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# **REPORT ON FOODSPAN VISIT TO OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO**

SUBMITTED TO  
**FOODSPAN SECRETARIAT**

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19<sup>TH</sup>-21<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2011

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION:**

As part of FoodSPAN's strategies for achieving its vision and objectives such as forming strategic partnerships and alliances with other like-minded national and international networks, FoodSPAN organized an exposure visit to Ouagadougou in Burkina-Faso to interact with ROSSAD, a strong network with outstanding contribution to food security in Burkina Faso and also explore the opportunity of cementing our relationship with ROSSAD as an IFSN member in Africa. The network acted as the host.

The team members that visited ROSSAD in Burkina Faso were:

1. Ananga Richard - Advocacy and Training Officer, Trade Aid Integrated (TAI), Bolgatanga, Upper East Region.
2. Azure Baba Zakari - Administrator/Accounts, Centre for Community Development Initiatives (CODI), Zebilla, Upper East Region.

## **1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE VISIT:**

The purpose of the visit was to learn and share ideas aimed at improving the work of the networks and strengthening their relationship with each other. The visit specifically sought to provide opportunity for members to:

1. learn the structural set up and operational methodologies of the visited networks
2. understand the management mechanism of ROSSAD with respect to mobilising and retaining committed members, fund raising strategies and financial management techniques
3. be acquainted with the different thematic areas and strategic objectives of the visited networks and how they specifically tackle policy issues towards addressing food security needs of the poor
4. visit selected member organisations to learn how their diversified approaches contribute to the overall unified strength of ROSSAD
5. highlight the challenges that food security networks in Africa face especially in the wake of globalisation and intensified competition for financial resources
6. explore how FoodSPAN and ROSSAD can strengthen their collaboration and how a common communication package can be designed with uniform message for African governments and their "development partners".

## **2.0 THE VISIT - 19-21 JANUARY, 2011**

The team left Ghana, precisely Bolgatanga, at about 11:30am on a chartered vehicle to Ouagadougou and got there at 4:00pm. The three hour journey turned to four hours due to construction work on the road between Po and Ouagadougou.

1. Wanting to prove how organized and serious they are, ROSSAD, SOS-Sahel, PARECAP, Green Cross and CCEPA were already seated in the SOS-Sahel's conference hall waiting for us. As the saying goes "no time to waste", by 4:20pm we zoomed into the business of the day. There was a brief introduction by all in the conference hall followed by a warm welcome address by M. Oudraogo Salifou, Executive Director of SOS-Sahel, the host of ROSSAD.

Present at the meeting were:

| Name                        | Designation and organisation                              |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 2. M. Zakaria Nanan         | IFSN/ ROSSAD Coordinator                                  |
| 3. Diallo Ousseni           | Training and Advocacy Officer- Green Cross                |
| 4. Traore Yacouba           | Water and Sanitation Officer-CCEPA                        |
| 5. MME. Oudraogo Antoinette | Treasure of ROSSAD & member of BUYABA                     |
| 6. Konate Diakala           | Information and Communication Officer, League of Consumer |
| 7. Absa Rigoulot            | VSO- SOS-Sahel  |
| 8. M. Oudraogo Salifou      | Executive Director, SOS-Sahel                             |
| 9. Mme. Tapsoba Cariline    | African Network for Right to Food                         |
| 10. Amidour Kabora          | Programme Director, Self Help Africa                      |
| 11. Ananga Richard          | Advocacy and Training Officer, TAI                        |
| 12. Azure B. Zakari         | Administrator/Accounts, CODI                              |

### 2.1 WELCOME ADDRESS:

The Executive Director of SOS-Sahel, the host organization of ROSSAD, on behalf of his colleagues welcomed the visiting team and also thanked the other members of ROSSAD for coming. He was emphatic that food security and food as a right was dear to their hearts as he believed it is so with FoodSPAN members. According to him it was an opportune time for both networks to collaborate and share relevant ideas so as to achieve our common goal. Finally, he wished all happy deliberations and to the visitors, a joyous stay in Ouagadougou.

A cross section of participants at the meeting.



Mme. Antoinette and Konate Diakalia

Absa Rigoulot and Kindo Soumaila

Richard Ananga and Barry Amaudou

### 2.2 ROSSAD PRESENTATION:

The presentation was done by M. Zakaria Nanan, IFSN/ ROSSAD Coordinator. In fact, immediately after his presentation, about three-quarters of our expectations were met, for instance to learn the structural set-up and operational methodologies, understand the management mechanism of ROSSAD with respect to mobilising and retaining committed members, fund raising strategies, and financial management techniques, be acquainted with the different thematic areas and strategic objectives of the visited networks and how they specifically tackle policy issues towards addressing food security needs of the poor. Attached is the presentation.

There was another presentation from RADPA (African Network for Right to Food). The rationale behind the formation of RADPA was that, there was no policy on right to food in Burkina Faso, not even in the constitution. Hitherto, citizens had no backing from any authority when their rights to food were violated. RADPA was therefore introduced to advocate for the introduction of policies on the right to food in Burkina Faso. Key activities undertaken so far includes the presence of an office and staff, proposals were written and presented to high profile authorities of which some have been considered by the government and other developmental partners. The day ended with a very powerful prayer by Mr. Baba Zakari of CODI.

## 2.3 FIELD VISIT:

At about 6:00am 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2011 the visiting team (FoodSPAN) and ROSSAD Coordinator and a VSO personnel to ROSSAD set for the field work. The journey was almost 300km away from Ouagadougou.



Nanan and Richard removing spare tire

Driver and Zakari fixing car tire

The journey was not without its challenges apart from its long nature. The car with which we were travelling at some stage developed a puncture. Pictures above showing team members doing some maintenance work.

**2.3.1 KOLINKA:** The first place to visit was Warrantage stores at Kolinka. Here a storage facility has been provided where after harvesting their produce, the farmers take part of the food that will not be consumed immediately to the Warrantage (Guarantee) where the produce is valued in monetary terms by a committee constituted by the farmers themselves and the money given to the farmer less the cost of two bags. The principle here is that the farmer is given money to engage in a business of his/her choice. At a later date when the produce would have appreciated in monetary terms, the farmer then takes back exactly his produce and pays the loan also with a little interest worked out by the Warrantage committee. The advantage here is that at the end the farmer will have food and some money as well.



Bags of maize and groundnuts in stock, MAGASIN DE WARRANTAGE DE KOLINKA- Office and store and-coordinator

**2.3.2 OUESSA:** Next place visited was Meraicher Perimeters at Ouessa. Here was a large farm fenced by SOS-Sahel. Different types of vegetables are cultivated here and all are produced organically. All over the farmer are compost pits and wells. Their produce is high yielding and chemical free. The main sources of market for their produce are Ghanaians. . The farmers said the interventions have helped them to be self-dependent. They said they get a lot of income from the garden and are very happy with the lead organization which opened their eyes to see far and wide. What is nice about the place is that the farmers are well organized and so nothing can be done without consulting the chief of the farms. It was evident that the project is providing livelihoods and feeding into food security for the farmers so other farmers who could not have access to the project space were found farming immediately after the fence. The chief farmer conducted the team round the farm explaining every activity and the efficacy of that method. A lot of time was spent on how compost is made and tomato production and how diseases were treated locally using leaves of some trees.



**2.3.4 DISSIN:** The team then proceeded to the project office at Dissin where a presentation was made by the area project manager.

In the presentation, the coordinator of the project said that the project is sought to check soil erosion and land degradation by the use of stones and other local materials to maintain the lands to ensure that the land can be used to produce food leading to food security.

In the presentation it was made clear that farmers have been trained on the use of local materials and experimental ways of protecting lands for foods cultivation. The practice is gaining a lot of land that was unfertile and could not be used for farming activities by both women and men.

He said in the presentation that tree planting has been another area of interest which 765 farmers have been encouraged to plant trees on contract to be paid after the trees have survived for two years. This took place in 20 communities, with 374 farmers volunteering and planted 25,570 trees and in the two years period 19,780 survived. The surviving trees are mango, neem, teak and other local trees species. The coordinator also mentioned that from the period 2008, 2009 and 2010 women groups have been assisted with credit amounting to 95,280,000 CFA. This is to enable them undertake income generating activities to better their lives and those of their families. The team's full day was spent at Dissin and it finally got back to Ouagadougou at about 8:00pm.

### **3.0 DAY THREE**

#### **3.1 MEETING WITH ROPPA**

**ROPPA:** On the last day, the team met one of the network member organizations called ROPPA which literally means Network of African Farmers that operates in almost all West African states including Ghana. M. Fuseini Oudraogo who is the Coordinator of ROPPA on behalf of the



Executive Secretary gave us an overview of the organization (ROPPA), how they operate and how they work towards changing lives of people living with hunger.

VISITORS MEETING WITH ROPPA TEAM



He said they are specifically working to ensure that peasant farmers' interests are protected and that they are able to farm to feed their families which is the best way in eradicating hunger and poverty.

They also train their network members on advocacy skills so they can engage duty bearers to formulate policies that will ensure food security in Burkina Faso particularly and ECOWAS states at last.

### **3.2 DEBRIEFING WITH ROSSAD**

Afterwards the team met with ROPPA, one of the steering committee members of ROSSAD.

M. Zakaria Nanan, the ROSSAD Coordinator briefing the committee member on the field visits.



The final activity for the day was a debriefing with ROSSAD members. Preceding the Coordinators' brief of what has happened since the last meeting with ROSSAD members in the same venue, Mr. Richard Ananga on behalf of FoodSPAN and his colleague expressed his profound gratitude to the entire members of ROSSAD who made it possible for us to learn and share experiences from our Burkinabe counterparts. According to him, the three days has been like a month of learning because he has learnt a lot, citing warrantage, and maraicher perimeters experiences. He also said that lessons have been drawn from the presentations and activities of ROSSAD. He reiterated that some of the experiences would be replicated in Ghana. Mr. Ananga also applauded them for the transportation services and meals offered them. He concluded by setting pace for the next important activity by saying his wish is that both networks solidify their relationship with each other and embark on joint campaigns and also share important information.

#### **4.0 THE WAY FORWARD:**

On the way forward, both networks by consensus concluded to:

1. Institutionalize annual exchange visits
2. Share relevant food security interventions, programmes and policies (information and practice)
3. Embark on joint campaigns against national/international policies that inhibit food security
4. Joint campaigns for the introduction and implementation of good policies.
5. Organize a joint meeting where ActionAid Ghana and Burkina Faso would be present.
6. ROAD MAP: Both networks (ROSSAD AND FoodSPAN) should start discussions on the possibilities of the collaboration at their general assembly level before agreeing on a day to discuss the matter considering plans that could be laid down to start on good footing.

#### **CHALLENGES:**

- Language Barrier
- The visit was too short a time for adequate learning and sharing
- Inadequate financing of the journey

#### **5.0 CONCLUSION:**

The steering committee of FoodSPAN approved a visit to Burkina Faso for strategic reasons - as part of its partnership programme with the International Food Security Network (IFSN). FoodSPAN considers exposure visit a powerful tool of capacity building and an ideal way to learn and share in theory and practice. Assessing from the shared learning while in Burkina Faso, the team came to a conclusion that the visit was a good experience and full learning; and the objectives of the visit have been realized. Implementation of the recommendations will foster enhanced learning for farmers in Ghana as the knowledge and skills are shared among network members and their constituents. Lastly, relations between IFSN Ghana and Burkina Faso will be enriched for continued shared learning to improve food security in the sub-region.