



Aidemet Ong

Aid to the Development of the Traditional Medicine

Non-Governmental No-Profit Organization

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Medicinal plants threatened with extinction on the Dogon's tableland.

The Project "Restoration of the medicinal plants threatened with extinction and safeguard of the biological diversity in Dogon's Country", has been realized by the Federation of the Associations of the Traditional Healers of the District of Bandiagara (FATTB) in collaboration with the Italian NGO *Terra Nuova*, with the support of the Program Small Subsidies of the World Fund for the Environment of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The Regional Center of Traditional Medicine and the Nature Conservation Service of Bandiagara assured the monitoring of the activities. Dr Sergio Giani, Program Officer of *Aidemet* NGO assured the coordination of the project.

The project was carried out from 2002 to 2006 in Bandiagara and in the villages of Irguily and Nantanga.

The vegetal species to protect and to restore were selected according to the demand of the traditional healers, to their importance in the local traditional pharmacopoeia, and to the used part (the roots):

1. *Annona senegalensis* Pers. (*Annonaceae*), in dogon *Noubèlè-angondo*: the roots are traditionally used against diarrhea, dysentery and fevers and to improve the diuresis.
2. *Fagara zanthoxyloides* Lam. (*Rutaceae*), in dogon *fascori-fascori*: the roots are frequently used for cleaning the teeth; their extracts reduce in a meaningful way the crises of the patients affected from sickle-cells anemia.
3. *Nauclea latifolia* Smith (*Rubiaceae*, in dogon *ayugu*,): the roots take care of teeth ache, gastrointestinal affections, constipation, fever and malaria.



Photo n° 1: The demonstration garden of Irguily

4. *Securidaca longepedunculata* Fres. (Polygalaceae), in dogon *toro*: the very thick roots release a characteristic smell of methyl salicylate, and are used against fever, bites of the snakes, rheumatism and traumatic pains.
5. *Ximenia americana* L. (*Olacaceae*), in dogon *ondobani*: the infusion of the roots is used against dysentery, painful hemorrhoids and sleeping illness; as antidote, emetic and laxative. The macerated of the roots is useful in the treatment of leprosy and mental illnesses.

The operational research on the techniques of domestication of these plants was developed in collaboration with the responsible of the Medicinal Plants Project of the Institute of Rural Economy of Bamako, the engineer Seydou Ouattara. The results of this research were transferred progressively to the Associations of Traditional Healers through some sessions of proximity training at the different villages.

The seeding nursery of the project has been realized inside the Regional Center of Traditional Medicine of Bandiagara, while three demonstration gardens, of around 400 ms, protected with grilles and living hedges, and equipped with great diameter wells, were realized in the three villages implicated in the project.

A campaign of communication on the local community radio, Radio Baguine, accompanied the



Photo n° 2 : The proximity training.

different activities of the project, with some broadcasts giving the voice, for the first time in Bandiagara, to the organized traditional healers. The treated themes hinged on the importance of the medicinal plants, and on the necessity of their safeguard.

The strategy of intervention of the project required the effort to pass from the study on the traditional medicine to the collaboration on equal terms with the actors of the traditional medicine

and to the valorization of the local knowledge. The actors on the field understood and appreciated the participant methodology and the approaches of proximity that have been experimented. For this, their engagement in the activities of the project could not miss.

The traditional healers are actually professionally and culturally interested to the safeguard of the vegetal biodiversity. Their implication in the operational researches regarding the protection, the domestication, the reintroduction, the durable use and the ethical marketing of the medicinal plants is a challenge really useful, necessary and exciting.

Text compiled by Dr Sergio Giani, Programs Officer of Aidemet NGO

Photo: Archives Aidemet