a functioning charter of the platform for the respect of norms;
- get the powder approved by the Ministry of Health following the decree N° 03343/MS/DC/SGM/CTJ/DPMED/DA/SA of 10 July 2012.

- **Organization of an agricultural productivity competition**

The overall objective of this initiative is to contribute to Food Security by stimulating an increase in agricultural productivity through the emulation created by the agricultural productivity competition and the convergence of the competitions of various agricultural development stakeholders.

Specifically, this initiative aims to:

- honor the producers (men and women) who have achieved the highest levels of productivity for the targeted crop(s) on merit;
- capitalize and share the best practices of the agricultural production used by the best producers;
- ensure a synergy of the stakeholders whose competencies will be used in the framework of the competition.

The productivity competition took place in the epicenters of Kissamey with 70 producers (including 40 women) competing and Avlamè with 40 producers (including 16 women) competing. It was conducted over two production seasons and concerned maize and cowpea respectively in Avlamè and Kissamey. The public supervision of the competition was ensured by technical agents involved for the evaluation of outputs and the establishment of production performances on merit.

The awards to the best epicenter producers were given on December 19, 2014. The ceremony recorded the participation of local authorities (Mayors, Members of Municipal Councils), departmental agricultural development officials and epicenter populations. It allowed the various authorities who attended to congratulate recipients on their impressive agricultural performances

and to urge all the epicenter producers (men and women) to have more commitment to agricultural activities in order to ensure food security for all.

Kissamey results particularly impressed everybody. Of the 70 competitors, women distinguish themselves with the highest agricultural outputs. This shows the commitment of women in that epicenter. THP-Benin must support them.

It is also important to mention the media coverage of the activity. Indeed, two (02) TV channels (Canal 3 Benin and Golfe TV), 03 radio stations (ORTB, Couffo Fm, Radio Tonignon), 02 newspapers (Communales Infos and Le Matinal) relayed the event.

■ ***Workshop for evaluating the 2014 – 2015 agricultural campaign in the epicenters and planning the 2015 – 2016 campaign.***

This activity was conducted in 14 epicenters and recorded the participation of key agricultural development stakeholders in the various epicenters: farmers (men and women), representatives of the District Union of Producers, local authorities, agricultural supervision agents, and epicenter committee members. It served as a framework for these various stakeholders to trade experiences on how the agricultural season went on. They also discussed issues related to the supply of inputs (including seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides), soil fertility management, complying with the technical itinerary of production during the workshop.

In total, 660 people including 154 women took part in the workshop and allowed evaluating the weaknesses and strengths of agricultural activity in the various epicenters and to define priority actions to be taken during the 2015 – 2016 agricultural campaign in order to improve the working conditions of epicenter producers, men and women included.

■ ***Monitoring the initiative ‘support to the production of certified soya seeds’***

Support to the production of certified soya seeds for soya producers in the epicenters of Tré and Ouissi with the technical assistance of CRADIB NGO. In total, 3886kg of certified soya seeds and 2500 soya grains have been produced. Through that activity, THP will support the growing production of soya in the central region epicenters and will thus contribute to improving epicenter partners’ incomes.

■ ***Informing and raising the awareness of priority epicenter populations on sexual and reproductive health issues***

From 17 to 30 November, 2014, a mission of information and awareness raising on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) issues has been dispatched to the three priority epicenters (Avlamè, Kissamey and Bétérou). That mission aimed to raise awareness and build the capacity of partner populations of THP-Benin’s priority epicenters in health and reproductive matters. Specifically it aims:

- *to get local authorities and religious leaders of these priority epicenters to support activities planned by THP-Benin on health and reproduction ;*
- *to inform young girls and boys of these epicenters on risks related to early sexuality/motherhood, abortions done in bad conditions and STI/HIV-AIDS;*
- *to organize awareness sessions on sexual and reproductive health in the epicenters;*
- *to facilitate the replication of those sessions in partner villages of the priority epicenters.*

Following that activity:

- local authorities, religious leaders and lobbies in the priority epicenters grow favorable to communication activities on Sexual and Reproductive Health and to take part in their implementation ;

- young girls and boys in the priority epicenters become aware of the risks related to early sexuality/motherhood, provoked abortions and have a sound knowledge of STI and AIDS and their mode of contamination and prevention;
  - the knowledge of partner communities including women and men in the priority epicenters are improved in the areas of sexual and reproductive health;
  - the WEP animators and the model mothers in the priority epicenters have organized awareness sessions on sexual and reproductive health (including risks related to early sexuality/motherhood, close maternities, provoked abortions and the benefits of family planning.
- **Pursuing VCA sessions in Lahotan and Dasso. In total**, 649 (231 women and 192 men) in Lahotan and 1147 partners (916 women and 231 men) in Dasso took part in these sessions.
  - ***A total of 60 small scale entrepreneurs were trained on techniques*** to conquer and secure loyal markets. This training has been planned following a great deal of requests from the small scale entrepreneurs supported by the program. The training was implemented in Bohicon by a Consultant and was attended by partners from the epicenters of Kpinnou, Wawata , Dékpo, Kissamey, Gohomey, Klouékanmey, Avlamè Ouissi Tré Za-kpota, Akpadanou, Bétérou and Gbégourou. The module and the report of the training are available.
  - ***As part of building the capacities of entrepreneurs in improving and defending their business plans, a total of 30 business plans developed by entrepreneurs from the epicenters*** of Kpinnou, Wawata, Akpadanou, Avlamè, Ouissi, and Tré, Za-kpota have been examined and the entrepreneurs have been interviewed. These business plans will be sent to the National Funds for the Promotion of Businesses and Youth Employment (FNPEEJ) to request funding as part of the partnership of that institution with THP-Benin.
  - **Awareness raising campaigns on the topic « ITCs for the personal development of the youth and epicenter self-reliance »** were conducted in the epicenters of Kissamey, Dékpo, Avlamè, Ouèssè, and Zakpota. In total 686 young partners (including 315 girls that is almost 46% of the total number of youngsters impacted) of the epicenters have been impacted and realize the importance of ICTs in the development of their epicenters and their personal development.
  - **A total of 3185 partners of the epicenters** of Akpadanou, Bétérou, Daringa, Dékpo, Gohomey, Gbégourou, Guinagourou, Klouékanmey, Kissamey, Ouissi, Tré-Dassa, Wawata and Zakpota have been sensitized on the rural banks' activities. This sensitization aims not only to make participants understand the functioning of the rural banks but also to get them to subscribe to the banks.
  - ***Training of members of various committees, M&E animators, literacy teachers, and translation groups of the epicenters on the new framework of the self-reliance indicators.***  
A total of 119 men and 57 women actively took part in these training sessions. Proceedings of the training led to the translation of the indicators in local languages in the priority epicenters - Avlamè, Bétérou and Kissamey. That draft translation will be further improved to allow us to have final documents that can be effectively used.

## **CHALLENGES**

- ✓ One of the challenges faced during the quarter is related to the topic: “Early pregnancy in schools”. Indeed, it was not admitted to use concepts and images based on sex or to discuss topics related to sex with children in schools. These topics are always considered as taboos (and parents almost never discuss them with children). Thus, to make awareness raising activities successful in secondary schools, parents and teachers have been invited to get actively involved. This challenge has been taken as the awareness raising campaigns were conducted in secondary schools with the support of parents.
  
- ✓ Another challenge in the quarter lied in being able to mobilize all the epicenter partners for the unfailing organization of the agricultural productivity competition. Indeed, the activity requires each partner to play his/her part effectively. We actually recorded the involvement of 110 farmers.
  
- ✓ The participation of young girls in ICT activities namely awareness raising activities on the topic “ICTs for the personal development of the youth and epicenter self-reliance” in the epicenters of Kissamey, Dékpo, Avlamè, Ouissi, and Zakpota is often weak. In fact, the rate of participation of young girls in ICT activities was 22.3% during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. That rate rises up to 46% in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. The challenge has been taken through the support of local authorities and resource people who supported THP team in the various awareness campaigns conducted across the above-mentioned epicenters.

## **INNOVATIONS**

- During this quarter, the initiative “Clubs of Entrepreneurs’ ” was launched in the epicenters. It aims to facilitate exchanges among small scale entrepreneurs and to urge them to become more responsible for the development of their business, on the one hand, and to establish dynamic entrepreneur networks, capable of linking up with other networks with the purpose of creating profitable relationships.
  
- The organization of awareness raising campaigns on the topic “early pregnancy and dropout girls” in the secondary schools of the epicenters of Avlamè, Kissamey, and Bétérou.

The purpose of this initiative is to help reduce the rate of dropout girls in THP-Benin’s priority epicenters. Indeed, the weak level of girls’ education and women’s literacy in epicenters has been identified, from every perspective, as the main obstacle for women’s self-reliance and a key factor in the persistence of social inequalities. The analysis of factors explaining that state of things reveals the high dropout rate due to such characteristic features as early pregnancies and the lack of financial means. This does not help either the cause of strengthening women leadership or the cause of poverty eradication in partners’ communities which are the main objectives of the Program. That activity has been conducted with the active involvement of students’ parents, teachers, and model mothers and women leaders.

## **B. LESSONS LEARNED**

- Organizing a competition on agricultural production allowed realizing that it is very important to motivate farmers and to honor them through their activity. They always had the impression of receiving little attention in their sector. The initiative of honoring the best has generated a great emulation among farmers who gave themselves the challenge to get very interesting results at the end of the process. In addition, local authorities in Aplahoué have been so much convinced by the pertinence of the activity that they took the commitment to get involved particularly in the upcoming editions.

## C. ADVOCACY & ALLIANCES

- THP – Benin took part of activities including:
  - a fair of Small and Middle-Size Businesses organized by the National Agency for the Promotion of Small and Middle-Size Businesses (ANPME);
  - a strategic plan validation workshop organized by the National Funds for the Promotion of Business and Youth Employment (FNPEEJ);
  - a strategic plan validation workshop and a fortnight trade fair organized by the Beninese Agency for the Promotion of Commercial Exchanges (ABePEC) as part of its partnership with institutions in charge of entrepreneurship in Benin.
- THP-Benin took part in a working session on 5 December 2014 at the Embassy of the Netherlands in Benin. The session was meant to take stock of the recommendations of the final evaluation of the Project “Capacity Building for THP-Benin’s Women Leaders in leadership and political communication” so as to make it operational. Representatives of PFID-Benin, THP-Benin and the Netherlands Embassy in Benin attended the meeting.
- Meeting with the Beninese Association for Social Marketing (ABMS) on 25 November 2014 with the intent of establishing partnership relations in implementing activities. It has been agreed that:
  - to make a room available for “Amour et Vie” in THP-Benin’s epicenters for the implementation of actions in favor of the sexual education of the youth in epicenters’ villages.
  - the mobile clinic of ABMS will be made available in the epicenters to provide Reproductive Health services (however, it must be noted that the implementation of this activity is subject to the training of health agents, training that will take place in Q1 of 2015).
- Meeting with the Beninese Association for Family Planning on October 24, 2014 for thinking over the implementation of joint activities. The following have been agreed:
  - organizing a capacity building session for the health unit personnel on reproductive health in Southern and Central epicenters (personnel training, equipment, inputs, monitoring and supervision)
  - organizing a capacity building session for youth in the epicenters with ABPF to protect the network ‘action movement of young peer educators’ following the ISE (Integrated Sexual Education) aspect.
  - establish a written partnership documents between THP-Benin and ABPF before activities actually begin.
- THP-Benin took part in a symposium on Moringa, organized by the company VITAL MORINGA with the purpose of collecting more expertise from stakeholders involved in promoting Moringa oleifera in order to be more alert and capable. The panel included doctors in pharmacy, health care doctors, and experts in nutrition, institution managers and representatives from THP-Benin. The audience was quite diversified made of health specialist, mid-wives, nurses, pharmacists, and managers. At this workshop, THP-Benin presented:
  - the various individual operations involved in the production of the dried moringa leaves powder
  - the nutritional values of the moringa leaves and some recipes based on Moringa leaves or Moringa leaves powder.
- Organizing an award ceremony for the best producers of Kissamey and Avlamè epicenters on 29 December 2014. The ceremony was covered by two (02) newspapers, three (03) radio channels and two (02) TV channels.

- As part of the partnership with the Ministry in charge of literacy, a contract for the implementation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the have-it-done strategy in literacy is about to be signed. As a reminder 02 THP-Benin's epicenters are involved in that state program - Zakpota and Ouinhi.
- THP-Benin took part in a workshop organized by the Association of Former Workers of the United Nations (AAFNU) from 10 to 13 November 2014 at the Azalaï Hotel on the theme: "Social dialogue and political dialogue with the youth for a consensus on youth employment". It has been agreed at the workshop that a document stating the actual needs of the youth be produced and submitted to the Beninese Government for them to be taken into account in public policies.
- THP-Benin took part in a midway evaluation workshop on the activities of the project "Amour et Vie Project" of ABMS PSI on sexual education of adolescents and youth held on 25 November 2014. It has been agreed to work together for the self-reliance of the project in order to impact more targeted people.
- THP-Benin took part in training organized by the Ministry of Agriculture on 1 December 2014 entitled "Training of stakeholders involved in the running of the coordinating platform and the co-management of public and private interventions in the agricultural sector.

## PARTNER STORY

Through its Entrepreneurship Development Program, The Hunger Project – Benin supports small scale entrepreneurs at all epicenters across the country both technically and with pedagogical funds in order



to awaken in epicenters' partners the entrepreneur spirit by building their capacity and mainly by supporting the development of their activities. Mr. Aimé AFANDI, from Kpinnou epicenter, is among those entrepreneurs supported by THP-Benin's Entrepreneurship Development Program. He shared his experience with THP-Benin.

*I am Aimé AFANDI. I am 36; I am married and I've got four (04) children. I started truck gardening in 2008 at Kpinnou. I was illiterate and I was no longer living with my parents since I was married. I requested and obtained a plot of land (about ¼ hectare which I started developing. I asked for more land and got up to ½ hectare 3 years later. In 2012, I discovered Hunger Project - Benin's Entrepreneurship Development Program through friends who are in the same business like me. Then,*

*I was spotted out by the Program Officer following a visit to my farm and an interview. This allowed me to take part in training organized at Lokossa by Hunger Project and delivered by the Program Officer and the Bohicon regional Project Officer. The training literally altered my perception of things because we were trained on how to establish a business, on personal and collective development, on organizational and financial management and on how to look for markets for our produces. After the training, I corrected some management mistakes that used to plague my business. I began using management tools like a ledger and others. Through this accounting procedure, I can now have a clear idea of how much I invest and how much I earn from the activity.*

*After several monitoring visits from Hunger Project, I requested a financial support with the intent of strengthening the activity in order to meet demands from some clients that I got in contact with. A pedagogical support fund was then given to me. I therefore bought seeds and some watering equipments. After I paid the pedagogical funds back on due date, it was renewed. I must confess that ever since I got involved with Hunger Project's Entrepreneurship Development Program, my farming activity has been making notable strides forward. The training I attended allowed me to take new initiatives and to make my activity expand significantly. The pedagogical support funds have been extremely helpful to me insofar as they allowed me to face expenses related to my activity (purchasing a power driven pump, a watering can, a hose etc.), to expand the cultivated area, and to punctually meet clients' demand.*

*After the technical support and the pedagogical financial support, in short, after THP-Benin's support, I have moved from farming on one (01) site of 1/2 hectare to farming two (02) sites of 1/2 hectare and 2 hectares respectively. My income has increased significantly and now I can take good care of my family and support the education of my children. I am very proud of this achievement.*

*I thank The Hunger Project from the bottom of my heart for the salutary support they have given me and I am urging them to continue such a profitable support for us. Now, several of our brothers have joined in and Kpinnou's club of entrepreneurs keeps growing.*

## D. HUMAN RESOURCES & TRAVEL

<b>Staff Changes</b>  <i>Please list any arrivals or departures and a brief summary of the reasons.</i>	-
<b>Extended Absences</b>  <i>Please list the Senior Management Team's vacation dates, as well as any other staff members' long-term absence, including maternity leave)</i>	-
<b>Staff Development</b>  <i>Please list any staff member trainings or professional development activities.</i>	-
<b>Epicenter Visits</b>  <i>Please list the epicenters and the number of staff visits in parentheses next to them.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Akpadanou (10)</li><li>• Avlamè (12)</li><li>• Bétérou (14)</li><li>• Daringa (9)</li><li>• Dékpo (7)</li><li>• Gbégourou (9)</li><li>• Guinagourou (7)</li><li>• Tré (13)</li><li>• Wawata (10)</li><li>• Kpinnou (11)</li><li>• Ouissi (10)</li><li>• Gohomey (11)</li><li>• Kissamey (19)</li><li>• Klouékanmè (6)</li><li>• Zakpota (7)</li><li>• Lahoton (6)</li><li>• Dasso (6)</li></ul>

## E. Next Quarter Priorities

- To equip and commission the nutrition unit of Gohomey epicenter
- To prepare and take part in the upcoming visits of investors and THP President.
- To establish a road map for the epicenters which are heading to self-reliance and to develop legal texts that must preside over the epicenters before and after self-reliance.
- To continue mobilization in Dasso and Lahotan following the village to village training on taking ownership of the VCA concepts as well as their mastery and practice in everyday life by partner communities, on the one hand, and in all the other epicenters where investors' visits are expected, on the other hand.
- To continue the selection process of the borough of OFE (commune of Savè) as a prelude to the visit of THP team on the ground for its confirmation.
- To make Daringa, Guinagourou and Klouékanmey's rural banks operational.