

## Research, Network and Support Facility (RNSF)

“Support to enhance livelihoods per people dependent on informal economy  
and improve social inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable persons”

### Good Practices and Lessons Learned

<b>RESEARCH QUESTION</b>	<b>2-Decent work and enterprise growth</b>
<b>SUB-TOPICS (Research matrix)</b>	<u>Environment and sustainable management and IE (2.4)</u>
<b>REGION – COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<i>Africa - Comoros</i>
<b>RESUME OF LESSONS LEARNED</b>	<p>Social action must be carefully prepared and based on a thorough and practical knowledge of power relations that exist within communities.</p> <p>A lesson learnt was that once the beneficiary had got the calf, he was not willing any more to feed the cow correctly. Also prophylaxis costs were high and it was then decided not to continue with the activity.</p>
<b>PROJECT NAME</b>	<i>Engagement Communautaire et Développement Durable (Community Engagement and Sustainable Development, ECDD)</i>
<b>YEAR</b>	2008 - 2013
<b>FUNDING AGENCY</b>	European Commission
<b>IMPLEMENTING AGENCY</b>	Vétérinaires sans frontières
<b>KEY TARGET GROUPS</b>	Farmers
<b>SUMMARY OF THE ACTION</b>	<p>The project was conducted in 9 villages of Anjouan Island and aimed at improving the living standards of the population through agricultural development, sustainable management of natural resources: soils, water, forest and biodiversity. It consisted in supporting and counselling the farmers through farmer field schools (150 demonstration plots) and individual monitoring in the villages (with technicians present 3.5 days a week): seedlings under vegetal cover, micro-irrigation and ox-park with proximity fodder, all techniques successfully tested in Madagascar.</p>

## LESSONS LEARNED

The ECDD project was run by Bristol Conservation & Science Foundation (an operating unit of Bristol, Clifton & West of England Zoological Society Ltd.) in partnership with Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, the Government of the Union of the Comoros and the Administration of the Island of Anjouan, and with the support of Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières. The project was conducted in 9 villages of the Anjouan Island and aimed at improving the living standards of the population through agricultural development and sustainable management of natural resources: soils, water, forest and biodiversity. It included supporting and counselling the farmers through farmer field schools (150 demonstration plots) and individual monitoring in the villages (with technicians present 3.5 days a week): seedlings under vegetal cover, micro-irrigation and ox-park with proximity fodder, all techniques successfully tested in Madagascar.

Regarding sustainable management of natural resources, the project focused on community water management based on collective unpaid work. A new national NGO was created towards this goal. In order to gain the trust from the villagers it was necessary for the technicians in charge of extension services to clearly identify the role of the actors in the communities. They had to insist on the inclusion of youth, women and elderly, and on the exclusion of corrupted people, so that some actors were able to develop the sense of responsibilities to initiate reforestation around catchments, collection of funds from communities, etc. Self-help groups and traditional mutual assistance were revived.

However, in the absence of social cohesion and leadership, and of decentralised governance, the project objectives turned out to be difficult to achieve. Building of trust could not be achieved: community hen houses or vegetable gardens had to stop because individualism was taking precedence over collective behaviour: all collective income generating works were abandoned, except for water management.

Among the experiences of the project, one can note that a cow was provided in sharecropping in each village to a motivated beneficiary not previously involved in animal husbandry: the first calf was for the beneficiary and 6 months after calving, the cow was given to another beneficiary. Prophylaxis costs were paid by the project. A lesson learnt was that once the beneficiary had got the calf, he was not willing any more to feed the cow correctly. Also prophylaxis costs were high and it was then decided not to continue with the activity. Also, despite efforts, the production and use of manure and compost were not efficient and would have required longer support.

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<p><b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p>	<p>Social action must be carefully prepared and based on a thorough and practical knowledge of power relations that exist within communities: these power relations cannot be ignored, it is vain to think that a project action can go against them, even if it is advisable to ensure that the action will not be used to reinforce them.</p> <p>Technicians or agricultural extension workers are not trained for social experimentation. Actions that involve communities and leaders must be prepared and accompanied by social scientists, especially where work is mobilised without cash.</p>
<p><b>FURTHER TAGS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Production management (improved production techniques) training for informal economy entrepreneurs (3.6)</li> <li>▪ Environmental protection, green jobs and the IE development, (2.4)</li> </ul>
<p><b>SOURCE(s)</b></p>	<p><b>RNSF Research Volume 4.3:</b> <a href="https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/iesf/documents/rnsf-research-volume-43-gp-ii-15-ec-funded-projects">https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/iesf/documents/rnsf-research-volume-43-gp-ii-15-ec-funded-projects</a></p>