

COMPASS Burkina Faso: Half-moon technique

OCADES Kaya

Short description of the experience/activity.

The half-moon is a basin in the shape of a semicircle, made with a pickaxe. The excavated earth is arranged in a semicircular bed and flattened above to form an earth bench. The average density per hectare is 315 half-moons, 1.5 to 2 meters in radius, arranged in contour and staggered. This activity was carried out by the Guibtenga Working Group with the support of the COMPASS Program.



What does this change regarding the situation of the target groups?

The target group of this activity was the beneficiary households of the COMPASS activities in the Guibtenga village in the Ziga community. High soil poverty and poor rainfall greatly affect agricultural activity, and producers see their yields decline from year to year. Half-moons can help recover, improve and maintain soil fertility while increasing production. The activity took place on land abandoned for production for more than 40 years because of its poverty, which prevented any vegetative development. The result of this experiment has shown the producers that they can obtain better yields on so-called poor soils, if they apply good agricultural practices. They obtained 1.73 t/ha (the average local yield during good seasons is 600-800 kg). 104 producers (20 men and 84 women) participated in this activity.

What is the “specialty” regarding this experience / activity?

The specialty of this activity is that it leads producers to stop abandoning their land when it is supposedly exhausted and thus stops them destroying the forests in search of more fertile land. It also allows the recovery, protection and conservation of degraded lands. The use of well-decomposed organic manure improves soil fertility and increases yield. Digging half-moons is difficult, which is why this technique is not very common despite its advantages. COMPASS helped this project with Food for Work, which means food was provided for the producers during the digging. They also benefited from improved seeds for sowing.

How does it work?



To get growers to adopt this strategy, we chose a field where no crops have been planted for many years and no grass grows, either. Negotiations ensured that the owner retroceded the land to the Working Group (WG) to avoid land conflicts afterwards. The digging and the follow-up were ensured by all the members with the technical accompaniment of the COMPASS agricultural officer. Important moments are: negotiation with the landowners, demarcation and digging of half-moons, application of well decomposed organic manure, sowing and maintenance. As for the methodology, Working Groups (WGs) were established.

This approach, for whom could it be interesting?

To allow producers to meet regularly to discuss agricultural difficulties and to make common actions increase their resilience to climate change, COMPASS has set up Work Groups (regrouping one or more districts of the same village). This approach allows producers to follow the process and to be the main actors responsible for activities. This approach is increasingly used by COMPASS Burkina for the agriculture component as it allows producers to be held accountable and work as a team to solve their problem. This approach can be used by all development projects that provide ongoing training to producers.

Compass

Improved chances for smallholders

COMPASS South Sudan: Promoting small scale piggery to increase family income and better nutrition

Solidarity with South Sudan

Brief description of the experience / activity.

COMPASS SSD has carried out intensive awareness campaigns on the importance and benefits of keeping pigs as integrated livestock within sustainable farming. As a result, a number of farmers came to the project team requesting for trainings and provision of piglets so that they could initiate pig rearing to upgrade diversification of agriculture as well as better nutrition and nutrient recycling for sustainable crop production. COMPASS SSD started with the provision of pairs of piglets to seven individual farmers in Riimenze after training on piggery rearing and animal nutrition. The purpose of this start-up support is a semi-intensive approach of pig rearing, concentrating on establishing good housing and proper feeding routines to ensure healthy pig production, taking advantage of locally available resources.



What does this change regarding the situation of the target groups?

The activity shall diversify farmers' production in order to reduce risks of depending mainly on crop production. Local pigs are highly prolific, relatively resistant. They are good consumers of agricultural residues. Pig manure is rich in phosphorus and nitrogen increasing soil fertility. Pork is a rich recourse to increase animal protein among farmers' families and to reduce the risks of illegal hunting. Due to the high market value of pork, families will be able to generate enough income that will enable them to send their children to school. Hence small scale piggery will reduce poverty and can contribute significantly to economic growth. This project intervention ensures that farmers earn a fair reward from pig rearing and it also ensures that enough pork is available to families for diversifying their meals and so that there is a surplus to satisfy market demands. The ultimate aspiration is that communities prosper and people are healthier and more self-sufficient.

What is the "specialty" regarding this experience / activity?



Traditionally, pigs are often owned or kept by women, with the result that any financial benefits usually go towards the needs of the families. It also has the effect of strengthening women's economic status. Keeping scavenging pigs or a semi-intensive system requires a minimum amount of inputs. The financial risks involved in this system are minimal, with little money being invested and little time spent looking after the pigs. In addition, local sows are quite resistant to diseases/pests and are able to produce multiple offspring (8-10 in average). Due to the short gestation period of about 4 months, the number of pigs produced increase considerably in a short period of time.

How does it work?

Each family is given one pair of piglets to raise them until the time they will reproduce the first offspring, after which they are obliged to return back a pair of piglets to allow for other farmers to benefit from the system. Before the provision of piglets, farmers are trained and asked to construct proper housing and feeding for the animals. The community extension workers checks to confirm completion of the animal house and then bring the report to the Extension Officer who on his part will inform the Farm Manager and the Project Coordinator for consideration and approval. Community extension workers continue to follow up to ensure good feeding and hygienic practices are done and in case of any serious problem of sickness, they will report to Extension Officer who may contact the veterinary authorities for medical attention and treatment. Additionally the Extension Officer will conduct field monitoring visits to check and monitor the condition of the animals.

This approach, for whom could it be interesting?

This approach could be interesting to rural smallholder farmers who are interested in pig rearing to supplement and diversify their agricultural production. This could also be interesting to individual farmers, men, women, youth, and all categories of people in order to upgrade their lives through pig production.

Compass

Improved chances for smallholders

COMPASS Senegal: Production and redistribution of quality seeds at community level

Caritas Tambacounda

Brief description of the experience / activity.

This activity is in line with other initiatives aiming to grant more autonomy to the family producers. The goal is easier access to quality cereal seeds for the farmers by seed production and redistribution at community level.

What does this change regarding the situation of the target groups?

The activity creates solidarity among the producers, because a certain amount of the collected seeds is distributed to others who can use the money saved for quality seeds for other things the families need (e.g. children's education or health issues).

What is the "specialty" regarding this experience / activity?

This activity is special because it creates resilience. It constitutes a community response to a community problem. It makes the producers autonomous as it creates and replenishes the community seed capital, reducing waiting time and allowing early sowing. The yields obtained have led farmers to increase the planted area and to diversify their crops. This creates new activities for the Village Cereal Banks which collect the seeds after the harvest and redistribute them among the community members.

How does it work?



The activity is entrusted to the inter-village management committees of the Village Cereal Banks set up by the project. With the help of the animators, they are charged to discuss with the producers on the implementation of the activity until their adhesion. At this moment, the lists of producers with the estimation of surfaces to be sown and the speculations chosen by each producer are constituted. Depending on the area planned, the bank committee determines the amount of seed to be donated and the quantity to be given back after the harvest. This is valid for all the speculations. For the crop year 2018/2019, 5,300 kg certified and early maturing seeds have been distributed to the producers by the

management committees. These were corn, sorghum, millet, cowpea and pumpkin seeds.

In order to guarantee good yield to the producers, the animators accompany them in the adoption of cultivation techniques adapted to climate changes during the pre-winter and winter season.

After the harvest, every producer retrocedes to the bank the quantity of seeds agreed upon in the mutual agreement. This constitutes a seed stock that is kept by the Village Cereal Bank in order to guarantee and maintain good quality. These seeds will be sorted out and redistributed to other producers in the following season. For the 2018/2019 crop year, the collection of the seeds is ongoing. Collection forecasts are estimated at around 27,000 kg of seeds all speculations combined.

This approach, for whom could it be interesting?

This approach is interesting for the producers as it allows them to dispose of diversified quality seeds at the right moment. It is also interesting for the project because the financial resources originally saved for the purchase of seeds can be used for other activities. For the public authorities, this action is a lever for the implementation of a real seed policy.



Brief description of the experience / activity.

One of COMPASS Ethiopia's good practice examples is on small ruminants fattening & household asset building. The example presented in this newsletter concerns a target household which was transferred small ruminants (goats) as a means of asset building within a short period (6 months of fattening of the goats) and which has subsequently bought a small she-donkey.



What does this change regarding the situation of the target groups?

Asset building in the case of smallholder farmers is an important issue in the region. Intensive trainings on how to manage small ruminants and promote asset building at the household level were provided to women targeted by the project. Based on the gained knowhow, the woman mentioned in this example (K. Raba, around 50 years of age) was able to manage her received goats properly during the fattening period. Afterwards, she sold the fattened goats and bought a small she-donkey solely with the money she generated from the exchange of the fattened goats. Donkeys are highly demanded by households in rural areas of Ethiopia, as they reduce the domestic working load. The woman was using her back to fetch water, to carry cereals to the market and to the grinding mill and to bring goods home from the market. The donkey helps the woman to maintain her health and to be more efficient in her daily work. It increases her social status and her social bond with the community, as she can now lend the donkey to others from time to time. In addition, the woman still has three more goats left after having bought the donkey.

What is the “specialty” regarding this experience / activity?

The specialty in this experience is how fast the small ruminant fattening contributed to asset building at the smallholder farmer's level. Small ruminant fattening takes only a few months (approx. 6) in order to obtain value at the market. Moreover, less effort is needed to take care and manage them compared with other large size cattle. Fattening small ruminants is an existing practice in the communities; hence, the women are used to the concept. They only require some extra training on how to improve their traditional ways of small ruminant management & fattening. The other specialty of this activity is its contribution to the reduction of domestic labor of rural women, which is often invisible or underestimated. Thus, the experience contributes to the social status of the women and their health besides building asset in the household.

How does it work?

First, one needs to identify the existing habits and trends in the respective community and to set priorities with the target households. The trainings need to be designed according to the needs of the beneficiaries. Close monitoring in the process of the implementation is vital.

This approach, for whom could it be interesting?

This approach remains interesting for the direct beneficiaries, which are mainly smallholder farmers. Yet, the activities' learnings are also of interest for other beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders involved in the project, as it enables them to see the remarkable outcome in this short period. It is also interesting for any other development organizations or research institutes in the area (e.g. to carry out further studies on the topic).