Agroecology Release

N°02-August 2019

Summary

Agroecological practices at the service of small producers

Funded by the German organization Bread For The World, the project «Strengthening food security and improving dietary diversity for small farmers in the Far North and East regions of Cameroon» has enabled producers in the East (forest zone) and the Far North (Sahelian zone) regions to adopt agroecological practices. Farmers use the experience gathered in farmer field schools popularized by the Support Service for Grassroots Development Initiatives (SAILD).

To do this, they started by creating compost pits near the fields so as to optimize crop growth in the East. About 250 hectares of rehabilitated lands are being restored in the Far North».

21 villages concerned in the East and Far North

Regions	Divisions	Villages
East	Haut-Nyong	Paki
		Sibita
		Beul
		Mayos
	Lom et Djérem	Djangane
		Mbeth
		Gouekong
		Adinkol
		Sambi
Far North	Mayo Kani	Mogom
		Ouro-Bounné
		Djangal
		Yakang
	Mayo Tsanaga	Djamdoudi
		Mokong
		Boula
		Zamalao
		Kodek
	Diamaré	Koutouloum
		Dogba
		Markaba

With the support of German NGO Bread For The World

Brot für die Welt

Compost to fertilize farmlands

Composting techniques were popularized in fourteen farmer field schools.

Producers in the East region are now custodians of a rapid compost manufacturing technique, by using large compost pits built in several villages. Composting sites have been set up with technical and material support from SAILD. As part of increasing soil fertility, composting techniques have been popularized in fourteen farmer field schools in beneficiary villages of the project «Strengthening food security and improving food diversity for small farmers in the Far North and East regions of Cameroon". 2m x 1.5m compost pits were run for a month, and harvested compost was filled into bags for use. This compost was then placed in pockets and boards designed to accommodate the plants in order to increase the yields of crops such as okra, tomato, chili and plantain; crops on which beneficiaries rely to improve their nutrition.

Healthy production based on natural inputs

Compost helps produce healthy food.

This natural fertilizer helps to improve the amount of carbon in the soil.
- Compost does not promote soil degradation like some chemical fertilizers used for years by project beneficiaries
- It enhances natural biomass and crop residues
- Low manufacturing cost
- It is released slowly in the soil and can remain there for at least two years if the dosage is respected
- Compost promotes good rooting of plants
- It retains water and minerals from the soil at the base of plants
- Compost promotes a good nutritional balance between the plant and the soil
- The transformation of biodegradable garbage into compost makes it possible to recover the carbon dioxide (CO2) which could have been released into the atmosphere if this garbage were burned.

Legumes as a rotation option

Producers add value to fallow lands by sowing beans, soybeans, corn and cassava associated with pigeon peas.

Agroecological techniques for restoring degraded soils such as crop rotation with legumes have been adopted by these producers. They plan to resow beans and soybeans on other fallows, and to cultivate maize in the cultivated plots. Legumes through their roots fix nitrogen from the air in the soil and provide a sustainable alternative against the use of fertilizers. They only harvest the pods, stems, roots and leaves are buried in the ground when plowing. Beans and soybeans as crop rotation options are becoming commonplace.

Amend the soil with organic manure

Techniques for making compost pits were presented to beneficiaries.

Launched in November 2018, the project, which is scheduled to end in June 2021, is already bearing fruits. The actions initiated within the period of June to December 2018 enabled 116 producers to master and apply crop treatment techniques with natural plant extracts. These efforts have also contributed to the popularization of techniques for carrying out composting and monitoring the status of compost beds. Thus, 209 producers have been able to amend their soils normally with organic manure and save the funds formerly intended for the acquisition of fertilizers. In addition, 252.5 hectares of degraded land have benefited from sustainable management means, in particular through the making of bunds. These lands were then amended and are being rehabilitated.

209 farmers supported

Satisfied beneficiaries

For Jacques Chéré, millet producer in Dogba in the Diamaré Division, the project, which is in its first year of implementation, is already a success. "I always thought it was time consuming and not beneficial to amend the soil with organic manure. But, thanks to this project, I understand that I should jealously guard my manure because it is economical and very good for my crops. For that alone I find that the project has allowed me to move forward, «he explains.

Control of water in arid land thanks to bunds

The project intends to popularize appropriate agricultural practices.

2/3 of the arable land in the Far North region is subject to the impact of soil degradation, while cultivation techniques remain archaic. Thus, on the basis of a participatory approach focused on observation, discussion, analysis, concerted decision-making, the farmers became familiar with the "A" level, a tool designed to determine the level differences between two points of a field and analyze the waterways. They also provide farmers with skills enabling them to diagnose the situation of their fields, in particular by observing the state of soil erosion, by determining where to make level ridges, and by making bunds.

Compost improves the biological structure of the soil

Dieudonné Wouwe, agricultural engineer and project assistant.

« The use of compost for the production of compost pits itself is one of the agroecological techniques promoted by SAILD in the East region. Compost actually comes from the controlled decomposition of plants and animal residues. This degradation is due to the development of microorganisms in a hot, humid and ventilated environment. Compost thus improves the biological structure of the soil".

" We have discovered a cheaper fertilizer "

Pauline Mebang, beneficiary of Gouekong 2.

« We have discovered a cheaper fertilizer. We just need leaves, straws, grasses, crop residues, organic kitchen waste, tree branch, cow bones and dung, chicken droppings, pig manure, shells and all combined with fertile soil to produce good compost. Compost is not harmful to the health of farmers unlike chemical fertilizers «.

"My millet is more fragrant and tastes better"

Anne Véronique, beneficiary of Dogba.

« I have always used chemical fertilizers. From 2 bags of fertilizer per hectare I went to 3 then to 4. So I ended up changing my practices by turning to organic manure. I noticed that its use allows to restore the soil and increase its yield, since from the 10 bags that I obtained on 1 hectare, I went to 16. In addition, I also noticed that the taste of my millet is no longer the same. It is more fragrant and its cooking is better".

"My pest treatments are based on Neem leaves"

Dama Dawaï, beneficiary of Boula in Mayo Tsanaga.

« My experience in agroecological practices is relatively short. I got started in 2018. I opted for a soybean-corn combination to allow my corn to take advantage of the nitrogen fixed by soybeans. In addition, I have had experience with plagues made from Neem leaves. In the long run, I realized that this way of practicing agriculture gave me the possibility of producing at reduced costs. After this try, which I found rich in lessons, I undertook to convince all my relatives to adopt this way of doing «.

Editorial board

Coordination :
Hozier NANA CHIMI (SAILD)
Editorial staff :
Sonia OMBOUDOU et Abbo MOHAMADOU
(La Voix Du Paysan)
With the collaboration of
Stéphanie AKONO,
Dieudonné WOUWE et
Rodrigue KOUANG
Layout / Graphic design:
Jean KANA
(La Voix Du Paysan)
Contacts:
SAILD, Elig-Essono,
Yaoundé
Tél:+ (237) 222 22 46 82/
242 14 56 54
Email:
saild@saild.org
www.saild.org