

June 2018

This newsletter is presented by Congo Entreprises Développement



In regions located far away from the larger urban hubs, it is harder to provide quality support services to actors from the private sector. There is however a pool of very small enterprises, who represent the backbone of local development in many African countries. **How to support their long-term development?**

SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN REMOTE AREAS

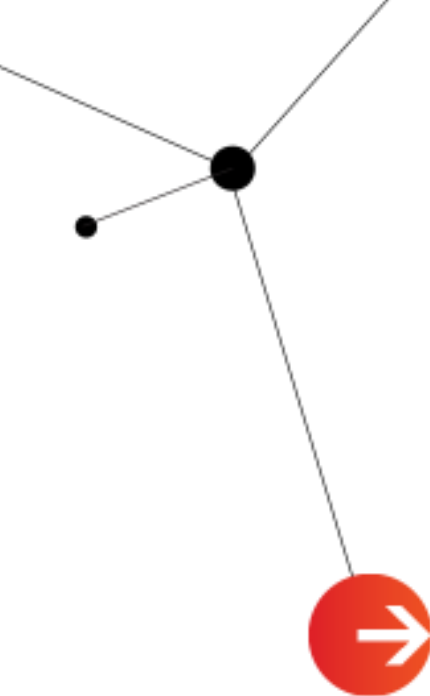
MOBILE TRAININGS IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



In the Republic of the Congo, the informal sector of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) is dense in urban centers outside of Pointe Noire and Brazzaville: because it is hard to find a formalized job, a lot of people turn to entrepreneurship. In the regions of Bouenza or Niari for example, the local economic activity used to rely on logging or sugar cane production. “The need to restructure and grow the productivity of the sugar industry has led to a drastic reduction of jobs”, explains Jocelyn Gbaguidi, manager of the INECO project for the NGO Initiative Development (ID), that offers to diversify the local economic landscape by creating and supporting the industry of economical cooking stoves and nurseries.

These entrepreneurs are however faced with many difficulties. As in Pointe Noire and Brazzaville, they have a technical knowledge related to their activity but they lack management skills. Other obstacles add up to this, because of the distance to the main cities, such as the difficulties to access the market and suppliers or the absence of basic infrastructures. They are little





local initiatives to support these small entrepreneurs, who are too far away from Brazzaville and Pointe Noire to access trainings like those offered by the Management and Training Centers of Congo Entreprises Développement (CGED). These obstacles therefore harm the long-term development of MSEs.

To cope with such issues, entrepreneurs organize themselves in associations or groups, to mutualize their means and resources in order to facilitate their work. A real collective dynamic emerges, less common in big cities, that allows entrepreneurs to break their isolation by benefitting from the support of their group.

Based on this situation, CGED has opened in June 2017 a new mobile branch based in Dolisie. This mobile branch answers a wish to go towards isolated entrepreneurs, by offering mobile trainings and an individual follow-up for remote entrepreneurs who cannot access training centers. The first mobile training was launched in December 2017 with ID: "Given the growth in the volume of activities that would come with the manufacturing of cooking stoves or the production of seedlings, the craftsmen and nursery owners need a specific input of basic management notions for SMEs", according to Jocelyn Gbaguidi.



The Basic Management Training took place in Madingou, capital city of the region of Bouenza, and it allowed CGED to raise awareness on its training program in the region. The success of the first batch of entrepreneurs helped attract other groups of entrepreneurs, who contacted CGED to benefit from the training. Thanks to this, a new batch of market gardeners was launched in May 2018 in Nkayi.

The process is different than the one followed in the training centers: CGED works only with groups or associations who have expressed an interest in the training, and no longer uses individual

prospection. Because the distances are much more important, the trainings are more flexible, with an adapted schedule. Furthermore, the academic level of entrepreneurs is often lower than in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire, and a lot of them don't speak French very well. The trainings are given in the local languages. To adapt to a lower literacy level, CGED will start using the Top Sales training, more adapted to a vulnerable population, with illustrative and interactive contents.

The first results of the training on the entrepreneurs are very encouraging, with 63% of the entrepreneurs using management tools one month after the training: "Our partner entrepreneurs have all understood the need to change behavior in the way they manage their activity. It shows in the way they are applying the various tools like the cashbook or the supplier's book", tells Jocelyn. Thanks to the mobile trainings, entrepreneurship is now accessible to all, even in remote areas. ■

A QUICK LOOK AT...



Cameroon Starting from Garoua, the first Top Vente training was given to the association of women of Gaschiga, 10km from Garoua. Thirteen women and one man took part in this training and graduated on April 26th, with the executive director of CED and the authorities of Gaschiga attending.



Ivory Coast CIED experienced with mobile training several times, more recently in Tounbokro, a village close to Yamoussoukro. 66 women benefitted from the Top Sales training in their village, which allowed for a stronger involvement. The training's schedule was adapted to take into account their daily tasks, since all of them are also involved in food-producing agriculture.



Madagascar To answer the needs of entrepreneurs outside of the capital city, MED was solicited by local authorities and entrepreneurs in the region of Vakinankaratra, south of Antananarivo. In Faratsiho, 61 entrepreneurs were trained with the Top Sales training. Cooperation with actors of entrepreneurial finance in Antsirabe, the MFI Vahatra and the Regional Fund for Agricultural Development, led to the launch of a new training for 27 entrepreneurs.

14 entrepreneurs

from the Bouenza trained
in Madingou

282 entrepreneurs

graduated from CGED in
2017

14 entrepreneurs

currently trained in Nkayi

TESTIMONY PORTRAIT

Remy BALOUTA, 54, nursery owner,
beneficiary from the Basic Management
Training in Madingou



I am involved in the growing of seedlings, until they are big enough to be marketed and transplanted. I have been doing this for several years now. Following a study conducted by ID, I was identified, because of my motivation, to gain a new expertise in arboriculture and to learn to manage my nursery business. This is when I realized my activity could provide for the needs of my family.

I had no knowledge of business management. Thanks to the training, I discovered that, to grow my business, I needed to improve some of my qualities, to identify my needs and to plan my activities in order to reach my goal, grow my sales with specific technics and better manage my time and finances.

The sessions and the content of the class answered my needs, it was obvious our difficulties had been identified before. The visits during and after the training are an essential support. In the same way, the fact the classes are in the local language helps everyone understand the content of the class.

Following the training, I started saving money. Now, becoming a member of the Entrepreneurs' Club would be an asset to be able to access thematic evenings and other services and to access the Training in Marketing in order to better sell my seedlings. ■