



Investing in rural people

Côte d'Ivoire

Making small-scale farmers resilient to climate change

In Côte d'Ivoire, agricultural development projects have traditionally focused on boosting productivity, even as investments in post-harvest activities have remained low. Supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Agricultural Value Chains Development Programme (PADFA) seeks to improve post-harvest activities (packaging, storage, processing and marketing) for the strategic value chains of rice, vegetables and mango. PADFA works in the regions of Bagoué, Gbêkê, Hambol, Poro and Tchologo, where production has been low. Farmers' fields were vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and frequent intrusion by insects left many of their crops destroyed.



Group photo of Association of Vegetable Producers (WOPININ) members and families



Promoting agriculture as a business that can generate a surplus for smallholder producers

Thanks to PADFA, production is rising, and small-scale producers' incomes are increasing. PADFA provides these farmers with drought-resistant seeds, inputs and training, resulting in a noticeable increase in the amount of grain harvested.

In the village of Nahoualakaha in Poro region, located in the northern part of Côte d'Ivoire, the rice farmers of the Wowela cooperative (a name that means "we help each other") only had enough crops for their own subsistence, leaving little to no food to sell. Now, with the support of the PADFA programme, the farmers are seeing a promising future. "Before PADFA, I used to farm cotton, maize, potato, groundnut and rice. My productivities were low because the insects attacked my field and destroyed my crops," says Brahim Silué, Farmer, a 38-year-old father of four. "When I joined PADFA, I received drought-resistant rice seeds and inputs. I used to harvest 19 bags; now I can harvest nearly 30. My household consumes part of the rice I produce, and I sell the surplus. With the income, I can afford to cover all my family's needs, which was not the case before."



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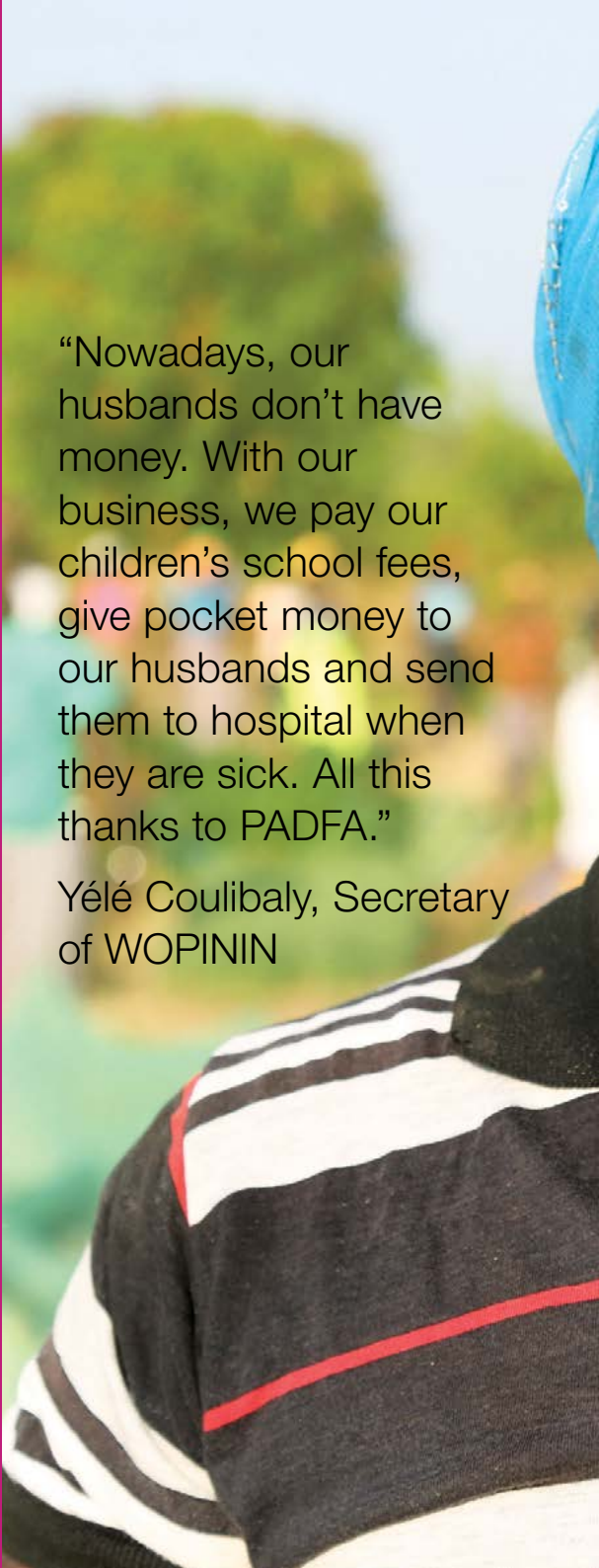
Brahima Silué



No solution to poverty and hunger without rural women

Women's empowerment is a prerequisite to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recognizing that rural women are agents of change, PADFA targeted them so that they now account for a sizeable proportion of the programme. In Nabéguévogo village, for example, 70 of the 73 members of the Association of Vegetable Producers (WOPININ) are women. After PADFA provided certified seeds, inputs, training and equipment in 2017, the members' productivity drastically increased. They now produce enough vegetables to sell as well as eat. The greater production has improved nutrition in the community, especially among children.

"Market gardening is a profitable business. Within a year, you can harvest several times. This allows us to make lots of money," said Yélé Coulibaly, Secretary of WOPININ and mother of six. "Nowadays, our husbands don't have money. With our business, we pay our children's school fees, give pocket money to our husbands and send them to hospital when they are sick. All this thanks to PADFA."



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The Chief of Nabéguévogo village, confident that giving women equal access to land would increase productivity and reduce poverty, allocated 16 hectares of public land to WOPININ. With the support of PADFA, WOPININ members are farming three hectares and have a long-term investment plan for the remaining land, even if PADFA were to close.



Commercial partnerships boost small-scale farmers' incomes

One of PADFA's objectives is to create market access for project participants through the local private sector. Ivoire Tahanman Industrie Agroalimentaire (ITIA) is helping five cooperatives of small-scale mango producers supported by PADFA to obtain organic certification. Renewable each year, this certification enables farmers to export their mangoes to Europe for better prices. Furthermore, ITIA also purchases the mangoes that farmers cannot export, processes them locally and sells them in supermarkets in the cities.

"Today, we process 10 tons of mangoes per day. Our objective is to move soon to processing 20 tons of mangoes per day. Our main clients are supermarkets like Procash, and soon Carrefour will start purchasing the fruits we process," said René Yéo, the general manager of ITIA. "The small-scale producers don't waste their mangoes anymore, and they make more money. Before, they used to dispose of the mangoes they could not sell."



Dry fruits processed by ITIA and sold at supermarkets in the cities





Fatogoma Yéo, 47 years old and father of three, has been processing rice for 15 years now. In September 2020, PADFA connected him to small-scale rice producers. F. Yéo signed a contract with the rice producers to buy all the paddy rice they produced and process it to sell. The small-scale producers are happy that F. Yéo is a guaranteed market.

Fatogoma Yéo with the rice bags



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“PADFA has promised to help me acquire climate-friendly machines. This will help me to have a good quality of rice I process. I can sell the good-quality rice at a better price, and then give also a better price to the rice producers when I buy their paddy rice. In addition, I can also give jobs to more young people in the village so they do not go to the cities to look for opportunities that do not exist,” said Fatogoma Yéo.

“PADFA has promised to help me acquire climate-friendly machines.”

Fatogoma Yéo

Yéo's worker during the processing of the paddy rice

Meeting the challenges of climate change

Climate change is affecting small-scale mango producers, who are losing up to 70-100 per cent of their crop. Drought has reduced the mangoes' quality, and flies can easily destroy the fruit. Mangoes represent an important source of income, as Côte d'Ivoire exports an average of 30,000 tons of mangoes to Europe each year.

To help small-scale mango producers, PADFA is training them on simple techniques to fight the reproduction of flies. This organic treatment consists of attaching yellow boxes to the branches of mango trees. The round boxes contain a product that attracts and traps male flies, while the square boxes attract and trap females. Farmers were also trained on soil and water conservation, using half-moon and conservation agriculture systems to contain rainwater around the mango trees.

“The villagers used to laugh at us when we lost all our mangoes through fly attacks. They said, ‘Instead of planting cashew nut trees, you plant mango trees because you want to export them to Europe. Now you mango farmers you do not have your mangoes to export nor to eat,’” explained Korona Yéo, a mango farmer in Kakologo village. “With the support of PADFA, we have begun to reap the fruits of our efforts. We sell now our mangoes to the companies who export them to Europe. Thirty per cent of mangoes on the European market come from Côte d'Ivoire. My dream is that, one day, I will be able to export my mangoes directly to Europe without passing by the middlemen.”





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Korona Yéo, mango farmer





PADFA is also supporting small-scale rice producers in meeting the challenges of climate change. They receive from PADFA drought-resistant and certified seeds and specified fertilizer to plant rice.

“Before PADFA, I used to plant rice with normal seeds and use the fertilizer I use to plant cotton. Now, with the training, the certified seeds and fertilizer I received from PADFA, I have increased my productivity passing from 23 bags of rice to 35 bags,” said Dramane Silué, a 41-year-old rice farmer. “I sold some bags to have more money and keep some for my household consumption, which was not the case before.”

“With PADFA, I have increased my productivity passing from 23 bags of rice to 35 bags.”

Dramane Silué, rice farmer



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