

Gruppo Aleimar Onlus



LET'S SEED THE FUTURE

Female social enterprise and educational programs for the enhancement for the local agricultural supply chains and for waste recycling

Atakora District – BENIN



August 2016

1. PROJECT IN BRIEF

TITLE

Sow the Future

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Gruppo Aleimar Onlus (**Aleimar**)

Via Curiel, 21/D

20066 Melzo (Milan) Italy

LOCAL MANAGER

Diocesan Caritas in Natitingou

PROJECT MANAGER

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DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

- 250 women in difficult economic condition and/or at risk of social marginalization because of the HIV virus
- 750 people (of which 720 students and 30 teachers)

TOTAL AMOUNT

77,300 euro

MISSING QUOTA

11,350 euro

REALIZATION TIME

12 months

Expected start: September 2016

Completion: August 2017

2. SUMMARY

The project consists of the **development of local agricultural activities** involving **women**, in particular those in difficult economic condition and/or at risk of social marginalization because of the HIV virus. In this way, it is supposed they can play an important role in the development of rural agricultural areas and, consequently, **defeating the food insecurity**.

The second work axis will instead be **educational**. Will be started activities in schools of Benin in order to enhance and restore the local foods to better ensuring balanced nutrition. In addition, we will launch the groundwork for a pioneering awareness on the subject of **waste recycling** that, starting from schools, can reach the parents of students and the local community. Starting a network of recycling of waste “door to door” will not only contribute to the reduction of trash and the general improvement of the hygienic conditions, but also the optimization of some resources for the production of natural fertilizer for the agriculture or for the production of biogas for everyday cooking and as a source of energy electricity.

Regarding the first aspect, the beneficiaries are 250 women divided into working groups belonging to three municipalities in the Atakora region (one of the poorest and most backward in the northern Benin): Boukoubé, Natitingou and Toucountouna.

As for the second one, instead, the recipients are 5 schools, for a total of 24 classes (**720 students** and **30 teachers**).

The estimated cost is € 77,300 and the missing quota is € 11,350.

The two areas of intervention provided by the project, particularly on agricultural production, are in line with government policies. In fact, the theme of the supply chains promotion is among the main recommendations, of the two most important documents of national strategies in the agricultural sector: Strategies Guidelines for the Development of Benin (*Orientations Stratégiques du Développement du Bénin* (OSD, 2012-2016)) and Growth Strategy for Poverty Reduction (*Stratégie de Croissance pour la Réduction de la Pauvreté* (SCRP 2011-2015)). The Strategic Plan for the Recovery of the Agricultural Sector (*Plan Stratégique de Relance du Secteur Agricole* (PSRSA)) aims to make Benin “one agricultural powerhouse dynamic, competitive, attractive, environmental friendly, creator of wealth and alert to the needs of economic and social development of the country”.

The project will run for 12 months.

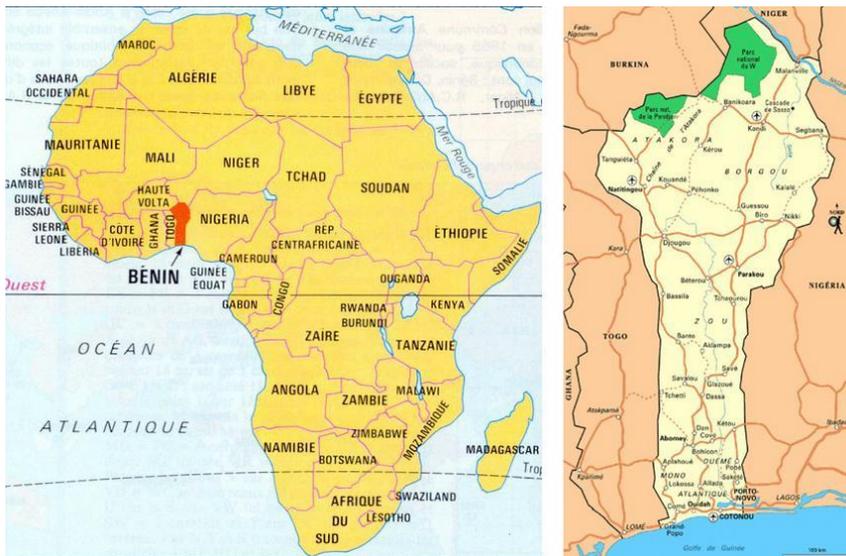
3. INTRODUCTION

Benin is a country of the Central West Africa and ranked, by international organizations, as belonging to the category of low-income countries in the sub-Saharan Africa, presenting data both economic and social very low. Here below are some data in comparison with Italy (in parentheses)¹:

- Extension: 114,763 (301,000) square Km
- Population: 10 (61) million

¹ CIA – The World Factbook

- Average age: 18 (44) years
- Urban population: 45% (68%)
- Life expectancy at birth: 61 (82) years
- Index of fertility: 5,1 (1,4) children born/woman
- Degree of literacy: 42% (99%)
- Expectation of school life: 11 (17) years
- Availability drinking water: 84% (100%)
- Average income per capita: 1600 (24.200) U\$/year
- Human development index: 166° (25°) place²



The economy of Benin is very poor and largely depends on subsistence agriculture, cotton cultivation – predominantly oriented towards exports – and regional trade. The real growth in manufacturing has averaged over the last six years of the 5% but the rapid growth of the population has made vain the large part of it. In the recent years, the inflation was kept under control. In order to further increase the growth rate of the economy Benin is trying to attract more foreign investments, place more emphasis on tourism, facilitate the development of new systems for food processing and production of new agricultural products and encourage the new computer and telecommunications technologies.

Presence of Aleimar in Benin

Commitment Aleimar in Benin in favor of the poor and abandoned children started in 2000 and has increased over the years, also differentiating the types of intervention. To the initial support for children have been joined development cooperation projects for the promotion of the local communities, where children lived till to realize, in the recent years, multiannual programs to reach their self-sustainability. In healthcare, Aleimar has built, and manages, a nutritional center in Abomey and sponsors health and hygiene and nutritional training activities, in several towns and villages. Aleimar also supports some accommodation centers (Natitingou, Boukoumbé and Perma), the accommodation and professional training center of Toucountouna, kindergartens and

² <https://data.undp.org> - 2013

primary schools in Natitingou and Kpossegean and a project for the promotion of OVC (Orphans and Vulnerable Children) (*OEV - Orphelins et Enfants Vulnérables*) in collaboration with Caritas-Benin. Gruppo Aleimar's investments in Benin (supportships + development projects) amounts to about € 200,000 per year.

4. PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

The Republic of Benin is at the 166 place, out of 186 countries, inside the "Low Human Development" band in the Human Development Index in 2013. The project focuses in the Atakora District, in the northwest of the country bordering with Togo and Burkina Faso and in particular in three of the nine municipalities that make it up: Boukoumbé, Natitingou and Toucountouna. It has a population of about 600,000 inhabitants, 200,000 if considering the only three municipalities involved in the project, with a density of 31 inhabitants per square Km (nationally among the lowest).

A) FOOD INSECURITY

The district, like others in the country, has lived for several decades a **strong dependence on cotton production system that has discouraged communities to invest in local agricultural productions and thereby generating a diffused food insecurity that affects 51% of the population**. After the decline of the cotton system, communities are looking for a productive differentiation; also the local government has re-begun to promote and invest in the agricultural sector of food as deduced from the development plans of municipalities, in which it is in fact mentioned the approach to the supply chain as element for the agricultural development of the territories.

It is important to act now because the project will have a significant social impact in the rebalance of a consolidated system of inequalities in the local culture, which tends to marginalize women despite their central role inside the family and community.

B) WASTE RECYCLING

The problem of waste disposal in Benin has always existed, but only in recent years, some groups of the population are becoming aware. The government has not yet developed a clear policy and municipalities, in the absence of guidelines to follow and funds for investment, defers to civil society, in particular to local associations, the task of collecting the waste in makeshift landfills where, periodically, the garbage is indiscriminately burned for lack of possibility of its separate collection and partial recycling.

Following the urbanization policies implemented by the government, Natitingou (capital of the departed-chin) has faced the energy crisis and the lack of water in most villages and in some urban neighborhoods. In a phase of continuous expansion, the consumer society imposes itself more and more with its corollary of massive waste production. plastic bags, glass, cans and other objects threatening to invade the environment. **Currently the city of Natitingou produces daily about five tons of waste**, of which only two are collected by municipal services until discharged in the suburbs without any kind of treatment. On the territory there are two waste accumulation points, but are not valid because of the missing phase

subdivision of materials, reaching only 30% of the recycling. The means available to the municipality are limited and often the lack of sensitivity to the immediate needs of the population. This situation makes it difficult to attain the new objectives of the Millennium sustainable development, including poverty reduction and the creation of an eco-friendly environment.

5. PURPOSE AND TARGETS

The purpose of the project "Let's seed the Future" is to strengthen food security and enhance the local agricultural supply chains in their economic-productive and socio-educational dimension.

The targets are:

1. Supporting the female social entrepreneurship in the local agricultural sector, with a particular attention to women in distress and marginalization;
2. Renew nutrition education in Benin and in Italy, enhancing the role of family farming and the local organic products;
3. Promote education to environmental sustainability and eco-citizenship.

6. BENEFICIARIES

Target 1

Direct beneficiaries:

- 250 women

Indirect beneficiaries: all household members

- 1,500 people

Target 2

Direct beneficiaries: 1,750 people divided as follows:

- 30 teachers;
- 720 students of 5 schools for a total of 24 classes
- 1,000 students' parents

Indirect beneficiaries: all household members and local community

- 5,000 people

Target 3

Direct beneficiaries: 1,750 people divided as follows:

- 30 teachers;
- 720 students of 5 schools for a total of 24 classes
- 1,000 students' parents

Indirect beneficiaries: all household members and local community

- 5,000 people

7. METHODS

The project is managed in collaboration with Caritas Natitingou (Benin) and the organization Valeurs Espoir pour l'Afrique (VEA) NGO, founded in 2011 and working from 2013 on projects for the promotion of eco-citizenship on the territory of Natitingou. VEA NGO has opened at the beginning of 2016 an eco-centre in the far outskirts of Natitingou: the eco-centre will provide a warehouse for differentiated waste storage and tanks for washing plastic, glass, aluminium and iron.

Planned activities for achieving the target 1:

1. Introduction of an innovative technological agro-ecological package for local productions (compost, improved cuttings, etc.). The activity specifically foresees training in agro-ecological techniques for the treatment of soils, which focus in particular on fertilization.
2. Introduction of new machinery for processing and consulting on conservation/packaging.
3. Realization of new local platforms of distribution.

Planned activities for achieving the target 2:

1. Development of a training program on nutrition and local food for teachers, students and parents of 5 kindergartens and primary schools in the municipalities of Natitingou, Toucountouna and Boukoubé.
2. Planting of trees, fruit or ornamental, to contribute to food security and reforestation for the preservation of the environment and climate.

Planned activities for achieving the target 3:

1. Meetings of sensitization on the importance of the cleaning in the environments in which you live and practical demonstrations on the separate waste collection and disposal for teachers, pupils and parents of 5 kindergartens and primary schools in the municipalities of Natitingou, Toucountouna and Boukoumbé.
2. Start of a net of separate waste collection "door-to-door" authorized by the municipality of reference involving the greatest pupils, teachers and parents.

Expected results for Target 1:

- 1.1 Quality and quantity increase of the production of cassava, soybean, peanut and other local products by the 250 women involved.
- 1.2 Production of the compost with 50% of the damp material coming from the separate waste collection: production of around 1 ton/month, whose 30% sold to the population creating a source of revenue for the project autonomy.
- 2.1 Quality and quantity increase in the processing and storage of local farm products by the 250 women involved.
- 3.1 sales increase of raw products and processed by the groups involved.
- 3.2 Variety increase of local agricultural products used in households and marketed.

Expected results for Target 2:

1. 30 teachers, 730 pupils and 1 000 parents formed on the link among local foods, food safety, agricultural and food sustainable systems and environmental protection.
2. 100 plants, fruit or ornamental, planted.

Expected results for Target 3:

- 1.1 30 teachers, 720 students and 1 000 parents raise awareness on waste collection and disposal.
- 2.1 Constitution of a recycling network consisting of 20 workers (10 pupils and 10 adults who receive a monthly compensation of 500 CFA) and at least 500 subscribers (households and private/public entities engage in the waste collection receiving a monthly lump sum of CFA 500.
- 2.2 Enhancement of waste as a source of wealth and employment.
- 2.3 Reduction of waste indiscriminately abandoned in the streets and/or burnt near-homes.

CRITICAL ISSUES

There are a number of challenges that the project will have to face, starting from the production stage, and is attributable to **four factors: human, technical, economic and institutional**. In terms of **human capacity**, the high illiteracy rate and insufficient professional training result in the application of technical cultivation itineraries inappropriate and a wariness about the benefits of waste collection.

On a **technical level**, the critical issues relate to the tendency to the extension of cultivation areas set more than the increase in productivity, to poor water control, to insufficient mechanization (technologies are inadequate and make it agricultural work unattractive and not very profitable) and to the lack of adequate means of transportation for agricultural products and waste collected.

On the **economic level**, it must be stressed again: a strong central role of the cotton sector which places the supply chain "food" in a disadvantageous position in terms of production inputs such as seed (often unavailable at national level) both with respect to imports of raw materials or finished products; poor market access and credit (less than 2% of bank credits declared are agricultural); one too weak infrastructure development (roads, warehouses, etc.).

On the **institutional level**, the shortcomings are low efficiency and planning on the part of the state; a lack of skills of farmers' organizations and private actors; the land insecurity namely the uncertainty over land ownership due to the conflict, as yet unresolved, between traditional/customary law and positive law. This is an even greater problem wanting to involve in the project as protagonists women because they suffer most from the effects of a traditional culture based on the superiority of man. Rarely, the woman is the owner of the land, participate in decision-making processes of their community and have sufficient financial resources. However, it is true that women are the main player to win the challenge of food security in rural areas.

Additional restriction, that deserves to be deepened, concerns the bad management of land that environmentally produces very worrying effects.

Serious are the difficulties in processing the products (where women are the most employed) and the marketing. The main obstacles in the processing phase are the rudimentary nature of the manufacturing processes, materials and tools, a low level of training and the difficult access to raw materials.

Equally damaging is the traditional practice of indiscriminate disposal of waste through the fire, very often close to homes. This pollutes both the air and soil of populated areas, with all the consequent hygienic health complications.

ADVANTAGES

The promotion of agriculture of small scale, which operates on the chain and which is brought forward by groups of women in a mutual and cooperative way, it will be easy to implement as it is based on simple organization and profitable in relatively short times.

The training sessions will make children and adults more sensitive to the issues addressed: nutrition, respect for the environment, exploitation of resources (including waste), social responsibility, in particular the importance of becoming environmentally active citizens.

The home waste collection, launched as pilot project in collaboration with VEA ONG and the cleaning and preservation of external environments in the involved areas will provide an example of integrated environmental protection and will bring an improvement to the quality of life of local population.

Its natural evolution could lead, over time, the conception of a **pilot project for the production of biogas** from organic waste collected to be used in the kitchen (instead of the traditional coal, harmful to the environment) and as an energy source electricity, according to the same successful model at the Songhai Centre in Porto Novo.

Economic incentives for those who will work in the waste collection and the prospect that, for some of them, this will turn into a real generating activity of income, will overcome the resistance to the novelty and the logistical difficulties.



8. BUDGET

Item of expenditure	TOT €
Micro/credit (250 women)	28 000
Materials and training activities (250 women, 720 pupils and 30 teachers)	19 550
Planting (100 plants + material for per irrigation and protection)	500
Incentives for separated waste collection (20 workers + 500 subscribers)	4 700
Structured personnel (project coordinator)	5 550
Non-structured local staff (one responsible for micro/credit, 1 sensitization activities schools referent, 2 animators)	10 800
Current expenses (utilities, communications, fuel, vehicle maintenance)	5 300
Other operating expenses (administration)	1 500
1 Mission	1 400
TOTAL	77 300

9. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER PARTNERS

The project foresees the collaboration of 4 counterparts:

1. **Mani Tese (Extended Hands):** is an Italian NGO that since 1964 implements rural development projects in the southern hemisphere, including Benin where it structures a presence since 1993. The right to food, the food security and sovereignty are sectors in which Mani Tese is currently involved in several African countries as well as in Italy with co-financed projects by EU, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and various Italian institutions including Municipality of Milan, Lombardy Region and Fondazione Cariplo (Cariplo Foundation). On agricultural sectors, in particular that of cassava, it works for four years in Benin with the involvement of women's group of Atakora and for these activities it has already started a cooperation with the partners of this project. Numerous its international

cooperation initiatives related to the food security and those of World Citizenship Education (WCE) in Lombardy primarily implemented in the schools.

In the context of this project, Mani Tese will collaborate with its own funds in the activity management of women's groups e schools, other than those coordinated by Aleimar.

2. **Caritas Natitingou:** follows 250 women divided 10 vulnerable women's groups included in this project and provides all information necessary both to define their needs and to process the targets, expected results and activities. It also helped to select some schools that were included in the planned activities for achieving targets 2 and 3 of this project and, in particular, follow the activities involving these schools. It will contribute with enhancement of amortizable goods and volunteer staff.
3. **Service of the Sisters for Human Promotion (*Service des Soeurs pour la Promotion Humaine - SSPH*) of the local Sisters (*Oblate Sisters Catechists Small Servants of the Poor - Oblates Catechistes Petites Servantes des Pauvres (OCPSP)*):** helped with the other parties to the preparation of this project proposal on the basis of previous interventions, highlighting gaps which still make it difficult complete the autonomy of the groups. Additionally, managing the shelter and training center of Toucountouna, helps raising awareness in schools by providing a vegetable garden already started and the land for planting. And more, it makes available one of the warehouses of the center for the storag of agricultural products of women. It will contribute to the project with the enhancement of amortizable goods and volunteer staff.
4. **Valeurs, Espoir pour l'Afrique (VEA) NGO:** follows the actions for the implementation of Objective 3 as it has a proven track record in the field, starting an eco-center on the outskirts of Natitingou. It will provide the eco-center for the waste collection and disposal, personnel to raise awareness in schools and the organization of the separated collection.

10. SOSTAINABILITY

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: the promotion of the role of women in agricultural will drive empowerment and will have significant effects inside both the family and the community. The very concept of female entrepreneurship allows further **enhancement of the role of women inside the community, modifying power relations in the different contexts of the social life.**

Besides economic incentives for those who will work in the waste collection and the prospective that, for some of them, this will turn into a real generating activity of income, will overcome the resistance to the novelty and the logistical difficulties.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY: previous experiences have shown that the agricultural activities supply chain realized by a group have an economic impact in the life the each single member that produces an improvement in the quality of life inside the family, especially of children, ensuring greater food security. This positive impact will be strengthened by the realization of a system of

female rural entrepreneurship in which the groups become **economic independent actors able to repeat every year the process that will allow them to control the entire supply chain of the different local products.**

TECHNICAL SUSTAINABILITY: the participation in the project by the company Agnellini, Slow Food Lombardia (Lombardy), Università degli studi di Milano – Dipartimento di Beni Culturali e Ambientali (University of Milan – Department of Culture and Environment) ensures the improvement of the technical abilities of the groups involved in all stages of the chain.

The learning of the techniques for the production of compost and its use in agriculture will reduce the purchase of chemical fertilizers and the sale of the surpluses of compost.

The separate waste collection for their enhancement and disposal will be an additional source of income for workers, as well as, minimally for subscribers, thanks to the expected economic incentives.

11. EVALUTATION

For Objective 1

Monitoring and evaluation activities should develop on three steps.

1. The first shall be carried out by the animators who will be provided with a series of forms to be filled for monitoring the activities regarding both aspects of cohesion and group organization and those of product production, processing and marketing. It shall be created a form for each group with the same parameters in order to also compare and exchange experiences for mutual support. It has expected that the staff of the project can meet at least twice a month every single group involved in the activities.
2. The second shall be executed by the management of Gruppo Aleimar, Mani Tese and local counterparts; in particular, Gruppo Aleimar and Mani Tese will deal with more general aspects such as the coordination of the animators on field and verification of their work, in addition the monitoring of the progress of actions related to the expected chronogram, according to the planned timetable. SSPH shall monitor groups that refer to the center in Toucountouna and their productive and commercial aspects. Caritas Natitingou shall monitor groups constituted by women in particular vulnerable situation.
3. The third shall be played out by monitoring and evaluating missions from Italy.

For ongoing and final evaluation of the activities will be used the following four criteria:

1. Relevance
2. Efficiency
3. Impact
4. Sustainability

For Objectives 2 and 3:

As for the monitoring and evaluation of activities to raise awareness in schools (GCE - Global Citizenship Education), these will be carried out by the GCE referent in situ, for the first case, and by the Aleimar and Mani Tese GCE responsables for the second case. VEA NGO will monitor and evaluate the activities of the animators in the schools in the field of waste collection and organization of the workers of the collection itself.

12. REGISTER APPLICANT and LOCAL MANAGER

	Applicant Organization	Local Manager
Name	Gruppo Aleimar Onlus	Caritas di Natitingou
Legal status	Non-profit Organization	Religious organization
Legal representative and title	Elena De Ponti President	Bishop Antoine Sabi Presidente
Address	Via Curiel, 21/D 20066 Melzo (Milan) Italy Tel.: +39 02.9573.7958 Fax.: +39 02.9571.2273	Natitingou B.P° 45 Tel. : 0029 23821173
Web site	www.aleimar.it	natitingou_cdd@yahoo.fr
Email	info@aleimar.it	
Tax code	91526820153	
Establishment year	1983	1964
Staff	5 employees 110 volunteers	20 employees 250 volunteers
Mission	Helping minors in need, with families at risk, abandoned or without references	Promote human social integration without any distinction, with greater attention towards vulnerable groups, especially women and children
Countries in which it operates	Benin, Brazil, Colombia, Congo, Eritrea, India, Israel, Lebanon, Palestine and Zambia	Municipalities belonging to the Diocese of Natitingou (Atakora Region)
Recent experiences in similar projects	Financing agricultural activities in Kpossegean e a Toucountouna	Organization of discussion and support groups for women of the diocese. Management of agricultural projects of social nature for young people and women in need.

BANK

a. *Applicant Organization:*

Bank: Banca Prossima (Gruppo Intesa San Paolo)

Bank account: IBAN: IT 69 U 03359 01600 100000100565

SWIFT: BCITITMX

Account holder: Gruppo Aleimar Onlus

Causal: *Liberal donation for the project "Let's seed the Future" - Benin*

PROJECT FINANCIAL PLAN

COSTS (OUTPUTS)				COVER ASSETS (REVENUE)			
Cost items		Total Expenditure		Aleimar's contribution	Local Mangers Contributions	Fondazione Cariplo Contributions	Missing quota
		CFA	Euro				
A	CONSTRUCTIONS						
A1		0	0				
	TOTAL A:						
B	MATERIALS & ACTIVITIES						
B1	Micro-credit	18.368.000	28.000	2.600		18.600	6.800
B2	Material and training activities	12.824.800	19.550	3.900	1.450	12.400	1.800
B3	Planting	328.000	500	500			
B4	Incentives for waste sorting	3.083.200	4.700	3.700			1.000
	TOTAL B:	34.604.000	52.750	10.700	1.450	31.000	9.600
C	STAFF						
C1	1 coordinator	3.640.800	5.550	1.400		2.400	1.750
C2	1 responsible for microcredit	1.312.000	2.000		500	1.500	
C3	2 animators	3.739.200	5.700		300	5.400	
C4	1 referent for the activities in schools (GCE)	2.033.600	3.100	1.100		2.000	
	TOTAL C:	10.725.600	16.350	2.500	800	11.300	1.750
D	OTHER EXPENSES						
D1	Uses	3.476.800	5.300	1.850	250	3.200	
D2	Other management expenses (local transports etc.)	984.000	1.500	300	300	900	
D3	1 Mission	918.400	1.400	1.400			
	TOTAL D:	5.379.200	8.200	3.550	550	4.100	0
	GENERAL TOTAL	50.708.800	77.300	16.750	2.800	46.400	11.350
	PERCENTAGE CONTRIBUTION			22%	3%	60%	15%
		CFA	Euro	Aleimar's contribution	Local Mangers Contributions	Fondazione Cariplo Contributions	Missing quota
		Total Expenditure					

Estimated exchange: 1 Euro = 656 CFA