

The ICA Youth Network Replication Project: the story of ENOFOCC Cameroon

-By Akwo Kelvin (October, 2021)

18 November 2020 remains a landmark date in the annals of Enhancing Organic Food Cropping Cooperative (ENOFOCC) in Cameroon. It was on this day the Youth Network of the ICA announced nine winning projects from around the globe for its Replication Project Initiative. This competitive opportunity was created by the ICA Youth Network to replicate existing cooperatives and create new youth cooperatives worldwide.

Replication Project: ENOFOCC from Cameroon



Picture announcing replication winners on ICA Website

Earlier in June 2020, a group of friends stumbled on this life-changing opportunity and courageously took the decision to exploit it. Having little experience on the cooperative world, we counted on our diverse academic and professional background plus the determination to succeed and the envisage mentorship of the ICA.

ENOFOCC effectively started on 4th January 2021 with the first constituent meeting, election of board members and setting up the plan of action. It was from here that an office space was hired and a manure composting site in Nkwen Bamenda.

Purpose and Need

At this time when arable land has become scarce due to pressure from population growth, agriculture has to be made sustainable and environmentally friendly. Hence we promote the use of compost animal organic manure to boost production and preserve food quality and the environment where production takes place.



Picture: ENOFOCC Logo

MILESTONES

With the indispensable support of the ICA Youth Network and the Project Mentor, Mr. Koffi Kobenan Maurice, ENOFOCC Cameroon was able to realise some highpoints:

The foremost achievement by ENOFOCC Cameroon was it's ability to quickly get registered with the Registra of Cooperatives and gain legal status on the 2nd month of its operation. This prompt success is thanks to the funds received from its partner the ICA Youth Network. Today the cooperative is officiaially registered with authorization number:

21/019/CMR/NW/38/204/CCA/002009/002009/002009003

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN Paix – Travail – Patrie MINISTERE DE L'AGRICULTURE ET DU DEVELOPPEMENT RURAL DELEGATION REGIONALE SERVICE REGIONAL DU REGISTRE		REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON Peace – Work – Fatherland MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT REGIONAL DELEGATION NORTH..WEST REGIONAL SERVICE OF THE REGISTRY
CERTIFICAT D'IMMATRICULATION MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE		
N° 21/019/CMR/NW/38/204/CCA/002009/002009003		
Le présent certificat d'immatriculation est délivré à... ENHANCING ORGANIC FOOD CROPPING COOPERATIVE The present matriculation certificate is issued to SOCIETY WITH BOARD OF DIRECTORS(COOPBOD)- ENOFOCC COOPBOD		
Ayant son siège social à... NIKWEN..... Arrondissement de... BAMBENDA III..... BP. 912..... Tél: 673567303 With head office at..... Sub-Division..... P.O.Box Bda Tel		
Immatriculée au Registre régional des Sociétés Coopératives NORTH WEST..... Matriculated at the regional registry of cooperative societies		
En date du 19/02/2021..... précédemment inscrit sous le n°..... On the..... previously registered under the N°		
Conformément aux dispositions de l'Acte uniforme OHADA relatif au droit des sociétés coopératives et au droit coopératif national. In compliance with OHADA cooperative act and national cooperative Law.		
Etabli à... BAMBENDA..... le 19/02/2021... Done at..... on the		
Le Chef Service Régional du Registre The Regional Chief of Service for the Registry		
 		

Picture: ENOFOCC Registration Certificate

In its 9 months of operation, ENOFOCC Cameroon has been able to collect over 257 bags of animal dung mostly from poultry farms, cattle ranches and pig farms. This has been process through composting and some has been grind. Packaging is yet to be done but some of the manure has been sold to farmers in small quantities for trial purposes.



Picture: Animal dung at ENOFOCC Processing site

For its proper organic manure processing, and thanks to grants from its funder, ENOFOCC Cameroon has been able to aquire an electric manure crusher machine, probe thermometer, handcarts, spades and other processing equipments



Picture: Some equipments of ENOFOCC Cameroon (Probe thermoter & Crusher Machine)

From a team of five who contested for the Replication Project, today ENOFOCC Cameroon proudly boast of eight board members and some 23 members of the cooperative. The cooperative has a manager and a processing worker. The President of the Board of Directors is Mr. Mbifi Valentine, the President of Supervisory Board is Mr. Akwo Kelvin, the Secretary to the Board is Miss Wudindolo Fantina and the Manager is Miss Veye Elissa.



Picture: ENOFOCC Board members at a Board Meeting

Partners

The following are partners of ENOFOCC Cameroon

- ❖ **ICA Youth Network:** The ICA through its Youth Network Replication Project is the main sponsor of the ENOFOCC project idea. The webinars by the ICA has gone a long way to educate ENOFOCC members on the cooperative business model.
- ❖ **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Cameroon:** They have been very useful to us during the cooperative registration process. This is the supervisory body for cooperatives and runs several projects that benefit farmers and farmers' groups.
- ❖ **Local animal farmers and Crop Farmers:** We have a beautiful relationship with the community famers who are our target customers.

They have shown interest in our product through the sensitization campaigns we run.



Picture: ENOFOCC networking and sensitization meeting with local farmers

Difficulties

It goes without saying that no human venture is void of challenges. Some of the inherent difficulties included;

- ❖ It has been an uphill task for us to get packaging bags. This has been more expensive in the local market than we envisage as the logo needs to be attached to the bags. We look forward to importing bags from neighbouring Nigeria because of lower price.
- ❖ Insecurity / Violence: ENOFOCC was conceived and is being realised against the backdrop of the ongoing Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon since 2016. This has slowed the progress of the project implementation. It has also increased the operational cost of the project. It is our priority to observe safety precautions.

- ❖ Covid-19 is a non negligible difficulty encountered by the team. The economic hardship resulting from the health crisis is a heavy blow to businesses. To cope in such situation, we mostly contact clients by phone calls and observe W.H.O and Cameroon government barrier measures.

Perspectives

Having gained a lot of support and mentorship from ICA Youth Network, we are determined to forge ahead with our “baby” cooperative and to diversify our line of action to exploit new grounds.

- ❖ **Membership:** ENOFOCC Cameroon started as an initiative of five youths, today it boasts of 23 members and for 2022, the goal of the cooperative is to have some 50 registered members and more in subsequent years.
- ❖ **Organic manure:** The flagship product of ENOFOCC Cameroon is processing animal dung. In its first year ENOFOCC collected 257 bags and so in 2022 we hope to collect and process 350 bags and maintain an upward trend in the following years.
- ❖ **Potato farm:** In 2022, ENOFOCC Cameroon intends to open an organic potato farm in Tubah Subdivision. The farm will cover some 2 hectares with a capacity of 62 tons of potatoes per year.
- ❖ **PADFA Project:** ENOFOCC Cameroon has registered with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) project in Cameroon, *Commodity Value-Chain Development Support Project Phase II (PADFA II)*, to organically produce onion in the Tubah Basin. This project will also build the capacities of the members of the cooperative
- ❖ **ICA Member:** By virtue of a replication project beneficiary, ENOFOCC has joined the Youth Network of the International Cooperative Alliance and hopes to continue collaborating with this mother organisation in building its capacity and gaining exposure within the context of her activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ The Youth Network of the ICA should organise more editions of the Replication Project to initiate more youths the world over into the cooperative business model.
- ❖ The Youth Network should pay special attention to capacity building of its Youth Network members. We had four online trainings on cooperative model and management of cooperatives. However, we believe that more could be done, particularly through physical workshops and seminars.

CONCLUSION

An African Proverb goes thus, *“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”*. This proverb is suitable for the cooperative business model and for a people who’s culture is essentially communal, we at ENOFOCC Cameroon strongly believe the cooperative model is suitable for community development in societies like ours. Thank you Replication Project for opening our eye to this beautiful revelation. Thank you ICA for your funds and mentorship.