Yasmine N’Dilu, 16-year-old, student in her third year at the FFS of Ngidinga in DRC

I selected bee-keeping as the theme for my third-year project. There are few bee-keepers in my village although the activity is profitable. I am now doing my professional training at the Botanical Garden of Kisantu. It is a major opportunity that will make it possible for me to increase a real know-how. I shall also participate at the forthcoming exams of the JUNACYP. It is very important for my parents and me and I must show that I am up to the mark. Fortunately, those who train me show me real support, so that I can face the test adequately.

Rigobert Mansala, Officer in charge of the professional training in the Botanical Garden of Kisantu

In the DRC, most of the trainees are ambitious agronomists who abandon remote rural areas, which explains why villages lack skilled farmers. The training provided by the FFS is a response to this issue as the main goal is to enable students to gain key competences in agriculture in order to set up shop as farmers in rural areas. The student is assisted in his activities which helps him to find opportunities at the end of his training period. The country needs more similar initiatives in order to meet the challenges of rural development.

The JUNACYP

The JUNACYP is a degree awarded at the end of a two-year training program in professional fields. The exam is built on a competency-based approach and is structured around three theoretical and practical sessions including the presentation of an internship report. Each student is therefore supposed to attend beforehand a one-month internship which has to be directly connected to the professional field selected by the student.

The results are very positive: 80 % of the students attending the Family Farm Schools in DRC passed the 2016 JUNACYP exams (Professional Short-Term Training National Board of Examiners) with flying colors! After a three-year training program based on the dual pedagogy, the students are rewarded for their efforts as they have been granted a degree which is recognized by the Congolese government. Moreover, to improve the consistency between the education given by the FFS and the preparation for the JUNACYP degree, the pedagogical teams have been trained and the training plans were adapted to make it possible for third-year-students to prepare for the national exams and, at the same time, to expand their professional project “My First Business” (MFB).

Getting the degree is an asset which helps improving the exposure of the FFS in the DR of Congo. It is also a new step towards the recognition of the training centers by the authorities, emphasizing the pertinence of the dual pedagogy approach.

Congratulations to the young graduates and good luck in their professional lives!
In November 2016, a technical training session was set up for the benefit of the trainers working in the FFS of DRC. It was based on the techniques used to increase the number of fruit trees, to plant an orchard and look after it. The emphasis was put on practice and the pedagogical team had the opportunity to try grafting, cutting and layering of various species. This training session gave them the opportunity to learn the PIF (seedlings from stem fragments) technique making it possible to increase the number of banana trees in a short time. The method is much more effective than the traditional techniques but it is not sufficiently spread. The training session took place in the Botanical Garden of Kisantu. The garden is under the administrative supervision of the Congolese Institute in charge of protecting the environment (ICCN) and it hosts the Kisantu Technical College in charge of horticulture which offers training sessions in the field of botany. In a country where biodiversity and ecological resources are often not properly taken care of because preference is given to economic interests, the purpose of the garden is to make the people aware that the environment requires protection. Thanks to those who operate in the garden and who are deeply committed to that purpose, the trainers could immerse themselves in these values which are an integral part of the FFS.

**At the same time in the other countries....**

**The visit of the new French ambassador of Cameroon at the FFS of Trypano**

On 14th November, the Trypano FFS “Esperance Vie” in East Cameroon received the visit of the newly appointed French ambassador, Mr. Gilles Thibault. He was greeted by the pedagogical team and by the Chairman of the FFS Federation of Kadey and had the opportunity to have a pleasant time with the students who took him around the didactical garden and the fish-farming ponds of the FFS. After that visit, they showed him some of the practical training schemes conducted at the FFS: producing fruit juices, using Chinese bamboo to make drinking troughs and local building materials to make nurseries used in horticulture, etc. The ambassador congratulated the students and encouraged them to go on with their efforts.

**Training the parties involved in the FFS of Yamoussoukro**

In Ivory Coast, the month of November was the opportunity to bring together the members of the associations and the main trainers of the FFS in a discussion concerning the dynamism of the associations and the promotion of the FFS. Thus, two sessions lasting two days were organized in order to exchange views on the tasks and the duties of everybody in the life of the FFS: parents’ role in the daily management of the training centers of their children, key principles concerning dual pedagogy, exchange of views concerning the values on which the FFS are based, etc. It was a booster injection for the participants which gave the opportunity to stress on the fact the implication of local communities is essential to the development of FFS network.