

2017

ANNUAL REPORT





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## *Message from the executive director*



I am pleased to share with you, on behalf of the Executive Secretariat, the report of our activities during 2017. The year was marked by events and achievements that enriched our expertise and broadened our range of activities. For example, ACED strengthened its expertise in issues related to youth entrepreneurship and urban agriculture. These new capacities support our work in other areas such as inland fisheries and aquaculture, rural agriculture, adaptation to climate change, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and so on. In addition, ACED has developed its capabilities in knowledge management, both internally and in its projects and activities. In so doing, several knowledge products – such as policy and knowledge briefs, case studies, success stories, etc – have been developed to inform our stakeholders about good practices, on the one hand, and policymakers about evidence-based actions for

effective grassroots development, on the other. All this has earned ACED the renewed confidence of its technical and financial partners who have continued their commitment by supporting our initiatives, and instituting organizational development to ensure greater impact.

In 2018, ACED will complete the implementation of its 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. It will continue to implement its initiatives and develop innovative solutions to the challenges faced by smallholders and vulnerable farming populations. It will also continue to strengthen and expand its partnerships. In 2018, ACED will kick off the development of its 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, which will guide the centre's new strategy and activities. ACED thanks you for reading this report and invites you to discover more about its activities on our website.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2017

Two Masters research grants were awarded to students of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin, to research post-harvest technologies in the fisheries sector.

March  
2017

June  
2017

The average selling price of healthy gardening produce made from compost increased by 19%.

Two pilot allotment gardens in Porto-Novo and Abomey-Calavi created 40 jobs for vulnerable populations.

September  
2017

November  
2017

19 policy-oriented publications were produced and disseminated.

855 tonnes of compost was produced from 1 455 tonnes of water hyacinth collected.

December  
2017

December  
2017

ACED received a grant from the Comité Français pour la Solidarité Internationale (CFSI) and the Fondation de France to develop a strategy for scaling up the sale of local gardening produce grown using water-hyacinth compost.

ACED concluded a technical and financial support agreement with the Small Grant Programme of the Global Environment Facility to support capacity-building of local communities; and development of beekeeping in mangrove areas of the Ramsar 1017 complex.

December  
2017

## *Our activities in 2017*



### **Use of water-hyacinth compost in agriculture**

#### **Knowledge and impact of ACED**

Since 2015, ACED, in partnership with Gevalor, has supported the market gardeners of the lake Nokoué's communities in southern Benin to improve their production and income by using water-hyacinth compost to fertilize their land. This initiative has made it possible to:

- produce 1 880 tonnes of compost from 3 195 tonnes of water hyacinth collected from Lake Nokoué;
- develop a new, less cumbersome and more efficient water-hyacinth collection technique, which uses nets to pull the water hyacinth into piles and to group them on the shore. This new technique has increased the productivity of water hyacinth collection by 39%;
- develop technical procedures for the optimal use of water-hyacinth compost. These new technical procedures improved yields by 162% for chilli pepper, 42% for tomato and 120% for amaranth;
- improve the average selling price of gardening produce grown using water-hyacinth compost by 19%, as a result of the improvement of the sales channels and the promotion of the produce;
- improve farmers' incomes and the autonomy of women.

## Better quality and quantity of produce improves women's incomes

### Story of Rolande Hounmanon from Gbessou, Sô-Ava municipality

Rolande Hounmanon, from the village of Gbessou, in Sô-Ava municipality, derives her income mainly from the sale of gardening produce – grown by herself and her peers – to the local market, supported by ACED. These women have benefited from training in agro-ecological production using water-hyacinth compost for gardening. Rolande noted an increase in the yield of vegetables and an increase in the yield of tomato and chilli pepper crops. Today, she is delighted with the positive impact of ACED's actions on her income. The gardening produce she harvests with the support of ACED is of better quality in terms of size, conservation and shape, and attract consumer interest. Once in the market, she gets a higher price, which may vary according to the amount of traffic in the market and the volume of sales. She says that her income has improved, giving her more room to manoeuvre in her household spending.

*Read the full story of Rolande Hounmanon at <https://bit.ly/2s7T3BK>*

### Next step



ACED has secured a grant from the CFSI and the Fondation de France to develop a strategy to scale up the sale of local gardening produce grown using water-hyacinth compost.



## Installation of a digester in Sô-Ava

### Production of biogas from water hyacinth and household bio-waste

ACED continues its research-action work on the use of water hyacinth and household bio-waste for biogas production. A digester is being built in the village of Gbéssou, in the Sô-Ava municipality, to supply a pilot group of 17 households with domestic gas produced from water hyacinth and household bio-waste.

### Next step



After the digester is built, beneficiary households will be trained on the digester's feeding process and the methods of using biogas bags at household level. This pilot experience will enable ACED to develop large-scale initiatives to improve rural households' access to clean energy.



## Pollution of the Lake Nokoué/Lagoon of Porto-Novo complex

### alters the quality of water and fisheries resources

The analysis of the physicochemical properties of the waters of the Lake Nokoué/Lagoon of Porto-Novo complex, conducted by the Laboratory of Hydrobiology and Aquaculture at the University of Abomey-Calavi as part of ACED's support for improving the resilience of inland fishery in Benin, revealed a high level of pollution of the

complex's waters. There is a high concentration of heavy metals such as mercury, lead and copper. With the exception of copper, heavy-metal levels in both the water and fish flesh are above international standards. This pollution originates from anthropogenic activities with 34 main pollution sites identified in the vicinity of the complex.



## **Failure to comply with fisheries regulations and poorly organized fishermen**

### **hinder the development of inland fisheries**

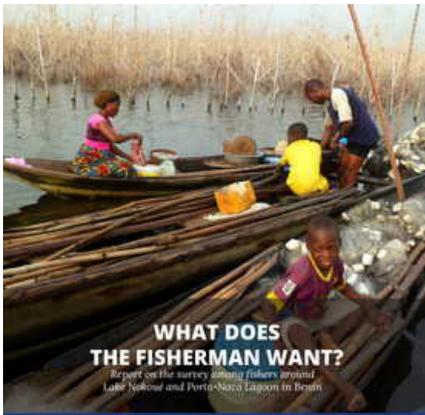
A study was conducted into the activities of 839 fishermen in the Lake Nokoué/Lagoon of Porto-Novo complex to analyse the customary and regulatory rules that support the sharing of water resources between these communities. The study found:

- a significant proportion of fishermen (32%) living in a state of food insecurity, with households having access to no more than one meal a day;
- numerous conflicts between fishermen, due to non-compliance with the rules;
- a low level of organization between fishing communities. For example, 63% of fishermen do not belong to any organization. This situation could reflect a lack of confidence among fishermen in government institutions, mistrust between fishermen, and a lack of communication between fishermen and the leaders of the federation charged with defending their interests.

## Next step



Focus groups will be organized with fishermen to formulate practical recommendations for improving water governance and resource-sharing in the Lake Nokoué/Lagoon of Porto-Novo complex. Alternative activities to fishing and fish processing will also be made available to fishermen and fisherwomen involved in the fisheries sector. Dialogue will also be initiated with policymakers and other stakeholders in the inland fisheries sector to exchange points of view about the challenges facing the sector that have been identified by the various studies carried out by ACED. This dialogue will enable the development and implementation of joint efforts to improve the resilience of inland fisheries in Benin.



A report titled “What does the fisherman want?” presents the key results of a study that focuses on the perspectives of inland fishermen in Benin. The report is accessible on ACED’s website.

A second report focused on fisherwomen will soon be published.



## How to integrate youth into agribusiness?

### Knowledge is generated to build their capacities

To reduce the knowledge gap in mainstreaming youth into agribusiness, ACED has conducted a series of studies that have generated the knowledge needed by youth and the institutions that support them, in the agribusiness sector. Three main publications were produced in 2017.

- a publication that maps the profile of youth interested in agribusiness. It presents youth profiles and capacities required for successful mainstreaming in the agribusiness sector;
- a publication that identified and listed more than 50 business opportunities adapted to youth in the pineapple, poultry and fish sectors;
- a technical handbook on agricultural entrepreneurship and business skills for youth.

## 28 business opportunities identified in the egg-supply value chain

Unlike the current practice of focusing on a few segments within the sectors, mainly in primary production, an ACED study has made it possible to map out detailed and extensive business opportunities that exist in three value chains in Benin – dried pineapple, egg supply, and smoked Clarias. For example, within the egg-supply value chain, we generally see three segments: production/ marketing of inputs, eggs, and reformed layers. The study revealed 28 business opportunities within the egg-supply value chain. These opportunities range from pre-production and production to marketing and related services. The knowledge generated by such innovative studies broadens the horizons of youth interested in agribusiness and the institutions that support them.

*The report on business opportunities in the pineapple, poultry and fish sectors is available at the following link: <http://bit.ly/2H36bgQ>*



## **Allotment gardens as a solution to improving food security for vulnerable urban population**

ACED focuses on the issue of food security in urban areas and has developed two allotment gardens in the cities of Porto-Novo and Abomey-Calavi. A pilot group of 40 participants from vulnerable households has been set up and provided with equipment for gardening activities. They have also been trained to produce vegetables that they can eat and then sell the surplus. The produce and income from this activity will enable them to improve their food security and livelihoods. ACED is piloting this initiative, in partnership with the Vrije University of Amsterdam and the University of Abomey-Calavi, to better understand the dynamics of food insecurity in urban areas and assess the contribution of allotment gardens as an endogenous solution.

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### **Next step**



A site selection tool to support the installation of community gardens in cities will be developed, and a study of the optimal form of a gardeners' organization will be carried out.



## Working to improve the link between research, action and policy

As part of its activities, ACED is developing a learning and innovation platform to facilitate participation and to elicit the views of all stakeholders on food security issues. This platform is organized in the form of a multi-stakeholder committee made up of representatives of all project stakeholders. This committee, which meets periodically, allows for the active and formal involvement of stakeholders in the research-action process. It also makes it possible to disseminate evidence-based solutions to relevant institutions to support policymaking.



JANUARY 2018



SUCCESS STORY 1

### How a stakeholders' committee can make a difference in the way of doing research?

A story about developing allotment gardens in Benin

An example of the impact of such multistakeholders' committee has been documented in a publication available at the following link <https://www.aced-benin.org/en/content/capitalizing-stories-change-during-research-process>. The story of change highlights how a committee of stakeholders shaped the research process and supported our activities on improving food security in urban areas through allotment gardens.

# Publications



## Research reports

ACED (2017). *Analyse des profils des jeunes dans le secteur agricole au Bénin : Les impératifs de capacités*. Rapport d'étude. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

ACED (2017). *Opportunités d'affaires pour les jeunes au sein des chaînes de valeur agricoles*. Rapport d'étude. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

## Guidelines

ACED (2017). *Fiche technique de production de l'amarante à base de compost de jacinthe d'eau*. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

ACED (2017). *Fiche technique de production de la tomate à base de compost de jacinthe d'eau*. Abomey-Calavi : ACED

ACED (2017). *Fiche technique de production du piment à base de compost de jacinthe d'eau*. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

ACED (2017). *Manuel technique sur l'entrepreneuriat et les capacités d'affaires en agrobusiness pour les jeunes*. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

ACED (2017). *Guide pour le développement d'un plan marketing dans une entreprise*. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

ACED (2017). *Comment mettre à l'échelle son entreprise agricole*. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

ACED (2017). *Recherche de financement pour lancer et développer son entreprise : le guide à l'action*. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

ACED (2017). *Tester son idée d'agrobusiness*. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

## Case studies

ACED (2017). *D'un produit de consommation traditionnelle à un marché moderne : Leçons de la start-up King of Soto du Bénin*. Etude de cas. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

ACED (2017). *Jus de Moringa Assiba Fée*. Etude de cas. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

ACED (2017). *Les améliorations observées avec les produits maraîchers sains obtenus grâce au compost de jacinthes d'eau : Etat du circuit de vente, des prix et des quantités vendues*. Note de capitalisation. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

ACED (2017). *Les impacts du maraîchage agroécologique dans la vie d'un homme maraîcher*. Etude de cas. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

ACED (2017). *Les impacts du maraîchage agroécologique dans la vie d'une femme maraîchère*. Etude de cas. Abomey-Calavi : ACED.

ACED (2018). *How a stakeholders' committee can make a difference in the way of doing research? A story about developing allotment gardens in Benin*. Abomey-Calavi : ACED

ACED's knowledge products are available at the link :  
<https://www.aced-benin.org/en/publications>

You can also scan this QR code



## *Conferences and workshops*



20-22 February 2017, Dakar (Sénégal) 8th AfCoP Annual Meeting and General Assembly.

29 March 2017, Abomey-Calavi (Bénin). Launch workshop of the project “Reducing the knowledge gap to build youth capacities in the agricultural sector in Benin”.

28 July 2017, Abomey-Calavi (Bénin). Knowledge sharing workshop of the project “Reducing the knowledge gap to build youth capacities in the agricultural sector in Benin”.

31 October 2017, Cotonou (Bénin). Scoping workshop on agribusiness opportunities for youth in Benin.

08-10 November 2017, Bohicon (Bénin). Capitalization workshop of the project “Projet de Promotion de l’Entrepreneuriat Agricole des Jeunes Ruraux (PEAJRB)”.

22 November 2017, Abomey-Calavi (Bénin). Knowledge sharing workshop on agroecological production in Benin: Utilization of compost from water hyacinth.

10-13 December 2017, Paris (France). *One Planet Summit* organized by the French Presidency.

14-15 December 2017, Cotonou (Bénin). General Assembly of the National Water Partnership (PNE-Bénin) 2017.

# Partnership



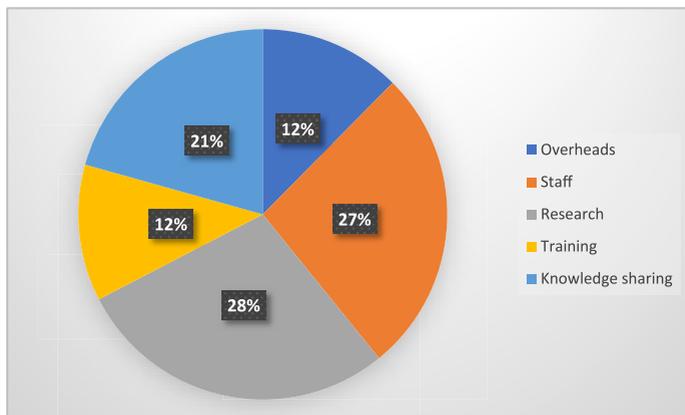
## Technical partners in 2017

French Development Agency («*Agence Française de Développements*», AFD)  
Amsterdam Centre for World Food Studies  
DagriVest  
School of Economics, Socio-Anthropology and Communication of the University of Abomey-Calavi  
EREP-SA  
Forest and People Livelihood Research Unit - LABEF  
Gevalor  
Laboratory of Hydrobiology and Aquaculture at the University of Abomey-Calavi  
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries  
Northern Great Great Plains Research Laboratory

## Financial partners in 2017

French Committee for International Solidarity  
Fondation de France  
JM Bruneau Foundation  
African Capacity Building Foundation  
Fondation Veolia  
French Global Environment Facility  
Global Environment Facility  
Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research  
Presbyterian Hunger Program  
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Promotion in International Cooperation  
International Union for the Conservation of Nature - French Committee

# Finance 2017



# About ACED

The Centre d'Actions pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable (ACED) is a not for profit organization focused on action-research which is working on food security and nutrition. ACED develops in 2013 a 5-year strategic plan (2014 – 2018) which orientates its actions.

**Vision :** ACED seeks to be a leading institution in empowering agricultural communities for increased food security and poverty reduction.

**Mission :** To improve food and nutritional security in Benin in a sustainable environment.

## Our Programmes

- **Agriculture & Food Security:** To support small-scale farmers for a more profitable agriculture.
- **Climate change:** To support vulnerable communities in coping with climate change.
- **ICT for Agriculture:** To promote the use of ICT for agricultural development.

## Contact

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