

Farm to Market

Volume VIII Issue 01 • July 2012 • Peace Corps Togo • West Africa

Pass it on:

Community Organizing for Sustainability



Global Shea Conference
Buttering up to *karité*

A Recipe for Sustainability
How to whip up delicious VSLs

Door-to-Door Community Organizing
Getting to know you, getting to know all about you...

contents

English

- 3** Door-to-Door Community Organizing • Reize Sample
- 5** Blind Replacement • Caitlin Welte
- 6** A Recipe for Sustainability • Rebekah Chang
- 7** Sustainability of National Projects • Maggie Person
- 8** Subverting the Sustainable • Heidi TenPas
- 9** Global Shea Conference • Emily Goldsmith
- 10** A Remedy for Rotting Produce • Dillion Tindall
- 10** New Perspectives on Access to Market • Alex Anani
- 11** *Food Security* – Nutritional Facts for Togo's Staple Foods • Will Maier
- 12** *Retrospective* – Face of Change • Sara Otto

Français

- 13** Le cadre de changement de comportement • DONNELLY Christina
- 14** Redéfinir la réuissite • SCHEINPFLUG Jes
- 15** La santé des plantes • SINANDJA Paul
- 16** *Rétrospective* – Travail collectif et minimiser les risques • COYLE Ilona
- 16** *La sécurité alimentaire* – TODD Katy



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Editor's Note

We hope you enjoy our first issue of *Farm to Market*. We selected the theme “Pass it On: Community Organizing for Sustainability” to gather your unique perspectives on the process of sustainability. The submissions we received explore how sustainability can be achieved and the benefits and challenges involved. We hope that the ideas presented resonate with you and that you can apply them to your various projects and activities.

The next issue of the publication is titled “Past, Present, Future: Togo's Tomorrow”. Its theme commemorates Peace Corps' 50 years in Togo—one of PC's longest running programs. We are looking to highlight the work of past Volunteers, see how you will be celebrating and how you hope we will evolve both as an organization and for the future of Togo. As a reminder, please try to include photos with your articles.

Also, we want to give a big thanks to Rachel Lihoussou for editing our French articles with the speed of lightning!

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Anyone may submit to "Farm to Market." Limit your submissions to 1500 words or less and include pictures with photographer credits. Submissions should be sent to the email address: duchampmarche@gmail.com. Thank you, as always, for your continued support.



Mission Statement:

"Farm to Market" is a quarterly newsletter for Togo's Peace Corps community: Volunteers, trainees, counterparts, and staff. It publishes information on Environmental Action and Food Security (EAFS) and Small Enterprise Development (SED) technical resources, best practices, and field experiences. Farm to Market seeks to integrate the EAFS and SED program goals into the rest of the Peace Corps community.

Door-to-Door Community Organizing

Knocking on Togo's capacity



By Reise Sample | PCV EAFS

My background in community organizing began at the age of 19 when I stood before an apartment door in the projects in the South Bronx. I was armed with a set of questions about public housing conditions and not sure precisely what I was doing or how I had gotten there. I was volunteering for a grassroots organization called Mothers on the Move (MOM).

MOM began as a small group of inner-city mothers meeting to teach one another to read and write. They started to discuss their lives, why they could not read and write and why their children were not learning either. Seeking answers, they began having conversations with their children's teachers, which turned into meetings with administrators. When they met resistance there, they responded with new tactics as the need arose: lists of demands, creating solutions and involving more community members. They learned to leverage the power of mass pressure against the powers-that-be. When they realized how well this was working, they made an organization, Mothers on the Move, to expand their reach moving into employment, housing, youth and environmental issues.

I trained as a community organizer with MOM. We spent an afternoon in their little office in the Bronx learning the process. Then they walked us to the projects, equipped us with clipboards and a brief history of their campaign to improve public housing conditions and set us off on our own for two hours. We went from apartment to apartment asking questions MOM had prepared for us. After the first few conversations, we found ourselves astonished by how eager people

were to talk about their problems. Their eagerness brought out our enthusiasm and each new door became like having a conversation with your seat partner on the bus, natural and amiable, with the added benefit that it was about making the community better.



Ideas on How to Do It:

I have done community organizing in a lot of contexts since then. It is different every time, especially in degree of effectiveness. However, there are certain guidelines I find useful. Boiled down, I might explain it like this:

1) *Be a community member:*

- ◆ Spend time getting involved and getting to know people. Listen and pay attention. Identify community issues through conversations and personal observation. Develop some loose ideas about the state of the community.

2) *Canvass:*

- ◆ Go door-to-door. If this is your first effort in the community, ask a lot of questions about what community members consider to be their greatest problems and assets. Have a number of questions prepared

ahead of time about all the domains you want to know about to fall back on if you get nervous and/or if the community member does not know where to start in discussing things. However, do not feel married to those questions; have as full a conversation as possible and ask pertinent

questions as new information comes up. Ask community members to rank the importance of the issues they cite at the same time.

- ◆ **Write Everything Down.** Write people's responses to questions but also note their reactions, how they emphasize things and personal observations about the people you interview. How much do they seem to care about the conversation? How motivated, charismatic, organized or friendly

do they seem? Are they involved in community work? *You need these notes.* Besides our data about the problems themselves, this is the most important thing you will learn from canvassing.

- ◆ Your process, especially the questions you ask, should evolve over time as you get a clearer sense of the community and its issues. Be open to changing your questions and your approach to people as you learn about the culture and village.
- ◆
- 3) *Map the patterns:*
- ◆ After a few months, you will have a feel for the contours of the problems and you will have heard the same responses often enough to know what the community's priorities are. Go through your notes and count up how many times each issue was stated. Organize the responses into categories and rank them based on your count of their prevalence.

4) *Begin community meetings:*

- ◆ Discuss the results of the canvassing and the priorities as you have organized them and let people talk about how the community might address the most important issues. This is where Participatory Analysis for Community Action comes in. Use those tools to develop project plans, set timelines, delegate responsibilities, etc. You know the drill.

Community Organizing In Togo:

When I got to village, I came up with a list of about 50 questions I wanted to know about my community – problems and practices in agriculture, food security, education, health, etc. My counterpart and I began going door-to-door the next week. We visited one to three houses per night on average and each conversation took about half an hour. I was already adept at greeting in Ewé, and my counterpart translated my questions and each family's responses. I developed my own shorthand for recording the responses and created a new log for each family. It took us about two and a half months to visit 93 of the 99 households in my village.

I took about a week at the end of canvassing to read and organize the responses; the data showed exactly the picture I was getting in my head as the conversations built one on top of the next over the months. My community's greatest problems were in soil fertility, food security and access to health care. People were not sure what should be done about soil fertility and food security issues so, I have since experimented with a variety of ideas. However, almost 99% of the community was clear about what they wanted to do about health care: they wanted a health center. So, after many all-community meetings, we decided together that we had the capacity to make it happen and started down that road. All of my work now orients around those three issues.

Benefits and Limits:

I am pretty sure I am in one of the smallest villages in Peace Corps Togo; there are about 100 households, with 800 inhabitants including children, in my village. It was possible to visit all of them in the span of three months. Also, my counterpart was uniquely fantastic; he

understood the importance of visiting each family, was a great translator and was willing and able to give up one or two hours each evening to go door-to-door with me. My village is almost entirely Ewé, a relatively open culture. People loved that I visited them at their homes, but I do not know whether this would be true of all cultures in Togo. Plus, my previous experiences in community organizing gave me a confidence and ease going door-to-door that in turn helped families feel comfortable talking with me. I had a lot of things working in my favor.

However, I think this process could work equally well under different circumstances. You will always need someone to translate for you but you could probably get a middle school student to go with you in exchange for a sugary drink. Size might strike some people as the biggest barrier, but I would argue that bigger villages and cities just require more strategy. The work another Peace Corps Volunteer, Delilah White, was doing in her city is a great example. She targeted a select number of parents, students, teachers and administrators from a representative sample of schools and handed out questionnaires to each participant. Over three months, she gathered a massive body of data that she was planning to use to revamp education in her city. In that same vein, you could choose to visit a representative sampling of houses in your village or city, for instance, twenty households per district.

In all cases, I would still recommend doing it door-to-door rather than having meetings so you get to hear individual opinions uncolored by the influence of others. Plus, as women are so often at home, it is a great opportunity to get to hear women's perspectives. For male volunteers, this will of course be more difficult. Maybe look for a female translator to take with you.

I like to think of community organizing as the best way to get good, thorough information before starting projects and to identify who can do what in your project plan. Sometimes, I think, Volunteers use a throw-projects-at-it-and-see-what-sticks approach with their communities. This is a great way to expose your community to a lot of new ideas and see what is best based on what they continue to do. However,

community organizing narrows the field of possibilities, focusing you in on the community's priorities and getting you embedded into those issues; it makes our work more relevant and responsive.

In addition, it is a great way to learn local language. I heard the same responses about the community's problems so many times that by the end of two months, with a little help from my counterpart, I had built up a pretty extensive Ewé vocabulary in the domains of health, agriculture and education. I got comfortable enough to translate some of my simpler questions into Ewé and ask them myself, which people loved. Local language helped my integration, but even more than that, families were touched that I visited each home to get their individual opinions. In addition, people got used to seeing me walking around the village; my novelty wore off quickly and they began to treat me like a community member.

Most importantly, of course, I got a clear picture of the community's problems and priorities but also, and of almost equal importance, I learned its assets. I found families using animal waste on their fruit trees. I discovered a farmer who uses mulching in his fields instead of chemical fertilizer. I met individuals who were motivated, intelligent, and eager to get involved and I made notes next to their names. I have invited these individuals to take on leadership roles in new projects and they are quickly becoming true counterparts.

To date, canvassing remains the most important experience I have had in my village. It was simultaneously my greatest challenge and my greatest joy. It killed me to hear people say things like, "My family only eats once a day right now," or, "My fields do not produce anything if I do not buy chemical fertilizer." Being welcomed into the homes of each family, being told with such eagerness and hope what people would like to see bettered in the village and being thanked over and over for taking the time to visit and listen generated in me a warmth and sense of responsibility toward my community that have been my greatest assets in my work. I recommend you try it out, for your community and for yourself. ■

Blind Replacement

The life of a replacement Volunteer



By Caitlin Welte | PCV EAFS I

Replacing another Volunteer creates special advantages and disadvantages, depending on the Volunteer you replace. I took over for Abby in a rural but populated village in East Maritime. When I first arrived, I was greeted by hoards of children yelling, “Abby! Abby!” and running toward me for hugs.

I had only met Abby once, during Pre-Service Training, when she came to talk to us about environmental education and when we toured her site. We had not received our posts at that time so I had no clue that I was getting a sneak peek into my future. She had completed her service before post visit, so she left me a long typed letter about her time in village: her cat had fallen in her latrine, she ate with the neighboring family for every meal, the good places to get beans and rice, the woes of running out of water and the glories of the ladder she had constructed to see the stars.

What I did not know was what exactly she did in village, what projects worked, what failed and the next steps. However, she did leave a bookcase full of information about every training she held and another full of a lot of really good books, which was pretty awesome and a good starting place. I spent my first month or so at post reading through all of the packets she left me; folder upon folder of literature on the trainings and camps she held as well as some research on projects for an environmental club. From there I was able to gather information on what she had introduced to the village, what avenues she had taken to do so and what exactly she had taught during her various trainings and camps.

I am approaching month eight living in village and I am still learning about the next steps of her projects, what relationships worked and failed with Abby and what level of knowledge

“How could I keep her projects sustainable if I did not really know much about the future plans?”

has been maintained from her trainings. Yet I am sometimes still called Abby! It has been quite a tedious process. Despite this, I am very lucky to have the benefit of the close relationships she forged with our mutual

counterparts and the fact that she set a very positive image of Americans and Peace Corps (PC) in the village. In this way, I have been able to have open conversations with community members about ways to make an impact. Because they have worked with PC before, they know that our goal is to introduce sustainable change; in other words, I am not a moneybag.

The question is: what did she envision for the village? How could I keep her projects sustainable if I did not really know much about the future plans? I am often approached about the next steps of her peer



educator training, her moringa group and sometimes about the camps she used to hold with a neighboring Volunteer. I would be asked about what to do next and the counterparts were waiting for me to make moves and call the shots. At first I would just smile, nod and insist that I was just trying to get to know the community before I started doing anything. But as of late, I have gotten down to business.

As Volunteers, we would like for our projects to be sustainable and for people to spread the knowledge they learn in our trainings. We deeply care for our communities and do these projects to help make their lives better. We do not want to leave our village and all of the work we put so much effort into be left to the history of, “the white person who tried to teach us silly things,” story. So, I have taken stock of what Abby did

and what can be done to make it more sustainable. I have spoken to counterparts, participants from past trainings and other Volunteers who knew her well. I have finally been able to create an action plan that works with Abby's past projects and I have focused on ways to have the learned information be put into practice. However, bringing all of these groups who have followed her trainings to the next level is tricky, because it is hard to define the level of training and follow-up on the practices. I am learning all the different ways to do this so that I can push the participating community members to spread their knowledge and move forward on the

behavior change scale. It is difficult, but I think Abby would be happy to know that I have not scrapped all the work she did, but rather I have followed suit, with my own flair.

Abby's legacy has been hard to follow: she played soccer with a girls' team whom I am definitely not fit enough to keep up with (a.k.a.

more village credit for Abby) and she did a lot of funded trainings. She left a village who knows about moringa, is used to morning runs by the strange foreigner and a neighborhood primed to engulf me in cultural integration, which I am very grateful for.

I am different from Abby in many ways. Be it my work style, my rate of integration or my diet; I cannot completely replace the Abby my village grew to know and love. However, our Volunteer styles are similar in that we both deeply care about the well being and the environment of our village. Her moringa group is still intact, without any of my aid, and the environmental club still has their own moringa field. Now, it is up to me to continue to encourage and educate the people to make behavior changes toward a healthy life.

But wait a second.... I am the third Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) in my village. Who was the first? His name was Nicholas, or Nick, and even upon inquiry I have learned very little about him. He set the stage for PCVs in this village by teaching the community what PC is all about. He had the middle school alley crop their school field, which is still there today and is still a great example of the benefits of alley cropping. Other than that, I do not know much at all.

Being a replacement Volunteer has taught me many things: it is hard to be a replacement. I have to keep a detailed account of my work in village for whoever will replace me in the future and that change is an incredibly slow process. We all go into this job blind but full of expectations. It took me a minute to gain my footing, especially because I was not starting at zero, but rather a different number that I could not gauge.

I have found that following in Abby's footsteps will be the best way to complete the work that Nick started. By having to learn about Abby's projects from those who participated in them, I have been brought closer

with many members of the community and have a better understanding of the culture. If both Nick and Abby had not started a relationship with our neighbors I would not have my best friend in Togo and a fantastic counterpart to guide me through this wild experience. I love my village and I hope that any future Volunteer here, be it PC or otherwise, will continue what Nick, Abby and I have worked so hard to implement.

Abby had painted this quote on the bedroom wall, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." At first I hated it, I thought it was really stupid and over used, but now I understand; it is the relationships that she forged which are the most sustainable and have made my time in here wonderful. Really, if there is even the slightest chance that you will be replaced, keep a site notebook, it will make your own projects more sustainable and the transition for the new Volunteer that much smoother! ■

A Recipe for Sustainability

Empowering women through VSL associations

By Rebekah Chang | PCV SED

This recipe creates a sustainable financial institution and will feed a community for years to come. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 1 Community with a chief full of hope and wisdom
- 1 Group of motivated individuals who share a common interest
- 1 Reliable counterpart (for me, who could translate from French to Kotokoli)
- 1 Eager and enthusiastic Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV)

Directions:

★ *Phase 1—Prepare the Ingredients:*

My counterpart and a fellow PCV informed me that there was a group of women interested in saving money; they were not sure of the exact need so I made a plan to determine if I could help.

After introducing myself to the chief, my counterpart and I met with the 16 women to identify what they were looking for.

After several meetings and a lot of questions, we determined that the women were looking for a structured way to save money and a way to borrow money to generate revenue. They had already tried on their own but were unsuccessful. I tried to ascertain why they were unsuccessful but was unable to find out why (either due to my poor French or their lack of wanting to tell me), so I was a little nervous because I did not want them to fail again.

★ *Phase 2—Find the Right Recipe:*

Together, we determined that a Village Savings and Loan (VSL) program would be a perfect fit. After two months of writing rules and

regulations, defining and explaining how the group would function, electing officers and purchasing all the required materials, we had organized an official VSL.

What is a VSL?

A VSL is a program that teaches and empowers individuals to create a simple and self-sustaining savings and loan facility. It provides access to financial services (the ability to save and earn interest as well as access to loans) that improve the lives of those in the community.

The members are bound together by a common goal or interest and they are managed solely by the group and its elected officers. There are basic guidelines and, just like a recipe, there is room for flexibility. I act as a facilitator to answer questions and to help guide their decisions.

★ *Phase 3—Let's Get Cooking!*

Our group of 16 women meets weekly and, during the first two months, saved more than 40,000 francs CFA. At our first loan meeting we were able to provide loans for five women. This is the *first* time any of these women have had this opportunity. We were all so excited at our first loan meeting and it was difficult to contain our joy (yes, we did lots of singing and Boncs!).

I often conduct mini-presentations on the benefits of saving, feasibility, etc. to encourage and build confidence in these women. I support, constantly praise and express my gratitude. I love these



women for what they have given me and for what they have given themselves.

Because all decisions related to their money are made by the group, it empowers each woman that, “You can make decisions for yourself.” So, when I am no longer here, the group can trust each other to make the right choices.

All I do is sit in the back of the room and smile, smile... and smile. I could not be more proud of what they have accomplished.

★ **Phase 4—The Final Product: Independence, Confidence and Sustainability:**

My VSL now functions on its own. I attend our weekly meetings because I want to greet these women and show them how proud I am of them.

Occasionally they have a question and I *always* say back to them, “It is up

to the group to decide how they would like to handle the situation.” Sometimes I will remind them of their own guidelines or the intentions of the VSL, but all of this is building their own confidence and teaching them that they already know the answers. *They are learning to trust themselves and their decisions.* That is empowerment.

For me, the VSL is the most rewarding and sustainable community project I could have ever participated in as a PCV. It is a great recipe for success.

For more information on how to form a VSL, ask your Associate Program Country Director (APCD) for the handbooks – available in English and in French – and ask any volunteer who currently manages them for assistance. ■

Sustainability of National Projects

Continuing the legacy

By Maggie Person | PCV EAFS



Here in Togo, we have numerous national projects that carry on from year to year. That leaves us with the question of how to best ensure the easy transition of project ownership from one group to another. Given that many of the national projects are camps, here is a brief overview of what two national camps, Camp ECO-Action and Camp UNITE, do to ensure seamless project continuation.

For Camp ECO-Action, the camp I am helping to organize, we are figuring out the project sustainability aspect as we go along since this is our first year. We have three interns who are included in the project development phase and who will be counselors for one week each at camp. The main things we will be partnering on are evaluation and follow-up, which will involve



visits to each participant in early September; interns also assist with development of supplemental materials to be given to each participant at the visits. Because the camp will be rotating regionally, we will also be using our contacts to help the interns find a partner organization and a campsite for next year. Evaluation and follow-up are especially important to do together because we want to evaluate the camp we organized and the interns want to know how to improve the camp for next year. We will also be providing our interns with a detailed timeline of what we did during each month to help keep them on track.

Most of the national camps have similar approaches to ensuring project sustainability. Camp UNITE has a team of Togolese counterparts and Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) who work together to plan camp. Chelsie Miller, an organizer of Camp UNITE, says, “Generally, the PCVs that are taking over for the next year spend one week as a counselor and one week shadowing the organizers. This year we are also writing a guide in English and in French. The Togolese counterparts have been the same for the past four years so that is where the majority of our sustainability comes from. But, the process is the same for them as well. They have to spend time being a counselor then as an apprentice organizer for a summer.” The other camps also have interns who learn the camp process as they go along.

This approach can be applied to projects in village as well. Maintaining continuity and ensuring sustainability are important in any project that will be carried on after you leave. It is mostly common sense, but assures that those who will be carrying on the project after you will have enough exposure to the management processes and overall goals of the project. Project leaders and participants need to have adequate buy-in, which we all know is necessary for any project to succeed here. Whether a project is village-wide or country-wide, you must take the necessary steps to ensure its sustainability. ■

Subverting the Sustainability

How to unlearn your Peace Corps training



By Heidi TenPas | PCV EAFS

Sustainability is overrated. Now, stop for a second. How did reading that make you feel? Unconvinced? Indignant? Relieved?

If you felt a stream of contesting sentiments rush to your lips, this article is for you. If you felt a wave of, “yeah, duh,” agreement settle over your rolling eyes, this is for you too. For the rest of us who remain chronically ambivalent, always a half-step behind the overzealous sustainability train but ever plagued by the doubt that we are not doing enough to make our impact last, read on.

Dueling Attitudes:

Sustainability is such a bread-and-butter tenet of the Peace Corps (PC) canon that it feels heretical to challenge its value. But hey, I am feeling a little seditious today so let's draw our swords for a friendly duel.

We know the pro-sustainability logic all too well: in order for a project to be truly effective, it must be designed and equipped to be maintained in the long run — ideally, by its target population or beneficiaries, or at the very least a counterpart or replacement Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV). Why plant a moringa nursery if nobody is committed to or capable of caring for the trees to maturity? What use is a new latrine if the community will abandon it once it is full? An after-school girls' club is great, but what happens when the PCV responsible for it leaves? Being a smart, seasoned Volunteer, you could surely preempt such questions by making these sample projects, “sustainable.”

But what if you directed your energies towards goals other than sustainability? Ah, now this is where things get interesting.

Paul Farmer is Not Drinking the Kool-Aid, and You Should Not Be Either:

I remember well the mind-blowing moment when I first read global health demi-god Paul Farmer's diatribe against the international development community's obsession with sustainability. You know the drill by now: a 25% community contribution, transfer of knowledge and skills and plan for sustainability are preconditions for our government-sponsored

“...sustainability is not the lifeblood of development work, it is more like a multivitamin, beneficial but not essential.”

funding mechanisms. In pursuit of his vision to bring world-class healthcare to the poorest of the poor, Farmer slogged through similar red tape and seethed over proposals rejected due to an apparent lack of sustainability. To him, the crime lay not in doing an unsustainable project but in doing a project that cut corners in the name of sustainability, or worse, not doing a promising project because it failed to meet a funder's sustainability criteria.

Yet time and time again, this is precisely what happened. As a doctor working in poor communities throughout the world, Farmer found that the institutions resourcing his practice refused to pay for, say, top of the line antiretroviral drugs for an AIDS patient or chemotherapy for a child with leukemia because such treatments were not locally sustainable in the context of poverty. They could not be continued or replicated without external resources; they were categorically unsustainable and thus inappropriate for the beneficiary communities. Balking at this reasoning, Farmer went all Robin Hood on the powers-that-be and stole the drugs, machines and cash necessary to save a life, any life. The assurance of human rights, the most essential being the right to life, was his foremost priority in project design and management.

Now, I am well aware that we are questionably-qualified, semi-professional Volunteers, not intrepid world-class physicians; our service is not a life or death matter. I believe, however, that we can learn an important lesson from Farmer's defiance; sustainability is not the lifeblood of development work, it is more like a multivitamin, beneficial but not essential. Farmer would be the first to laud a healthcare program that was high-quality, life-saving and sustainable, but he saw a clear moral and pragmatic imperative to do good work with or without a path to long-term sustainability. Likewise, we as Togo PCVs can learn to look beyond our “sustainability blinders” and expand our options for meaningful work. Projects that

seem to be inherently unsustainable can still be worthwhile and engender other positive results.

Take, for instance, the eyeglasses distribution campaigns led by such formidable Volunteers as Terri Nichols and Maggie Person. Sustainable? Not exactly. Fantastic? Absolutely. The many excellent camps in Pagala were conceived and launched with a set-up that has always struggled with sustainability; it is nearly impossible to imagine the camps continuing in their current form without PC manpower and dollar bills. Is this a reason to pull the plug on some of PC Togo's most successful projects? Of course not. Also, as much as we love to scoff at foreign Non-Governmental Organizations like Plan and BorneFonden for, “just building stuff and leaving,” we must admit that infrastructure gets used, whereas knowledge or skills gained through a capacity-building training may not. If we remove our biased lenses and look around Togo we see that, for the most part, “if you build it, they will come.” If there is a school, kids will attend it. If there is a well, people will drink from it. Can we really deny the benefits of such direct aid?

Loosen Up:

Alas, the answers elude us. The sustainability duel — er, debate — will persist as long as development work does. But, where there are no answers, perhaps we can find a little peace of mind; our efforts as Volunteers may not endure for the ages, but they can have a positive impact now. So, what if all those trees in your nursery die? Often it is the process of doing a project, not its tangible outcomes, that yield the most good for its participants. Sometimes a well-placed gift can generate benefits that multiply in a community for years to come. So loosen up, broaden your focus and, if the occasion calls for it, subvert the sustainable for a greater good.

Global Shea Conference

The potential benefit for Togo



By Emily Goldsmith | PCV EAFS

This past April, Manda Draper, Justin Carter, Kristine Dalton and I attended the Global Shea Conference in Cotonou, Benin. The conference brought together hundreds of stakeholders in the shea industry from across the globe for four days of sessions and networking. There were representatives from across the spectrum, ranging from small producer cooperatives to large international companies like the Body Shop; participants came from across Africa, Europe, and the United States.

So, what interesting and important things did we learn at this conference?

The shea industry is large and growing. Shea butter is used in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and confectionary. Its largest use is as a replacement for cocoa butter in chocolate (although chocolate sold in the United States is required to be made with cocoa butter). Overall, it is a product that has international demand and the potential for growth.

Why does this matter to us here in Togo?

Well, if your village is north of Sokodé, chances are you have shea trees near you (shea is called karité in French). The women in your village are probably collecting shea fruit (from June-July), eating the fruit, drying the nuts and either selling them to other women to be made into shea butter or making them into shea butter themselves. In village, shea butter is mainly used as a form of cooking oil and sometimes as a

“The shea industry is large and growing. Shea butter is used in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and confectionary.”

form of lotion. So, at least half of us are living in villages with a valuable natural resource we probably were not even really aware of.

What is next?

While at the conference, we met Volunteers from Ghana, Benin, Mali and Guinea. In Mali, Benin and Ghana Volunteers work with shea producers and cooperatives to help

women's groups, student clubs or apprentice groups that PCVs work with.

Environmental Action and Food Security: PCVs could start shea tree nurseries, promote shea tree conservation and the conservation of forested areas where shea trees exist and encourage women to process nuts into shea butter as a form of income-generating food transformation.

Small Enterprise Development: PCVs could work with women's groups, producer cooperatives, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and private buyers to enhance shea nut and butter sales in their communities.

What are we doing now?

Currently, we are trying to collect information on the status of shea in Togo. We are asking all Volunteers with shea trees at their sites to help us gather information. We are also collecting contact information on Togo-based buyers and NGOs that work

with shea and could serve as resources for interested PCVs. Additionally, we will be incorporating information on shea and potential shea projects into Pre-Service Trainings and In-Service Trainings for the incoming Volunteers. We hope to connect with Volunteers in Ghana and Benin to get more information on the work they do with shea which we can share with Togo Volunteers. Lastly, we have a USB key full of all the conference presentations that will be made available to all Volunteers.

So, if you want more information or resources, please contact one of us:

- ★ Justin Carter, jdcarter@buskers.unl.edu
- ★ Kristine Dalton, Kgirl258@yahoo.com
- ★ Manda Draper, amdraper22@gmail.com
- ★ Emily Goldsmith, ecgoldsmith@gmail.com

Community Health and AIDS Prevention: Shea nuts come from shea fruit which is often one of the few fruits available in the north. Peace Corps Volunteers could promote shea trees and fruit as a way to improve community nutrition.

Girls Education and Empowerment: Shea nut collection is traditionally carried out by women. Shea nut and butter sales could be used as income-generating activities for



A Remedy for Rotting Produce

Tomatogo tomato paste



By Dillon Tindall | PCV SED

Tomatoes often flood the market leaving Togolese farmers vexed with rotten tomatoes and bare pockets. Jarring seems like a straightforward solution to prevent crops from rotting but, if done incorrectly, can cause deadly forms of botulism. Tomato farmers, when asked why they continue to mass produce tomatoes at a loss, simply say, “Tomato growing is all we know!” In the end, millions of tomatoes are rotting each year in Togo. Meanwhile, large amounts of tomato paste are imported from China.

Eleven women in Dapaong saw this disconnect and found a solution. They are selling tomato paste, rightfully named Tomatogo, made with locally grown tomatoes. With technical and financial support from Jeunes Filles pour l’Agro (Young Women for Agriculture) and an Italian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Ricerca e Cooperazione, the women have created a small business named Cooperative Dindann. The Italians have helped the women in the beginning stages of their business for the past two years. Next year, the Italians will leave Togo and Cooperative Dindann will be wholly self-sustainable.

Tomatogo is sold in 200 gram and 400 gram bags. Jodano, a comparable Chinese can import, has 10 grams more per can but sells for the same price. Tomatogo is available in many stores throughout Dapaong. In addition, women walk the streets wearing Tomatogo uniforms and selling the merchandise on the tops of their heads. Outside of the Dapaong area the product can be found in Lomé.

The women working in the factory all wear aprons, gloves and protective shoes. The equipment is modern and includes two large sterilizing machines. The cooperative hopes to produce mango juice in the near future,

finding a solution to a large mango surplus problem in Togo. They have all the equipment and bottles to make the juice and will start production soon.

Cooperatives, like Dindann, create the kind of economic development Togo needs. The problem of surplus crops with short shelf lives has been an issue that stagnates growth for years. In addition, the tomato paste reduces the demand from imports because it is sold for a comparable price. The cooperative has also created many new jobs for women and has given many women self-confidence in running their own business.

The Italian NGO found the proper equipment, taught women how to safely produce tomato paste and provided a well-researched marketing plan. The average Togolese entrepreneur would find this kind of business structure difficult to adopt within a short time span. However, the Italian NGO shortened the time span by helping the Togolese find the resources. The project was scheduled to be completed in three years, only one of which is remaining.

In the past, crops like tomatoes and mangos have not been profitable. However, farmers are reluctant to change. Even though it may be economically viable to change their crops to something more in demand, farmers are afraid of starting new ventures. The Cooperative Dindann cannot solve the tomato surplus problem. In fact, only few tomato farmers benefit from the enterprise. Even though manufacturing products is important for economic development, no economy can grow on just selling raw goods. Farmers need to adjust to market demands so more intricate manufacturing processes can evolve. In this context, Togo’s market inefficiencies can begin to improve. ■

New Perspectives on Access to Market

A quick reflection



By Alex Anani | APCD SED

The African macroeconomic landscape has been getting better as of late, according to major business news reports. Magazines such as *The Economist* and organizations such as the *World Bank* have published encouraging findings and reports. For the year 2012, the *Economic Community of West African States* forecasts an average economic growth rate of six percent for the West Africa region. Last month, Ernst & Young published the second edition of its own *Africa Foreign Direct Investment Report*. This brought much good news and portrayed encouraging economic and business trends for the continent as whole. In this report we learned that seven out of ten of the fastest growing economies in the world between 2010-2015 are projected to be African. The report highlights the huge importance of intra-African investment led by South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya. It emphasizes the growing middle class as well. As Volunteers and staff living and working in Togo, it is encouraging to read that the second largest investor of projects in Africa is ECOBANK, a pan-African bank, headquartered in Lomé. The question is, could all these positive trends possibly have palpable micro-implications in the villages where Volunteers intervene?

If foreign direct investment (FDI) is coming in and African economies are growing, are people in big and small towns and villages feeling the benefits? This would be an interesting subject to investigate. Rather than taking on this ambitious and assuredly controversial question, in our case as the small enterprise development program, I would suggest concentrating on new opportunities for entrepreneurs. Take for example small-scale farmers or artisans; they could also take advantage of the rising purchasing power exhibited by the growing middle class in country. The urban setting is no doubt, the place to target for market size and for disposable income. A case in point could be the vegetable market or the egg market. Looking around in Lomé or in regional capitals and medium towns throughout Togo, the demand for those items seems to always exceed supply.

Artisans and small-scale farmers could as well, if well equipped, tap into to the already existing but markedly expanding cross border business. Thus, it would be fair and timely to consider in country and cross border business opportunities while thinking and planning access to market. In the past, host country small business owners and small business

advisers tended to solely look for and see new markets outside Africa, say, in Europe or in America. Other developed markets throughout the world (e.g. Brazil, Russia, India and China) are not explored enough or are simply overlooked for small business export, decreasing the likelihood of similar endeavors in African countries. The evidence is suggesting that this approach to accessing markets and creating wealth needs to change. Furthermore, cross border trade is not just about export. It is also about sources of raw materials. For example, artisans in Togo's clothing industry know and practice sub-regional sourcing of fabric and other raw materials. The same goes for business owners seeking packaging and bottling instruments. Customarily, Togolese small business owners would travel to Nigeria, Ghana or Burkina to find materials for their final value added product. They should be encouraged, when necessary, to cross other

borders in Africa as well to look for new markets or to buy ingredients.

To summarize, we suggest that small business owners take advantage of local in country as well as sub-regional and regional opportunities in Africa for selling their final products and for sourcing raw materials. FDI's and large corporations are taking strong lead in this direction. Individual and concerted efforts on the part of small businesses should catch the trend as well. However, the path is not all cleared. Challenges are expected but so are great rewards. ■



Nutritional Facts for Togo's Staple Foods

Which is the best?



By Will Maier | PCV EAFS

Editor's Note: Will Maier went digging for more information on the nutritional value of the staple foods the Togolese people depend on. Take a look—the foods highest in the nutritional content we value may surprise you. The foods containing the highest amount of a particular nutrient are underlined and bold.

Staple	Maize/Corn	Rice	Wheat	Potato	Cassava	Soybean	Sweet Potato	Sorghum	Yam	Plantain
Water (g)	76	12	11	79	60	68	77	9	70	65
Energy (kJ)	360	1528	1419	322	670	615	360	1419	494	511
Kcal/ m sq	1847	1482	1083	1318	1940	1029	1140	529	1215	842
Ton/Ha	5.1	4.3	3.1	17.3	12.5	2.4	13.5	1.5	10.5	6.3
Protein (g)	3.2	7.1	13.7	2	1.4	13	1.6	11.3	1.5	1.3
Fat (g)	1.18	0.66	2.47	0.09	0.28	6.8	0.05	3.3	0.17	0.37
Carb (g)	19	80	71	17	38	11	20	75	28	32
Sugar (g)	3.22	0.12	0	0.78	1.7	0	4.18	0	0.5	15
Fiber (g)	2.7	1.3	10.7	2.2	1.8	4.2	3	6.3	4.1	2.3
Calcium (mg)	2	28	34	12	16	197	30	28	17	3
Iron (mg)	0.52	4.31	3.52	0.078	0.27	3.55	0.61	4.4	0.54	0.6
Potassium (mg)	270	115	431	421	271	620	337	350	816	419
Vitamin C (mg)	6.8	0	0	19.7	20.6	29	2.4	0	17.1	18.4
Riboflavin (g)	0.06	0.05	0.12	0.03	0.05	0.18	0.06	0.14	0.03	0.05
Niacin (g)	1.7	4.19	6.74	1.05	0.85	1.65	0.56	2.93	0.55	0.69

Staples (quantities per 100g)

- Corn: Sweet, yellow, raw
- Rice: White, Long-grain, regular, raw
- Wheat: Durum
- Potato: Whole, raw
- Cassava: Raw
- Soybeans: Green, raw
- Sweet Potato: Raw
- Sorghum: Raw
- Yam: Raw
- Plantains: Raw



Glebockifarms.com

Data sources: www.nal.usda.gov, www.knowledge.allianz.com/?709/food-crops, www.gardeningplaces.com

retrospective

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Face of Change

Volunteers in transition

By Sara Otto | RPCV SED



“**Y**ou won’t have to worry about ever being bored. She is about to explode.” That is what PCV Megan Rhodes told me during my post visit to Kpalimé a few months ago as she handed me an overstuffed binder marked “Aklala Batik”. Although Megan served as a Volunteer in the nearby village of Adeta, she started work about a year and a half ago with Chantal, a batik artist in Kpalimé, and now the project has been handed over to me in the wake of her departure. While it is great news to see a project like this grow enough to need another Volunteer’s help, it can be a bit daunting to spend the last 3 weeks of training thinking about a huge project that has just fallen into your lap. If it is anything like my situation, you have some big shoes to fill.

Megan began her work with Kpalimé seamstress Chantal Donvide during the spring of 2008 after suggesting that she create bags and other products with her unique hand-dyed batik fabric. Although Chantal had been established as a seamstress for many years, Megan approached the project like a start-up enterprise by creating a logo, publishing a blog, building a product line, designing marketing materials and coining the business name, Aklala Batik. By the time she passed the project on to me, Aklala had a full line of purses, clothing and accessories thanks to Megan’s help and now had an eye on expanding the brand to the export market. Although the foundation was laid out for me, there were a few hurdles to overcome before getting immersed into the project. Megan had been involved with Aklala since its foundation and was thus very familiar with its structure, mission and intricacies. However, it took me several weeks to sort through and organize that large binder of materials, as well as several gigabytes of digital files, just to orient myself and develop a plan of attack.

For Chantal, a change of Volunteers meant a readjustment and a temporary change of pace while we got to know one another, got comfortable and developed a routine. One

major factor in this adjustment was my relatively lower language level, something that would hinder the fast pace of activity that Chantal was accustomed to with Megan. Another major adjustment on the part of Chantal and her counterparts was the simple factor of familiarity. It took a little while to get to know the key players in Chantal’s world and about the same amount of time for them to get comfortable with me and, perhaps even more importantly, to accept that some things may change. With Megan being the first Volunteer to work on this project, certain expectations were formed based on her habits and personal style, something that would be challenged with my introduction to the operation.

While a Volunteer is bound to experience these challenges, there are, of course, benefits to having this position as well. As I mentioned previously, a local organization may take a little time adjusting to a replacement Volunteer; however, there is a trade off, in that the organization is already familiar with Peace Corps and the way the program works, which saves the new Volunteer from having to reestablish the guidelines and goals of their work.

Diversity between Volunteers can also benefit an enterprise and expand its potential for new ideas by taking advantage of the different skills and experiences each Volunteer brings to the table. In the case of Aklala Batik, these roles seemed to play out perfectly. Megan, who has an educational background in the arts and marketing, was keen to develop the brand of “Aklala” and design all the necessary marketing tools such as the Aklala logo, business cards, catalogs and brochures. Also, she was able to direct Chantal closely in the product development of her bags and accessories.

At the time of Megan’s departure, Aklala had begun to flourish, but was now in need of a solid financial system and more organization on the management level. Opportunely, this was something that I had a lot of experience with from my previous position at a multi-faceted company that kept a relatively

complicated bookkeeping system. To tie all of these things together, I also have an arts-based background, which gave me the ability to help Chantal with any design needs. Needless to say, my work was already cut out for me.

Since Megan’s return to the States, Aklala has also expanded its reach abroad as she has committed to aiding the enterprise with marketing and, hopefully, distribution within the US. Of course, this post-service contribution is not always possible or feasible, but it can help the enterprise access more resources and opportunities, such as high speed internet for website management, local representation abroad, market development, and easier access to foreign tradeshow.

While there are challenges to face with every Peace Corps project, taking over an on-going project may present some unique challenges and benefits. I would say that my best advice for anyone taking over a job like this is to keep in mind that you are not and will never be the Volunteer who you replaced. Even though the locals in village may call you by his or her name for months, you are a new Volunteer with your own unique background, education and experiences and therefore bring new ideas and perspectives to each situation. While your interactions may be different than the previous Volunteer, different is not better or worse, it is just different.

In the beginning of my involvement with this project, I definitely struggled with the idea that I could, and should, be different from the previous Volunteer. Taking over the responsibility of Megan’s “baby”, a project that she had put her heart and soul into, put even more pressure on me to succeed. In my case, though, I was fortunate on two accounts – first, both Megan and Chantal were fully accepting of this change and because of this, the transition went pretty smoothly. Also, our skill sets were both put to good use to improve Chantal’s blooming business. In the end, I believe that the biggest successes come from being able to adapt to changes and work with all available resources to their fullest potential. ■

Du champ au marché

Le cadre de changement de comportement

Pour que nos projets durent

Par DONNELLY Christina | PCV GEE



Chaque volontaire du Corps de la Paix et tous nos homologues togolais sont d'accord sur un point: nous voulons que notre travail soit durable. Que notre impact continue d'être senti bien après la fin de notre mandat de deux ans. Que la communauté non seulement écoute les informations que nous partageons, mais aussi qu'ils les internalisent et mènent un changement de comportement dans leurs propres vies. Ça, c'est l'idéal. Mais nous savons que cela n'est pas du tout facile. Nous nous demandons, comment planifier et s'engager dans les projets dans une manière efficace, qui aura un vrai impact et continuera bien après le départ des volontaires du Corps de la Paix ?

Depuis juin 2011, les volontaires, l'administration, et les homologues du Corps de la Paix ont commencé par être formés sur le Cadre de Changement de Comportement, qui donne une nouvelle perspective sur la manière par laquelle nous devons élaborer nos projets sur le terrain. À travers ces formations, nous voyons l'importance de la patience et la recherche avant le début du projet pour vraiment engager les gens et assurer la durabilité. A la base, nous trouvons le cadre même, qui définit la séquence d'étapes que nous devons suivre au cours de l'implémentation d'un projet :

1. **Comportement:** Nous devons bien définir un comportement spécifique et mesurable bien avant de commencer nos activités.
2. **Groupe prioritaire ou groupe influent:** Nous devons définir le groupe prioritaire au sein duquel nous voulons promouvoir le comportement. En plus, nous devons considérer quelles personnes peuvent influencer le groupe prioritaire, et se demander si on doit cibler certaines activités sur ce groupe influent. Il est aussi nécessaire de déterminer le niveau du groupe sur la gamme de changement de comportement, décrit ci-dessous.
3. **Obstacles:** Le fait de déterminer les obstacles qui empêchent un groupe d'adopter un

nouveau comportement est la clé du cadre. Souvent dans nos communautés, nous trouvons que les gens ont beaucoup d'informations, mais ils ne les appliquent pas pour amener un changement de comportement. Pourquoi ? Cette étape n'est pas facile, mais elle est indispensable. Si nous éliminons pas les obstacles, nos efforts seront inutiles.

4. **Objectifs:** Les objectifs que nous définissons doivent être directement liés aux obstacles que nous avons trouvés existant dans la communauté. Ce sont ces obstacles et les objectifs qui suivent qui déterminent le travail que nous aurons à faire.

5. **Activités:** Enfin, avec toutes les informations recueillies, nous pouvons organiser les activités liés directement à surmonter les obstacles, qui mèneront les membres de la communauté à adopter un nouveau comportement d'une manière aisée, sans soucis ou réserves.

(Trop souvent, nous essayons de commencer le processus avec cette étape. Nous voulons mener les activités sans bien connaître notre groupe prioritaire et les obstacles qui les empêchent d'adopter les comportements que nous voulons promouvoir.)

Un exemple:

La volontaire et son homologue veulent promouvoir l'utilisation de moringa dans au moins un repas chaque jour par les mamans du quartier Dallas à Amegnran. Ils ciblent les mamans d'enfants en EPP comme leur groupe prioritaire. En parlant avec elles, ils trouvent qu'elles connaissent déjà beaucoup à propos du moringa, son utilisation et ses bénéfices pour la santé de leurs enfants. Ils se demandent pourquoi, avec toutes leurs connaissances, les femmes continuent par ne pas utiliser le moringa dans leurs repas. En recherchant les obstacles, ça devient très évident : les femmes ont appris la méthode d'ajouter les feuilles de moringa à leurs sauces. Le problème ? Les feuilles changent le goût de la sauce, et les

femmes et leurs familles ne l'aiment pas. L'objectif est donc déjà défini : augmenter la connaissance des femmes quant à la préparation de la poudre de moringa, qui ne change pas le goût des sauces. Les activités aussi sont évidentes : enseigner aux femmes comment produire la poudre de moringa et les instruire quant à son utilisation dans leurs repas.

Etapes de changement:

Au cours du processus, surtout en définissant le groupe prioritaire, il est très important de connaître leur niveau sur la gamme de changement de comportement :

Pré-conscience → Conscience →
Préparation → Action → Maintien

Qu'est-ce qu'ils savent déjà sur ce sujet ? Est-ce qu'ils ont déjà été formés sur ceci ? Comme nous voyons avec les femmes dans l'exemple, ce n'était pas la peine de les former davantage sur le moringa. Elles étaient déjà sur le point d'être prêtes pour adopter l'action (préparation). Il suffisait seulement de leur donner une petite information additionnelle pour faciliter leur adoption du comportement et la maintenance de ce comportement.

Le rôle de l'homologue:

Comme dans tous nos projets, nos homologues togolais ont un très grand rôle à jouer dans les projets de changement de comportement. S'ils s'engagent dès le début, ça peut assurer le succès du projet pendant notre service et aussi sa durabilité après le départ du/ de la volontaire. D'abord, ils sont à mesure d'aider à définir quel comportement serait faisable et apprécié par la communauté. Ils sont aussi dans une position avantageuse pour non seulement définir les obstacles mais aussi savoir comment les surmonter de une manière culturellement appropriée. Si, par exemple, l'obstacle à l'utilisation des préservatifs est la perception de la volonté divine, les homologues savent beaucoup mieux que les volontaires comment aborder ce thème.

En se dirigeant vers la gamme de changement, l'homologue peut savoir facilement comment continuer un projet après le départ du/de la volontaire. Peut-être qu'au début du projet, lui-même était sur l'étape de préparation – il était informé à propos du comportement, de ses bénéfices, et de comment l'incorporer dans sa vie quotidienne, mais il ne l'a pas encore fait. Au cours de son engagement dans le projet, on espère qu'il dépasse le niveau d'action et arrive à la maintenance du comportement dans sa propre vie. Il devient l'exemple pour les autres, et c'est en ce moment qu'on peut dire qu'il est en mesure de mener le projet lui-même, sans volontaire.

En même temps qu'il a procédé aux nouvelles étapes, sûrement les membres de la communauté ont évolué aussi. Voici la clé : les personnes qui sont arrivées à l'étape de préparation ou même d'action sont celles qui deviennent les nouveaux agents de changement et qui peuvent

continuer le projet dans la communauté sous la direction de l'homologue. Au fur et à mesure que les gens évoluent dans le processus de changement, leurs rôles aussi changent. Ayant les informations nécessaires, sachant les obstacles communs à l'adoption du comportement, et voyant les bénéfices du comportement, ils ont la responsabilité maintenant de partager ces informations avec les autres membres de la communauté. Le rôle du/de la volontaire est exactement ceci : de promouvoir le comportement au sein d'un petit groupe et en même temps les outiller pour pouvoir continuer le travail de promotion du comportement après leur départ par ceux qui l'ont adopté. ■

Redéfinir la réussite

La valeur de la colonté

Par SCHEINPFLUG Jes | PCV GEE

Selon vous, quels sont les points clés d'avoir un projet à succès? Les bons cadeaux comme les chemises? Un bon montant de per diem? La publicité sur la télévision? Si oui, pourquoi?

Je ne refuse pas que ce soient des bonnes choses mais est-ce que ce sont vraiment ces choses qui disent que c'est une réussite? Après une durée d'un an, est-ce que ce sont les cadeaux matériels que vous allez rappeler?

Selon moi, le point clé d'un projet à succès est que les participants mettent en pratique ce qu'ils ont appris.

Imaginez une formation sur « la pratique de la vie saine » qui a ciblé les jeunes filles d'un CEG dans laquelle les formateurs ont gagné un per diem de 10.000 francs CFA. La semaine suivant la formation, une fille tombe enceinte. Que vaut ce per diem si les filles n'ont pas mis en pratique l'information? La vie d'un jeune a quelle valeur?

Nous, les volontaires du Corps de la Paix, nous nous occupons de prendre soin de certains dans nos milieux. Est-ce que vous avez une fois demandé pourquoi? Il n'y pas un bénéfice monétaire dedans. C'est parce qu'il n'y a pas un prix pour la réussite d'une personne.

Gandhi a dit que « Soyez le changement que vous voulez voir dans le monde. » Alors, je veux un monde où tout le monde peut vivre à un niveau où il a au moins assez de nourriture, une maison, de l'eau propre et de l'éducation. C'est un défi mais chacun le mérite et je ne peux pas rester tranquille jusqu'à ce que cela soit accompli. C'est mon

avis. Je pense que je suis née avec la chance d'avoir ces choses, donc je suis aussi capable d'aider mes frères et sœurs à avoir les mêmes conditions.

Les raisons sont différentes pour chacun. Pour moi-même, il y a aussi les raisons égoïstes. Moi, je sens bien que si j'aide quelqu'un d'autre à gagner quelque chose, donc j'ai gagné aussi.

Ainsi, la réussite peut-être beaucoup de choses. Il ne faut pas aller trop profond pour définir ta réussite des projets. Voici mes idées et mes exemples de la réussite dans mon travail:

1. Les participants sont reconnaissants
2. J'ai fait rire les gens
3. Un élève que je soutiens a reçu une bonne note
4. Je fais partie de l'évolution de quelqu'un (e) ; ça veut dire que je peux témoigner sur le changement du comportement ou sur l'augmentation de la confiance en soi de quelqu'un(e)
5. Quelqu'un(e) est fier de moi
6. Au moins un participant a amélioré sa vie grâce à de l'information que j'ai partagée
7. J'avais l'opportunité de voir quelqu'une qui a réalisé son rêve d'aller à l'université
8. Je connais les filles qui sont économiquement autonomes (les filles qui peuvent payer leurs

écolages sans chercher un garçon ou un homme)

9. Je connais les hommes comme partenaires qui traitent leurs femmes comme des égales aux hommes
10. Je connais les filles qui ont choisi la Série D au lycée

Même si vous avez des problèmes comme manque des participants ou manque d'intérêt dans votre projet, vous ne savez jamais comment votre travail a changé la vie de quelqu'un d'autre. Par exemple, peut-être il y a une fille qui a voulu abandonner mais grâce à de tes mots de soutien et d'encouragement, elle a changé son idée au dernier moment. On ne sait jamais.

Si vous êtes chrétienne, Dieu a dit que « il faut traiter ton voisin comme vous-même » alors si vous aidez votre voisin, c'est comme vous avez aidé vous-même ou bien comme vous avez aidé Jésus.



Si vous êtes en train de lire mes mots, je sens que vous êtes un bon homologue d'un(e) volontaire du Corps de la Paix, alors je vous remercie. J'ai quelques conseils pour vous:

- ★ Il y a les volontaires qui considèrent les homologues comme acquis en parlent des formations, alors je demande pardon. Ça veut dire que j'assume que vous êtes formé de la même manière que je suis formée. Nous avons la chance de vous connaître et il y a quelque fois que j'oublie d'inclure mes homologues dans mes projets. Si vous avez de l'intérêt à faire un projet, je vous encourage à approcher votre volontaire du Corps de la Paix et proposer votre idée. Nous apprécions beaucoup l'initiative.
- ★ Si vous avez les questions sur nos domaines (l'éducation, la santé, l'agriculture, le business), il faut poser les questions. La plupart des volontaires aiment bien les questions.
- ★ Il faut aussi poser les questions sur notre culture américaine. Nous avons pour buts de partager nos habitudes et notre culture avec les Togolaises. C'est aussi une réussite pour nous de partager nos expériences.

Pour résumer jusqu'à ce point: ce ne sont pas les grands projets qui vont donner à nos projets une valeur. Ça peut être un très petit projet cela vaut mieux. Il ne faut pas laisser tomber tous vos efforts d'améliorer la vie des autres et il ne faut pas vous décourager parce qu'on ne sait jamais notre impacte sur les autres.

Je veux parler aussi de la durabilité d'un projet. Avec « Le Cadre de Changement du Comportement », nous avons beaucoup de théories à mettre en pratique pour assurer l'efficacité de nos projets. Le cadre est une très bonne chose. Pour moi, la plus importante chose d'un projet est l'idée de « follow-up » ou le suivi. C'est un concept très simple: le travail n'est pas fini après le projet.

J'ai déjà dit que selon moi, le point clé d'un projet à succès est que les participants mettent en pratique ce qu'ils ont appris. C'est notre responsabilité de s'assurer que ça ce passe. Pendant nos formations, les participants sont vraiment motivés, mais arrivés au village, normalement ils sont rapidement découragés. C'est à nous de visiter, encourager et garantir qu'ils mettent l'information en pratique. Il ne faut pas oublier cette étape du suivi parce que c'est plus important que la formation elle-même. Sans la mise en pratique, l'information ne fait rien.

Pour conclure, je veux une fois encore vous remercier pour le travail que vous faites dans vos milieux. Il faut bien rappeler toutes vos réussites pour ne pas décourager et il faut aussi continuer de soutenir vos participants et suivre leur succès. J'ai un tatouage dans mon bras qui dit « Nous habitons dans un beau monde » et je crois que c'est grâce à des gens comme vous. ■

La santé des plants

Comment préparer les fertilisants biologiques

By SINANDJA Paul | APCD



Les maladies des plantes diminuent le rendement des cultures et leurs conséquences peuvent être aussi graves que les dégâts causés par les ravageurs.

L'objectif de la production agricole est d'avoir des plantes saines, robustes de résister aux différentes maladies. La préparation locale et l'utilisation des fertilisants biologiques est une alternative pour bien gérer la matière organique tout en optimisant les rendements. Les fertilisants biologiques agissent en fortifiant les plantes tout en les protégeant des parasites nuisibles. La promotion des fertilisants biologiques est à encourager parce qu'ils sont simples et faciles à préparer et les ingrédients/le matériel sont localement disponibles.

Les fertilisants biologiques agissent sur les feuilles et les racines des plantes. Ils sont issus de la fermentation de la matière organique comme le fumier, le lait, le petit lait, la paille, les cendres, les feuilles de certaines plantes telles que le moringa, le gliricidia sepium, les jus de fruits, les farines et sous l'effet des micro-organismes. Les composés de la fermentation sont extrêmement riches en énergie libre qui est absorbée par les feuilles lorsqu'ils sont utilisés comme engrais foliaires.

Une grande variété de fertilisants biologiques peut être préparée à partir de divers matériaux disponibles au village et dans la ferme. Cette préparation va des plus simples aux plus complexes selon que l'on ajoute d'autres sels minéraux.

Voici un exemple de fertilisant biologique simple à essayer:

1 – Ingrédients et quantités à titre indicatif: Pour 50Kg de fumier frais il faut 200L d'eau.

- ★ Fumier frais de vache- 1kg variable
- ★ Lait cru ou petit lait – 2L
- ★ Jus de canne à sucre et eau – 2L
- ★ Eau propre de puits (sans chlore) – 4L variable

2 – Mode de préparation:

- ★ Dissoudre le fumier de vache dans 100L d'eau dans un conteneur en plastique
- ★ Dissoudre le lait et le jus de canne à sucre dans 10L d'eau et ajouter cette préparation au fumier mélange à l'eau
- ★ Amener le volume à 200L, bien mélanger et fermer le récipient en le gardant dans un endroit sombre
- ★ Après 30 jours/ un mois de fermentation active, vérifier la qualité de la préparation à l'odeur et à la couleur qui ne doit pas avoir une odeur de pourriture sinon l'opération n'a pas réussi.
- ★ Pendant la fermentation vérifier et remuer—en période de froid le processus de fermentation peut dépasser les 30 jours.
- ★ Pour toute utilisation, préparer une solution de cinq percent du produit obtenu pour pulvériser dans les champs. Bien filtrer le liquide- pour préparer 100L de solution à pulvériser, mélanger 5L de liquide avec 95L d'eau.

3 – Matériel à prévoir:

- ★ Tonneau en plastique avec couvercle recommandé (200l de capacité), un bâton pour remuer

NB – Quelle que soit la quantité de fertilisant à préparer, les proportions doivent être bien respectées. ■

rétrospective

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Travail collectif et minimiser les risques

Microfinance changes in Togo

Par COYLE Ilona | RPCV



Au Togo, les entrepreneurs se méfient souvent du travail collectif. En dehors des groupements agricoles, les propriétaires de presque n'importe quel type d'entreprise, ont d'habitude peur que s'ils prennent un employé ou partenaire, ils vont perdre de l'argent à cause des pertes ou des vols. Donc, normalement, les propriétaires travaillent seuls ou emploient des membres de leurs familles. Ceci est encore plus applicable avec les métiers parce que les patrons ont la possibilité d'engager des apprentis, et les apprentis payent les patrons pour travailler dans leurs ateliers. Dans cet article, je soutiens que les partenariats peuvent augmenter l'investissement disponible pour ouvrir un atelier, et les partenaires peuvent minimiser le risque et les problèmes.

Le besoin pour le partenariat

Depuis un an, mon mari (BELSITO Louis) et moi, avons travaillé avec des apprentis et des jeunes patrons de plusieurs ateliers. Nous leur avons demandé d'expliquer leurs problèmes communs. Un problème qu'ils ont identifié est que beaucoup des jeunes patrons qui viennent de recevoir leurs diplômes n'ont pas assez d'argent pour ouvrir un atelier. Souvent, il prend entre deux et cinq ans ou plus pour un nouveau patron d'épargner assez d'argent pour ouvrir un atelier. Pendant ce temps, les jeunes patrons ne peuvent pas trouver du travail dans leur métier, parce que presque tous les patrons avec de l'expérience travaillent seuls ou engagent des apprentis. C'est le bon sens parce que les apprentis payent les patrons au lieu du contraire.

Les bénéfices du partenariat

Pour répondre à ce problème, je suggère que les nouveaux patrons se regroupent dans des partenariats pour ouvrir des ateliers. Les partenariats pourraient réduire les frais de lancement de l'atelier pour les patrons individuels. Par exemple, trois jeunes patronnes couturières qui travaillent dans un partenariat pourraient s'organiser pour partager le loyer et mêmes les machines, ainsi divisant le coût de ces choses en trois. Avec les frais de lancement

réduit, chaque partenaire pourrait commencer à travailler rapidement, pour qu'il n'oublie pas son métier. Donc, les jeunes patrons dans tous les métiers avec les frais du lancement cher peuvent bénéficier du partenariat.

Les patrons avec de l'expérience peuvent profiter du partenariat aussi. S'il y a plusieurs des partenaires avec de l'expérience dans l'atelier, ils peuvent organiser le travail pour prolonger les heures d'opération. Les heures d'opération prolongées peuvent attirer les clients qui travaillent dans les heures d'opération typique. Aussi s'il y a plusieurs partenaires, ils peuvent acheter ensemble des matériels en vrac à un prix moins cher, augmentant ainsi leurs bénéfices ou bien, s'ils veulent, par la réduction de leurs prix finaux, ils peuvent attirer plus de clients. Pour un seul entrepreneur c'est plus difficile d'acheter les matériels en gros parce que, souvent, il n'a pas assez d'argent dans la caisse à tout moment.

Les méthodes de réduction des risques d'un partenariat.

J'ai demandé à des apprentis « Pourquoi est-ce que les jeunes patrons ne font pas de partenariat déjà? » Ils m'ont dit qu'ils n'ont pas assez de confiance en d'autres pour partager une entreprise avec eux. Ils ont peur qu'un partenaire pourrait être paresseux ou pourrait voler d'argent. Donc, leur première préoccupation est qu'il n'y a pas de sécurité dans un partenariat. On ne peut jamais prévenir totalement le détournement d'argent ou d'autres problèmes. Néanmoins, il y a quelques outils qu'on peut utiliser pour minimiser les risques. Avec la négociation en avance, le contrat, un bon système de comptabilité, et un plan pour l'avenir, on peut éviter beaucoup de risques dans un partenariat. Aussi, on peut limiter les aspects de l'entreprise qui sont partagés avec les partenaires et organiser les autres aspects individuellement.

Discutez en avance avec vos partenaires.

L'étape la plus importante pour commencer un partenariat est que chaque partenaire doit

discuter de ses attentes, ses objectifs ; les responsabilités, les droits, et les bénéfices de chacun d'entre eux. C'est aussi très important de définir et d'expliquer tous les mots et phrases qu'on utilise. Énumérez les bonnes qualités de caractère que vous cherchez dans un partenaire, et définir quels comportements ou actions spécifiques sont associés avec ces qualités. Incluez ces comportements dans vos discussions, et, éventuellement, dans votre contrat. Par exemple, si vous voulez un partenaire travailleur, dites que vous voulez un partenaire qui travaille au moins 50 heures par semaine et qui vient chaque jour à l'heure.

Décidez quels aspects de l'entreprise seront partagés.

Basé sur les discussions préliminaires, les partenaires doivent décider quels aspects de l'entreprise ils veulent partager ensemble et quels aspects ils veulent garder séparés. Si les partenaires n'ont pas les mêmes buts ou si leurs méthodes de travail sont différentes, ils peuvent partager seulement le minimum. Si les partenaires travaillent bien ensemble dans une équipe, ils peuvent partager tout dans un partenariat complet.

Dans un exemple d'un partenariat simple, les partenaires partagent seulement les frais de loyer et d'équipement, et ils s'organisent pour donner à chacun l'opportunité d'utiliser les machines. Aussi, les partenaires cotisent-ils pour épargner pour l'équipement qu'ils veulent dans l'avenir. Cependant, les bénéfices, les clients, et les équipements sont la propriété de chaque partenaire individuel. Chaque partenaire a une boîte avec un cadenas pour garder toutes les choses qui ne sont pas partagées. Ils gardent leur épargne dans une caisse avec un cadenas pour chaque partenaire pour assurer que personne ne puisse prendre l'argent et s'enfuir.

Contrairement à un partenariat simple, dans un partenariat complet les partenaires partagent tous: le matériel de travail, les bénéfices, les clients, et aussi les bâtiments et l'équipement. Les partenaires ont, souvent, les

but et valeurs en commun, et chaque partenaire a beaucoup de confiance dans les autres.

La plus importante méthode pour assurer l'honnêteté dans un partenariat complet est de garder un système détaillé de comptabilité. Le partenariat complet aussi peut utiliser une caisse avec un cadenas pour chaque partenaire ou un compte en commun dans une institution de micro-finance.

Rédigez un contrat.

Pour être sûr que tous les partenaires ont agréé et ont compris les discussions, il faut rédiger un contrat. Le contrat doit inclure les informations suivantes :

- ★ comment les partenaires partageront-ils les bénéfices
- ★ la fréquence avec laquelle les partenaires partageront les bénéfices
- ★ combien de bénéfices épargneront-ils pour l'avenir
- ★ où garderont-ils l'épargne
- ★ les responsabilités de chaque partenaire (exemple : garder le système de comptabilité ou respecter les clients des autres partenaires)
- ★ l'organisation du travail (qui travaillera quand)
- ★ la durée du partenariat
- ★ les droits et responsabilités à la fin du partenariat (comment les partenaires diviseront-ils l'argent, l'équipement, etc.

Préparez un plan d'action.

Le plan d'action décrit les attentes des partenaires pour l'avenir. Par exemple: combien de clients et de production chaque partenaire doit-il réaliser. Les partenaires doivent décider aussi comment ils veulent dépenser l'argent qu'ils épargneront, et donner un ordre de priorité aux dépenses. Par exemple, quels équipements ils achèteront et quand.

Gardez un système détaillé de comptabilité.

Le système de comptabilité est une source de sécurité très importante dans le partenariat. Avec un système effectif on peut trouver facilement d'un détournement de fonds, et le système de comptabilité doit garder l'information sur chaque commande, sur tous les revenus et dépenses, et sur tout l'inventaire de l'entreprise. Les différentes informations doivent être comparées afin de s'assurer que l'utilisation de l'argent correspond avec les commandes spécifiques.

Conclusion

Les partenariats peuvent beaucoup avantager les jeunes patrons ou patronnes qui viennent de finir leur apprentissage mais qui n'ont pas de l'argent pour ouvrir leur propre atelier. Ils peuvent utiliser les méthodes mentionnées ci-dessus pour bien gérer un partenariat et éviter des problèmes courants comme le détournement d'argent ou autres malversations. ■

la sécurité alimentaire

C'est évident que les prix des produits varient durant l'année. Parfois, ça dépendra de la région du pays ou par saison. Le graphique suivant donne les prix de l'igname pour l'année dernière au Togo. Vous pouvez utiliser ces informations comme guide pour les moments d'achète et vente.

