

NDEF Drummer

A Quarterly Newsletter of the National Development Foundation (NDEF) Cameroon

Issue 003

October 2006

NDEF plays host to NWADO assembly

On 11th July, NDEF was host to the latest quarterly meeting of the North West Association of Development Organisations (NWADO). Formerly North West NGO Forum, NWADO changed its name to accommodate expansion of its membership to a diverse range of development actors in the Province, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs) and government representatives.

NWADO's aim is to strengthen the development of civil society in the North West through the sharing of information and the exchange of experiences, creating opportunities for collaboration and avoiding duplication of efforts. In this way, we can maximize the use of our collective resources to promote grassroots development.

At the July meeting, NWADO resolved to organise for the first time a civil society open day in the North West Province. This will take place on October 24th and 25th 2006. It is expected that representatives of civil society from throughout the Province will descend on the premises of the Franco-Cameroon-axis Alliance to exhibit their work to the entire population. By communicating their activities to the public, and networking with other groups, it is hoped that the collective achievements of civil society can be enhanced. The activities are organised to coincide with the World Development Information Day, a day that has been hitherto ignored in the North West Province.

Rapid multiplication of clean plantain/banana suckers

A training workshop on the rapid multiplication of high quality plantain and banana suckers was organised by NDEF for September 18th—20th. The workshop trained NDEF staff and members of its collaborator, the Round Enterprise Common Initiative Group (RECIG) in the Conference Hall of NDEF in Bamenda. The groups are particularly indebted to the facilitator, Ms. Chiatoh Emelda, who ensured that a great deal was gained from the workshop by all participants.

The motivation for the course stemmed from the observation that farmers often rely on poor quality planting materials for their plantain and banana crops; often these are infested with nematodes and/or weevils. Moreover, the limited availability of such planting materials for the regeneration or creation of new farms is also a major constraint on the growth of this agricultural sector. These qualitative and quantitative problems have contributed to poor productivity and thus low production of plantains and/or bananas. Demand thus tends to exceed supply, pushing up prices for these products. The situation is likely to continue given the high demographic growth rate that will further increase demand.

Since high plantain and banana prices are an opportunity for farmers to generate considerable additional income, NDEF and RECIG took

NDEF's stand at the show will highlight the success of its agroforestry and plantain multiplication techniques that have given a major boost to the incomes and livelihoods of rural farmers. We look forward to meeting you on the day, and discussing the many opportunities open to us.

Jonathan Philips—UK Volunteer—Joins NDEF

Jonathan, a Volunteer from England has joined the staff of NDEF to prepare the organisation to better meet the needs of our clients. He arrived in Cameroon (Bamenda) on the 22nd of September 2006 and will work for NDEF for up to a year.

As a trained economist, his role is to make NDEF more effective as an NGO in achieving its objective of improving rural livelihoods. He will help in developing NDEF's agroforestry projects, as well as integrating sound project management, monitoring and evaluation procedures. He will work hard to encourage a micro enterprise development spirit in the activities of the farmer groups which NDEF supports. Farmer groups will thus be able to plan and carry out income generating projects with NDEF providing technical support, training and micro-credit where necessary.

Jonathan has already been impressed by the commitment and friendliness of rural communities in North West Province and looks forward to working closely with all NDEF's stakeholders in the near future.



a decision to empower their staff to respond to the current situation by rapidly making available clean plantain/ banana planting materials for farmers in a bid to increase production and incomes. This should have a further benefit in alleviating poverty in the Bamenda area.

The practical training focused on the PIF technique for plantain multiplication (i.e. the encouragement of plants issued from plantain stems). At the end of the course, a greenhouse was constructed in NDEF's nursery, and a number of plantain explants planted into it for the purpose of multiplication.



Participants constructing a greenhouse for multiplying suckers

Establishment of demonstration farm in Bawock

NDEF is establishing a demonstration farm in Bawock Village (near Bali) so as to train farmers better in farm management and the benefits of integrating multiple improved crop varieties into their farms. This demonstration farm is the second undertaken by NDEF after that of Okomanjang Village (Menchum Division).

Although relatively small in size, it is hoped that the farm will provide a tangible demonstration to small-holders and farmers of the multiple streams of income that even a small area of land can generate. Additionally, there is considerable value to the farm environment in utilising a range of crops and trees that contribute to soil fertility and reduce erosion. As preparations at the site of the farm continue, a plan has been developed to grow seasonal crops such as corn and beans as a rapid source of income, while progressively integrating multiple varieties of fruit trees. So far, a good number of grevillea trees and prunus africana have been used to demarcate the farm. Some grafted pears have also been integrated. Other crops to be integrated are plantains and bananas, yams, pepper, pineapples and sugar cane. In addition to the benefits for soil quality of introducing agroforestry trees, bee farming will be a major activity for the production of honey.



Grevillea for planting

It is worth noting that all the fruit trees, plantains, bananas and yams will be improved varieties derived from the research techniques developed by NDEF's research partners, ICRAF and IITA. Consequently, the farm will act as a source for improved crop varieties and an indispensable way of sharing new agricultural techniques with farmers.

NADAR is born

On July 24th 2006, the Network of Agricultural Development and Adaptive Research (NADAR) came to life. Meeting in the Conference Hall of PRTC Fonta, the following four pioneer organisations agreed to work together as members of NADAR:

- Presbyterian Rural Training Centre (PRTC), Fonta;
- Organisation of Rural Development and Environmental Protection (ORDEP);
- Mbengwi Area Food Crop Cooperative (MAFOCCO), and;
- National Development Foundation (NDEF).

The objective of the network is to collaborate with research institutions in developing and collecting the results of improved agricultural techniques, and adapting those results for implementation in the field realities of farmers. It was observed that much research on aspects of agriculture is lying unexploited in researchers' drawers, when it should be exploited and disseminated for the benefit of farmers and rural communities.

2 The motivation to form such a network stemmed from the formidable work that the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) have been doing to research practical agricultural techniques that can be implemented by local development organisations to increase agricultural production.

It is intended that NADAR focus on establishing arrangements with research institutes that permit the experiences of field adaptation to be rapidly and efficiently fed back into the research process, improving the relevance of that research to farmers' needs.

Delivering academic support to young orphans

As part of a continuous exercise in which NDEF supports the education of young orphans, academic materials were distributed in Pinyin. On the 13th of September 2006 at Menka Village, NDEF distributed writing materials and textbooks to young orphans in the area. The writing materials are distributed on an ownership basis. As for the textbooks, they are given out on a borrowing basis whereby the pupils/students have the opportunity to use the books for one academic year. At the end of the year, the books are returned to NDEF and a request for new books is made as the orphans move to new classes. The used textbooks are then given out to orphans coming up from lower classes. This ensures some sustainability for the project and ongoing support for orphans throughout school.



However, the major problem being faced by this programme is the regular change of textbooks by educational authorities. Many books thus lie waste in our office in the hope that they may reappear in the booklist some time in the future. Resources are also insufficient to expand the programme and pay school fees for these orphans. Consequently, it is necessary for family relations to complement NDEF's support.

Two new staff recruited

NDEF has recently recruited two new employees to add to its staff strength. Mr Aseh Godwill is joining NDEF to work as a Nursery Production Manager. He will be working from our Bamenda Office. Meanwhile, Mr Aneng Eric Akum will join NDEF as the Farm Manager for our Okomanjang Demonstration Farm. Both staff will join NDEF on October 16th 2006.

Upcoming events

In the last quarter of this year, NDEF will focus on empowering farmers on technical and managerial issues related to micro enterprise development. This will include training on how to identify income generating activities, plan projects, management, record keeping and all that it takes to analyse and execute a successful small-scale business project. Specific dates will be arranged in each locality and for further details, please contact NDEF at the details below.