

COOCENKI MAGAZINE



COOCENKI

**SUPPORT PROGRAMM FOR FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS IN
AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC COUNTRIES
"FO4ACP"**

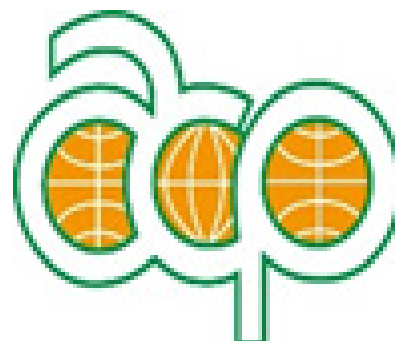
***Agricultural sector: Corn
North Kivu/DRC***

What to remember from the FO4ACP 2019-2024 programm



WITH THE SUPPORT OF EAFF

UNDER FIDA/ACP/UE FUNDING



Brief Presentation of the FO4ACP Programm.

The programm is based on 4 components listed below:

1. Provision of economic services along priority value chains
 2. Improvement of advocacy and political dialogue by national farmers' organisations (NFOs)
 3. Strengthening the institutional capacities of farmers' organisations
 4. Visibility and communication of the project
- The general objective of the programme is to increase incomes and improve livelihoods, food and nutritional security and the security of organised smallholders and family farmers in target areas of ACP countries.

Specific Objective

1: POs and farmer-led enterprises improve technical and economic services to their members along value chains

Specific Objective

2: POs influence business policies and environments for the transformation of family farming and the development of sustainable and adaptive economic initiatives and farmer-led enterprises

3: POs are responsible organizations capable of effectively fulfilling their institutional functions

4: Ensure the Visibility and communication of the project at the national level

Meetings:

A total of 14 business meetings were organized between 2020 and 2024, involving producers, processors, traders and financial actors, around the following themes:

- access to quality inputs and financing of agricultural activities
- contractualization of business between producers and traders
- The modalities of access to financing for farmers from MFIs/Banks



Business meeting held in Goma



Business meeting held in Butembo



Business meeting held in Mighobwe

Village Savings and Credit Associations, AVEC,⁴ in acronym, set up as a local tool for savings and credit for farmers

- 20 operational AVECs bringing together 1,153 members, including 329 men and 824 women
- Credit granted to farmers: \$82,774.36
- 4 financial education training sessions conducted for 124 members of the 4 AVECs initiated by the grassroots cooperatives with the technical support of COONCENKI



AVEC in Kabasha, Mighobwe, Luofu, Kipese

Advocacy and political dialogue by COOCENKI (OPN)

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6 advocacy and political dialogue meetings were held around the following themes:

- Standardization of units of measurement for agricultural products: Advocacy note submitted to the provincial government of North Kivu for a specific decree on the standardization of units of measurement.
- The implementation of the OHADA uniform act relating to the law of cooperative societies:
- Register of cooperative societies available, registration and registration of cooperative societies in the register launched in the DRC 2024
- An advocacy mission carried out in Goma to monitor the launch of the maintenance of the register of cooperative societies at the provincial level, with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Rural Development by the Director or Executive Secretary and Chairman of the Board of Directors of COOCENKI, SYDIP and LOFEPACO in 2023. During this mission, 2 other points were discussed, namely: Access to support funds for cooperatives and farmers' organizations from the Ministry of Rural Development and the national rural development strategy.
- Participation in the meeting of the official launch of the registration and registration register of cooperative societies, held in Goma in April 2024
- Participation in the joint mission EAaff-Coocenki-Conapac-Lofepaco-Sydip at Kinshasa in the mobilization of new technical and financial partners. To know the General Secretariat of MINAGRI, FONOREDD and the IFAD-DRC office
- Development of 2 cooperative advocacy notes on the occasion of the celebration of the International Days of Cooperatives submitted to the Congolese Government



EAFF advocacy mission in KINSHASA



Advocacy mission in Goma/SG/MINADER

Capacity building of farmers Cooperatives and institutional development 6

Cooperative members, leaders and staff of COOCENKI benefited from training on the following themes:



OHADA law training



C.S/COOCENKI Members Training

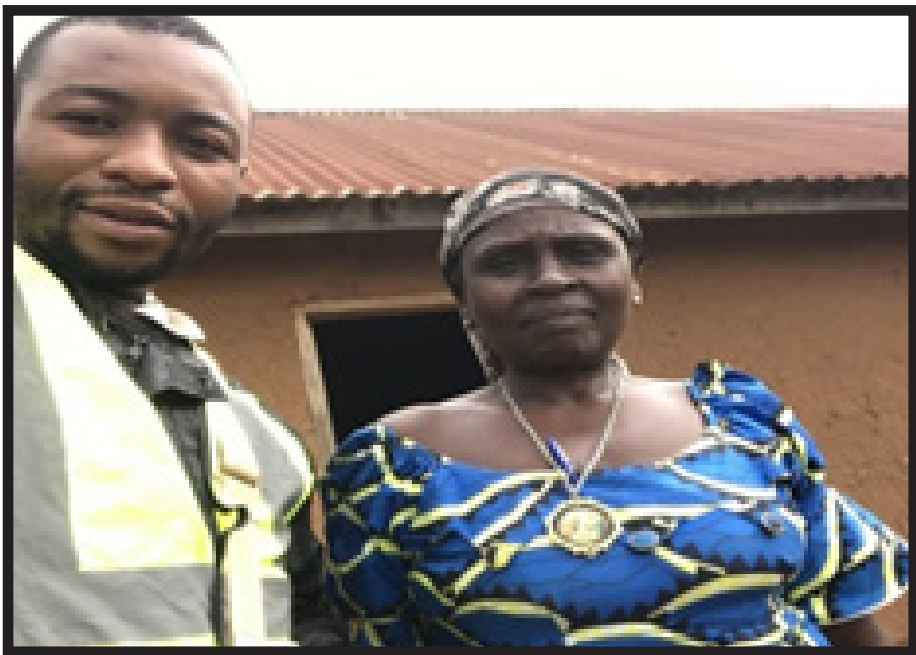


Participants in the 41st AGO-COOCENKI

- The constitution and operation of a co-operative society according to the OHADA law.
- Contract farming and market access mechanisms.
- Group sales and post-harvest operations for maize.
- Training of COOCENKI Supervisory Board members on internal audit techniques.
- Support for the holding of Ordinary General Assemblies (AGO) of COOCENKI.
- Support of 14 cooperatives in obtaining accreditation documents
- Support for the organization of the celebration of international cooperative days with submission of advocacy notes
- Training of 2 COOCENKI staffs on resilient agriculture and climate change as well as agroecology practices.
- Training of 3 COOCENKI staffs on monitoring-evaluation and financial reporting of FIDA projects
- Training of 30 farmers in training on strategies for access to finance by family farmers and on Climate change and resilient agriculture in Lubero-Beni territory
- 40 family farmers trained on resilience and agriculture adapted to climate change in Lubero territories

Studies made for the development of economic services provided to farmers⁷

- A study done on access to financing by small-scale family farmers in Lubero-Beni territory in 2023
- A study on climate change and resilient agriculture in Lubero-Beni territory
- A meeting held to restitution the results of the studies carried out with farmers



Study on Access to Finance



Working sessions at COOPAKI-Kayna



Restitution meeting of studies done in Mighobwe

Business contracting and group sales of corn 8

- Development of the 5 business plans of basic cooperatives in Beni-Lubero territories.
- 6 contracts for the delivery of maize signed with private companies (Ets Halinunga, CDPP, PAM, Ets Baraka, Ets KMO, Enth Business).
- 1320.45 tonnes of maize were collected and sold by farmers to generate total incomes of over \$358,650.95.
- 5 signed financing access contracts / financial credits with MFIs / banks for a total amount of \$109,000 including COOPEC-CECAFEP: \$41,000 COOPEC-UDEV: \$68,000 for Facilitate group sales of corn through cooperatives.
- A collaboration protocol signed between COOCENKI and Equity BCDC-Butembo Agency for Financial Inclusion and Access to Agricultural Finance for Family Farmers Members of Basic Cooperatives.
- 3 collaborative framework agreements signed with maize processing and marketing companies in the delivery of 750 tonnes of grain maize in 2025, including ETS Baraka (300 tonnes), ETS KMO (200t) and Coldec-Scoops (250t).



Business meeting with the HALINUNGA Establishment in Musienene



Director COOCENKI and Manager Equity BCDC, Agency-Butembo

Visibility of Coocenki's actions

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- Production of 56 T-shirts, 20 vests and 2 banners, calico and 38 calendars
- Coocenki website update, www.coocenki.org Publish the information, achievements of the Coocenki
- 5 success stories produced and documented for the actions carried out by the COOCENKI



Financing corn cultivation through “AVECs”, the experience of Balikwisha Chrysostome



Muhindo Balikwisha Chrysostome is a farmer from Kabasha, member of the Cooperative of Farmers and Breeders (COAGREL), a peasant organization whose head office is in Kabasha, a village in the Ruwenzori sector in the Beni territory in North Kivu. Having been involved in agriculture since his youth, he introduced village savings and credit banks, “VAUX”, into his organization, through which members have access to agricultural financing. He shares his own experience in financing corn cultivation after receiving a donation of agricultural inputs as part of the Support Program for Peasant Organizations in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (FO4ACP) in acronym which is implemented in Beni-Lubero by the Central Cooperative of North Kivu (COOCENKI) in acronym in the corn sector. Chrysostome received for the first time a donation of 5 kilograms of corn seed of the “Bazooka” variety in the March 2023 season followed by technical support from COOCENKI within the framework of the East African Agricultural Producers Federation (EAFD). But its yield is impressive. “Personally, I sowed 5 kilograms, but from each kilogram I made a bag and a half or 750 kilograms of corn. I realized that this bazooka variety is too fruitful. In addition, I am not the only beneficiary, there are many of us and we already have multiple achievements.”

Lubero: access to the corn market raises the economic level of Kasereka Chuma Flavien thanks to the FO4ACP program 11



Kasereka Chuma Flavien, a young farmer in his forties, runs a mill in the Luo-fu shopping center, a town located south of the Lubero territory more than 150 km from the city of Butembo in North Kivu. This man is one of the many beneficiaries of the Support Program for Peasant Organizations in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (FO4ACP) in acronym which is implemented in Beni-Lubero by the Central Cooperative of North Kivu (COOCENKI) in acronym in the corn sector. Since then, he has easily accessed the corn market allowing him to recover economically.

A member of the Luofu Agricultural Producers Cooperative (COOPALU), a primary farmers' cooperative of COOCENKI, Mr. Kasereka Chuma Flavien was provided with agricultural inputs consisting of 3 kilograms of corn seeds of the "Bazooka" variety, fertilizer and pesticides. Furthermore, still within the framework of this partnership with COOPALU, he also benefited from training ses-

sions on new cultivation techniques and access to the agricultural market. "When harvest time comes, we call on our partner COOCENKI to express our desire to find a market for our produce. Because in fact, more often, economic operators in the agricultural sector who come to us from Goma, Butembo, Kyanyabayonga and even those from Kayna come to impose their price on us. This is how, after telling this reality to COOCENKI, they directed us towards a more profitable market," he explained to us.



Lukanga: Neema Mutughu, the example of a farmer who succeeded thanks to the FO4ACP program in the corn sector

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A farmer from the Lukanga agglomeration, in the Bukenye group in the Lubero territory in North Kivu, Katungu Neema Muthughu is a member of the Cooperative of Farmers for the Development of Lukanga (COOADE-LU). It is thanks to this farmers' cooperative that she was targeted as a beneficiary of the Support Program for Farmers' Organizations in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (FO4ACP) in acronym which is implemented in Beni-Lubero by the Central Cooperative of North Kivu (COOCEN-

KL) in acronym in the corn sector. Through her seasonal yields, she has become the model of a farmer who has managed to easily earn a living thanks to agriculture, making her family and her entire community proud.

It was during the first growing season of 2023 that Mrs. Neema Mutughu received 3 kilograms of maize seeds of the "Bazooka" variety from the Central Cooperative of North Kivu. According to her, this support was also accompanied by training on new cultivation practices. "Apart from the seed, they also trained me. It was at this time that I realized that I was doing it very badly be-

cause I had no idea about the standards of maize cultivation, and this had an impact on the yield. However, since I was trained through EAFF, I have learned row cultivation, field monitoring, and even seed quality control," she confessed. For the abundant harvest of the first season of 2023, Mrs. Neema Mutughu has earned significant income. During this period, the price of a kilogram of corn on the local market varied between 800 and 900 Congolese francs. Through joint management with her husband Kambale, the couple decided to invest in pig and goat farming.



Lubero: successful economic and social reintegration thanks to the “AVEC”, the great experience of Syavulisembo Isaac

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Syavulisembo Isaac, 40 years old, recently moved with his entire family to the village of Mighobwe from Kitsombiro in the south of the Lubero territory in North Kivu. This transition would not have been easy if he had not joined a peasant cooperative called the Mighobwe Agricultural Producers Cooperative (COOPROAGRI) in which village savings and credit associations (AVEC) are organized.



When he arrived in Mighobwe, Syavulisembo Isaac had neither a house nor a field to cultivate. He had to start from scratch after leaving everything in Kitsombiro due to various circumstances in life. I joined COOPROAGRI when I had just arrived from Kitsombiro, I was told if you want to earn a living here, you have to join an agricultural cooperative; once you are a member as a farmer, you will benefit from it. There, they gave me guidance until they gave me a field to cultivate. I took this field of half a hectare. At this stage, I won-

dered if I would have the means to exploit it, but the other members of the cooperative reassured me. They told me that if you pay your membership in a AVEC you could take out a loan with which you can exploit your field without any problem. I immediately formalized my membership and, at the same time, I started plowing my field. But at one point, I reached the end of my strength as the growing season approached. So, in order not to be late with the season, I requested my first credit worth 200 US dollars. This money helped me finalize the work until I was ready to receive the seed, “he testified. Trained in agropastoral and small livestock pharmacy, Mr. Syavulisembo Isaac invested his money in sheep breeding. He puts his knowledge in agropastoral to good use by combining agriculture with livestock breeding.

Beni: the “AVECs” boost corn cultivation, a fascinating story by Judson Maghulu

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In Kabasha, a village in the Beni territory in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, several family farmers have grouped together in village savings and credit associations (AVEC) in acronym. In this rural environment devoid of microfinance companies and traditional banks, the AVECs are an alternative for accessing agricultural financing, particularly corn cultivation.



This Friday, November 7, 2024, the weather is nice when we arrive at the COOAGREL headquarters in Kabasha on the Butembo-Beni road axis in North Kivu. In the courtyard, we see men and women gathered in groups of 15 to 20 people handling banknotes. “These are the members of the AVECs!” exclaims an agent of the Central Cooperative of North Kivu (COOCENKI), the cooperative to which they are affiliated. COOAGREL is one of the cooperatives supported as part of the imple-

mentation of the FO4ACP project with the financial support of EAFD under the financing of IFAD from the European Union. Among them, Judson Maghulu, a young farmer of 27 years old who does not know how to get rid of his AVEC, the only source of financing for his agro-pastoral activities. “I am a young entrepreneur, I practice agriculture and livestock breeding, also a member of COAGREL, (the cooperative of farmers and breeders) specialized in corn farming especially, but also in the technical supervision of breeders and farmers, that is to say, providing them with support in agro-pastoral,” he presents.



The Central Cooperative of North Kivu, COOCENKI in acronym, is a Congolese peasant organization, bringing together agricultural cooperatives in the DR Congo. Created since 1980, COOCENKI is a second-level cooperative, which was approved in 1987; this approval was renewed in 2017 by the governor of the province of North Kivu under Provincial Order No. 01/171/ CAB/GP-NK/2016 and Ministerial Technical Approval No. 026/CAB/MIN/AGRIPEL/2003 of 08/ April/2003 of the National Minister of Agriculture. It is registered in the Register of Cooperative Societies under No. 3072/VB/001/T16/2016.

VISION

An economically strong peasant world thanks to agropastoral activity and the marketing of agricultural and agro-industrial products.

MISSION

Support for community and family agropastoral production in general.

Processing and Marketing of agricultural and agro-industrial products.

Peasant structuring; Training and cooperative education

Promotion of women, gender and young farmers

OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure the flow of agricultural and livestock products on markets inside and outside the DR Congo for its members.
2. Create at any instance entities for the production, processing and marketing of agricultural products
3. Carry out, at least once a year, an inspection of its

members.

4. Exercise administrative, technical and financial control over its members and the institutions affiliated to its members.

5. Ensure consistency and promote the development of the network.

6. Represent its members with their partners at the local, national and international levels

7. Define, for the use of its members, the main guidelines of a code of ethics.

8. Conclude, suspend and terminate contracts of all kinds on behalf of its members.

9. Negotiate, guarantee and endorse bank loans to support its members in the agricultural sector.

10. Organize a medical-sanitary action for members of primary cooperatives.

11. Initiate pilot fields for agro-pastoral demonstrations.

12. Integrate women farmers and young farmers in the agricultural development process

AREAS AND INTERVENTION APPROACH:

1. Agriculture:

- Support for the development of value chains in the following agricultural sectors:

Cassava sector Corn sector Bean sector Rice sector Potato sector Soybean sector Palm oil sector Coffee sector as a cash crop

- Supply of quality agricultural inputs: Food seeds, mineral fertilizers, herbicides - Technical su-

pervision of agricultural producers grouped into cooperatives. 2. Marketing of agricultural products:

- Organize the joint sale of agricultural products from small farmers
- Facilitate small farmers' access to the provincial, national and regional markets with secure delivery contracts,
- Facilitate access to bank credit to finance the collection and marketing of agricultural products
- Facilitate the transport of agricultural products to consumption centers
- Organize marketing for agricultural products from small farmers,
- Train producers on quality standards

3. Processing of agricultural products:

- Provide agricultural producers with suitable technology for drying, cleaning, storing and processing cereals (hydraulic mill)
- Train producers on quality standards
- A corn processing plant to produce semolina
- A micro power plant to activate the corn processing unit

4. Cross-cutting themes:

- Peasant structuring; training and cooperative education
- Gender promotion in agricultural activities
- Young farmers
- Micro credit
- Poultry farming

FULL ADDRESS AND CONTACTS

Range of action: Democratic Republic of Congo Head office: Village MIGHOBWE in Lubero Territory on the BUTEMBO-GOMA road axis at 132km Our liaison offices BUTEMBO: 20

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