

Action brief

Eating healthy in Togo – Producer and consumer food partnerships for Organic Food Baskets

Country: Togo

Themes: Nutrition-sensitive

Sub-themes: Boost local availability of nutritious and diversified food (healthy diets)

Date: 2023



Overview



Promoting agroecological products and consumer health by using nutraceuticals (foods that have positive effects on consumer health while protecting the environment).

Conventional agriculture is intensive, characterized by the massive use of capital and inputs (e.g. synthetic pesticides and chemical fertilizers), the abusive exploitation of plots, and a lack of respect for the environment. At present, the consumption of most of these agricultural products is likely to lead to complications and food poisoning. Thus, food has become an important factor in public health considerations in communities, and consumers are increasingly concerned about this issue.

The *Centre d'Action pour le Développement Rural* (CADR) and its partners have addressed this need through the



Panier Bio Kpalimé (Kpalimé Organic Basket) initiative, which unites consumers and producers with the aim of promoting agroecological products and consumer health through nutraceuticals and environmental protection.



Objectives of the action brief

The goal of this fact sheet is to share information on the best practices of the initiative:

- Maintain and develop local agriculture that is economically viable, socially equitable and ecologically sustainable, that has low environmental impact and that creates economic activity and employment.
- Promote a responsible and civic relationship with food.
- Foster a fair and local economy.
- Contribute to food sovereignty, favouring peasant farmers in a spirit of solidarity.
- Develop partnerships among producers and between producers and consumers.
- Promote the protection of the environment.



Period covered

After several meetings to define its operating methods and its organisation between the actors, “Panier Bio Kpalimé” was officially launched on 2 November 2018 in the great hall of Kpalimé City Hall (in West Plateaux region of Togo) in the presence of the President of the special delegation of the city of Kpalimé, the Secretary General of the prefecture of Kloto, the media, agricultural producers and also consumers.

The production and marketing of products have continued since then. Production drops during the lean season due to a lack of control over the water supply. The restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic affected the marketing system, which came to a standstill in 2020.



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What action was taken?

The sale of products is done without intermediaries, with the producer in direct and regular contact with consumers. The small producer sets his price directly with the consumer. Thanks to the local and solidarity partnership, the producer benefits from helping hands (financially, inputs and even advice) from the consumer. This is not the case in the traditional system, where there is an intermediary who sets his price and who does not benefit the producer, and who is in contact with the consumer. Here, consumers know who produces his food, and producers know the consumers for whom these products are intended.

Several working meetings were organised to define prices, organisation and functioning of the initiative in addition to the creation of a coordination team composed of consumers and producers.

Two selling models have been defined. The consumer can either buy a basket or as individual products. The basket sale comes in three types, namely:

- the classic basket, which contains imported products (lettuce, cabbage, carrot, dill, basil, etc.);
- the local basket, which contains local products (nightshades, okra, courgettes, etc.) ;
- the mixed basket, which is a mix of local and classic products.

The principle of this initiative is the non-variability of prices remain the same throughout the year. For example, if the tomato is at 500 CFA francs per 500 grams in the rainy season, this price and this quantity remain the same in dry



or rainy season. In other words, the peasant farmer “loses” in the dry season and gains in the rainy season, but above all takes into account the cost of production.

Lively transactions take place every Friday, with about 15 regular producers and about 60 consumers. More than 200 kg of products are delivered each month, with most of the orders made via a related WhatsApp group.

The coordination of the initiative falls between producers and consumers. To date, the Organic Basket covers the prefecture of Kloti (Plateaux Ouest) with à la carte orders in Lomé.

The agricultural sector is heavily involved, and the production farm of the National Agricultural Training Institute of Tové and the agricultural high school of Agou (a school belonging to the Togolese State) have also joined. Currently, the initiative is well established and known throughout the prefecture of Kloti and with certain partners, such as GIZ, through its ProDED and ProEnergie projects. At Bar Bakula in the town of Kpalimé, lively transactions take place every Friday. We now have about fifteen regular producers who deliver the products, and about sixty consumers. More than 200 kg of products are delivered each month. Most of the orders are made from the Basket WhatsApp group. We have set up three groups, namely: the coordination group, the producers group, where the weekly compositions of the baskets are made in relation to the products available from each producer, and finally the large Organic Basket group, where the orders are made weekly and general discussions take place.

The initiative operates with technical support from the Alliance for Nutrition in Togo, and Action Solidarité Tiers Monde in Luxembourg provided support for the official launch, funding for open house days and the equipment. Expenses are financed, in part, by a 10 per cent retention on weekly sales.

Sustainability:

- Collective experiences are used by individual producers on their respective farms and plots
- Consumers know where to get organic and sustainable products.
- The risk of food poisoning has been significantly reduced.
- Small producers are trained and made aware of good practices in agroecology.
- Small producers see improvements in their incomes compared to what they were receiving before.
- More and more people are joining (consumers and producers).
- Local product certification process by Bio SPG from the National Association of Organic Agriculture in Togo (Anabio), initiated by IFOAM – International.
- The organic market is growing. The populations are increasingly aware of the need to consume agroecological products.
- The business is also sustainable simply because it provides regular income for producers. 10 % of this income is used to cover some of the initiative's running costs.
- In carrying out their activities, the producers take environmental protection into account.

Some impacts of the programme:





What would the country do differently?

Challenges have been noted:

- Production dips during the dry seasons, but the demand for fresh produce remains high. Solar irrigation production systems should be promoted on production farms.
- There is a lack of funding for production farms.
- There is a lack of certification of the system, but steps are underway with the National Association of Organic Agriculture in Togo for Bio SPG certification.



Adaptation and applicability

- **It takes patience and the organization of many meetings for to implement such initiatives. Because it often is difficult for a single farm to satisfy a whole set of consumers, a group of producers (farms and/or individual producers) is needed.**
- **It also is necessary to avoid product shortages, organize meetings periodically between producers and consumers, and carry out regular satisfaction surveys.**



Next steps

- Organize training on topics such as biofertilizers and bioprotectants.
- Achieve organic certification.
- Diversify and develop partnerships with consumers beyond Kpalimé.
- Formalize the initiative and gain and official recognition.
- Participate in calls for projects for the funding of the initiative.



Further information



<https://cadrto.org/article/192804183601-mise-en-place-et-fonctionnement-de-l-initiative-panier-bio-kpalime>



<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063091518610&mibextid=ZbWKwL>



<https://vert-togo.tg/panier-bio-kpalime-voit-le-jour/>



<https://www.savoirnews.net/blog/2018/11/03/promotion-des-produits-agricoles-bio-les-populations-de-kpalime-applees-a-consommer-des-produits-bio/>



<https://atop.tg/kloto-les-acteurs-agroecologiques-appelles-a-promouvoir-une-alimentation-de-qualite-aux-consommateurs/>



<https://youtu.be/-ORVtruHjgg>



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