Editorial

“Setting up projects for rural youth without the involvement of farmers’ organizations is a mistake”

Brief

Major issues and challenges of FO’s local stocks in West Africa to ensure food and nutrition security p3

In the spotlights

The Mamadou CISSOKO Farmer University of ROPPA

A farmer training offer to support the strengthening of leaders of farmer organizations and family farms is underway p4

Life of the networks

The right to food: a fundamental right often ignored p6

AFDI - FFF- CTOP / REJEPAT PARTNERSHIP p7
Young people are the driving force behind the development and desired changes in West Africa. In fact, people under 35 represent more than 60% of the population of our region, and this proportion is ever-growing from year to year, due to the persistence of the demographic boom in this part of Africa.

Essentially living in rural areas, the majority of these young people face thorny problems of adequate training and education, on the one hand, and access to gainful and rewarding employments, on the other. State-led public policies generally offer solutions that are ill-suited to these two fundamental requirements in order to make the best use of the development potential of the region’s youth.

Guaranteeing these young people, rural in particular, a harmonious integration into income-generating activities of the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector; it is to remove them from mafia networks, terrorism and above all illegal immigration. Such a strategy is the major concern of all stakeholders in our region, mainly agricultural socio-professional organizations.

Since its inception in 2000, ROPPA has made adequate treatment of the situation of youth one of its elements of doctrine and advocacy. Arguments for the promotion of family farms include the decisive role that each member of the family must play, including youth.

This vision materialized through two strong actions. The first concerns the endowment of the network with a regional strategy for the integration/installation of youth in the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector in West Africa in 2019. The second relates to the establishment in 2020 of the regional youth college. In this vein, several initiatives and projects for the integration of young people led by farmers’ organizations have been promoted. There are many examples in all ROPPA member countries. These initiatives are very interesting, both because of their anchoring in our regions, and of the results they produce. In fact, beyond the intrinsic performances in terms of improving productivity and mitigating the multiple constraints with which the sector is confronted, they help draw a fundamental lesson: the exclusion of youth from the different phases of the projects is one of the key factors of their failure.

ROPPA has adopted this lesson, incorporates it into current projects and invites partners at all levels to become aware of this situation. Without false modesty, we have several experiences to share in this area.

In fact, the members of ROPPA have initiated several successful experiences of integrating youth into the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector. Successes recorded mainly result from the deep knowledge of the psychology of these youth, their concerns and areas or sub-sectors bearer of intrinsic potentiality for the development by the farmer leaders. It is based on this knowledge of the field; intrinsic factor of success, that farmers’ organizations through ROPPA asks to be closely associated with all initiatives aiming at promoting youth integration in the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector.

Thus, the opportunity was given to us through the publications that we launched in April 2021 to share some experiences of these rural youth through their backgrounds, places in family farms and their ambitions.

Ibrahima COULIBALY
Chairman of ROPPA
Since the dawn of time, storage has always been a tool in the resilience strategy of communities and States in Africa and elsewhere in the face of various crises. Local stocks, built for years by the FOS and communities to cope with various hazards, play a key role in supporting vulnerable families, regulating prices at the local level to favor both consumers and farmers. In many countries, local stocks have proven to be an instrument that allows Family Farms to access profitable markets. The development and strengthening of storage under the implementation is therefore fundamental in public policies.

Under the formulation of the ECOWAP’s implementing instruments adopted in 2005, RFOs proposed, defended and obtained the establishment of a regional reserve for agricultural products as one of the key instruments for the implementation of this policy. For ROPPA, the goal of this instrument would be to effectively and sustainably respond to food emergencies which are almost structural in some localities in the region, but also to ensure a certain regulation of agricultural markets, an essential function that many countries have or groups of agri-exporting countries have fully exploited to achieve the development of their agriculture.

The effectiveness of this strategic option for the prevention and management of food crises and Food and Nutrition Security has resulted in the creation of the Regional Food Security Reserve and the adoption of a regional strategy with 3 lines of defense constituted by a continuum of instruments at local, national and regional level. Notwithstanding the key achievements and results achieved, there are also challenges which limit the full expression of the instrument’s potential. If links between the first line of defense and the constitution of national stocks seem to be established in some countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso despite the limits observed, there is generally still a lot to be done within ECOWAS’s countries for the real deployment of local stocks as the first line of defense and their mobilization for the constitution of the regional reserve.

They face huge challenges that do not allow them to reach their full potential. Some challenges would necessarily have to be met in order to achieve the goals assigned to its local stocks. It is about: i) the continuous increase in infrastructure, particularly the public ones, allowing forever a greater storage capacity and an increase in the quality of products, ii) the strengthening of the organizational and technical capacities of FOSs which bear local stocks allowing to make these tools real aggregators of the FF’s productions ; iii) Improvement of operational mechanisms allowing the connection between the 3 lines of defense of the Food and Nutritive Security ; iv) improvement of the business environment to facilitate the marketing with lucrative prices of cereals and other products from FFS regarding the Food and Nutritive Security of communities and countries.

Imelda AGONDANOU
ROPPE Program Officer
In 2001, that is to say from the day after its establishment, Board members of ROPPA, based on an analysis of the challenges of FOs and family farms related to the environment of the Agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector, identified “farmer-to-farmer training and learning” as one of the strategic levers to support the consolidation of the infant farmer movement and strengthen the capacities of family farms to perform their functions effectively in a context marked by the liberalization of economies, withdrawal of States from the productive sector, and weakening of the public offer of agricultural training and advisory services.

The building process of the FUR concretely started in 2012. It was based on the one hand on the use of lessons learned from experiences and farmer-to-farmer training and learning systems from some national platforms and federations; and on the other hand on conclusions of discussions organized for this purpose with the participation of farmer leaders, representatives of training institutions, research institutions having a strong experience in collaboration with FOs at all levels and resource persons with proven experiences in agricultural and rural training. In 2014, the strategic orientations of the Farmer University were adopted.

The FUR thus defined is a new approach of “farmer training” which puts endogenous farmer knowledge and achievements of Farmer Organizations (FOs) in terms of training, at the heart of the educational approach and facilitation of training sessions while by associating external technical expertise. It proceeds in this way by identifying and co-constructing training modules, topics and sub-topics with farmers and FOs; and the construction of pair farmer leaders / external technical human resources for the conduct of training sessions. Under the responsibility of ROPPA’s Board members, the FUR’s institutional system comprises two operational bodies, namely the steering committee and educational committee, and a sponsorship committee.

Within its committees, there are there the representatives of youth and women’s colleges, private actors offering training services (AFDI, INADES Formation in Togo; IPR/IFRA, INIFORP, AFDI and IRPAD in Mali; and ROPPA, RN-FAR / BF in Burkina) and public actors (Togo: DFDTOPA and DFV from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry in charge of youth, Ministry for the promotion of women and the Ministry in charge of vocational training; Mali: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, Ministry responsible for the promotion of Women; and in Burkina: Multipurpose Agricultural Center of Matourkou (CAP/M) of the Ministry of Agriculture, DGFOMR, Directorate General for Vocational Training and National Certification Commission).

The establishment of these committees helps create and strengthen partnerships frameworks between FOs and public and private actors. It should also be noted, apart from, among others, their role of defining the operational orientations of the ROPPA Farmers’ University, of overall monitoring of the actions carried out and developing educational content, these committees also constitute information and dissemination channels of the farmer training approach promoted by ROPPA.

The FUR offers two farmer-to-farmer training and learning formats: training sessions in the form of a seminar which lasts approximately 7 days and thematic training courses or cycles. Taking into account the strategic priorities of the network, training courses mainly target young people and women with a view to strengthening their capacities in their professions; policy dialogue and influence. These training courses aim at the integration of these socio-

In the spotlights

The Mamadou CISSOKO Farmer University of ROPPA, a farmer training offer to support the strengthening of leaders of farmer organizations and family farms is underway
professional categories in the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector and preparation of the succession within the FOs, capacity-building of the FO's technicians.

From 2014 to 2015, three (03) regional thematic training meetings under the FUR were organized in Burkina Faso, Mali and Benin. To have a comprehensive look at the strengths and weaknesses with a view to improving the approach, a review was carried out in November 2015 and April 2016. In 2017, a fourth regional thematic meeting accompanied by a roadmap was organized in Thiès. The implementation of this roadmap contributed to enriching the proposals on the FUR during the development of ROPPA's 2019-2023 five-year plan.

Since 2020, the UPR has experienced a new dynamic. Despite the difficult health context with the COVID 19 pandemic, training courses for women and youth were prepared and launched in partnership with AFDI under the SEPOP project financed by AFD.

Thanks to this partnership and based on the principle of co-construction of training courses, the Confédération Paysanne Du Faso (CPF), National Coordination of Farmers’ Organizations of Mali (CNOP) and the Togolese Coordination of Farmers’ Organizations and Agricultural Producers (CTOP) have proceeded, through national meetings with their members, with the identification of skills / capacity building needs of farmer leaders and FOs. This information base enabled ROPPA to organize a regional meeting which helped formulate training courses for elected officials and employees of FOs. In May 2021, modules and topics / sub-topics for their training courses on "inclusion in the formulation, analysis and monitoring-evaluation of policies in the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector" were mapped out during a meeting held in Thiès with representatives of youth and women’s colleges with the support of endogenous and external resource persons.

Lastly, during a meeting organized at the International Center for Agroecology Training in Nyéléni, ROPPA with the support of the Austrian cooperation through the PARFAO project to organize sessions to pool training devices and modules of CPF, CNOP Mali and PFPN in agroecology.

These processes of co-construction and pooling of training modules, topics and sub-topics enabled the network to develop a guide for training modules on agroecology and on "inclusion in the formulation, analysis and monitoring and evaluation of policies in the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector (ASPH)" for training courses to be adapted to the context of each country and to the needs of farmers and their farmers’ organizations.

To strengthen the current dynamic aiming at achieving the objectives set in terms of capacity-building of the farmers who are members of the network, some actions are planned in the future : (i) Create for the network a directory of endogenous resource persons (farmer leaders and FO technicians for a better valuation of farmer knowledge) and external likely to be mobilized for the pedagogical preparation and facilitation of training sessions; (ii) Establish a monitoring and evaluation system for training programs and trainees; (iii) Continue efforts to disseminate the “ROPPA’s Farmer University” farmer training approach, and for its ownership within the network and by other actors.

AMOUAN Kossi Paulin,
Capacity-building Programs Officer
The right to food: a fundamental right often ignored

The right to adequate food as a fundamental human right was first recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, under the right to an adequate standard of living (Art. 25): «Everyone has the right to a standard of living sufficient to ensure their health and well-being and that of their family, in particular for food...».

This fundamental right became legally binding when the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights entered into force in 1976. Since then, many international agreements have reiterated the right to food, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Despite these numerous international agreements aimed at its full implementation, the right to food is often ignored by rights holders, policy-makers and/or violated implicitly or explicitly in most countries in Africa. One of the major consequences of this situation is the recurrence of food and nutrition insecurity and nutrition problems despite the technological progress. The many struggles of farmers organizations which aim to enforce farmers' rights to ensure a sustainable increase in the production and development of agricultural and food products in their communities and countries, are limited by the lack of political frameworks supporting the enforcement of the right to food.

Burkina Faso is one of the few countries where initiatives directly relating to the enforcement of the right to food have been undertaken. The implementation of the “Rural Governance for the Right to Food” project funded by BMZ and implemented in Burkina Faso by a consortium (ROPPA, WHH, CPF) with their partners shows timid progress in the enforcement of this fundamental right in this country. Even though the right to food is not yet enshrined in the constitution and State has not yet ratified the optional protocol on economic, social and cultural rights, paragraph 1 of article 11 of Burkina Faso law n°070-2015 / CNT of October, 22nd 2015 on the agro-forestry-pastoral, fisheries and wildlife orientation law in Burkina Faso.

In this country several agricultural policies and programs are implemented in order to achieve food security. Other actions undertaken by the Burkinabé State are in their form, in line with the voluntary directives aimed at the progressive realization of the right to food.

However, due to the lack of insufficient financial resources, the full effectiveness of agricultural policies and programs remains a constant challenge. This situation affects the proper operation of rural land services in most rural communes, and thus generates and maintains poor governance of rural land, one of the strategic pillars of the application of the right to food.

Thus, efforts made by Burkina Faso remain clearly insufficient to generate substantial results with regard to the full enjoyment by communities of the right to food. Better consideration of family farming in policies and programs and good global governance could accelerate the achievement of the goal of sustainable food security and improved nutrition. The road to the full realization of the right to food in Burkina Faso therefore remains long and even very long if the rights of farmers and challenges of family farms, in particular those related to secure access and use of resources, land tenure, access to information on regulations and laws, and employability of rural youth are not sufficiently supported by the appropriate policy instruments and measures.

Dieudonné PAKOTOGO
ROPPA’s Program Officer
The various successive crises over the past 20 years, in particular security, environmental, climate, health crises, etc. have brought the Agri-forestry-Pastoral and Fisheries sector to the heart of the development strategies of all governments around the world with many questions about the weaknesses and limits of the current prevailing model based on intensification from pesticides and chemicals and reflections on alternatives. How to produce more agricultural and foodstuffs in sufficient quantities and nutritive quality to ensure food self-sufficiency for communities and countries while preserving natural resources, biodiversity, harmful effects related to the use of chemicals and pesticides? This is the big questioning of recent years that has led to the promotion of the agricultural practices that are environmentally-friendly and helping increase productivity, built over the years by the Family Farms (FF) and communities and to develop new agricultural methods and techniques aiming at increasing the productivity and resilience of agriculture.

In this perspective, the Network of Young Producers and Agricultural Professionals of Togo (REJEPPAT), member of the Togolese Coordination of Farmers’ Organizations and Agricultural Producers (CTOP), has been committed for 3 years to promoting endogenous environmentally-friendly systems including agroecology. This system promotes practices that rely on functionalities offered by the ecosystems in order to ensure their sustainability.

This vision of REJEPPAT was built through its central region section by the adoption of the project « Promoting agroecology by building the capacities of young farmers in the central region in Togo », initiated and implemented under its partnership with French Farmers and International Development (Afdi) Lorraine. Under this project, 10 pilots farm schools were selected in 2018 in the 4 prefectures of the Middle region to support the installation and professionalization of rural youth. They benefited in particular from capacity-building on agroecological practices and restoration of forest landscapes. Each year, the 10 farm schools welcome young farmers for initial training as well as trainees from other agricultural training centers wishing to be equipped with agro-ecological practices. In 3 years, the 10 farm schools have trained 285 young farmers whose age group is between 18 and 40 years old.

The dynamic gained momentum especially with the training organized at the national level in September 2020 by CTOP with the support of FAO through the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) program. This national training reached 100 youth, including 31 girls, engaged in innovative and regenerative agricultural production systems.

For this year 2021, CTOP, still under the implementation of the Forests and Farmers Mechanism (FFF), obtained support from FAO for the training of 150 youth (75 boys and 75 girls) on agro-ecological and forest landscape restoration practices and agricultural entrepreneurship. To conduct this training, 18 trainer teachers from 10 farm schools benefited from a retraining session with a very rich and varied contents in order to significantly improve the quality and scope of the thematic field of their services. Several topics were discussed during this recycling in line with agroecology, plant nutrition and different production techniques: the preparation of Bocashi ; the manufacture of bio char; Family Farms. Preparation of phosphite ; reproduction of Acido-Lactic bacteria. The trainer teachers also worked on the cultivation of forest microorganisms, seeds of native forest microorganisms, the preparation of ash broth, that of sulfur lime broth, seed coating and preparation of solid supermagro. Finally, this capacity-building of trainer teachers focused on their skills and capacities for innovation in the educational approach of conveying knowledge during the training sessions they conduct.

By creating and strengthening the training capacities of the 10 agro-ecological farm schools as youth incubation centers for profitable and resilient production systems, this initiative of CTOP/REJEPPAT and AFDI farm schools is fully implementing strategic orientations of Togo which intends to making agriculture one of the main levers of its socio-economic development.

Serges Mensah TETEH
CTOP, Communication Officer

AFDI - FFF- CTOP / REJEPPAT PARTNERSHIP:
The promotion of 10 farm schools for youth to support the agricultural intensification and transformation based on agroecology
**ROPPA INFO**

**Publication director:**
Ibrahima COULIBALY,
Chairman of the Board of Directors

**Deputy director of publication:**
Ousseini OUÉDRAOGO,
Executive Secretary of ROPPA

**Editor-in-chief:**
Fatimata KONÉ,
Communication and knowledge management officer at ROPPA

**Writing team:**
Program officers and communication managers of ROPPA and national platforms and resource persons

**Proofreaders:**
Program officers and communication managers of ROPPA and national platforms and resource persons