



Networking is a crucial issue for MSE development and sustainability: lasting relationships enable them to face competition and to grow. Yet, small entrepreneurs struggle to establish partnerships among each other.

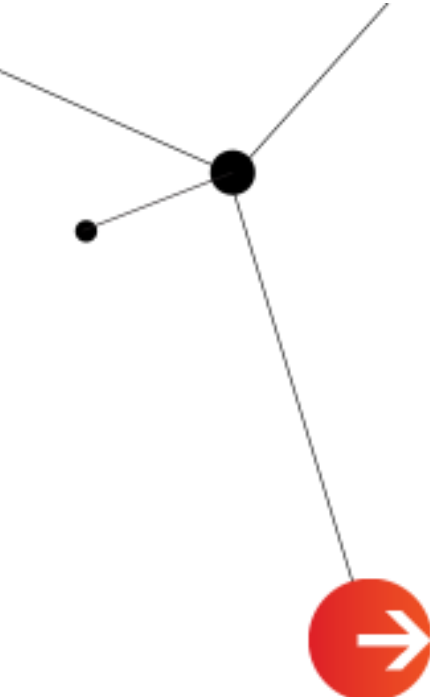
THE KEY BENEFITS OF **NETWORKING**

« **Working with someone leads to more problems** ». Small entrepreneurs often hesitate to establish partnerships among each other and prefer to work alone. This reluctance results from bad experiences that ultimately failed, or from a negative image of partnership: for most entrepreneurs, being partners means doubling one's problems and sharing the benefits, and not the opposite.

However, **partnership allow MSE to become stronger together**. Indeed, the issues of quality, skills, diversification, etc. can not be handled the way they are handled in big companies. MSE can not find the resources within their own firm: networking is often the answer to that problematic.

An entrepreneur who builds a lasting partnership with a reliable supplier can thus guarantee the quality and the availability of his products to his customers, and reduce his production costs by negotiating with this supplier. For his part, the supplier wins over a faithful client: the partnership is beneficial for both parties. **The company turnover and margin can durably increase.**





Networking also allows entrepreneurs to share their know-how and benefit from each other experience. Over time, the partners can move forward together regarding the global management of their enterprises and their professional skills. Moreover, teamwork is a source of motivation, and contributes to the global improvement of the entrepreneurs' practices. Finally, breaking the isolation of the companies can lead to the development of several complementary activities on the model of big companies. It will allow them to provide their clients with complete products and services.

Establishing a partnership requires two conditions: meeting other entrepreneurs, and being able to present one's activity in a concise, convincing and efficient manner.

Among the entrepreneurs that CGED trains, only a few are able to present their activity. It represents a difficult exercise that they must perform everyday: credit application, search for clients, partners and investors, etc. Those who success in this exercise establish partnerships more easily.

A successful partnership is a lasting partnership: before jumping into the search for a partner, CGED helps the entrepreneurs find out what is the most important for them and the future of their enterprise. That process allows them to identify the adequate partner for a lasting professional relationship.

A « Bimoko Ya Kisalu »
evening



The Club of Entrepreneurs gathers entrepreneurs from the same Management and Training Centers, sometimes from the same training classes. Therefore, the members of the Club benefit from an **atmosphere of trust**. They can also find within the Club the support and information they need to implement and formalize partnerships.

Hence CGED gathers all the elements to ease and encourage the implementation of partnerships between MSE.

With that objective in mind, CGED organizes « Bimoko Ya Kisalu » evenings, which can be compared to *Speed Business Meetings*.

The participants are gathered in groups of 4 people. At the beep tone, **each participant has 3 minutes to present his company and his partnership needs** to the 3 other entrepreneurs. They do not ask any question and do not enter into a discussion during the presentations. The trainers control the speaking time for every entrepreneur. At the end of the 12 minutes, the entrepreneurs switch tables so that they can discover other enterprises. After all those presentations, the member of the Clubs are invited to share a drink and discuss more in depth with the potential partners they have identified.

Those innovating and dynamic evenings allow the entrepreneurs to **meet many potential partners in a short period of time**, and facilitate the first contact between two strangers. The participants share the same goal and the same misgivings, which contributes to an efficient networking.

Finally, during the *Bimoko Ya Kisalu*, the Club members practice the presentation of their enterprise in a familiar context, and benefit from the other members' and the trainers' feedbacks. They learn how to prepare, simplify and clarify their presentation. They are aiming at **differentiating themselves and draw the interest of the audience**. They also improve their self-confidence and their power of conviction. ■



LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT...



Cameroon The Club of Entrepreneurs of Kribi arranged a meeting between entrepreneurs in a friendly establishment of the city. This initiative was very appreciated by the participants as it represented an opportunity to broaden their network. The MTC of Yaoundé regularly organizes company visits for the Club members to favor critical exchanges between the entrepreneurs.



RDC RDCED took part in the organization of the 6th edition of the Access to Funding Forum, which gathered more than 400 entrepreneurs and 100 bank and public authorities' representatives. The three lectures and the exchanges that followed were an opportunity for the entrepreneurs to discuss with actors of the financial sector.



Ivory Coast On the 10th and 11th of June, the members of the Clubs of Entrepreneurs of Yamoussoukro were invited to take part in the 2nd edition of the « Top Leader » seminar. Around the general topic of « Building a bright future », the participants discussed the challenges of developing a strategic action plan, and the integration of a quality policy.



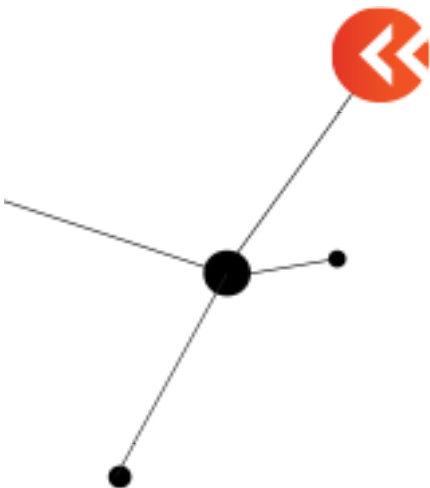
Madagascar The Club of Entrepreneurs of MED successfully organized the Entrepreneurs Fair on May 27th. 300 visitors came and met the members of the Club of 67 hectares Management and Training Center on their stands. For those 30 entrepreneurs, the Fair represented an opportunity to build professional relationships that might be helpful in the future.

CGED has organized **4 Bimoko Ya Kisalu** since March 2015.

136 ENTREPRENEURS HAVE TAKEN PART IN THE BASIC MANAGEMENT TRAININGS SINCE THE OPENING OF

51 entrepreneurs have subscribed to the Clubs of Entrepreneurs of Brazzaville and Pointe Noire.

TESTIMONY PORTRAIT



Diche Ricel Mabanza,
Entrepreneur in electronic security

We need more Bimoko". " I took part in all the Bimoko Ya Kisalu and in all the activities and trainings of the MTC: SYBT, BMT, ST, Club of Entrepreneurs and thematic evenings. The Bimoko allowed me to formalize a very important partnership.

I met Mr Mampouya Jivé right after the third BMT session. He works in cooling and air conditioning. On the last day of the training, a fire occurred in his premises. I'm a smoke detector installer, so I got acquainted with him at that time. He also needed some help to manage his computer system so we started to work together, but without formalizing the partnership. Once he rebuilt his office, he provided me with some working space so that we could work together.

The 1st Bimoko session made us realize that we could consider our collaboration as a real partnership. We started to think of the best way to pool our address books. One day, as they were looking for a computer scientist, Mr Mampouya told the APNI (Industrial Association of Pointe Noire) about me. Then, I stayed at the APNI. It was not easy to leave Mr Mampouya's workshop but we kept in touch.

In the Bimoko, it is important to present one's activity and to network, even if we know that the opportunities and tangible contacts won't be immediate. On the second Bimoko, I exchanged business cards with an entrepreneur that later called me to do some computer maintenance." ■