

## Conference proceedings

# Development alternatives from the South. A Ghanaian rural development example

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**2nd Conference  
on Economic  
Degrowth  
For Ecological Sustainability  
and Social Equity**

**BARCELONA  
26th-29th March 2010**





## Abstract

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This work comes from a case study on a Ghanaian NGO called KITA ([www.kita-ghana.org](http://www.kita-ghana.org)) specialized in rural development and inspired by a very different vision from the classical one. KITA's objective is to enable farmers who it is working with to establish Modular *Organic Regenerative Environment* systems.

*Modular* suggests that it is an agroforestry system, where different « modules » from the three categories of trees, animals and crops are integrated in order to let them sustain each other. Consequently, wastes, ecological footprint, needed inputs and energy are reduced and efficiency is increased. Moreover, it is possible to add renewable sources of energy and to combine the use of traditional techniques with modern sustainable and milieu-adapted ones.

*Organic* means that chemicals and genetically modified organisms are banned.

*Regenerative* is the term used in place of « sustainable »: such a system eliminates bad practices and chemicals and introduces an integrated system which is not only not harmful for the natural resources but that is also able to regenerate a damaged environment.

In conclusion, it is a systemic approach that mimes natural behaviors, and that is permaculture. Such a system shall assure food security to farmers and, at least concerning those who live in peri-urban areas, also a small marketable surplus and so sustainable, self-reliant and sufficient revenue. This revenue could permit some savings for future needs, some investments in farming activity and in children's education and some cash to buy what they don't produce but that they need. The result is a net improvement in their lives. As a consequence, this system shall enable farmers to draw their own village development plans based on their local resources.

## Keywords

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Agro-ecology, permaculture, rural development, post-development, Ghana

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Subject choice

This work is a sort of prosecution of our bachelor discussion, which was about degrowth and which briefly analyzed in the conclusion the consequences of development in the South and the ways and strategy that African people have invented to survive and resist, such as vernacular societies and informal economy. The failure of the Occidental project for the « developing Countries » and the entire world is the beginning of a new alternative for the future.

## 1.2. Purpose of the work

Here we analyze a project undertaken by a Ghanaian NGO - KITA, *Kumasi Institute of Tropical Agriculture* – specialized in rural development and inspired by a very different vision from the classical one, well represented by the Modular Organic Regenerative Environment (MORE) system. The purpose is to verify its viability and efficiency and its social and ecological sustainability.

## 1.3. General background

Before entering the core of this work, we think it is necessary to describe the larger context of Ghana and its present and past agricultural policies. These in turn are placed in the context of the development process that disadvantages agriculture and mainly small size familiar subsistence agriculture compared to export agriculture and above all to industry, with serious consequences for nations' and people's food sovereignty and security – and so for their real independence – and for the environment<sup>1</sup>.

If we add free trade to this recipe, the debt trap and the consequent conditionality, speculations on agricultural products and the agrocarburants' boom, we obtain the present situation, where we reach the historical hunger peak<sup>2</sup>. And we can't forget that the hungry sore, which mainly touches small food producers, is a political and redistributive problem and not just a technical and supply one<sup>3</sup>.

Concerning Ghana, it is well endowed with natural resources and comprises six agro-ecological zones: coastal savannah, rain-forest, semi-deciduous forest, forest-savannah transition, Guinea savannah and Sudan savannah<sup>4</sup>. Its economy continues to revolve around agriculture, which accounts for about 35% of GDP and employs about 55% of the work force<sup>5</sup>.

About 80% of Ghana's total agricultural output comes from family-operated farms (the majority of agricultural workers are old and illiterate women) using traditional and rudimentary technology, or seldom animal traction. A large portion of small farmers are landholders (90% of them own a plot smaller than one hectare) and produce for subsistence, with an occasional little bit of marketable surplus<sup>6</sup>.

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1 Firouzeh Nahavandi, *Du développement à la globalisation. Histoire d'une croyance occidentale*, Bruylant, Brussels, 2005; Norberg-Hodge Helena, Goering Peter, Page John: *From the Ground Up. Rethinking Industrial Agriculture*, Zed Books, London, 2001.

2 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *The State of Food Insecurity in the World. Economic crises – impacts and lessons learned*, Rome, 2009.

3 Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: an Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1981; Olivier de Schutter, conference *The Right of Food*, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, December 1st, 2009.

4 Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Republic of Ghana, *Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II)*, 2007, [www.mofa.gov.gh/FASDEP%20II](http://www.mofa.gov.gh/FASDEP%20II)

5 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *The World Factbook 2009*, [www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html)

6 Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Republic of Ghana, *FASDEP II*, op.cit.

Larger plantations produce mainly cash crops and to a lesser extent, cereals and pineapples<sup>7</sup> for export.

The main cultivated crops are cocoa, cereals – like maize, rice, millet, and sorghum – starchy staples – such as cassava, yam, cocoyam – and plantain. Other crops include tobacco, cotton, oil palm, rubber, copra, sugar cane and horticulture crops such as pineapples, mangoes, chilies, peppers, ginger, bananas, beans and tomatoes<sup>8</sup>.

Only about one third of land suitable for agriculture is currently cultivated<sup>9</sup> and the harvest – mainly that of small farms – varies a lot as a result of weather vagaries from one year to another (also in view of the recent climate changes that reduce and make rains unpredictable). On average, Ghana produces about 51% of its cereal needs, 60% of fish, 50% of meat and about 30% of the raw materials necessary for agro-based industries<sup>10</sup>.

Ghana has roughly twice the per capita output of the poorest Countries in West Africa<sup>11</sup> and a population of 24 million people and has recently achieved significant progress in reducing poverty and hunger. « The diet [...] is relatively varied, with cassava accounting for 24% of total calories and maize for 13%. The percentage of people living below the poverty line declined from 52% in 1991–1992 to 29% in 2005–06. This progress is in danger, however, because Ghana's small open economy is vulnerable to external shocks affecting FDI, trade, ODA and remittances. For each of these individual components of financial flows, the IMF rates Ghana's vulnerability as medium, but because it is vulnerable to several different types of shock, the IMF's overall assessment is that Ghana is highly vulnerable to the crisis»<sup>12</sup>.

This is mainly because of Ghana's recent history, from the British colonization that imposed specialization in crops destined for export, going through the modernization myth and the debt trap, to the liberalization age, when all the protection and the support to the national agricultural sector has been dismantled through the Economic Reform Program and the Structural Adjustment Programs<sup>13</sup>. Such programs didn't reach the intended results, as in particular an agricultural sector growth of 4% per year, thanks to investment stimulation, elimination of public inefficiencies, better supply allocation and marketing costs reduction through competition and free trade. Nevertheless, they continued to be used as models until the new millennium.

Today, Ghana and other poor Countries face new challenges, such as the WTO Doha Round, the Economic Partnership Agreements EU – ACP, the actual crisis (whose only advantage has been to have made the governments of poor Countries aware that food security is a condition for social peace) and the land grab.

For a few years and thanks to this new deal, the Ghanaian Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) attributes more importance than it once did to subsistence agriculture, food security, rural imagination and environmental protection. Finally, it is also possible that some opportunities linked to agriculture, proclaimed for decades as employment opportunities and poverty reduction are at last really taken into consideration in government priorities. Oppositely, it is not possible to say the same for the supply of raw materials to develop local industry<sup>14</sup>.

We also add a remark that is true for the majority of poor African Countries, concerning the absence of

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<sup>7</sup> *ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> World Trade Organization (WTO), Trade Policy Review Ghana, Geneva, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Republic of Ghana, FASDEP II, *op.cit*.

<sup>11</sup> CIA, The World Factbook 2009, *op.cit*.

<sup>12</sup> FAO, The State of Food Insecurity in the World, *op.cit*.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Khor, Tetteh Hormeku, The Impact of Globalization and Liberalization on Agriculture and Small Farmers in Developing Countries: the Experience of Ghana, Third World Network, Malaysia, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> As a reference, see [www.mofa.gov.gh](http://www.mofa.gov.gh).

environmental sensitivity. In these Countries the same phenomenon is happening that happened in Europe between forty and fifty years ago, namely the plastic invasion. Once, people reused everything, because everything was natural, so the problem of burning off wastes didn't exist. Moreover, if people have to live day by day in poverty or sometimes in extreme poverty, they definitely do not have the resources to think about the environment, even if it end up directly or indirectly worsening their life conditions.

Finally, we remember the lost of the *savoir-faire* by small farmers, most of whom are now facing a situation where they are no longer able to cultivate without the use of chemicals but they don't dispose of cash to buy them.

## 1.4 Specific background

The present Ghanaian and poor Countries' situation needs to be solved in a political way and at a macro level, with a change of the dominant agricultural model that won't be possible without a change of the present system: industrial, capitalist and development-based. At a micro level, small farmers can only try to manage on their own.

The Kumasi Institute of Tropical Agriculture (KITA) works on precisely this topic, to give small farmers new ways and knowledge to face the new deal. It is a Ghanaian non-profit, community-based, non-governmental organization established in 1984 and situated between the villages of Domeabra and Apromase, Ejisu-Juaben District, Ashanti Region. Its action takes place in the rural development domain, both through direct interventions in the target communities and through education and training, research and consultancy to practicing and prospective farmers.

Its approach is a participatory village development one that enables communities to identify their needs and their opinions as to how these needs should be met, as well as the locally available resources in order to draw their own development plans to improve their lives, while respecting the environment.

KITA doesn't explicitly refer to post-development theories nor to any other theory, but its vision envisages a local, endogenous, autonomous and sustainable « development » that doesn't break with the past and that remembers the slogan of Ernst Friedrich Schumacher that « small is beautiful ». Moreover, according to our experience in poor Countries and to our studies, it seems to us that until now, paradoxically, a lot of them have been impermeable to post-development theories.

## 1.5 The MORE Project

The Modular Organic Regenerative Environment is the project that expresses KITA's model of « development » and is envisioned for small farms starting from one acre. This Project has already been experimented within other Countries with good results<sup>15</sup> and has been adapted to the specific context by KITA's team.

### 1.5.1 Modular

Modular suggests that it is an agroforestry system, where seven « modules » from the three categories of trees, animals and crops are integrated in order to let them sustain each other. Different species of trees<sup>16</sup> can contribute to sustainable soil management and to its regeneration<sup>17</sup>, they can be used to aid crops

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<sup>15</sup> As a reference, see [www.pppafrica.org](http://www.pppafrica.org).

<sup>16</sup> Trees For The Future, Agroforestry Training Program. Taking Action Reaching Out, Maryland, United States of America, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> For example, Albizia Lebbek has the property to control soil erosion and to regenerate it through nitrogen provision.

growth through nitrogen provision<sup>18</sup>, to feed animals<sup>19</sup>, as windbreak<sup>20</sup>, firebreak<sup>21</sup>, living fence as an animal-proof barrier<sup>22</sup>, fuel-wood, construction materials<sup>23</sup>, to maintain agricultural terraces against rain erosion<sup>24</sup>, to make traditional medicines<sup>25</sup>, natural pesticides<sup>26</sup> and natural fertilizers<sup>27</sup>, to obtain sawdust to mix with soil to increment its fertility, and generally to attenuate climate changes.

Trees' leaves and branches, mixed with animal manure and other natural waste products, are used to make compost, to fertilize soil and to aid crop growth. Finally, these crops are food for animals (and human beings). The original project also expects to introduce bees to provide wider pollination<sup>28</sup> and honey production.

Consequently, wastes, ecological footprint and needed inputs and energy are reduced and efficiency is increased. Moreover, it is possible to add the use of renewable sources of energy, such as solar, wind or hydric energy<sup>29</sup> and to combine the use of traditional techniques<sup>30</sup> and modern sustainable and milieu-adapted techniques<sup>31</sup> in a vertical integrated approach, which is a participatory approach where decisions are bottom-up and new technologies are introduced only when traditional and local techniques are insufficient. It is done gradually and adapting them to the context, after a process of negotiation with local logics in order to let local actors take possession of them.

### 1.5.2 Organic

Organic means that chemicals and genetically modified organisms are banned. Oppositely, natural fertilizers and pesticides are preferred.

### 1.5.3 Regenerative

Regenerative is the term used to take the place of « sustainable »: such a system eliminates bad practices and chemicals and introduces an integrated system which is not only not harmful for natural resources but which is also able to regenerate a damaged environment, for example, as indicated before, through

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<sup>18</sup> Several techniques are possible, such as culture rotation and alley cropping; examples of tropical trees species are: *Calliandra calothyrsus*, *Albizia lebbek*, *Moringa oleifera* and *Gliricidia sepium*.

<sup>19</sup> For example *Calliandra calothyrsus* and *Cassia siamea* for ruminants and *Moringa oleifera* and *Prosopis juliflora*.

<sup>20</sup> To protect crops and soil from wind erosion; some tropical species of trees that KITA uses are: *Leucaena leucocephala*, *Cassia siamea*, *Albizia lebbek* and *Prosopis juliflora*.

<sup>21</sup> KITA works in the rain-forest area, where this kind of problem is not huge. Anyway we point out *Anacardium occidentale* as an example for Sahelian areas.

<sup>22</sup> KITA uses *Acacia nilotica* and *Prosopis juliflora*, which are thorny trees.

<sup>23</sup> For example *Leucaena leucocephala*, *Cassia siamea* and *Gliricidia sepium*.

<sup>24</sup> Trees' diffuse root systems are planted on the contours of the hillside and, as the land is worked, stones, weeds, and other debris are continually thrown behind the rows of trees, forming a wall that helps catch the eroding topsoil; examples are *Gliricidia sepium*, *Calliandra calothyrsus* and *Leucaena leucocephala*.

<sup>25</sup> In particular *Moringa oleifera*, which seeds and pods, leaves and roots (except a poisonous brown part) are rich in minerals and vitamins and are used to cook and make healthy infusions for pregnant women, children and malaria sufferers. Seeds also have a water purifying property and we can extract antibiotics from them. *Cassia siamea* leaves are boiled and used against malaria, too.

<sup>26</sup> *Azadirachta indica* (Neem tree) leaves used alone or mixed with garlic, hot pepper or neutral soap, constitute a good pesticide against insects, nematodes, fungi, bacteria, and even viruses.

<sup>27</sup> To obtain a good natural fertilizer, put *Gliricidia sepium* leaves, rich in nitrogen, in water for twenty days. Almost the same is for *Leucaena leucocephala* leaves.

<sup>28</sup> Bees love *Albizia lebbek* big flowers, nectar-rich *Calliandra calothyrsus* flowers, beautiful yellow *Cassia siamea* flowers and bright pink *Gliricidia sepium* flowers.

<sup>29</sup> To obtain heat – ex. through solar ovens – and energy.

<sup>30</sup> For example the use of soil, wood and banana leaves in construction; unfortunately at present this savoir-faire has been almost lost, even if it could contribute in solving of homeless people in rural areas.

<sup>31</sup> For example in irrigation techniques.

some species of trees. This system protects biodiversity that is the engine of ecologic resilience and can provide almost everything a farmer needs: a differentiated nutrition, construction materials, combustibles, etc.

In conclusion, it is a systemic approach that mimes natural behaviors, and that is permaculture. Generally, permaculture is a labor-intensive way to cultivate – a fact that could reduce unemployment and poverty in rural areas – without spending a lot of money – and that is of primary importance for poor farmers – whose results are very positive.

The underlying idea is to link the wellbeing of local populations, the environmental question and concern for future generations.

### **1.6. The MORE Project in Essieninpong**

The specific project we worked on is run in the village of Essieninpong, Ejisu-Juaben District, Ashanti Region, which is situated in a peri-urban area about an hour by car or bus from the city of Kumasi and about half an hour from the village capital of the district, Ejisu.

The total population is about 5,000 people, half men and half women; the principal activity is multiple cropping, familiar in subsistence agriculture, with small breeding animals, mainly chickens, goats and cows. Most of the farmers are small landholders and practice manual agriculture. Lack of capital and work and new climatic problems push youth to the city, even if land is abundant and good conditions for agriculture are available.

For a village in such a situation, the specific objective is to enable target farmers to create farms based on the MORE model, which will assure them of food security and also a small marketable surplus that shall provide them with a sustainable, self-reliant and sufficient revenue. This revenue could permit savings for future needs, investments in farming activity and in children's education and cash to buy what they don't produce but that they need. As a consequence, farmers experience a net improvement in their lives and they shall become able to draw their own village development plans based on local available resources.

All things considered, an emphasis is put on food security, but this concept is not opposed to agribusiness in the sense of manufacturing and giving value-added to farm products in order to exchange them in the local and national markets. And this is correct in an essential agricultural Country where the majority of farmers practice subsistence agriculture or sell raw materials while most manufactured goods are imported from China, India, etc.

The specific objective follows in the footsteps of more global ones, that are a contribution to poverty reduction in rural areas and the protection of the environment, which constitutes the only source of food and income for poor farmers.

The means to achieve the specific objective are the provision of technical training in MORE technology, in financial, administration and marketing skills and in the importance of ecological sustainability; and the provision of prior inputs necessities to establish this kind of farm.

In more specific detail, the scheduled activities to obtain these results are twelve-months' training and the provision of the seven modules (a rabbit with its cage, three hens and a cock, some livestock, a bees' swarm with its beehive, mushroom grains and fifty small bags to sow them, a hundred multi-purpose fast-growing tree sprouts and fifty fruit trees and crops to cultivate one quarter of acre). Moreover, according to the Project, farmers also receive a hydraulic pump, a bike, cutlass (polyvalent and fundamental tool, used to cut trees, bushes and weeds, to dig holes to plant trees, to plough fields before sowing, etc.), boots, gloves and working wears. KITA chose not to distribute all the modules at the same time and to do it according to the different farmers' faculty level; furthermore discussions are underway with farmers about adapting them to the specific context.

Finally, KITA's team thinks that it is very important that target farmers are aware of what they are doing and of the wide sense of this kind of agriculture with reference to a larger level than a strictly local one. Of course this is everything but not easy to achieve, particularly in a poor Country where people dream about Development and where a capillary civil society discussing on environmental problems is absent. The main way to obtain it is education and training.

KITA started working in December 2007 with an already existing group composed of ten farmers; then, because of the improvement in participants' life conditions, other farmers asked to become part of it and in March 2009 another twenty-two members were accepted. As resources were limited, it was decided to choose the most numerous and motivated families and whose income came totally or almost totally from agriculture. When we were there, the first part of the group had already received almost everything (including nine-months' training) and was facing its second rainy season (the first was the biggest and that one the smallest) and the second had begun training, had already received a part of the scheduled goods and was facing its first rainy season.

## **2 Methodology**

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### **2.1 Literature sources**

The literature we have analyzed for the redaction of this article is quite various, as we could take advantage of the texts of several libraries – in Belgium, the United Kingdom and Italy – both before and after our field experience, of the materials KITA's managers provide us and of some materials available online.

More specifically, we have used some general texts on development history and its critics; some texts on Ghana's history and present; some texts and several articles (think tank publications, different types of organizations' and associations' document, generic and associative press, scientific articles) on the global system and Ghana's agriculture; and finally some tropical agriculture and agroforestry technical manuals and KITA's lecture documents.

### **2.2 Field research**

The field experience is the core of this article. We worked in the project that will be analyzed herein and we produced an evaluation of its results for KITA. In addition, we took advantage of the fact that being in the field to consult some of the key actors, such as farmers and KITA's executives, students and graduates. Moreover, we participated in workshops and seminars and in practical field-work. Finally, we have never lost the opportunity to observe, inquire and record everything in our daily journal.

In the context of our evaluation task, we had some discussions with KITA's executives working on this project and with some key actors, such as the President of the farmers' association involved in the Project and the chief of the village and then we interviewed all the farmers of the association. Our research technique needed an *ad hoc* data survey through structured interviews (questions YES – NO, multiple choice and some open questions) and with a face-to-face administration. Data has been computerized, codified and statistically analyzed to know the results achieved by the Project, the farmers' satisfaction level, their point of view and their level of conscience about the Project's objectives. This analysis represented both the central tendency and the dispersion. This kind of sampling can easily cross the line between quantitative and qualitative techniques; in this case, in view of the kind of initial questions and of the kind of analysis we did, we can affirm that we used the quantitative ones.

Finally, as a validation of the data issued from the interviews, we did a sort of short participant observation, in order to have the opportunity of living, working and interacting more freely with the farmers and of experiencing qualitative techniques.

Some problems linked to communication difficulties arose with the drafting of interviews to their administration, as our oral English was not perfect and mainly because the farmers were illiterates or they didn't know English or were otherwise ignorant. Consequently, for us it was very complicated to find and to use a linguistic register that they could understand. Obviously, we had some interpreters, but in several cases they demonstrated not to be on a level with their task.

### **2.3 Limits of this work**

We started thinking about writing a text on this subject almost a year ago, mainly thanks to our studies and our work in KITA during the last months of 2009 (ten weeks from September to November) was an opportunity to put what we studied both in a university context and for our personal interests to the test.

Anyway, we have to admit that we would need more time to dedicate to this research and in particular to spend in the field, to both observe and experience the practices of tropical permaculture.

We are conscious of the limits of this work and we hope to can make these themes deeper during further studies and maybe a PhD, as we strongly believe that these are fundamental themes for the future of the poor Countries and of the global village as a whole.

## **3 Results**

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### **3.1 Practical results**

#### **3.1.1. First part of the group**

According to the evaluation we carried out, the first part of the group is quite obviously more advanced by comparison to the second one. All farmers that were a part of it were able to precisely indicate the topic and the kind of training received and they have obtained quite good results in the medium term: 90% had been able to increase productivity and to attain sufficient food production, one family used what it received to increase productivity to sell, seven families for both increase productivity and self-consumption, uniquely one only for self-consumption, another one has neither been able to increase productivity nor to consume them.

#### **3.1.2 Second part of the group**

Concerning the second part of the group, the situation is less clear because of the novelty of their membership with all its consequences. For example, by the time we were there, they had only received sixteen hours of initial training over two days and some seminars about once a month. Because of this, there was no agreement about the training received and results were attenuated by comparison to the first group. Anyway, in the short term, 86% declared to have increased the farm productivity and improved their nutrition, in more specific detail seven families were able to use what they had received to increase productivity to sell, ten used it for both increase productivity and self-consumption, three only for self-consumption and two had not been able to either increase productivity nor to self-consume. The main causes of this had been that many animals (rabbits) died and crop cultivation failed because of a lack of rainfall.

#### **3.1.3 General assessment**

94% (everybody except two) were satisfied with MORE activities because of the stuff they received for free that permitted some savings; of the new knowledge they had thanks to the training that permitted them to increase productivity, work easier, faster and more productively; of the strength of the group; and

because of the attention they feel KITA has given to their needs and the hope it gave them. The two that were unsatisfied said that the beginning was good, but that they were still poor, so they hope to receive more in the future.

### **3.2 Ecological sustainability**

Thanks to the training, three families discovered organic technology, but only 30% prefer organic to chemicals, because they generally consider that chemicals make the work easier and faster, even if they are very expensive, and one said that they are necessary after «slash and burn»; only one declared not to know how to do without them. Farmers preferring organic argued that it is better for plants and human health and not to need chemicals.

They all still practice «slash and burn», but a campaign against it is planned.

### **3.3 Social results**

During our field research and analysis, we didn't find any problem between the members. Oppositely, the Project contributed to the forming of a strong and sympathetic group: if someone is in trouble with his activity, the others help him, members crowd bi-weekly meetings and every time they collect a small fee because they want to become a legal association and to open a collective bank account to save together for the group's empowerment. Moreover, 100% of them declared that the community unity has been strengthened because of the MORE Project and now they spend time and play music together.

We conclude that the group has the potential for improvement and that it is acquiring strength as an autonomous entity, which would survive even if the Project were to unexpectedly close; they are in fact elaborating some claims to KITA. Elsewhere, this strength is very important for the success and the sustainability of the Project.

Some more factors exist that can explain this success. Firstly, the concept of the MORE Village, that is a village or a consistent part of it engaged in the Project, to create a sympathetic group. Secondly, in the Ashanti Region, official powers have gradually supplanted the traditional ones and young people's migration towards the city has weakened traditional family links, consequently, according to our experience, power plays between members and between members and non-members don't exist.

### **3.4 Problems**

Even if the «development configuration is characterized by both development and local actors coming from the same Southern Country, region and rural world, we can't forget that every project implies the presence of power relations and that, anyway, they come from different worlds and have different objectives, perspectives, logics and strategies. Consequently, every success is inevitably the fruit of «an invisible negotiation and of a compromise de facto between the different groups [...] which is the manifestation of its appropriation by the concerned actors»<sup>32</sup>. In this case, local actors adopt a defensive strategy and the selection and the diversion principles that sometimes seem like apparently simple (and legitimate) opportunism; and KITA's team sometimes fails in the dialogue process.

We think in fact that these are the principle sources of misunderstanding. Actually, some farmers, the president and the secretary complained that KITA doesn't discuss priorities with them. For example, rabbit production is not as traditional as that of chickens, goats and sheep – a fact that can partially explain their high mortality rate – and bee production is not traditional at all and by now farmers seem not to be interested, and on the contrary, they are afraid. Moreover, farmers ask for other stuff, such as

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<sup>32</sup> Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, *Anthropologie et développement. Essai en socio-anthropologie du changement social*, Editions Karthala, Paris, 1995.

boots and pumps (mainly because of climate changes). Fortunately, KITA is now aware of these problems and is trying to correct them.

## **4 Discussion and conclusions**

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In conclusion, we consider this project to be an example of a good alternative rural development model, because it is within range of poor farmers, who need cheap and sustainable practices that can assure their subsistence. Furthermore, the constitution of a MORE Village strengthens communitarian links, threatened by young people's exodus.

However, as we could see, this young project is imperfect and not systematic and it needs improvements in dialogue and in both farmers' permaculture capacities and farmers' internalization and comprehension of the « holistic » project vision. Consequently, more training is necessary.

Actually, we think that these farmers see in MORE an opportunity to improve their life conditions, that they are motivated and that they constitute a strong group. However, they have not understood the real meaning of MORE and they have accepted it as they would have accepted any other persuasive project.

In development cooperation it is fundamental that every intervention begins from the local needs, but we are also persuaded that real, efficient and sustainable cooperation is only viable when two entities share a common vision and common objectives (and are in a parity relationship) and an NGO Cooperation has to constitute its net and selection its partners.

KITA's team is widely involved in agricultural and community extension, has taken these considerations seriously and is already elaborating and experiencing new ways of communication and training that are more participative, life-long and targeted. Furthermore, they are now providing for a stable presence of one of their agents to be at farmers' disposal, to check them and to establish a new dialogue.

We intend to come back in a couple of years to meet this community again who welcomed us very warmly and to see how the Project is going. Anyway, we can already affirm that this is an interesting alternative model, which could be reproduced elsewhere, after a process of adaptation in order to respect specificities and cultures of different Countries and regions.

## **Acknowledgements**

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I want to genuinely thank KITA's entire family and in particular Samuel, Lovans and Francis for all that they taught me and the members of the MORE group of Essieninpong, in particular M. Appiah and their families for the warm welcome to their community and the peaceful atmosphere I could breathe there.

I couldn't forget my parents and my family for their unconditional support and Roberto for encouraging me to participate in this conference.

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