

Deputy Director General visits Cameroon



Ravi presenting during working session with Cameroon staff

A weeklong working visit to Cameroon was an ideal opportunity for ICRAF's Deputy Director General in charge of Research, Dr Ravi Prabhu, to help local staff reflect on regional funding, management and research issues. Besides fund raising options/possibilities, Ravi met with technical partners, some CGIAR centres based in Cameroon (IITA and CIFOR), the Institute of Agricultural Research for Development (IRAD) and some donor organisations and held working sessions with them. Dr Prabhu was in Cameroon from 25 -29 May 2015.

Upon arrival in Yaounde, Ravi met with all the Cameroon-based staff during which he reviewed the on-going research activities. Scientists working on the different science domains presented their work. Alain Tsoheng presented the work on SD3, Ann Degrande captured the research on rural advisory services, Charlie Mbosso presented the work of SD2/PIM, Bertin Takoutsing presented on the land health, while Zac Tchoundjeu presented on SD5&6, on behalf of Dieudonne Alemagi.

A good number of things captured the DDG's attention as he asked many questions and made some salient proposals. On forestry policy, Ravi sought to know the situation of policy regarding trees and agroforestry tree products (AFTPs) from farm. It was explained that the forestry law is still under review and that ICRAF had submitted its proposals to the competent authorities. The Regional

Coordinator, Dr Zac Tchoundjeu summarised the content of the ICRAF proposal which included the need for ownership of trees by farmers and reclassification/differentiation between AFTPs collected from the farm and the wild. This he said will help encourage tree planting. In the course of the working sessions, Ravi and the Cameroon team were able to identify some great ideas and opportunities for fund raising through the development of proposals.

While in Yaounde, Ravi visited the tree domestication and experimentation station in Mbalmayo. There he saw the gene banks of the indigenous tree species on

which the local team is working on for the past decades. At each stop, Ravi made some recommendations.

Need to get closer to national priorities

Debriefing the team at the end of working visit, Ravi saluted the good relationship with other research centres. "We need to get closer with what the government is planning with national priorities...I was very happy to hear from the Director General of IRAD that ICRAF is the best partner collaborating with IRAD". Ravi used the opportunity to update the team on on-going developments within the CGIAR and the CRPs. He said "our responsibility is to help make things better for you" he announced to staff that top management has given extra money to PDU to help Cameroon office in fund raising. The Regional Coordinator used the opportunity to present some staff problems. Prominent was the situation of some staff who still have contracts of service. Other issues raised concerned the usually very short deadlines for reporting. Staff raised many concerns among them the challenges faced with the online data system. "We are working on a system that will consolidate data such that we do not report the same things many times" said Ravi.

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ICRAF Director of Research calls for cooperation and closer collaboration of CGIAR Centers in Cameroon



Ravi, Zac and Peter exchanging with scientists of CIFOR Cameroon team during courtesy visit. (Photo credit : Fai Collins /CIFOR)

The deputy Director General of the World Agro Forestry Center-ICRAF, Ravi Prabhu last Wednesday made a courtesy call on CIFOR and the other CGIAR centers located at Nkolbison in Yaoundé Cameroon. According to the Director of research at ICRAF, his visit was to get first-hand information of ongoing projects being carried out by the various centers and to take the pulse of the collaboration across the various CGIAR centers located in Yaoundé.

Denis Sonwa, senior scientist at CIFOR who sat in for the hub leader, coordinated the meeting which had representatives from Bioversity International, IITA, ICRAF and CIFOR. The representative of each center presented the ongoing projects which the center is executing

while pinpointing areas of cross center collaboration. After listening to the gamut of current or just ended projects presented by the delegates of the various CGIAR center, Ravi Prabhu noted that Cameroon has a long history of hosting CGIAR Centers whose results have made the country to be a living laboratory in action research. He said that though the issue of collaboration between the CGIAR centers has been on the table since 1995, progress has been relatively timid.

Ravi Prabhu therefore advised researchers in these centers to pool their strengths together and conceive common ground projects which can become flagships of research. The deputy Director General of ICRAF indicated that for this to be feasible the scientists should come together to brainstorm and write common concept notes. He however cautioned that for this think tank to be effective there will be need for selflessness and thinking out the confines of center as only a strong will can be the centripetal force. The deputy Director General of ICRAF equally suggested that the scientists of these centers could do a compilation their difference research results to give a fuller picture of CGIAR. Before the meeting broke up, Zac Tchoundjeu , Regional Director of ICRAF for West and Central Africa took up the challenge to convene the meeting that will bring together scientists from the different CGIAR center in Cameroon to brainstorm and come up with common concept notes that will not only enhance their work but pull varying talents together to improve results and give a true image of CGIAR. Apart from CIFOR that had a host of scientists in attendance, Bioversity International was represented by Hermann TAEDOUMG and ITTA by Yemefack Martin.

The deputy Director General of the World Agro Forestry Center Ravi Prabhu was accompanied by Peter Minang and Zac Tchoundjeu.

Source: Fai Collins / CIFOR

Atelier bilan des CVC



Les 23 et 24 Mars, la salle des Jeunes de Soubré a abrité les travaux de l'atelier bilan des activités des Operateurs CVC- Centre Villageois de la Cacao Culture- du projet V4C. Et ils étaient tous présents, les 52 Opérateurs CVC en compagnie de 28 Agents de Développement Rural (ADR) de l'ANADER, 13 techniciens CDC-Centre de Développement de la Cacaoculture- et autour d'eux les Juniors Scientists, les Masters Trainers et autres responsables du projet V4C. Une véritable première rencontre du genre après la remise officielle de diplômes de fin de formation aux premiers cités en Septembre 2014.

Toutes les activités menées par ces Opérateurs CVC ont été ainsi été passées en revue. De la vente des intrants à la mise en place de pépinières en passant par l'installation de germoirs de bananes plantains, les actions des Opérateurs CVC ont été jaugées et des conclusions et recommandations ont été faites.

Aussi, de loin, l'importance de la collaboration entre les acteurs présents pour la réussite des activités des Opérateurs CVC a été réitérée. Qu'ils soient Opérateurs CVC du modèle V4C/Mars ou de Cargill, de Biopartners, de Barry Callbault ou de HKF (un traitant), l'objectif de fournir des biens et services professionnels aux producteurs de cacao reste le même. Pour arriver à cela, il a été souligné que les Opérateurs CVC devraient être aussi légalement constitués et payer ainsi leurs impôts. Le Chef de Service des Impôts de Soubré qui a animé une session sur le sujet pendant la rencontre, a, avec force détails, souligné l'importance du civisme fiscal et exprimé sa disponibilité à aider les Opérateurs CVC à être en règle vis-à-vis de la loi. Pour apporter un plus à leurs aptitudes de gestion de produits phytosanitaires qu'ils commercialisent, la Direction départementale du Ministère de l'Agriculture a aussi fait une communication sur ledit sujet. Au final, c'est une rencontre riche et pleine d'enseignements sur les activités menées par les Opérateurs CVC qui s'est déroulée.

L'élagage sévère fait la différence chez les opérateurs CVC



Isaac dans son champ de cacao élagué portant des cabosses en saison non indiquée

GBAKA Lou Richard, plus connu sous le prénom d'Isaac, est un producteur visiblement heureux aujourd'hui! Il ne peut s'empêcher de dévisager la parcelle de son champ où il a accepté l'expérience de « l'élagage sévère » dans le cadre de la démonstration conduite par le projet V4C. Et La joie visible de ce producteur est compréhensible. En effet à cette période de l'année (février 2015), il est généralement rare de voir des cabosses dans un champ de cacao. Mais à la différence de la partie de son champ non élaguée, de nombreuses cabosses sont suspendues dans toute la parcelle qu'il ne cesse d'admirer avec espoir.

« Il faut être vraiment ivre pour faire cela dans son champ », ces propos du propriétaire du champ voisin à la vue de la parcelle en train d'être élaguée, Isaac s'en rappelle clairement. En octobre 2014, il était en effet en compagnie de Jean Bedel, l'opérateur CVC du son village Gbaleville (situé à environ 35 km de la ville de Soubré). Ensemble ils avaient en effet "sévérement élagué" une partie de son champ en débarrassant les cacaoyers de tout leur branchage encombrant et inutile donnant l'impression que le champ avait été exagérément nettoyé, car il était devenu vide. Mais visiblement cela était " le traitement a imposé au champ" de 4,5 ha et vieux de 26ans.

Certes Isaac a diversifié ses cultures par la mise en place de champs de café et d'hévea, mais il reste très attaché à la cacaoculture. Jean Bedel, l'Opérateur CVC qui l'assiste aujourd'hui dans la conduite de son champ de cacao, est un jeune homme qu'il connaît très bien. Laisant de côté, comme il le dit l'orgueil de prétendre tout savoir sur la base de sa longue expérience dans le domaine du cacao, Isaac n'a pas hésité à avoir recours à ce jeune entrepreneur rural, formé et installé grâce au projet V4C, ami du reste de son frère cadet. « Il est faut être humble dans la vie. Ce jeune homme a été formé dans ce métier, donc je lui fais confiance » souligne-t-il.

Et il a eu raison de lui faire confiance et de s'engager à mettre en œuvre les bonnes pratiques agricoles à lui enseigné par Jean Bedel. Ainsi, de son propre chef, il a décidé d'élaguer tout le reste de son champ de cacao où il invita le Jeune Opérateur CVC qui constata ce travail avec fière surprise.

Stakeholders in Mali trained on rural resource centre management



Three training sessions on the establishment and management of rural resource centres held in Mali last April. Organized by the World Agroforestry Centre in the localities of Sévaré, Dimbal and Soufouroulaye within the framework of the GCC and SmAT Scaling projects, the two-day training of trainers was a great opportunity to familiarize local NGOs (CRS, World Vision and Aga Khan Foundation), other extension services (from Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry) and ICRAF staff in charge of follow-up of community-based organizations to help achieve project's goals. The training was intended to create a group of effective trainers at Mopti region who can deploy appropriate andragogy techniques in delivering learning interventions, equip local NGOs collaborating with ICRAF-Mali in having a critical mass of staff that can conduct and facilitate trainings effectively and provide

support and advice to community based organizations, and to contribute to quality capacity development of project's beneficiaries.

To help participants better understand and familiarize with the project's goal, ICRAF scientists made a number of presentations during the two last sessions in Dimbal and Soufouroulaye. Topics covered during this three-day of community based training included : formation and strengthening of groups, roles and responsibilities in RRCs; leadership and group management, group cohesion, conflict management, organisation and animation of group meetings and collaboration between RRCs and other organisations, working together in RRC; planning, reporting, follow-up and evaluation in RRC. The theoretical sessions were very interactive to allow maximum participation and there were also many practical exercises (on leadership, conflict management, action plan development) to facilitate comprehension. About 15 community members, representing different social and professional groups (farmer organisations, women and youth associations, nursery operators, traders, village authorities) from Dimbal and 2 representatives each from 2 other villages, participated in the training. Sixteen women & 20 men and 3 local NGOs representatives participated from Soufouroulaye.

Before the end of the workshop, the participants had developed their action plans showing the different steps to set up RRCs in their respective zones. These training sessions were well appreciated both by local NGOs and farmers. For the smooth continuation of project's activities, a key measure needed is the regular follow up on the working plan of each group.

Shea warehouse to alleviate poverty among women in Mali



Shea fruits



Project stakeholders laying foundation stone of Shea warehouse

A warehouse for the storage of Shea nuts or Karité has been lauded by stakeholders in Mali as a milestone in the economic empowerment of women involved in the collection and sale of shea nuts. A ceremony to lay down the foundation stone for the warehouse held on 6th May 2015 in Bamako. The event was organised by ICCO Cooperation (Interchurch Cooperative for Development Cooperation) in partnership with ICRAF and USAID Mali. The 3000 tons capacity warehouse is expected to cost some CFA 50 million (about 100,000 USD) upon completion.

The warehouse is being constructed within the framework of the SmAT-Scaling project funded by USAID-Mali and implemented by ICRAF for a total duration of 5 years, including 3-years of public-private Partnership. The program is being implemented by a consortium of partners led by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). ICCO was therefore selected by ICRAF for the implementation of the public-private partnership in the Shea sector. This component aims at strengthening capacities of actors of the Shea sector in Mali, and to connect farmer organizations to markets.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Accelerated Economic Growth Office Deputy Director at USAID Mali, Ms. Marika Olson, lauded the public-private partnership in the Shea sector saying it will help link women's cooperatives with regional and international markets. She said the

project will equally help increase the income of women within the project area. Meanwhile, the ICRAF-WCA/Sahel Coordinator Dr. Antoine Kalinganire outlined some of the agroforestry technologies ready for dissemination. He said ICRAF and partners have developed shrub/tree fodder banks with *Gliricidia sepium*, *Pterocarpus erinaceus* and *P. lucens*, live fencing with *Jatropha curcas*, farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR) with gum Arabic, Shea trees, *néré* and *Faidherbia albida*, fruit trees in crop fields and parklands, food banks with baobab and moringa. Lastly, with the soil and water management techniques (*zaï*, half-moons, stone contours). And the representative of the Director General of ICCO, Bah Ataoulaye, said the project will serve as a springboard for the development of the Shea sector, adding that it will help create direct and indirect jobs.

The SmAT-Scaling project aims at enhancing access to and use of tree-based climate-smart technologies through effective scaling-up of already-developed and proven agroforestry technologies and improved market access, in order to increase food and nutritional security, as well as build resilience of farming systems. The project also seeks to strengthen the resilience of women and youth to climate shocks. In addition, at least 25 cooperatives will be registered under the Global Shea Alliance to give them greater visibility and direct access to regional and international markets targeting over 63,000 beneficiaries.

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