

PROJECTS ADOPTED BY 4CITIES4DEV

ACCESS TO GOOD, CLEAN AND FAIR FOOD: THE FOOD COMMUNITIES' EXPERIENCE

N'Ganon and Nangounkaha Community Gardens, Ivory Coast



Foto Archivio Slow Food

Slow Food gardens adopted by the city of Tours



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A THOUSAND GARDENS IN AFRICA

The Thousand Gardens in Africa project is Slow Food's biggest effort to ensure a healthy food future for the African continent. Terra Madre communities in more than 25 countries, from Morocco to Mozambique, are involved in creating concrete models of sustainable agriculture that are tailored to different environmental, social and cultural situations and are easily replicable. The gardens follow Slow Food principles and are based on seed-saving of local and traditional varieties; the exchange of knowledge between generations; and the sharing of agricultural and educational experiences among the communities involved.



THE CONTEXT

KORHOGO REGION, IVORY COAST

The conflict that broke out in Ivory Coast during September 2002 had an enormous impact on the Korhogo region in the north of the country. The free movement of people and goods was severely curtailed and money was extorted along the product supply chain. This had serious effects on agriculture and food production. Women, who make up the majority of the agricultural workforce, suffered a significant reduction in their income and many children throughout the country stopped going to school (700,000 in 2005, according to the report of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA).

The situation has been relatively calm for some years, allowing much of the rural population to resume their work, but the outburst of a new conflict in 2011 has put the local communities back into trouble. The heaviest legacy of such conflicts is the severe damaging of infrastructures.



THE PROJECT

Since Slow Food Chigata was formed in 2006 in the Korhogo region, the convivium has been leading work in the village of N'Ganon to organize a women's farming cooperative, with the particular aim of providing quality, local food for school meals.

This was a priority for several reasons. The children were choosing to return home at lunchtime rather than eat in the publicly run village canteen because of the low standard of the meals; the canteen catering company was forced to use imported low-grade products and didn't have funds to purchase locally; the women had to interrupt their day's work in the fields to cook; and meanwhile food was being wasted at the school. When the village chiefs recognized the seriousness of the issue, and the economic and social benefits that a project such as *Consommons Ivoriens* could bring, they committed to support the project and the women's cooperative and provided seven hectares of land for cultivation.

Today the N'Ganon cooperative cultivates a two-hectare vegetable garden, four hectares of rice and one hectare of beans. The cultivation techniques are sustainable and exclude the use of chemical treatments and fertilizers. Part of the harvest goes to families participating in the cooperative; another





part is donated to the school canteen for the preparation of student meals; and the remainder is sold at the local market, becoming an additional source of income. Slow Food has helped the cooperative overcome several obstacles and covered the initial costs for the purchase of seeds and tools and the building of a warehouse.

Slow Food Chigata Convivium has organized a range of educational activities for children and teachers to extend the program: visits to the community garden, training courses in organic agriculture and lessons on the principles of good, clean and fair food.

In 2010, the project was replicated in Nangounkaha, with the local primary school. This village of 2,500 inhabitants is equipped with good social infrastructures, such as a six-class elementary school, two water pumps for water supply and a school canteen. As in N'ganon, the women of the village working in a farming cooperative have set up a vegetable garden in order to supply the school canteen with local, sustainable and quality food. The remaining produce will be partly used by the women and their families and partly sold at the market to provide extra income.

OBJECTIVES

With this project Slow Food aims to propose new concrete models of sustainable agriculture, tied to the principles of agroecology and based on the knowledge of local agriculture, the use of traditional techniques and the correct management of natural resources. The gardens are a means of subsistence for the communities growing them, and also an important occasion to educate children about a healthy diet and increase their knowledge of local plants and farming and to learn from older generations. Individual Slow Food gardens are not isolated projects, but rather part of the Thousand Gardens community that shares information and resources and that has a support network that extends to countries around the world.

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Mariam Ouattara Adiarratou – Slow Food Chigata Convivium Leader

SOCIAL IMPACT

The *Consommons Ivorien* project has had a deep positive impact on the villages, reducing the negative consequences of the conflicts of 2002. The school canteen now offers healthier and better meals for their pupils, who are happy to stay at school for lunch, thus being a further motivation to attend their classes. The women directly involved have gained more autonomy and increased their income from production activities and the whole community is eating better, thanks to the increased availability of fresh and local produce.

Many of the nearby villages now want to copy the successful *Consommons Ivorien* project model, and more and more people are attending Chigata Convivium events.

CURRENT BENEFICIARIES

244 WOMEN

300 STUDENTS OF EPP N'GANON - École Primaire Publique de N'ganon primary school in N'Ganon

200 WOMEN from the farming cooperative

10 SCHOOL canteen cooks

SCHOOL HEADMASTER and teachers

SCHOOL FAMILIES

THE 2,000 INHABITANTS of N'Ganon village

300 STUDENTS of Nangoukaha primary school

80 WOMEN from the farming cooperative

10 SCHOOL canteen cooks

SCHOOL HEADMASTER and teachers

SCHOOL FAMILIES

THE 2,500 INHABITANTS of Nangoukaha village

CURRENT PARTNERS

The European Union

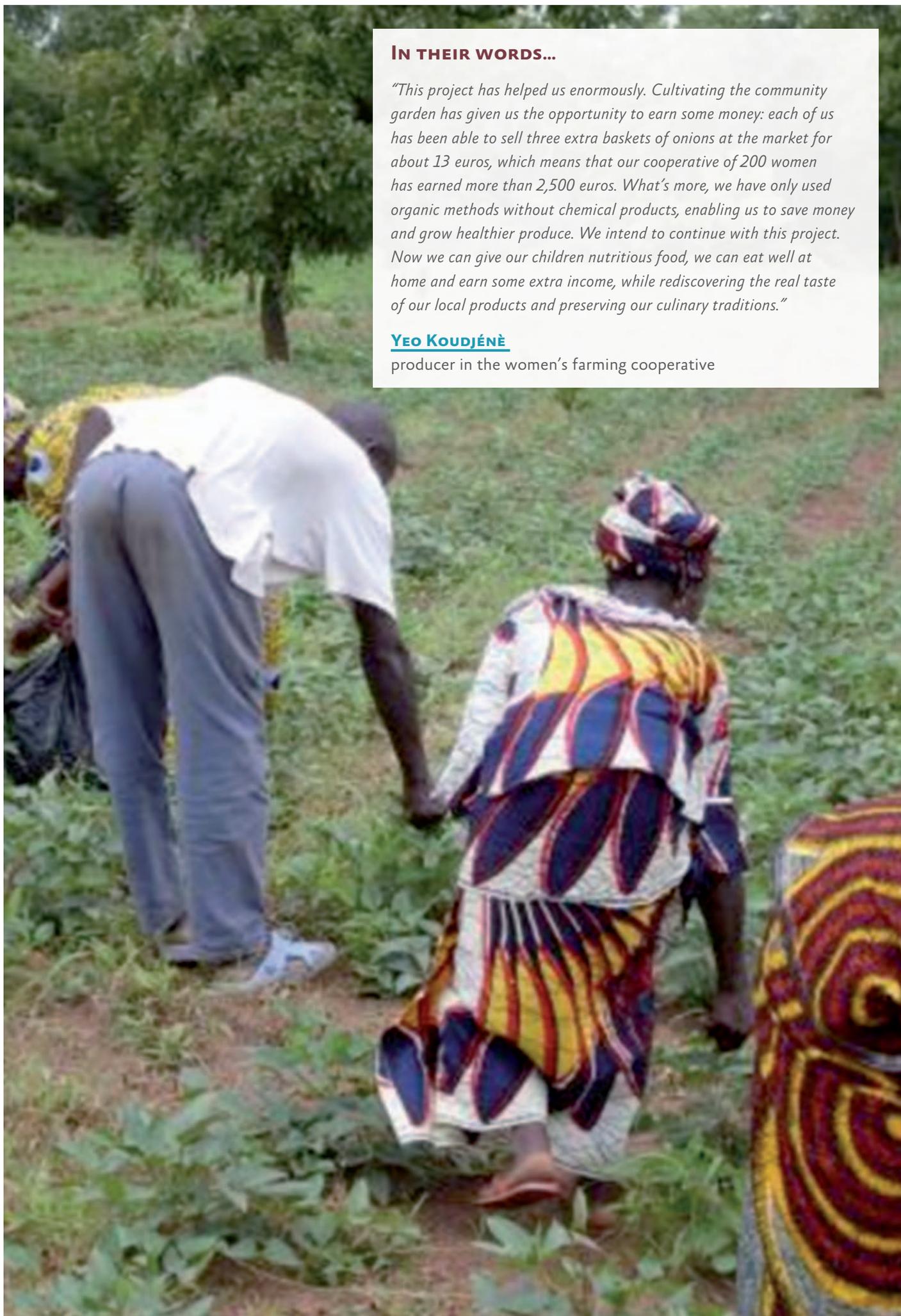


IN THEIR WORDS...

"This project has helped us enormously. Cultivating the community garden has given us the opportunity to earn some money: each of us has been able to sell three extra baskets of onions at the market for about 13 euros, which means that our cooperative of 200 women has earned more than 2,500 euros. What's more, we have only used organic methods without chemical products, enabling us to save money and grow healthier produce. We intend to continue with this project. Now we can give our children nutritious food, we can eat well at home and earn some extra income, while rediscovering the real taste of our local products and preserving our culinary traditions."

YEO KOUDJÈNÈ

producer in the women's farming cooperative



PROJECT STAGES

2008

The N'Ganon municipality donates seven hectares of farmland to the women, who start the first village garden. The garden is planned and tools are purchased. From the very first harvests, the women start supplying the local school canteen with their fresh produce. Field trips are organized to foster knowledge exchange between the women growers, the children and the school staff.

2009

A wooden fence is built to protect the garden from grazing animals. The women attend training about rice cultivation and the use of organic fertilizers and add local peanut varieties and black-eyed peas to their gardens.

2010

The *Consommons Ivorien* project spreads to the village of Nangoukaha and its primary school, doubling the number of beneficiaries. A new 7-hectare community garden is created, once again run by the women of the village gathered in a farming cooperative. This results in better canteen meals and encourages the students to attend school more frequently. An education campaign to promote the importance of consuming local, organic food targets the elementary school students, their teachers and families.



PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Among the planned activities is construction of a well in Nangoukaha to provide water for irrigation and a mill to supply the community with flour. The school canteens will work towards a daily lunch menu based exclusively on local products that values local gastronomic traditions.

The Thousand Gardens in Africa project involves the creation of a total of 50 gardens in Ivory Coast, as well as the participation of some members to international training sessions (the first one was held in Dakar, Senegal, in October 2011, involving ten African countries from the French- and Portuguese-speaking areas).









4CITIES4DEV FOR THE GARDENS

The *4Cities4Dev* project involves several activities to support the community gardens in the Ivory Coast, which will be carried out by Slow Food in cooperation with the city of Tours.

1

A group of community members attended *Euro Gusto*, organized in Tours, France from November 18-20, 2011, and will attend *Salone del Gusto e Terra Madre* in Turin, Italy from October 25-29, 2012. Participation in international events offers the delegates an opportunity to exchange experiences and enrich their knowledge, and to share this with their communities. They will also present the results of the project in Europe.

2

Creation of 10 of the 50 gardens planned for the Ivory Coast and funding of some of the training sessions, starting with the Dakar meeting in October 2011.

Slow Food gardens adopted by the city of Tours as part of the *4Cities4Dev* project



Foto Archivio Slow Food

www.4cities4dev.eu