

MOSA LI *Voices* N° 1

TRANSFORMING THE LANDSCAPE OF AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS IN AFRICA

2024 March/June/July



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ABOUT MOSALI VOICES

Mosali Voices is a quarterly magazine that offers a unique perspective on women's participation in the agricultural sector in Africa. Its name comes from Sesotho and means 'Women's Voices'. It offers a non-stereotypical discourse and stands as a transformative platform that focuses on sharing experiences, visibility of actions, and networking with professionals, organisations, movements, and feminist networks that are working every day to transform the agricultural ecosystem.

At this stage, Mosali Voices is the outcome of a co-foundation between the Groupement d'appui pour le développement durable and the feminist organisation Young social development actors. Through each issue of this magazine, these two organisations intend to share with you touching portraits, practical advice on improving working conditions in the agricultural sector, and information on public policies and local initiatives to promote gender equality.

In addition, to highlight the successes and struggles of women, the magazine also offers a range of in-depth analyses of the socio-economic and environmental issues faced by women. By reading it, you will have a more complete understanding of the challenges they face, as well as the opportunities and possible solutions for promoting their autonomy and development.

Much more than a magazine, Mosali Voices is a tool for sensitization, inspiration, and a plea for women's empowerment in the agricultural sector. Going through it will make you be inspired to think, commit, and act in support of these extraordinary women who are shaping the future of agriculture in Africa.

MOSALI *Voices*
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EDITOR'S NOTES



make you discover the achievements of certain local organisations on the field. Through these activities, they are committed to creating a healthy environment where women can participate, benefit, and act freely to reshape the agricultural systems.

Carole Fopa



Dear reader,

We are delighted to share with you the first issue of Mosali Voices Magazine. It is the fruit of several months of reflection and hard work. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed producing it.

In this first issue, we want to take you into the incredible world of these activists who work every day to ensure that the voices and priorities of women and girls are heard and respected. We equally want to share with you some practical and useful tools that could help you strengthen your actions on the field. For illustration purposes, you will find here the guide to promote gender equality developed by GIZ-KCOA in collaboration with the gender focal points of the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology project in Africa (KCOA) located in the five regions of Africa (Central, North, East, West, and Southern Africa). This guide intends to be a practical tool for addressing the needs of women and girls within and beyond the KCOA

We also propose a series of thoughts on the post-Malabo consultations that have successively multiplied across the continent. These thoughts are mainly structured around the way in which women were engaged with these post-Malabo consultation frameworks and the way in which certain structural constraints continue to be ignored; consequently, restricting the possibilities for them to actively participate in the development of this agenda on which their future depends. We also went towards the few women who had the opportunity to take part in these discussions and/or have initiated discussion frameworks, to find out how their voices were heard throughout this process and/or how they organised themselves to ensure that the priorities of women and marginalised groups are reflected at the level of the African Union.

This first issue is also an opportunity for us to make you discover the achievements of certain local organisations on the field. Through these activities, they are committed to creating a healthy environment where women can participate, benefit, and act freely to reshape the agricultural systems.

Achieving a healthy and inclusive farming system is a complex task that requires everyone's commitment; this is why we would like to thank all the people who have committed themselves to making this magazine possible.

Enjoy your reading

The gender guide: a unique approach to strengthen women's participation in the agricultural sector.

By Carole Fopa



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The participation of women and girls in the agricultural sector in Africa is a crucial issue, for the simple reason that they are key players in food security. World Bank figures show that almost 2/3 of women in Africa work in the agricultural sector. However, the ability of women and girls to contribute to the development of a resilient, efficient and sustainable agricultural system is severely compromised by gender-based challenges and discrimination. And although these challenges are known, very few policies or programmes have been developed to explicitly address them. As a result, gender inequality in African agri-food systems is perpetuated. To help reduce this gap, GIZ, in collaboration with the five gender focal points in the five regions of Africa (North, Central, East, West and Southern Africa), have co-created this guide, which provides practical tools, guidelines and case studies to identify and address the root causes of gender inequality in the agricultural sector.

The guide to promoting gender equality is a 52-page document divided into two parts. The first part, entitled Methodological and theoretical approach, focuses on the process that led to its creation.

In concrete terms, it highlights the way in which the gender focal points of the five African hubs organised themselves jointly with the GIZ-KCOA team to understand the gender equality context in 15 African countries and to formulate clear actions to address the challenges and systemic discrimination faced by women and girls in the agricultural sector in Africa. This first part also discusses the theoretical approach chosen to frame the actions of the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa (KCOA) project in terms of gender equality. More specifically, these are the gender equality continuum and the Reach-Benefit-Empower approach, two approaches that not only aim to enable women and girls to participate in and benefit from all the project's activities, but also seek to track down the root causes of inequalities in order to transform agri-food systems. The second part of the guide brings together a set of measures designed to promote and transform gender norms. There are 87 gender-related measures to address women's needs and priorities at each stage of the KCOA's implementation process, from design to implementation to monitoring and evaluation. It also highlights the obstacles likely to prevent the promotion of gender equality in specific contexts and how the measures developed could help to overcome them.



This section also provides a range of resources, literature and know-how on gender issues and links to them.

Ultimately, the guide to promoting gender equality appears to be a unique tool for promoting equality and transforming gender norms in the agricultural sector in Africa. Based on its recommendations, farmers' organisations, women's rights movements and networks, etc. can put in place specific programmes to strengthen women's skills, improve their access to agricultural inputs, financial services and markets, and promote their full participation in decision-making bodies.

To find out more about the gender guide click on the following link: <https://kcoa-africa.org/our-gender-approach/>

Five reasons to adopt the Gender Guide

By Armand Tagne

The Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa aims to enhance food security through the widespread adoption of organic agriculture. . Conscious of the contribution that gender equality could make to this objective, the project has developed the Gender Guide in the KCOA. Here are five reasons for which its assimilation could be beneficial for an organisation wishing to achieve equity in the agricultural sector.

1 An attractive design to visualize

The Gender Guide is fascinating from the outset. The colourful background, the various carefully balanced illustrations, and the gentle sense of gender sensitivity all captivate the reader's attention, and he or she is immediately drawn in. The visual comfort it offers is complemented by the fact that the text is well-spaced out and can be read in several sequences, depending on your availability. This layout invites you to browse through the document, discovering four other reasons why reading it would be beneficial.

2 The outcome of collaborative and participatory work

The guide is the outcome of collaborative and participatory work. Observation and active listening were at the heart of its conception. The desire to think and work together has resulted in a document that reflects the contributions of each hub. By reminding us of the connection between measures and obstacles, it takes us through these.

3 A walk through many obstacles

The guide lists a series of obstacles identified by the various knowledge centers. Since its designing process was based on a combination of contextual analysis and participatory consultation, it takes the reader through the dark forest of obstacles to gender equality and the fight against discrimination and violence to which women and girls are often subjected. These obstacles relate both to socio-structural factors and to the specific needs of women. They often vary from one country to another and from one socio-cultural area to another. What they all have in common is the perpetuation of gender inequality. Although they are not exhaustive, they are essential for any organisation wishing to promote women's rights. Indeed, the correct identification of a problem guarantees the relevance of the solution. They are grouped into five interdependent categories. In turn, the reader will go through the obstacles linked to violence against women, after those relating to access and limited control of resources, including knowledge, as well as those relating to mobility and constraints of time. Cultural and local constraints are then followed by those relating to participation, commitment, and leadership. This interdependence often encourages the pooling of several measures to overcome an obstacle. These same measures can also contribute elsewhere.

4 Effective and relevant measures

The Gender Guide proposes 87 measures of promoting gender equality. All of them promote gender equality in all activities and aspects of the project. Regularly introduced and summarised, these measures address the difficulties that can be seen in several components. These include project design, management, the capacity of KCOA staff to be gender-sensitive, communication and dissemination of knowledge, monitoring and evaluation, training, knowledge products, networking and advocacy, as well as protection. This holistic approach will ensure that women are reached and empowered at every stage of the process.

For all these reasons, the actors of the Knowledge Centre on Organic Agriculture and Agroecology project in Africa can do without the Gender Guide only by depriving themselves of a significant part of the expected success of the project. He/she can download it and exploit it alone. However, in our context, where we want to be a great number to promote gender equality and the fight against violence and discrimination against women, we will benefit from sharing the downloaded version of the document. Here is the secured download link:

<https://kcoa-africa.org/our-gender-approach/>

5 A connection space for continuous work

The KCOA Gender Guide is a platform for connecting to additional gender resources. In fact, at the end of the manual, readers will find a selection of resources that can be used to continue working towards gender equality. As each field has its own jargon, towards the end of the guide there is also a gender glossary to further familiarise and connect readers.

Specific training approach developed by INADES-Formation to improve access to agricultural knowledge for girls in Northern Cameroon

By Footinno Roel Clivert

In a global context where achieving equality between men and women is crucial, certain sectors in Cameroon still struggle to meet the objectives outlined by national and international laws on equality. This is the case in the Far North region, where access to education for girls remains a thorny issue despite the progress made. According to the Central Bureau of the Census and Population Studies (BUCREP) on World Population Day 2022, the gross and net enrolment rates for boys are higher than those for girls, no matter the school year. In fact, during 2018/2019, the gross enrolment rate for boys was 48.60%, compared with 42.45% for girls. And again, this year, boys had a net enrolment rate of 37.20% and girls 33.46%. The enrolment rate for girls is particularly low in this part of the country due to factors such as poverty, early marriage and pregnancy, insecurity, and sexist and sexual discrimination. In this context, there is an urgent need for a cross-sectoral approach to tackle this issue, involving other stakeholders such as civil society.



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With regard to this issue, INADES-Formation, as part of the KCOA, has included a specific module on gender equality in its agro-ecology and organic farming training modules. The aim is to make beneficiaries in the Far North region more aware of women's needs and priorities. From this perspective, training the local population on the importance of integrating women on an equal footstep with men in organic farming and agro-ecology activities is a crucial strategy for reversing trends and transforming gender norms.

From July 2 to July 8, 2024, three subdivisions in the Far North region, specifically in the Mayo Kani division (notably in the localities of Moutarwa, Kaélé, and Guidiguis), received training on gender modules aimed at making the men in these communities advocates for gender equality.

In the Moutourwa subdivision, the awareness-raising module took place in the village of 'LAF,' where 20 participants attended, including 15 men and 5 women. To raise awareness among the participants, several methods were employed. One effective approach involved sharing success stories of collaborative efforts between men and women in organic farming and agro-ecology. In the Kaélé subdivision, the workshop occurred in 'Kani' village, where a different dynamic emerged, with women participating in greater numbers. One of these methods was stories about successful actions that were jointly carried out by men and women on organic farming and agro-ecology. In the Kaélé subdivision, the intervention took place in 'Kani' village. A reverse situation was felt in this locality, where women are the majority to participate. In this instance, the focus shifted to increasing women's sensitivity toward men. The workshop included 24 participants, comprising 17 women and 7 men. Finally, in the Guidiguis subdivision, the awareness raising module took place in the villages of Danba and Lamtare, attracting a total of 45 participants, including 26 men and 19 women.

These sensitization and training activities, which follow on from a series of actions already carried out by INADES-Formation Cameroun in the above-mentioned localities, show the gradual establishment of collaboration between men and women, especially in the production of off-season sorghum. In this activity, there is a certain complementarity between the two sexes. Men actively participated in creating nurseries, while women provided the water used in seedling bags (a type of hole dug for sowing seedlings) during sorghum planting activities.

To find out more about the work done by INADES-Formation, visit the following web site: <https://www.inadesformation.net/> .



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KHCA adopts positive masculinity as a tool for promoting gender equality

By Armand Tagne


In Africa, women produce around 80% of household food. Despite this, they earn much less than men. This is the consequence of a hegemonic masculinity that constantly perpetuates inequality and discrimination based on gender. Being aware of how dangerous this is for an inclusive and prosperous Africa, the Knowledge Center for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology project in Africa (KCOA) is committed to promoting positive masculinity among its members.



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Men are traditionally identified by a set of stereotypic characteristics and behaviors. These stereotypes include those that guarantee or tend to guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. This masculinity is underpinned by forms of power (economic, political, cultural, etc.) that facilitate its growth. It fosters a permanent lack of communication and violence in all its forms. This is far from guaranteeing social justice and the achievement of the KCOA's overall objective, which is to strengthen food security through the widespread adoption of organic farming. The latter is one of the means of achieving a 'prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development' to which the African Union aspires through the 2063 Agenda. This same agenda relays the AU's desire for an Africa 'that builds on the potential of its people, especially women and young people, and cares for the well-being of children'.

Aware of the above, the KHCA would like to promote other characteristics and behaviours that would make men allies in the fight against inequality and discrimination, as well as the violence of which women and girls are most often the victims. These characteristics and behaviours are the hallmark of positive masculinity.



As a way of using male stereotypes (strength, security, power, intelligence, determination, etc.) to promote gender equality and fight against all forms of gender-based violence, positive masculinity can be tried out in all sectors of activity. In organisations that promote organic farming and agro-ecology, it could make a significant contribution in transforming food systems.

Positive masculinity promotes active listening by men from women, sincere dialogue between men and women, non-violence by men towards women, and empathy and support for women by men. By so doing, it would ensure more peaceful relations, guaranteeing well-being and inclusive, sustainable progress. It calls for a paradigm shift that cannot be achieved without men. Conscious of the need to strengthen responsible practices as part of this work, the ACCP is adopting positive masculinity as a tool for promoting gender equality and combating all forms of violence and discrimination against girls and women.

On 17 July 2024, the focal point for gender-trained representatives of organisations promoting organic farming and agro-ecology.

All men were trained in positive masculinity. Each would be ready to be a gender champion within his organisation. Since “when two forces unite, their efficiency double” (Isaac Newton), they will be able to enable others to be like them. In turn, they will be able to pass on what they learned to their male colleagues. For them, and thanks to the day’s workshop, active listening, empathy, and support can be experienced on a daily basis. One way of doing this is to follow Christian Edzengte’s example.

Christian Edzengte is an agropastoral technician based in Esse. He assists women wishing to become autonomous through the breeding of white grubs. On many occasions, he has seen women and girls who wanted to be trained in entomoculture being prevented from doing so by their spouses and some of their parents. Each time, he had to make a plea to these influential people. He regularly convinced them and turned them into allies for the empowerment of women and girls through grub farming. Like him, multipliers can step up their work to raise awareness among men in favour of empowering women in the agricultural sector.

Post-Malabo reflections: are female farmers' issues being addressed?


By Carole Fopa

The Maputo Protocol is the result of a consultation held in Mozambique in 2003, following which the African states participating adopted the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The signatory countries agreed to concretely express their commitment by allocating 10% of their GDP to agriculture, allowing agricultural growth to reach 6%. In 2014, the poor level of achievement of anticipated results pushed the African States to develop a ten-year strategy in Malabo to meet the CAADP's objectives. However, the fourth biennial review report of date indicates that, despite the efforts made to implement the Malabo declaration, Africa is still far below the targets set for 2025.



In Central Africa, significant obstacles remain in order to drive growth and restructure agricultural systems. The biennial report states that the region's performance in eradicating poverty through agriculture remains weak, due to the marginal participation of women in agribusiness, with a score of 1.25. This result, which is not unique to Central Africa, could justify the new orientations of the post-Malabo agenda, which explains the desire to involve all stakeholders in the process of developing it up. With this in mind, discussions on taking in to accounts the needs of the marginalised groups (women and young people, etc.) are explicitly mentioned as a thematic focus which must guide the discussions in the various consultation frameworks.

In view of this situation, consultation frameworks such as the Partner For Change Platform (P4C) set up by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in collaboration with the Kenyan government have included this issue on the discussions of the post-Malabo agenda.



During these discussions, which took place from the 26 to the 27 June in Nairobi, a multi-stakeholder working group was set up with a view to formulate clear proposals for achieving an inclusive transformation of food systems. The working group put forward ten practical recommendations focusing on the policies and partnerships that need to be developed to collectively shape the future of the agricultural sector.

In the Central African sub-region, the CNOP-CAM (National Consultation of Farmers' Organisations in Cameroon), led by Elisabeth Atangana, has set up several national and regional consultation frameworks to enable marginal groups (mainly women and young people) to speak out and make their voices heard. During these consultative processes, the 07 priorities of the post-Malabo process (governance, investment, hunger and malnutrition, livelihoods, trade, climate resilience and mutual accountability) were discussed by the various stakeholders' present. These were then submitted to another multi-stakeholder committee made up of representatives from MINADER, MINDCAF, MINPMEESSA and parliamentarians for amendment and adoption.

However, even if the African Union has clearly demonstrated its desire to include all stakeholders in this consultation process, and that national, regional and continental dynamics were observed, it is still important to note the limitations of this consultative process. For example, the post-Malabo roadmap was communicated late (mid-May 2024) to all the stakeholders, with strict and even unrealistic deadlines. A situation which is not conducive in promoting strong and in-depth stakeholder participation, thereby compromising the possibility of constructive participation and ownership by marginal groups (women, young people, etc.) as projected in the 2063 Agenda.

Furthermore, the consultation mechanisms and frameworks deployed were also judged to be very far from the peasant realities (organisation of webinars, use of foreign languages in the process, etc.), who are most concerned by the issues of climate change and food security. However, female peasant and other marginalised groups are catalysts for the transformation of agricultural systems, and not taking their specific needs into account in the consultation process would be reproducing the same causes that led to the failure of CAADP in previous years.

Embrassing leadership: the story of Dr. Khaoula Mokrani's participation in designing the post-Malabo agenda in Nairobi

Interview by Naomie Tiaze



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As a young woman, she was deeply committed to advancing sustainable agriculture and food security. The journey of Dr Khaoula MOKRANI'S took a pivotal turn when she was invited to join the writing committee of the Post-Malabo declaration at the Partner for Change-P4C Network Meeting that took place over two days in June 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya. This experience did not only reaffirm her dedication to ecological organic agriculture but also empowered her to contribute meaningfully to shaping policy and advocating for change on a global scale.

The P4C Network Meeting brought together a diverse array of stakeholders from across Africa and beyond. As a Regional Knowledge Manager of the North African Hub for the KCOA project, she found herself among esteemed colleagues and experts dedicated to addressing the challenges outlined in the Post-Malabo Declaration and charting a path forward for sustainable development.

Being part of the writing committee was both exhilarating and challenging for Dr. Khaoula Mokrani's; collaborating with peers from different backgrounds: government officials, researchers, civil society representatives, farmers, and international organisations, was a profound learning experience. She meticulously crafted recommendations that emerged from eight workshops, different conferences, and participants' ideas at the P4C meeting. These recommendations aimed at enhancing the implementation of the Post-Malabo Agenda.

The discussions were robust, fuelled by a shared commitment to inclusivity, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making. For her, this collaborative process highlighted the importance of diverse perspectives in shaping comprehensive and impactful policies, emphasizing that effective solutions must be inclusive and well-rounded.

Her contributions emphasized the importance of empowering local communities, particularly women and youth, in decision-making processes related to agriculture and food security, backed by her experience. This advocacy was driven by a belief in the transformative power of inclusive and participatory approaches, stressing that those directly affected by agricultural policies should have a say in their design. According to her, this connection between grassroots knowledge and policy-making is crucial for sustainable development.

For Dr. Khaoula, the culmination of our efforts—the P4C declaration—represents a collective commitment to a transformative change in African agriculture. It underscores the imperative of inclusive governance, sustainable practices, and robust partnerships across sectors. This experience deepened her understanding of global agricultural dynamics and reinforced her passion for ecological organic agriculture as a catalyst for positive change.

Reflecting on her journey as a young woman leader in organic agricultural advocacy, she is inspired to continue driving impactful initiatives within her community and beyond. She remains committed to fostering dialogue, implementing innovative solutions, and advocating for policies that prioritize sustainability and equity in agriculture.



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Developing the agenda post-Malabo: the perspective of youth and women at CNOP-CAM


By Footinno Tsueghap Roel Clivert



As part of the implementation of the roadmap for the Post-Malabo agenda, CNOP-CAM (National Consultation of Farmers' Organisations in Cameroon), led by Elisabeth Atangana, has organised several national and regional meetings to enable marginalised groups (mainly women and young people) to speak out so that their voices can be heard. As a national platform for bringing farmers together, it has acted as a lever to gather the needs of farmers throughout Cameroon. More specifically, it has carried out a series of activities, such as organising consultations at national and regional level, so setting up a monitoring system to ensure that the proposals put forward by women and young people in particular reach the African Union.

The voices of women and young people are certainly the one that sound the most at CNOP-CAM. Out Of its 57088 members, 30591 and 18703 are women and young people respectively. Covering all the regions of Cameroon, its pyramid structure enables it to identify the needs and priorities of farmers at the grassroots level. In a practical manner, 'CNOP-CAM has set up the regional structuring technique to reach farmers in each locality', says Elisabeth Atangana. The technique involves CNOP-CAM members organising themselves according to their region and appointing three representatives to take part in the organisation's assemblies and managing board's meetings. Out of the three regularly constituted members of the regional delegation, there must be a man, a woman and a youth.

It was through this internal mechanism that CNOP-CAM mobilised farmers from 5 to 6 June 2024 and from 13 to 14 June for discussions on the Post-Malabo agenda. These discussion sessions, which brought about fifty participants together, representing networks of small-scale producers and farmers, focused on seven priorities of the Post-Malabo process: governance, investment, hunger and malnutrition, livelihoods, trade, climate resilience and mutual responsibility. The aim was to involve all stakeholders in the process to achieve the objectives of the Post-Malabo agenda, so that no one is left behind.



In addition, CNOP-CAM co-organised regional consultations during which it presented the needs and recommendations of the grassroots, collected during the discussions at the national level. Among these regional consultations, one was organised from the 9th to the 11th of July 2024 in Douala, Cameroon. The aim of this consultation was to discuss the proposals of farmers' organisations (FOs) on the Post-Malabo agenda, collected in each country during the national exchanges. The discussions enabled all the agricultural stakeholders in the Central African region to express their views on the issues, challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt from the implementation of the Malabo commitments in their respective countries, and to present 'relevant and priority' proposals, taking into account the active participation of women and girls in this process, which will affect their future.

At the end of these discussions, the proposals put forward by the farmers (mainly women and young people) were selected and submitted to a multi-stakeholder committee made up of representatives of MINADER, MINDCAF, MINPMEESA and parliamentarians for amendment and adoption, before being forwarded to the African Union. In addition, an ad hoc committee was set up to follow up these proposals within the sectors concerned. The aim of all these measures is to ensure that the new agenda does not make the same mistakes as the Malabo agenda.

In this way, by taking into account the recommendations of the CNOP-CAM, the voice of women and young people will be the priority. Not only because CNOP-CAM is carried at the highest level by a woman, but also because it is mostly made up of women and young people who have defended family farming.

To find out more on CNOP-CAM, click on the following link: <https://cnopcam.org/>

Import substitution: the local fair for organic and agro-ecological products of Dschang in the target

By Carole Fopa and Armand Tagne



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Like many other countries, Cameroon has long been imports dependent. This has caused enormous damage to its economy and to the quality of life of its people. To reverse this trend, the President of the Republic of Cameroon, during his presidential oath on November 6th 2018, committed the people in the following terms: "It seems appropriate to me to focus on developing the sectors of our economy that can significantly reduce our imports of goods and services. (...) We are going to achieve a genuine agricultural revolution by modernising our means of production and further processing our agricultural products." This desire was materialised, among other things, through the three-year Integrated Import-Substitution Plan 2024-2026 announced during his speech to the nation on 31st December 2023. Through this import-substitution policy, Cameroon intends to promote "made in Cameroon" by supporting local production, transformation, and consumption. Among other mechanisms, we can find the organisation of entrepreneurial and agricultural exhibitions and fairs.

On Monday, 1st July 2024, the Groupe d'Appui pour le Développement Durable (GADD), holding on to its position as a member of the KCOA project, organised a local organic products fair' at the festival square in Dschang. The overall aim of the fair was to promote local production by setting up a scheme to encourage local consumption. It represented GADD's clear desire to align its policy of promoting local production with the national import-substitution policy, acting at the micro level to achieve global objectives.

More concretely, GADD has decided to address one of the major challenges of the "made in Cameroon" policy: getting people to take an interest in it and consume locally. However, if products are to be available on the market, ongoing support and assistance must be provided upstream.

Since 2016, GADD has therefore been committed firstly to support local production of organic products by providing guidance and support to more than 500 producers, and secondly to provide them with marketing space.

In addition, to ensure the fair and equal participation of all stakeholders, GADD has incorporated into its organisational policy ways of reaching out to and involving women and girls. It is in this context that female producers are regularly consulted (70%) on the choice of site and date in order to overcome the structural constraints to which they are regularly subject.

At the fair, which brought together 40 exhibitors (27 women), over 200 people visited and bought directly from the producers, giving consumers a better understanding of the importance of local consumption;

According to Mrs. Fomete Francine épse Tchoupou, Divisional Trade Delegate for Menoua, who was present at the event by promoting exchanges between local producers and consumers, the "local organic products fair" organised by GADD is a concrete example of Cameroon's institutional policy on import substitution. For her, organising trade fairs in the way GADD does "is in line with the instructions of the Minister of Trade, His Excellency Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, who promotes Made in Cameroon." She can only rejoice as she invites everyone to relentlessly continue to promote the production and consumption of local products: "Let's produce in Cameroon; let's consume from Cameroon," she recommends.

To find out more about GADD's work, click on the following link: <https://www.ong-gadd.org/>.



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21-days compost vs. 90-days compost: Which option for female farmers?

By Yannick Nguimtsop and Arnaud Lacmou

In the Menoua division of Cameroon, the agricultural sector is the main engine of growth, employing around 60% of the working population. Menoua benefits from favourable agro-ecological conditions and dynamic producers (mainly women and young people) who play a crucial role in food production. Food crops, vegetables and cash crops are produced on small farms. In their various farming activities, female farmers often face major challenges, including limited access to production resources and technologies, gender-based inequalities and unsustainable farming practices.



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Most of these producers have long practised inorganic agriculture and, over time, the increased use of synthetic chemical pesticides and fertilisers has led to risks for both the environment and their health. The most direct consequences of the abusive use of these chemical inputs are the decline in soil fertility, which directly affects agricultural yields, and the deterioration in food safety, which also affects human health. Faced with these ever-increasing dangers, female farmers are increasingly turning to sustainable agricultural production solutions. However, one of the main obstacles to the adoption and democratisation of sustainable farming practices is access to inputs.

The production and use of compost have gradually emerged as a new path to explore, to enable female farmers gain autonomy as far as fertilization inputs are concerned and thus offers promising solutions to the problems of soil degradation and food safety in Menoua. Composting techniques are varied, with each technique having its own advantages and disadvantages. This article provides a comparative analysis of 21-days compost and 90-days compost to enable female producers to make their own choices in terms of access to organic inputs, according to their specific needs and contexts.

21-days compost: advantages and constraints for adoption by female farmers in Menoua

► What is the manufacturing process ?

21-days compost is an organic amendment obtained by anaerobic decomposition of plant and organic matter in the presence of effective micro-organisms (EM5). The equipment needed includes a large tarpaulin, a scale, and 40-50 kg bags with plastic, a cutlass and a shovel. The inputs are *Tithonia diversifolia* leaves, EM5, 50 kg of laying hen dropping, bokashi, wood ash and chlorine-free water. The steps consist in chopping the *Tithonia* leaves, spreading them out on a tarpaulin, adding the hen droppings, wood ash and bokashi, preparing a solution of water and EM5, watering and mixing until homogenised, testing for humidity, packing the mixture in plastic bags and placing them under a shade on a wooden stand. The estimated cost of producing 100 kg of compost in 21 days is 11,900 FCFA.



► Advantages and constraints of this practice

In the rural context, the use of 21-day compost can play a crucial role in helping women to overcome the structural constraints that limit their participation in the agro-ecological transition. Its simplicity, speed and beneficial effects on soil fertility are proving to be powerful levers for curbing the constraints that limit their participation.

The composting method is distinguished by its simplicity and low resource requirements. It requires neither sophisticated equipment nor complex technical training, making it accessible to all women. What's more, producing compost in just 21 days requires less investment in time and effort over the long term. This reduces the physical workload, which is often a handicap to women adopting new practices. This is particularly important in the local context, where women do most of the housework and farming.

The use of 21-days compost leads to a significant improvement in the structure and fertility of the soil, thereby increasing agricultural yields. This increase in productivity is materialised into greater food security for households and strengthens women's economic independence from men, on whom they are generally financially dependent.

The simplicity and speed of a 21-days compost can encourage women to get together to share their knowledge and resources. These exchanges help to strengthen social ties and create support networks between them. These solidarity networks can play a crucial role in removing the structural barriers that limit women's participation and facilitate their integration into the agro-ecological transition in the Menoua department.

Despite the potential benefits of producing and using a 21-days compost, this method also has constraints that may hinder its adoption by women. Proper production of a 21-days compost requires effective micro-organisms (EM5) and Bokashi, which are often expensive and difficult to find. Women farmers in Menoua, who generally have limited resources, may find it difficult to obtain these essential elements.

In addition, the need for a shelter to store the compost for 21 days and the cost of transporting it to the fields may entail additional costs. These additional expenses could represent a significant barrier for women.


90-days compost: Assets and constraints for adoption of the practice by women farmers in Menoua

Manufacturing process and estimated cost

90-days compost is the finished product of the decomposed organic materials (manure, household waste, dead leaves, twigs, etc.) under normal conditions. The equipment required include a black tarpaulin, a cutlass and a shovel. The substrates used are fresh and dry plant matter, animal dung, wood ash, biochar, chlorine-free water and top soil. The steps involve marking out a composting area, planting poles, moistening the soil, adding a layer of chopped dry plant matter and watering, adding top soil and biochar, then a layer of fresh plant matter and animal dung, repeating the layers until a pile of 4 layers is obtained, covering it with a black tarpaulin and turning the compost at least twice during the thermophilic, cooling and matured phases. The estimated cost of producing around 200 kg of a 90-days compost is 11,500 FCFA.

► Advantages and constraints to adoption by female farmers in Menoua

In the rural context of the Menoua division in west Cameroon, the use of a 90-days compost presents several specific advantages and constraints for women. 90-days compost is generally more mature and richer in nutrients, which improves soil fertility. This enables women to increase their crop yields, which is essential for their economic autonomy and food security. Generally, women need their husband's permission to take a leave, so the availability of raw materials in the immediate environment, and the use of post-harvest and household garbage, gives more flexibility to women engaged in this practice. They will be no need to travelling to obtain the various inputs used in the production of a 90-days compost. This is because it is rich in nutrients and decomposes completely, this compost is more efficient in the long run.



The women are thus able to reduce their dependence on synthetic chemical fertilisers, which lowers long-term costs and improves the sustainability of their farming practices. This allows them to better manage their financial resources and focus on other aspects of their lives.

In addition, it is possible to produce and use compost directly on the farm. This eliminates the hassle of its transporting which is heavy and generates additional costs that are often prohibitive in the process of adopting the practice. So because of their limited financial resources, female producers generally go in for techniques that are easy to implement directly on the farm.

Despite the numerous advantages, constraints include the slowness of the maturation process, which can discourage users. Compost production also requires considerable physical effort, which can be a significant barrier for women, especially in a rural context where physical tasks are already numerous. Finally, the difficulty of accurately quantifying the elements of production can complicate the planning and execution of the composting process. These financial, physical and technical challenges need to be taken into account to promote the adoption of this practice among women.

► **What is the right choice ?**

Each type of compost has its own advantages and disadvantages. The choice between a 21-days and a 90-days compost will depend on the financial and material resources available, the physical abilities of the female farmers and their specific soil fertilisation needs. The various aspects involved in choosing a technique needs to be carefully assessed by the women so that they can choose a practice that meets their needs and takes into account their specific contexts.

Local EM an alternative to industrial EM ?

By Aurelie Tsaffo

Modern agriculture increasingly relies on innovative solutions to maintain soil fertility while minimising environmental impacts. In many rural communities, women play a crucial role in agriculture, particularly in tasks related to soil management and food production. They are often responsible for home gardens and small farms, where they apply their traditional knowledge to improve agricultural productivity. One innovative solution is to use efficient microorganisms (EM) to produce compost in just 21 days. This rapid composting transforms organic waste into nutrient-rich compost, speeding up the decomposition of organic matter and improving soil health. However, the use of EMs, particularly those of industrial sources, causes a number of challenges, particularly in terms of the cost of their acquisition by women and their ecological compatibility.


The high cost of industrial EM is a major barrier to their adoption, especially for small

farms run by women. In addition to the financial aspect, there are concerns about the potential dangers of industrial EM, particularly their impact on local ecosystems. These microorganisms, although beneficial to the soil, may not be adequate to all environmental conditions and could disrupt existing microbiological balances. Their adaptability to the local flora is therefore a crucial aspect to consider if undesirable ecological consequences are to be avoided.

One promising solution for overcoming the challenges associated with industrial EMs is to replace them with local EMs. Their use has several advantages: they are generally less costly, reduce the ecological risks associated with the introduction of exogenous microorganisms, and are more readily accepted by local communities. In addition, their promotion can strengthen the autonomy and resilience of farms, particularly those run by women.



Copyright : YSDA



With a view to assessing the effectiveness of local EM as a substitute for industrial EM, a study was carried out by YSDA (Young Social Development Actors) at Nzong village in west Cameroon on blackberry nightshade. YSDA used three types of compost, all prepared in 21 days, using chicken droppings, cow dung, and a mixture of the two.

- Three enrichment scenarios were carried out: enrichment with hen droppings + EM5, cow dung + local EM, and a mixture of hen droppings and cow dung + local EM. During the process, the growth of blackberry nightshade was observed at different times: 15, 22, 29, and 36 days after transplanting the plants, and the following results were obtained:

- Plant height: 29 days after planting, plants treated with local EM had almost the same height as those treated with EM5. For example, plants treated with cow dung compost + local EM were 215 cm tall, almost as tall as those treated with EM5.

- Leaf surface: After 29 days, the leaves of plants treated with local EM were as large as those treated with EM5. For example, the leaves of plants treated with laying chicken dung + cow dung + local EM mixture had a surface area of 1968.49 cm², similar to those treated with EM5.

- Stem diameter: After 29 days, the stems of plants treated with local EM were as thick as those treated with EM5, making the plants robust as well.

- Yield: treatments with local EM showed comparable yields to those of EM5. This parameter was measured using the number and total weight of harvestable branches.

The use of local EM with composts from cow dung or a mixture of chicken droppings and cow dung resulted in plants as tall as those treated with EM5. In addition, plants treated with 21-day compost enriched with local EM were as robust as those treated with EM5, which is crucial for resistance to climatic conditions and other stresses.

On the basis of the results obtained from this study, it can be said that local microorganisms can be effective substitutes for industrial microorganisms in the production of a 21-day compost. This substitution can reduce production costs for small-scale producers and encourage the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.

The results show that 21-day compost, whether enriched with local or industrial EMs, significantly improves agricultural yields, offering an ecological and economical alternative to chemical fertilizers.

For more information on YSDA's work, visit the website: <https://ysda2014.org/>.

MOSALI VOICES TIPS

Practical advice for a successful nightshade nursery

By Carole Fopa and Carine Pamela Kenfack




Copyrights: Patrick Kengne

Solanum nigrum L., commonly known as black berry nightshade, is a plant belonging to the Solanaceae family that is widely cultivated and consumed in west Cameroon. Its cultivation has few requirements, but like any other crop, its growth and development depend on the cultivation techniques chosen, particularly the success of seedling production in the nursery. Vegetable productivity in terms of biomass yield is a corollary of the quality of the seedlings used during semi-indirect or farm transplanting. In the case of black berry nightshade, setting up a nursery is a painstaking process that takes into account a number of parameters, including soil quality, shade, irrigation levels and pest and disease management.

► A shaded area: a good misconception

The question of shading is raised to highlight the ambiguity surrounding the need to shade plants or not, as it is widely recognised that plants need light for their growth. Light plays a vital role in their growth process, as it facilitates the process of photosynthesis, enabling plants to convert the sunlight they receive into useful energy to manufacture the nutrients they need for their development. But too much light can hinder this process. Shade therefore plays a decisive role in the success of a nursery, contributing to the health and optimum growth of the plants and regulating temperature and humidity.



Water loss due to excessive exposure to the sun can cause a great damage to young plants, same as water stress. Shade therefore helps to regulate temperature and humidity, creating a microclimate that reduces evapotranspiration by plants and their need for water. Shade production depends on the resources and equipment available to each nursery.

To ensure a balance between light and shade, nurserymen most often use plant material to create shade. However, there are also other types of shade, such as sails or retractable shade screens.

► **Intensive or irregular watering: which is better?**

Water is essential for plant growth. Although it is generally accepted that black berry nightshade is one of the leguminous plants in which water supply is crucial to its development, it is also important to assume the optimum quantity it needs for its growth. It is also important to estimate the optimum quantity it needs for its development.

To ensure optimum growth of black berry nightshade seeds, it is advisable to water the plant immediately after sowing, adjusting the watering according to the season. If the nursery has been set up during a period of low rainfall, it is essential to continue with the watering process. However, it is essential to set an appropriate watering threshold for the plant, as excessive watering can lead to root rot, poor cell oxygenation and the development of fungal diseases. Conversely, too little water could lead to dehydration and wilting of the plants. Finding the right balance in the watering process is an important factor.

► **Soil quality: a factor often overlooked**

The choice of soil for a black berry nightshade nursery is often overlooked. Neglecting it is sometimes as a result of the misconception about its practice. However, to facilitate the development of seedlings, it is necessary to adopt knowledgeable cultivation techniques. Assessing the suitability of the soil for growing black berry nightshade plants depends on its texture, structure, nutrient content, pH, water retention capacity and the presence of beneficial micro-organisms in the soil. The soil chosen must be sufficiently well drained to avoid water stagnation in the nursery. It is therefore advisable to carry out prior soil analyses to find out its nutrient requirements and amend it if necessary.

► **Crop rotation: a useful step to consider**

Crop rotation is an agronomic practice that involves alternating crops on a given plot of land. This practice is beneficial for both the soil and the plants. In the specific case of black berry nightshade, rotation is recommended. In particular, it helps to improve soil quality, control pests and diseases, and optimise crop productivity. The absence of crop rotation is therefore a mistake not to be made in nurseries.

► **Disease and pest management: an option ?**

Disease and pest management are often overlooked in the nursery plant production process. Plant development begins in the nursery, and if plants are attacked from the outset, this will influence the whole growth process. For this reason, it is advisable to put in place appropriate measures to prevent plants from pests and diseases.

KNOWLEDGE HUB FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURE AND AGROECOLOGY CENTRAL AFRICA (KHCA)



The Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology (KHCA) is one of the five hubs set up under the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology project in Africa (KCOA). This project is part of the special initiative 'Transformation of agri-food systems SIAGER' implemented by the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). These five hubs are spread across the 05 regions of Africa, namely North, Central, East, West and Southern Africa.

The KHCA was the last hub to be implemented. It is directed in Cameroon by CIPCRE based in Bafoussam. CIPCRE is working with 04 local organisations to implement the KHCA including SAILD, GADD, CPF and INADES - Formation. Through these organisations, activities to promote organic farming and agro-ecology are being implemented in the 10 regions of Cameroon.

The KHCA's ambition is to popularize the debate on organic farming and agroecology in Cameroon. For this reason, it works with a wide range of stakeholders, particularly with farming organisations and associations, the media and government bodies, to advance practices, research and policies in the agricultural sector. The KHCA also intends to provide multipliers with all the information they need to promote the adoption of agro-ecological practices by farmers in Cameroon. The knowledge disseminated to multipliers is developed according to their needs and in a format that suits them.

For more information on the KHCA, visit the website: <https://pcac-khca.org/>

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

By par Patrick Kengne

In this session, we provide a number of useful links for quick access to information about organic production processes.

1 Composting wastes for sustainable organic farming

this is a heap composting technology that allows cotton-growing farmers to make compost from agricultural residues like maize, cotton, and sorghum stalks, bean and peanut tops, and rice husks. The finished product, which is ready after three months, allows farmers to achieve high yields by improving the quantity and quality of compost, addressing the issue of insufficient compost on organic farms, and raising their income while contributing to food security. However, its adoption also faces challenges such as the scarcity of biomass (strong competition in the dry season for residues used as animal feed), the lack of water for regular watering, and the problem of manpower to carry out the work.

<https://kcoa-africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/FT-compostage-en-tas-BF-Sypro-bio.pdf>

2 Effect of composted waste and composting period on microbiological activity in composts.

The microbial biodiversity and biological activity of composts are determined by the raw materials utilized, the composting process, and the compost's maturity state. Three forms of compost were tested: grey household waste (GBW), the fermentable fraction of household waste (FOM), and green waste with sewage treatment plant sludge (DVB). After three months of composting, microbiological stability was detected in composts made from the fermentable fraction of household trash (FOM) and green waste plus sewage treatment plant sludge (DVB). However, even after 6 months of composting, grey household waste (GMW) compost continues to show symptoms of activity because its organic content has not yet stabilized. This study shows the importance of incorporating micro-organisms into the composting process in order to reduce preparation time.

<https://kcoa-africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Influence-des-dechets-compostes-et-de-la-duree-de-compotage-sur-lactivite-microbienne-des-composts.pdf>

3 Effect of phospho-compost with or without mycorrhizae on an organically grown tomato (*solanum lycopersicum*) crop

Fertilisation is an important element in agronomy. Plant resistance and growth are directly linked to the type of fertiliser used. In basic soils, natural phosphates are not very soluble and are difficult for plants to assimilate. To improve their availability to plants, a composting process using mycorrhizae was studied in Tunisia. This experiment was carried out on tomato crops, with the vegetative growth and yield of the tomato crop as the evaluation criteria.

<https://kcoa-africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/4.-EFFET-DES-PHOSPHO-COMPOST-AVEC-OU-SANS-MYCORHIZES-SUR-UNE-CULTURE-DE-TOMATE-SOLANUM-LYCOPERSICUM-L.-CONDUITE-SELON-LE-MODE-DE-LAGRICULTURE-BIOLOGIQUE.pdf>

4 Making the most of residual materials and forest biomass in Morocco: Composting and making organic substrates for the production of forest seedlings

Compost is obtained by decomposing plant matter from various sources. Producers in forest areas where agricultural residues are not as important as in savannahs can use residual matter and forest biomass. In Morocco, in order to improve and standardise the quality of substrates used in forest nurseries, a study was carried out on composting forest biomass consisting of *Cedrus atlantica* cone residues and green biomass: leaves and branches of *Quercus rotundifolia*, *Acacia mollissima* and branches with *Pinus halepensis* needles.

To find out more about the process and the results obtained, please read this article.

<https://kcoa-africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Valorisation-des-matieres-residuelles-et-de-la-biomasse-forestiere-au-Maroc-Compostage-et-confection-de-substrats-organiques-pour-la-production-de-plants-forestiers.pdf>

5 Composting and recycling oasis waste to improve soil and productivity

A soil's organic matter content is a strong indicator of its fertility. In arid zones, farmers are most often faced with this soil fertility challenge. In addition to the low organic matter content observed in these areas, some face a problem of salinity in the topsoil, as is the case in the Chenini oasis, an arid zone in southern Tunisia. In order to overcome these challenges, a study has been carried out into the use of oasis waste (particularly palm waste) to produce compost. Palm tree waste is ground to a particle size of 20 mm, soaked for 7 days and then mixed with organic fertiliser in proportions of 3/4 for the shredded material and 1/4 for the organic fertiliser, resulting in a well-matured compost after 6 months. The compost obtained was tested on lettuce and carrot crops and gave very good results. This process could be applied in areas where oil palms are grown in order to recycle waste.

To find out more about this study, click on the link below.

https://kcoa-africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/1.-Compostage-et-valorisation-des-dechets_oasiens.pdf

6 Producing 21-day compost

21-day compost is an alternative to ordinary compost made in heaps, pits or bins. It's unique in that it's ready to use just 21 days after it's been produced, unlike other compost, which can take up to 3 months. It's also easier to use, making it practical for people of all ages. Very rich in nutrients and micro-organisms, it can be used on all crops.

Click on one of the links below to find out more about this innovation.

<https://kcoa-africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Production-du-compost-de-21-jours.docx>
<https://kcoa-africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Compost-de-21-jour-du-29-03-23.mp4>

KEYS EVENTS

Organisations	Activitties	When ?
INADES	General Meeting to set up COAN	September
CIPCRE	Organic market in Bafoussam (opposite the Yatch)	Every last Wednesday of the month
SAILD	Organic market in Yaoundé (headquarters of voix du paysan)	27 july 2024
CPF	Organic market in Bandjoun	every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month
GADD	Organic market in Dschang (Near Mbouoh Star Palace)	From Monday to Friday
KCOA	Launch of the guide to promoting gender equality	07 August at 10 a.m. in Cameroon Registration link https://us02web.zoom.us/join/registration/tZctc-urpj4tHtTZ02X11RYVgP9tZVNk_igy#/registration

MOSALI *Voices*

TRANSFORMING THE LANDSCAPE OF AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS IN AFRICA



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