

ACED Strategy 2020-2024

EVIDENCE
POLICY
ACTION



ACED Strategy 2020 - 2024

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www.acedbenin.org

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List of acronyms

ACED : Centre d'Actions pour l'Environnement et le Développement durable

AGVSA : Analyse Globale de la Vulnérabilité et la Sécurité Alimentaire

EPA : Evidence Policy Action

FAO : Food & Agriculture Organization

FNS : Food and Nutrition Security

ICT : Information and Communication Technology

IFAD : International Fund for Agricultural Development

NGO : Non-Governmental Organization

UNDESA : United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNICEF : United Nations of International Children's Emergency Fund

WFP : World Food Program

WHO : World Health Organization

Forward

We are very excited to introduce our new Strategy 2020-2024 that will guide interventions for the next 5 years. The Strategy outlines our theory of change and the priority areas on which we will focus our work to create lasting impact in the food and nutrition security sector in Benin. This document is the outcome of extensive consultations with our stakeholders and is informed by the challenges we have faced and the lessons we have learned over the last 10 years. We sincerely thank all our stakeholders who have contributed to the definition of our strategic focus for the immediate future. The launch of this Strategy coincides with our 10-year anniversary; since 2009, we have combined research, policy and local action to implement activities that create long-lasting change for the most vulnerable communities.

Some of our initiatives have increased smallholder productivity, access to technologies and markets, and resilience to climate change, whilst others have focused on creating income-generating activities through the protection of local resources. Drawing on lessons from these initiatives, as well as our understanding of the development ecosystem, our work will focus on three strategic challenges as follows: poor access of smallholder farmers to innovations and markets, decline of natural capital, and poor mainstreaming of evidence in policy and practice.

Our pillars are defined to provide solutions to these challenges and create the necessary conditions to improve food and nutrition security among the most vulnerable populations. At the institutional level, we will continue to build a sustainable organization that creates partnerships, measures and demonstrates impact, and fosters learning. Our new strategy starts in a particularly difficult context with the COVID-19 sanitary crisis, which will ultimately affect food systems and therefore worsen the food situation of vulnerable communities. Our interventions are more than welcome in this context and we stand together with the government to support vulnerable communities in this struggle. We extend our gratitude to the technical and financial partners who make our work possible, and we stand ready to develop innovative actions with all stakeholders to accelerate the realization of our mission.

Frejus THOTO
Executive Director

Pascal DJHOSSOU
Chairperson of the Board of
Directors

Synopsis

Three strategic challenges

01

Poor access of smallholder farmers to innovations and markets

02

Worrying decline of natural capital

03

Poor mainstreaming of evidence in policy and practice

Approach

ACED has developed a non-linear three-pronged approach that combines research, action and policy. We produce high-quality and demanded evidence, formulate timely and adequate policy recommendations, and support the implementation of evidence-informed solutions directly in communities.

Vision

We envision a world where all communities have a decent life in a sustainable environment.

Mission

To empower communities with lasting solutions to poverty and hunger in a sustainable environment.

Strategic pillars

Pillar 1: Improving smallholders' access to innovations and markets

- ✚ Improving the production efficiency of healthy and affordable food
- ✚ Increasing access to markets

Pillar 2: Protecting the nature and related ecosystem services

- ✚ Improving the knowledge base on ecosystem services
- ✚ Stimulating the mainstreaming of an ecosystem services approach into planning and decision-making for sustainable ecosystem management

Pillar 3: Making evidence work for society and nature

- ✚ Producing timely and demanded evidence
- ✚ Improving access to evidence
- ✚ Increasing evidence use

Pillar 4: Building an effective and sustainable organization

- ✚ Improving effectiveness and efficiency
- ✚ Improving governance
- ✚ Measuring impact and fostering learning
- ✚ Ensuring sustainability

Our principles



Partnership



Inclusion



Evidence-driven



Sustainability

Theory of change

Challenges:

- Poor access of smallholders to innovations and markets
- Pressure on natural capital
- Poor mainstreaming of evidence in policy and practice

Inputs:

- Human resources
- Funding
- Partnerships
- Governance systems

Outputs:

- Smallholder farmers are trained and equipped in developing agroecological production systems
- Resilient innovative technologies and practices are sourced and made available to smallholder farmers
- Market opportunities identified for smallholder farmers
- Smallholder farmers capacities improved on market linkages
- Smallholder farmers' access to financial systems improved
- Researchers and practitioners trained on tools and practical guidelines for measuring and assessing ecosystem services
- Short-term programmes on ecosystem services designed and supported
- Capacities of policymakers improved regarding ecosystem service approach
- Policymakers and evidence generators are trained on evidence-informed policymaking
- Multi-stakeholders' platform on evidence use is established and functional
- Quality, relevant and timely evidence is produced
- Web portal of evidence is established and functional
- Help desk on evidence is established and functional

Assumptions:

- Stakeholders are willing to support farmers' inclusion in markets and financial systems

External shocks of agricultural systems are limited

Intermediate Outcomes:

- Smallholder farmers transition to agroecological production systems
- Smallholder farmers have increased access to markets and financial systems
- Vulnerable communities have increased access to healthy and affordable food
- Knowledge base on ecosystem services improved
- Ecosystem services approach is mainstreamed into sustainable ecosystem management
- Policymakers are able to demand, access and use evidence in policymaking
- Evidence-informed policymaking is institutionalized in central and local governments

Long-term outcomes:

- Income and food security of farmers and vulnerable communities are improved
- Ecosystem services are leveraged by local communities to improve food and nutrition security
- Policymakers systematically use evidence in decision-making processes related to food and nutrition security

Impact:

Poverty and hunger are reduced in a sustainable environment

Policy and regulatory environment enables innovation and collaboration

Evidence generators and policymakers are willing to engage in evidence use



1. The unfinished business of food and nutrition security

Ensuring that everybody is able to access sufficient, affordable and nutritious food has been – and still is – an all-time challenge for humanity, with the issue of food and nutrition security (FNS) receiving permanent and increasing attention in the research and policy spheres. About 820 million people in the world are still hungry today, and 2 billion people experience moderate or severe food insecurity (FAO et al. 2019). In spite of efforts and interventions, the number of undernourished people in the world has been on the rise these last 5 years, with the African continent demonstrating the highest prevalence of undernourishment (FAO et al. 2019). It is now clear that the goal of zero hunger is utopic and unlikely to be achieved.

Why is it so difficult to end hunger?

Food and nutrition insecurity is indeed a complex issue with multiple and interrelated causes, and which leads to negative impacts on the livelihoods and economic capabilities of populations. FNS has evolved in theory and practice during the last 70 years through a sequence of definitions, paradigms and interventions (see also Weingärtner 2004). FNS is significantly affected by economic slowdowns or downturns (FAO et al. 2019) and by the adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters (Grebmer et al. 2019). With burgeoning global population growth, which is projected to increase by almost 26% by 2050 (UNDESA 2019), the demand for food is also increasing rapidly, and within the same timeframe, there will be a need for 60-110% more food (Tilman et al. 2011).

All this in the face of numerous food supply challenges, including low agricultural productivity, increasing competition for natural resources and climate change. The issue of FNS is further complicated by strong interdependencies with other aspects of a broad sustainable development agenda, including inclusive economic growth, changing population dynamics, decent employment, improved social protection, better access to energy, water, health, sanitation, natural resource management and protection for ecosystems (See TST 2013).

The Republic of Benin, herein referred to as Benin, is a case in point where the issue of FNS is of major concern and maintained by

the trap of poverty. About 9.6% of the population (more than 1 million people) is food insecure, and about half of the population (5 million people) live in constant state of precarious food security (WFP 2017). The FNS issue is more acute in rural regions where about 12% of the population is food insecure; this compares to 7% in urban areas.

However, as a result of worsening living conditions, food insecurity in is on the rise urban areas, creating a population of vulnerable urban citizens, referred to as the 'urban poor'. About three-quarters of these urban poor have been found to be food insecure (Houessou et al. 2019). Unlike their rural counterparts, for whom different food shortage management strategies are available (home gardening, food banks, etc.), the 'urban poor' have few or none of the same options, with very limited access to agricultural land, and limited access to social security systems. The situation in urban areas in Benin is likely to get worse due to increasing urbanization (47.3%¹ - one of the highest rates in West Africa) and the expansion and creation of cities.

Therefore, regardless of geographical area (rural or urban), the issue of FNS is of great concern in Benin and requires more strategic, dedicated and innovative interventions that combine research, policy and action if the challenge of providing adequate nourishment is to be overcome. These interventions will happen in an unstable global and local context characterized by the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures taken by countries. This sanitary crisis is expected to impact food systems and therefore worsen the food and nutrition security of thousands of vulnerable households in Benin.



About 9.6% of the population (more than 1 million people) is food insecure in Benin



about half of the population (5 million people) live in constant state of precarious food security in Benin

¹ <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/benin/population-and-urbanization-statistics/bj-urban-population--of-total-population>

2. Three strategic challenges

Poor access of smallholder farmers to innovations and markets.

Most interventions regarding FNS-related issues strategically focus on smallholder farmers who represent the majority of farmers worldwide ². This target group is paradoxically known to be particularly affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, whilst at the same time, playing an essential role in ensuring FNS. But the world has developed – and continues to develop – agricultural innovations that could increase the productivity and performance of smallholder farmers. However, very often, those innovations fail to reach the last mile and impact those most in need. On the other hand, smallholder farmers are characterized by a poor and unstable access to markets and increasing productivity for smallholders creates a higher volume of agricultural produce that needs to be connected to markets. Therefore, our new strategy will build on the body of interventions on smallholder farmers' improved access to innovations and markets.



Pressure on natural capital.

Responses to interventions on FNS-related issues, and to the overall wellbeing of communities, are determined by our relationship with natural capital ³. Recent indicators of progress indicate a worrying decline of global natural capital, with escalating extinction rates of species and relentlessly increasing pressures on biodiversity. Through our new strategy, we will stand with local and international leading organizations in protecting nature and its contribution to people (ecosystem services).

² Farms of less than one hectare account for 70% of all farms

³ <https://www.wavespartnership.org/en/knowledge-center/status-and-trends-global-ecosystem-services-and-natural-capital-assessing-progress>

Poor mainstreaming of evidence in policy and practice

The issues of food and nutrition insecurity and natural capital decline have led to the development of numerous strategic and spontaneous responses around the world in terms of new policies, plans, programmes and projects. Unfortunately, these responses fail to halt the progress of food insecurity and biodiversity loss due, in part, to the quality of decision-making and action, particularly in Africa, where responses to FNS and conservation-related interventions are not sufficiently supported by evidence. Our new strategy is ambitious in dealing with this aspect of interventions, and supports the production, dissemination and utilization of evidence to inform policies and decisions in food security and preservation of natural capital.



3. Approach and impact

Over the past 10 years, ACED has worked to clarify and strengthen its intervention approach and to impact the livelihoods of grassroot communities. ACED has developed a non-linear three-pronged approach that combines research, action and policy. The approach iteratively completes the cycle of evidence generation, dissemination and use, helping to bridge the gap between research, policy and action for better impact. In fact:



We produce high quality and demanded evidence through collaboration with universities, research institutions and knowledge centres, but we do not stop at research reports, systematic reviews, and scientific publications;

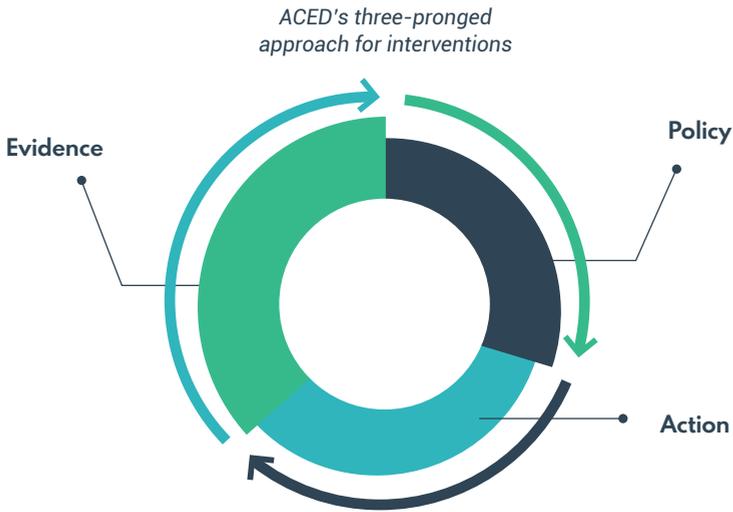


We formulate timely and adequate policy recommendations and engage decision-makers and other stakeholders to adopt them (e.g. through policy dialogues), but we do not stop there;



We proceed to support the direct implementation of evidence-informed solutions within communities, and generate learning from our experiences to provide citizens with evidence – before restarting the process.

This approach puts ACED at the right place to influence policymakers and practitioners, and to develop actions that are informed by strong evidence.



The effectiveness and relevance of ACED's approach can be seen in the tangible results of its interventions. The following table captures our socioeconomic and environmental impact on people, profit and planet.

Our impact on people, profit and planet

Indicator	Value
Number of farmers reached and empowered* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of men • Number of women 	5,156 3,574 1,582
Number of farmers in transition into agroecological farming (adopting organic fertilizer in general)	More than 1,070
Number of farmers' cooperatives empowered to improve the management of common goods	More than 200
Percentage increase in the productivity of vegetables (%)	More than 108

Quantity of water hyacinth compost produced (tonnes)	More than 8,500
Quantity of healthy food produced by our target farmers to improve urban food systems (tonnes)	More than 1,000
Number of youth reached (below 35 years old)	748
Number of people (children, women, men, etc.) directly impacted (whose conditions have been directly improved)	32,472
Number of people indirectly impacted in the society	More than 500,000
Quantity of greenhouse gas emissions reduced (tonnes of CO ₂ eq)	More than 10,000
Number of evidence generators and policymakers engaged in policy dialogues	More than 500
Number of knowledge products with actionable recommendations developed and disseminated	More than 250
Financial benefits** for our stakeholders (mainly smallholder farmers)	USD 2,008,585

**Reached' means they have benefited from at least one of our capacity building initiatives (training/ advice/equipment/access to technologies, etc.) to improve either their income or their food and nutrition security status.

***Financial benefits' means how much was mobilized and invested in field activities to build the capacities of the target groups (mainly smallholder farmers).

4.

Positioning

ACED is well known as the leading policy research organization on specific thematic areas in Benin (e.g. invasive species, fisheries, agricultural entrepreneurship, urban food systems, evidence-informed policy). Over the past 10 years, we have built strong ties with various stakeholders including researchers, policymakers, practitioners and local communities.

What do we do in the FNS ecosystem?

Researchers	Policymakers	Practitioners	Local communities
Scientists, evaluation specialists, data experts	Central government, local governments	NGOs, development institutions, private sector	Farmers, women, youth, low-income groups
What we do:	What we do:	What we do:	What we do:
Link researchers to the most crucial and relevant research questions that are of interest for policymakers, practitioners and farmers	Connect policymakers to high-quality evidence to inform their decisions	Provide relevant guidance on intervention design and implementation	Build capacities on the solutions available to improve FNS in a sustainable environment
How we do it:	How we do it:	How we do it:	How we do it:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops for co-creation of research questions • Funding • Transdisciplinary research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity development • Policy dialogues • EPA Forum • Help desk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and capacity development • Funding • EPA Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Access to innovations and markets • Knowledge co-creation

Our close collaboration with local communities is an asset that provides a comparative advantage and reinforces the added value of our interventions in the FNS sphere. In fact, it gives us the opportunity to learn about the most crucial needs and aspirations in the field, and to voice and mainstream these into our work and communicate to other development stakeholders.

III Vision

We envision a world where all communities have a decent life in a sustainable environment.

🤝 Mission

To empower communities with lasting solutions to poverty and hunger in a sustainable environment.



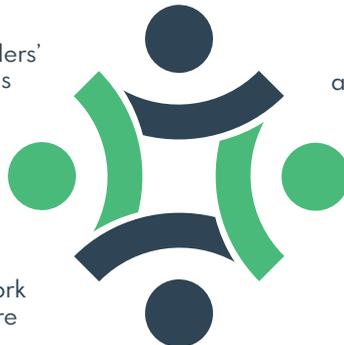
When ACED was established 10 years ago, 1.02 billion people were undernourished worldwide. In 2019, around 820 million people in the world were still hungry, many of them located in Africa, making the continent the region with the highest prevalence of undernourishment. Pressure on natural resources to feed a growing population is increasing. Therefore, our mission remains unchanged – we'll endeavor to empower communities with evidence-informed solutions to poverty and hunger whilst protecting the local environment. However, we'll improve our intervention approach by mainstreaming the learnings from previous initiatives and by seizing new opportunities. To achieve our mission, ACED will focus on four pillars as follows:

Pillar 1:

Improving smallholders' access to innovations and markets

Pillar 3:

Making evidence work for society and nature



Pillar 2:

Protecting the nature and related ecosystem services

Pillar 4:

Building an effective and sustainable organization

5. Make it happen

Pillar 1: Improving smallholders' access to innovations and markets

Smallholders are operating in a rapidly evolving socioeconomic, environmental and political landscape. Resource depletion, climate change, demographic pressure, rapid urbanization, higher incomes and changing diets present both challenges and opportunities for smallholders. To ensure smallholders leverage the opportunities offered by these changes, our work will focus on two main areas.

Improving the production efficiency of healthy and affordable food.

ACED will continue with its efforts to support smallholders in improving the performance of their production systems. To do that, we will build the capacities of smallholders in developing agroecological production systems. We do acknowledge that most smallholders use chemical inputs in their production systems, hence, part of our efforts will leverage our experience on capacitating such smallholders in transiting towards agroecological farming. In addition, we will invest in research and adapted innovative technologies and practices that increase their resilience to external pressures, such as climate change, natural disasters, pollution, and pest infestations. Furthermore, we will work with smallholders to improve pre- and post-harvest handling of foods, and storage and processing practices to avoid food loss and waste.

Increasing access to markets for smallholders.

We have learnt from experience that market access is instrumental in encouraging smallholders to adopt the technology promoted by initiatives and thus, improve their production and subsequently, their incomes and FNS. A first priority of ACED initiatives will be to encourage diversified production of nutritious and healthy foods that may present new market opportunities for smallholders. Using comprehensive data on agricultural and food value chains and markets, we will also promote a more enabling market environment for smallholders that provides fair and transparent prices to adequately remunerate their work and investments. For instance, we will promote short food supply chains that enable smallholders to obtain better prices. Furthermore, we will support smallholders' capacities to improve their organization, bargaining power, control over the economic environment, and participation in food value chains by acting collectively and forming cooperatives, associations and networks. Special attention will be paid to fostering the participation and equal decision-making power of traditionally underrepresented groups, such as women and youth.





An example of work

With support from the French Facility for Global Environment, the French Committee for International Solidarity and the European Union, we built capacity of over 1,000 farmers to transition into agroecological farming by producing and using water hyacinth compost. We also developed activities that connect farmers to consumers of fruits and vegetables in Benin's major cities, thereby increasing their selling prices and incomes.

In 5 years, we will have:

-  Supported 50,000 farmers to increase their productivity and income, and ultimately improve the FNS of their families;
-  Improved smallholder access to markets for their agricultural produce.

Pillar 2: Protecting the nature and related ecosystem services

Efforts to improve food and nutrition security often result in increased pressure on natural resources. Therefore, beyond our commitment towards ensuring better livelihoods for vulnerable communities, we also prioritise creating and safeguarding a sustainable environment. Natural resources provide the local communities with crucial goods and services referred to as ecosystem services. Most of these services, especially the regulating ones, are irreplaceable and crucial for food production systems but had been constantly overlooked.



Ecosystem services, also known as 'nature's contribution to people', refer to the direct and indirect contribution of ecosystems to human well-being. Besides provisioning services or goods, including food, fuel and other raw materials, plants, animals and micro-organisms provide essential regulating services such as crop pollination, prevention of soil erosion and water purification, as well as a vast array of cultural services.

For the coming years, ACED will contribute to the recognition and valuation of local ecosystem services to ensure their influence on food systems is improved. For effective and long-lasting impact, our work will be focus on the science, policy and practice nexus.

Improving the knowledge base of ecosystem services.

The science of ecosystem services is relatively recent (20 years). In Africa and especially in Benin the concept is still new, and little is known about its dimensions as well as the methodological approaches for assessing and measuring the services delivered by ecosystems. We will collaborate with leading institutions on this issue to develop and/or reinforce capacities of researchers to stimulate further study on the capacity, value and resilience of terrestrial and marine ecosystems in Benin. Our interventions will include (i) the organization of short trainings on tools and practical guidelines for measuring and assessing ecosystem services, (ii) support to research institutions for designing short-term programmes on ecosystem services and (iii) the provision of small research grants.

Stimulating the mainstreaming of an ecosystem services approach into planning and decision-making for sustainable ecosystem management.

Linking scientific information on ecosystem services with decision-making is the best strategy to guarantee awareness and effective conservation policies. However, beyond the lack of information and evidence on ecosystem services, limited technical capacities and non-conducive conditions prevent the development of informed policy decisions. Our intervention aims to fix these issues by (i) building the capacities of policymakers in ecosystem management, and (ii) providing technical assistance during planning process related to ecosystem management.

An example of work

With support from the Global Environment Facility, we have collaborated with the communities of Grand-Popo in southern Benin to assess the local mangrove ecosystem services in order to develop actions that simultaneously leverage these services, and protect this important ecosystem.

In 5 years, we will have:

-  Increased the knowledge base on ecosystem services by increasing the capacities of at least 200 researchers;
-  Supported 10 processes to mainstream ecosystem services into planning and decision-making for sustainable ecosystem management;
-  Supported at least 20 local communities to develop actions that leverage the local ecosystem services.

Pillar 3: Making evidence work for society and nature

During the last 10 years, ACED has played a key role in ensuring evidence is generated and used to address key challenges facing farmers and policymakers. Our intervention approach prioritizes evidence use by completing a cycle of evidence generation, dissemination and use. ACED will continue to focus on these three key areas.

By evidence, we mean data, evaluation and research but also citizen and endogenous evidence that may not follow a scientific process but all the same provides valuable knowledge that can inform policy and practice.

Producing timely and demanded evidence.

We will improve our collaboration with policymakers and practitioners to help them identify the most crucial and needed policy questions that can be solved with quality evidence. Our collaboration with universities, research institutions and knowledge centres will be instrumental in producing high-quality evidence for policymakers and practitioners. ACED will establish the first evidence help desk in Benin that can be reached by stakeholders, especially policymakers, in need of 'quick' evidence to make decisions.

Improving access to evidence.

We acknowledge that researchers and other evidence producers such as evaluators and data specialists have produced a large quantity of relevant and quality evidence on food and nutrition. However, the available evidence is scattered and mostly available in formats that do not allow smooth processing and mainstreaming into the policy cycle. Through targeted activities, such as data curation and aggregation, evidence translation, and visualization, ACED will improve policymakers' and practitioners' access to available evidence.

Increasing evidence use.

ACED will develop activities that increase the capacities of people involved in the policymaking cycle, especially political leaders and technical officers, to identify evidence needs as well as how to access the relevant evidence and use it to make decisions. Moreover, we will go beyond working with individuals to support the institutionalization of evidence use within central and local governments. The ultimate outcome of this will be to support stakeholders to embed evidence into routine decision-making processes and develop and implement evidence-informed plans and programmes that create positive change among communities.

In 5 years, we will have:

-  Supported 1,000 policymakers, researchers, data specialists, evaluation experts and brokers in creating an ecosystem where evidence use is institutionalized;
-  Established the first help desk on evidence use in FNS in Benin;
-  Become the go-to place for evidence on FNS in Benin and the partner of choice that connects evidence generators to policymakers.



An example of work

With support from the Hewlett Foundation, we provide support to local governments in demanding, accessing and utilizing evidence to make decisions on food and nutrition security. The initiative has created functional linkages between researchers and local governments.

Pillar 4: Building an effective and sustainable organization

For the organization to realize its mission, ACED will need to develop a strong, results-oriented approach that effectively harnesses the enthusiasm and support of its stakeholders. Towards this aim, we need to increase our effectiveness and efficiency through improved governance, impact measurement, generate learning and ensure sustainability.

Improving effectiveness and efficiency.

A major change in our programmatic functioning will be a move from project-based interventions towards more mission-driven programmes and initiatives to which individual projects can contribute. In other words, ACED will strategically focus on the above three pillars that will form the basis of our interventions. By doing so, we will be able to increase the effectiveness of our activities and improve their alignment with our mission and vision. Where possible, we will develop partnerships on these pillars to create synergies and complementarities and make optimal use of resources to achieve more with less.

Improving governance.

How we are governed will determine whether we achieve our mission or not. Therefore, ACED will reinforce its governance in a number of ways; first, internal management structures, including finance, human resources, and operations, will be improved to allow smooth implementation of our activities. Second, the composition of the Board will be improved and extended to ensure the organization is strategically driven by people with a shared vision and strong capabilities to achieve ACED's goals. Moreover, we will expand our International Advisory Board to bring in more expertise and resources that can provide technical guidance to enhance our operations.

Measuring impact and fostering learning.

As we work to empower communities with evidence-informed and lasting solutions for poverty and hunger, we are committed to measuring our impact. Since 2016, we have started integrating randomized control trials within our interventions design to rigorously measure the impact that is attributable to our work. In the coming years, we will adopt the most rigorous and cost-efficient methods to collect data and measure impact. Furthermore, we will continue to promote the systematic capture and sharing of knowledge, challenges and lessons to continually improve our approach and drive greater change.

A randomized control trial to measure ACED's impact in reducing food insecurity and poverty among urban households in Benin

From 2016 to 2019, we embedded a randomized control trial into our intervention aimed at reducing food insecurity and poverty among urban households with support from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research. The experiment demonstrated that allotment gardens are an effective intervention for improving FNS among the urban poor. The results helped to generate strong evidence and applicable learning on how to improve food security in urban settings.



Ensuring sustainability.

Thanks to the support of various funders, ACED has been able to mobilize the required resources to pursue its mission. Over the last 10 years, trends in the organizational and project-level budgets have been positive. However, our current funding system is highly dependent on grants (80%), with income generated from delivered services accounting for just 20%. The sustainability of our interventions will depend on our ability to ensure the smooth flow of financial resources. To achieve this, ACED will first diversify its funding sources and ensure a better balance between grants and self-generated funding. In terms of grants, we will target funders that have a strong culture of flexible and 'full cost' funding. In addition to generating profit from services offered by the organization, ACED will explore innovative fundraising mechanisms. Our ambition is that by 2024, general expenses of the organization will be fully supported by non-grant related revenue so that funders' dollars are purely invested into specific projects.

In 5 years, we will have:

-  Become a stronger, results- and learning-focused organization that delivers positive impact;
-  Diversified our funding sources to reduce dependency on grants.

Addressing cross-cutting issues: youth, women, ICT, climate change

Throughout all of our programmes and initiatives, we will mainstream concerns of women and youth to ensure they have the required resources, skills, and capacities to seize opportunities in the food systems. Information and communication technologies offer a wide range of possibilities to overcome challenges in the agricultural sector. Therefore, we will explore and embed those technologies in areas where they can make a difference and help deliver our programmes efficiently. Finally, adaptation to and mitigation of climate change is a major cross-cutting issue relevant across all of our pillars. We will actively mainstream actions that improve climate resilience of farmers and local communities.

Our priorities for action from 2020 to 2024



6. Our principles



Sustainability

ACED's interventions provide communities with the capacity and resources to continue our interventions without continued support.



Inclusion

Our activities actively seek to engage the participation of societal groups that traditionally have faced exclusion, including youth and women.



Evidence-driven

ACED's interventions are guided by evidence. As such, we work to generate research results and knowledge that can guide the effective implementation of our activities – and those of others.



Partnership

The development challenges we are facing require strong collaboration with all stakeholders. We create the conditions and incentives to ensure all stakeholders actively participate in our interventions to co-create sustainable solutions.



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Strategy 2020 - 2024

Evidence – Policy – Action



Vision

We envision a world where all communities have a decent life in a sustainable environment.



Mission

To empower communities with lasting solutions to poverty and hunger in a sustainable environment.



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