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COOPERATIVE 4 FEMALE EMPOWERMENT IN MADAGASCAR- STEP 2

The project funded by the PROCTER & GAMBLE ALUMNI FOUNDATION for a total amount of \$ 41,000, of which \$ 16,000 for the first step, implemented in 2022, and \$ 25,000 for step 2, currently underway.

The current phase, which started in January of this year, is currently involving 31 beneficiaries gathered in a specially created consortium called Tanbatra and Mendrika, and the replacement of alternative crops, less demanding of water, to the monoculture of rice, in non-irrigated lands.

The project, from a technical point of view, is followed by agronomists from the local Ministry of Agriculture.

Step 2 of the project is divided into the following points:

- ☑ *Establishment of a consortium;*
- ☑ *Acquisition of members interested in the project, (currently 31);*
- ☑ *Acquisition of agricultural land to be used for the crops envisaged by the project, made available by farmers participating in the project (currently 13 hectares are available);*
- ☑ *Construction of a 50m² warehouse;*
- ☑ *Purchase of a motor cultivator with trailer and agricultural tools;*
- ☑ *Purchase of seeds and fertilizers;*
- ☑ *Technical training courses held by experts from the Ministry of Agriculture;*
- ☑ *Land processing, sowing, cultivation of new crops (in spring and summer: beans, tomatoes, peppers, other vegetables, in autumn/winter: corn, soy, sorghum);*
- ☑ *Sale of products;*
- ☑ *Distribution of profits with a greater valorization of the work compared to the land income achieved with the cultivation of the land made available, in compliance with local customs and habits.*

Project progress status – In the first three months, the organizational phases were defined, in particular the establishment of the consortium, the acquisition of members, the acquisition of land, originally 19 Ha, subsequently reduced to 13 because 6 were not considered suitable by the technicians of the ministry for the cultivation of the planned crops, and the purchase of seeds, fertilizers, motor cultivator and agricultural equipment. Work also began on the construction of the warehouse. Subsequently, starting from April, the implementation phase of the project began:

- ☑ **Cultivation of the first 6 hectares of land:** pre-sowing soil processing, sowing of green beans (native local variety called Amberique) for a surface of 3 hectares, the remaining 3 hectares sown with various types of vegetables.
- ☑ **Subsequent cultivation work.**
- ☑ **Construction of the warehouse,** completed in mid-June, officially handed over to the consortium in the presence of local authorities and a large part of the village population, on June 22.
- ☑ **Training courses held by Ministry technicians** on sowing techniques, fertilization, irrigation and correct and appropriate use of pesticides. For the entire period, the Ministry technicians have carried out, and will



Wharehouse construction completed

periodically carry out until the end of the year, practical exercise courses on good cultivation techniques for the various types of cultivated plants.

☑ At the end of June, the harvest of green beans (Amberique) began and ended in mid-August. The cultivated area can be estimated at around 3 hectares. The grain production was slightly lower than the initial forecasts of the Ministry of Agriculture technicians, due to the severe drought that affected the area during the cultivation period, however it can be considered satisfactory, given that this cultivation was practiced in the area on an experimental basis.

The production slightly exceeded 13.7 quintals, which produced a gross income of around €860.00.

☑ In the spring/summer period, another 3 hectares of land were cultivated with vegetables, tomatoes, peppers, etc. The harvest is still ongoing and the data on the real production are not known, however the drought experienced in the previous months has significantly damaged the production both in terms of quantity and quality.

☑ In the months of October and November the work of preparing the land and sowing for the cultivation of corn, sorghum and soybeans will begin; 7 hectares of land will be dedicated to these crops.

Ultimately it can be said that the project is proceeding according to expectations, despite having highlighted in the initial phase some problems caused by misunderstanding between the members of the consortium, not accustomed, by culture and tradition, to work in a group to achieve a common goal.

The situation was also overcome thanks to a decisive intervention by the technicians of the ministry urged by Seniores to intervene.

At present the members participating in the project are 31 of which 12 are land owners.



Harvesting of green beans (amberique)



Harvesting and transport with moto cultivator and trailer



Green beans transport to the warehouse



Growing courgettes



Cleaning of green beans



Amberique pods

*The memory of our friend and colleague Giampaolo Calcari is still alive in our hearts and in all the activities we will continue to carry on in this project. Ciao Giampaolo!
The Seniores team*



Consortium members