

HEALTHY SOIL HEALTHY FOOD & AGROECOLOGY SUCCESS STORIES



Ayissou Marie happy in her cowpea field at the fruit set stage, combined with maize

Agroecology Farmers More Resilient in the Face of The Rising Prices of Agricultural Inputs

In response to the skyrocketing prices of agricultural inputs, a project spearheaded by the Académie paysanne Nénonéné (Nénonéné Farmers' Academy) has been making significant strides in Togo, helping farmers become more resilient and sustaining a healthy food production cycle.

Amidst the verdant stretches of Kévé, Togo, a example of optimism arises for struggling farmers grappling with the steep prices of agricultural inputs. In November 2022, Gadah Kokou Jérémie, a visionary from the Nénonéné Farmers' Academy, embarked on a transformative journey to equip 100 conventional farmers across five villages with the knowledge and skills necessary to adapt to the escalating costs, especially the dramatic rise in fertilizer prices which now stands at 18,000 FCFA per bag, a 33 per cent (6,000 FCFA) increase from the previous rates.

Aiming to foster a culture of self-sufficiency and promote healthier food production, Jérémie and his team undertook a series of three-day workshops where farmers were introduced to a spectrum of agroecological practices. The

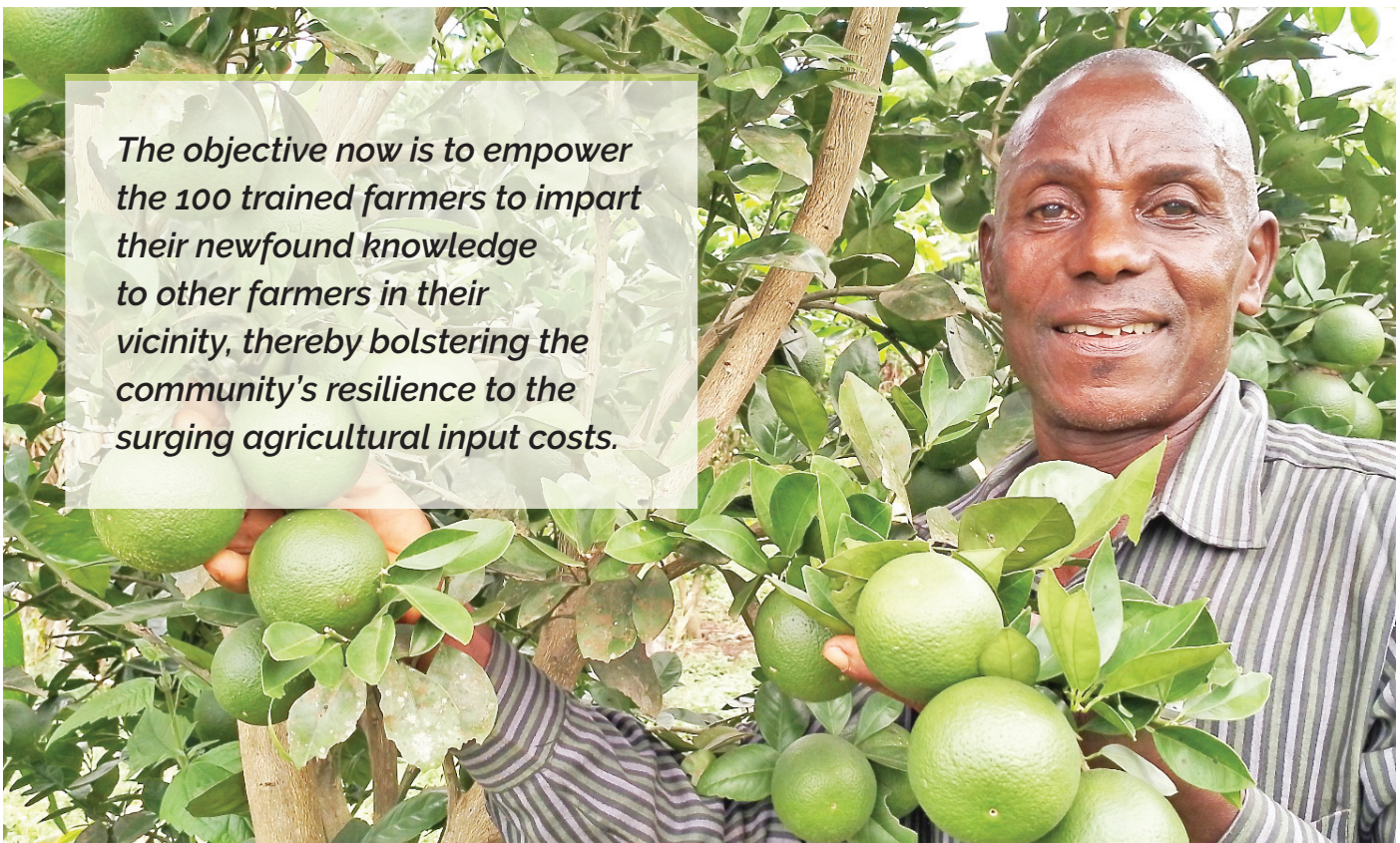


Kpondjo Antoine, proud of his beautiful ears of maize produced using ecological inputs

initiative centred around organic solutions such as the production of bokashi, super magro, and ash broth, along with techniques like mulching and composting.

The outcomes of this pioneering effort have been nothing short of revolutionary. Within a mere nine months, a staggering 90% of the participants have incorporated at least one of the agroecological practices taught into their farming routines. A considerable portion, predominantly women, have witnessed a notable increase in both yield and income over the same area of land. Moreover, they acclaim the enhanced quality and extended preservation of their harvests.

As Adjomé Akossiwa, a young woman participant, enthusiastically shares, "Thanks to mulching, compost, and the zaï technique, my white pepper fields



The objective now is to empower the 100 trained farmers to impart their newfound knowledge to other farmers in their vicinity, thereby bolstering the community's resilience to the surging agricultural input costs.

Gnato Cosmas marvelled at the size and quantity of fruit in his orange grove after applying Bokashi

have been exceptionally generous this year. From a bi-monthly harvest, I now reap a bountiful yield every week, allowing me to earn at least 10,000 FCFA weekly. It's truly a great pleasure."

Similarly, other participants like Gnato Cosmas, an older man, noticed substantial development in his orange and corn crops with the application of bokashi. "As the harvest season approaches, I am confident of a grand yield. My household is set to enjoy quality corn reminiscent of the kind from my grandparents' time," he said, mirroring the sentiment of rejuvenation that the project has instilled in the community.

The initiative does face challenges, chiefly in expanding the reach of the training to create a ripple effect in the locality. The objective



ADJOMÉ Akossiwa harvesting white chilli peppers in her field

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their vicinity, thereby bolstering the community's resilience to the surging agricultural input costs.

At the heart of this transformation lies a unanimous call for a return to the roots of agroecology, as echoed by the African agricultural sphere. Recognizing the pressing need for sustainable solutions, Jérémie advocates for the education of state agricultural advisors, fostering a genuine support system that would usher producers towards a realm of healthy and sustainable agriculture in their nations.

This grassroots movement signals a hopeful future where farmers, equipped with the tools and knowledge to sustain themselves, can thrive despite the rising tide of challenges in the agricultural sector.

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