

**Interim Report on
Food Security and Nutrition Project Western Kasai
S-063461 Innovation Fund CIDA**

March – August, 2006

In June, we submitted a narrative report on progress of the project to June 15, 2006. Rather than repeat the information in that report, this report presents the activities since that point. However, it covers the outputs and outcomes achieved in the first six months of the project (March – August, 2006).

Due to high levels of interest from farming associations, lots of hard work by the Butoke team, and extra demand caused by the failure of some other NGOs to provide promised seed to associations, Butoke has been able to achieve outputs that far exceed what was planned for this season. However, because only six months have passed since the start of the project, and the first planting has not yet been harvested, it is too early to report on outcomes and impact. This report will also provide projections of activities and cash flow requirements for the remainder of the project.

1. Synopsis of recent expansion and expected needs in coming months

Butoke activities have expanded faster than anticipated in the CIDA proposal for several reasons. On the one hand, we had obtained complementary funding even prior to the commencement of the CIDA project, to get a head start on the seed farms. Secondly, the demand by the community has exceeded our expectations. As a result, the surfaces planted by associations in the first primary crop season have been more than double what was projected: 613 ha instead of 300 ha. Similarly, the number of beneficiaries has reached 18,811 small farmers instead of 5,000. Other activities have unfurled more or less as expected, except for the mass media on nutrition sub-project, which we have set aside for the time being, as we have had our hands full with the expanded agricultural activities.

The rapid expansion of Butoke's agricultural program has implications for how Butoke manages its cash flow projections and for the sustainability of its activities. Key to Butoke's sustainability is its ability to recover and produce seeds from one season to the next. In prior seasons, success on this front has been mitigated. However, the formula for seed recovery and production now seems to be well in hand. According to this formula, associations are expected to return to Butoke the amount of seeds that they received at the beginning of the season. If they do not, they will not be supported the next season. On the seed farms, all of the harvest comes back to Butoke, although a portion is used as food for work.

Further expansion could enable Butoke to make a significant difference in food security in Western Kasai province. In managing future expansion, Butoke will require continued external funding for salaries, transportation, renewal of tools, special projects, and for the nutritional centre. Major uncertainties, aside from those associated with national politics, include agricultural yields, which tend to be quite uneven, and the availability of supplementary funding in the future. The challenge for Butoke is to manage these risks, while maintaining an ambitious expansion path. Budget management, in this context, requires continual adaptation to changing circumstances and opportunities.

From a risk management perspective, the acceleration of seed purchases is a win-win proposition, since seeds are expected to replicate themselves, except under the most disastrous of agricultural conditions. The best strategy is thus to maximize seed purchases and surfaces in the early phase of the project, as we have done. However, Butoke's sustainability requires an assurance of reserves to cover other necessary expenses, notably salaries, coordinating office costs and transportation costs. At current levels, the latter come to about \$2250 CDN per month. If necessary, these expenses can be covered from private sources, although this would be at the expense of other activities.

Butoke's immediate management challenge is to determine how much to invest in seeds for the upcoming secondary season. Planting in the secondary season is riskier than for the primary season because the rains are more irregular. Furthermore, because of the shorter growing season, beans are one of the few crops that can be grown in the secondary season. Even with these risks, food security demands that we plant the maximum possible. In the secondary season, we will therefore use all of the bean seeds returned to Butoke by the associations, plus 80% of the seed farm harvests from the primary season. This will allow us to plant approximately 300 ha of beans in the secondary season without purchasing any additional seeds.

Other seeds from the primary season, consisting of peanuts, maize, soy and watermelon, will be saved for the next primary season. In addition, while we will not be buying additional seeds for the secondary season, we do want to take advantage of low seed prices immediately following the primary harvest. We therefore plan to purchase in December the remaining seeds that will be required for the next primary season. To allow for this, we have readjusted our budget to allow for \$25,000 USD to be spent on seeds in December 2006. In order to be able to cover these purchases, we are asking CIDA to release \$40,000 at this time, rather than the \$20,000 originally projected. This would leave only the last payment of \$10,000 in CIDA funding outstanding. This would leave Butoke to pursue the rest of its activities based on AIM funding, a good part of which is expected to come in during the month of February 2007 (\$46,000 from Urbana).

The principal challenge facing Butoke in the near future is to secure additional funding, in order to further expand and diversify its activities, while developing and consolidating itself as a viable and sustainable NGO focused on Western Kasai province.

2. Activities, Outputs and Outcomes

2.1. Food Security

As September approached, and with it the time of planting for the main season in 2006, interest from new farming associations continued unabated. The first accepted were 272 old associations, with whom we had collaborated well during one or two previous seasons. All have worked bigger surfaces this year. These existing associations thus increased surfaces farmed under the project to 350 ha. By the end of August, we had visited another 373 associations and surveyed their proposed fields. In all, we agreed to support 645 associations, who had prepared a total of 613 ha for planting. We also agreed to support over 1500 individual farmers, focusing especially on elderly widows. Before the end of August, we bought most of the seed needed to plant the fields with peanuts, beans and watermelon. We continued to buy seed until planting was completed in mid-October.

The outputs as far as surfaces worked and sown are far superior to what had been planned (300 ha planned; 613 ha achieved). There are a number of reasons that we felt this unanticipated expansion was acceptable and desirable. All of these associations have shown initiative and a willingness to work hard to feed themselves and their families. The fact that those groups we have worked with in the past prepared larger surfaces this season shows that they are feeling more confident in their work and seeing the benefit of their efforts. In addition, some of the associations we took on this season had been encouraged by two other NGOs to prepare large surfaces, but then were left without seed to plant. Since many of the groups we visited had already worked a substantial field, we were able to help them without the expense of providing food for work or tools. Furthermore, we were able to obtain an improved variety bean seeds – niebe H36 – which is more productive and has higher market value than the local variety.

Dr. Jean Lumbala began seed distributions in mid-August. It was very moving to see some delegates of associations walk more than 100 km to get their supply and then trek back with the heavy load. The first real rains began at the time of the first distributions, and planting continued until mid-October.

Two more agronomists were recruited, bringing the total to 10. This is considerably higher than the four agronomists originally planned, but was done to permit the expanded food security effort to be well prepared and closely monitored by agronomists, who are resident in the new zones. The additional agronomists are being paid modest salaries of \$50 US per month, making the monthly expense manageable. The agronomists continue to work with the associations to promote improved agricultural methods and supply technical support.

The zones are now as follows:

Zone	Main Locality	Distance from Office	Number of Associations	Total members	Men	Women	Widows
A	Ntambue	9	100	3,048	1,246	1,802	156
B	Tshikaji	18	128	3,172	1,064	2,108	590
C	Tshikula	75	122	3,660	1,758	1,902	422
D	Lutempa	58	120	2,700	1,200	1,500	700
E	Tshikele	87	24	1,344	564	780	84
F	Muamba-Mbuyi	30	70	1,550	854	696	116
G	Kabue	80	27	1,216	580	636	96
H	Luiza	240	24	684	202	482	106
I	Dimbelenge	260	30	1,437	687	750	72
TOTAL			645	18,811	8,155	10,656	2,342
				100%	43,3%	56,6%	12,5%

Fields were planted as follows, totalling 612.8 ha:

Zone	Peanuts	Beans H36	Watermelon	Total
A	86	6	0	92
B	172.8	0	0	172.8
C	61	61	0	122
D	64	10	2	76
E	22	8	0	30
F	28	7	1	36
G	19	5	0	24
H	4	22	0	26
I	28	6	0	34
Total	484.8	125	3	612.8

Our initial plan was to plant 30 ha of pistachio, 30 ha of soybeans, 65 ha of peanuts, 50 ha of beans, and 25 ha of watermelon, for a total of 200 ha. The balance between different crops was disturbed by scarcity of some seeds, particularly soy and pistachio. In order to get the quantities needed and the best varieties of seeds, we had to travel long distances to markets, including Luiza (250 km), Mueka (270 km), and Bunkonde (80 km). This demanded long trips over hazardous roads, but it all seems worthwhile to offer the best available.

Luiza is the latest zone to be developed, and therefore the smallest. An innovation in this case is that we were able to integrate 156 families of demobilized soldiers. Helping these men to establish sustainable livelihoods is an important way in which we can contribute to the stabilization of the region.

The balance between men and women farmers has changed, mostly because in a number of the new zones men play a larger role in agriculture. At the same time, we have included more widows in our partnerships. The percentage of farmers we are helping who are widows is up from 10% to 12.5%, halfway to our target of 15%.

2.2. Seed Farms

Creation of seed fields has gone as planned. Approximately 100 ha of fields were prepared, and seeds bought. We were unable to find seed for 30 ha of soybeans as planned. We have therefore planted 6 ha of cassava and 10 extra ha of peanuts. In addition, we were able to find a second variety of beans, vigna beans, of which we have planted 16 ha. As with the association fields, these fields were prepared prior to the end of August, and planting occurred from mid-August to mid-October. In addition to the

seeds that will be harvested in December for the next primary season, the six ha planted with cassava will be ready for multiplication at the same time.

The seed fields are as follows:

Seed Multiplication	Surface
Maize	10 ha
Cassava	6 ha
Soy	2 ha
Beans (H36)	22 ha
Beans (Vigna)	16 ha
Peanuts	40 ha
Total	96 ha

2.3. Nutrition Centre

Our June report provided quite a lot of information about the activities of the nutrition centre, which will not be repeated here. Since then, as food stocks from the last harvest have dwindled, more and more children have been brought to the Tshikaji nutrition centre suffering from malnutrition. The number of children being fed at the centre grew from 60 in early August to 120 in mid-September. We have also been giving meals to over 30 widows. Thirteen cases of severe malnutrition had to become residential, as they had travelled up to 75 km to get to the centre. Such cases require carefully chosen frequent meals and daily medical supervision and care. Among them, two had symptomless malaria, one TB of the spine, one primary TB infection.

In terms of expected outputs achieved so far, the nutrition centre is operational and detailed records are being kept on each child to track their progress in terms of weight, height and development of illnesses as well as their participation in the meals. Because improved food security in the region has not yet been achieved, it is too early to judge whether families are putting into practice what they are learning about good nutrition. Our main objective at this point is to keep these children alive and improve their health until the next harvest. Over time, we hope that the education we provide through the nutrition centre, radio, and work with the associations will result in fewer children needing the rehabilitation assistance of the centre.

Since the nutrition centre opened in November of 2005, we have learned a number of important lessons:

- Most of the families affected by malnutrition also have three or more children under six years of age. Because of this, we have noted the need to dialogue with parents about child spacing in the overall context of responsible sexuality.

- Despite these obstacles, we have been able to save many lives. We have also seen progress as people gain a better understanding of marasmus and kwashiorkor and no longer label every malnourished person as a witch.

3. Financial Summary and Projections

3.1. Seeds Needed for Secondary Season 2006-07

Beginning in December 2006, our aim is to plant the maximum possible surface in beans during the secondary season, using beans harvested by the associations and the seed farms. Existing sources include the recovery of seeds from 125 ha of niebe H36 planted by the associations (enough for 125 ha in the secondary season), and 80% of the bean seeds produced in Butoke's own seed fields (22 ha of H36 and 16 ha of Vigna beans). Butoke's share should suffice to plant approximately another 175 ha. This will allow for approximately 300 ha to be planted without purchasing additional seeds.

Purchase of seeds for the next primary season was planned for April 2007 in the initial budget. With the expansion of cultivated surfaces, we will harvest more seed, but will also need to purchase more. As such, we want to maximize our budget, by buying seeds for the next primary season immediately after the harvest in December 2006. While our own yields from this year's primary season are not definite, an additional \$25,000 to buy seeds in December should allow us to once again cultivate approximately 600 ha with 645 associations.

In order to remain within the overall project budget, we have set aside the mass media nutrition campaign for now, and reduced the purchase of dietary supplements for the nutrition centre. This reduction for dietary supplements has been made possible thanks to a grant of \$10,000 secured from ADRA for the nutrition centre. Similarly, we are hoping to find separate funding for the mass media nutrition sub-project.

3.2. Budget Summary to August 2006

	Investment Budget	Approved Budget			Spent to Aug. 31
	ITEM	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	
I-1	Coordinating Office	4,651	0	4,651	7,626
I-2	Tools for Associations	25,932	18,896	44,828	20,780
I-3	Tools for Agronomists	1,959	448	2,407	2,160
I-4	Seeds	78,484	8,477	86,961	67,733
I-5	Nutrition Centre Building	3,489	0	3,489	3,487
I-6	Anthropometric Survey	523	0	523	546
I-7	Motorcycle and Used Truck	12,791	0	12,791	12,445
	Subtotal	127,829	27,821	155,650	114,777

	Recurrent Budget	Approved Budget			Spent to Aug. 31
	ITEM	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	
R-1	Coordinating Office	6,420	6,421	12,841	5,067
R-2	Food for Work – Seed Farms	29,944	16,571	46,515	12,103
R-3	Transportation	5,814	5,814	11,628	7,872
R-4	Planning Meetings	1,628	1,628	3,256	676
R-5	Salaries of Agronomists	8,652	8,652	17,304	3,209
R-6 & R-7	Pesticide/Fertilizer for Corn Seed Farm	2,326	2,325	4,651	1,846
R-8	Mass Media on Nutrition	2,093	2,093	4,186	697
R-9	Anthropometric Survey	2,500	2,500	5,000	813
R-10	Nutritional Supplements	18,039	0	18,039	10,809
	Subtotal	77,416	46,004	123,420	43,092

Grand Total & Overheads	Approved Budget			Spent to Aug. 31
	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	
Total of Investment and Recurrent Costs	205,245	73,825	279,070	157,869
Overhead, Travel & Fundraising –7.5%	10,815	10,115	20,930	13,670
Grand Total	216,060	83,940	300,000	171,539

3.3. Budget Projections for Remaining Years

	Investment Budget	Revised Budget		
	ITEM	1 st year	2 nd year	Total
I-1	Coordinating Office	7,626	0	7,626
I-2	Tools for Associations	20,780	12,472	33,252
I-3	Tools for Agronomists	2,160	2,093	4,253
I-4	Seeds	96,805	0	96,805
I-5	Nutrition Centre Building	3,487	0	3,487
I-6	Anthropometric Survey	546	0	546
I-7	Motorcycle and Used Truck	12,445	0	12,445
	Subtotal	143,849	14,565	158,413

	Recurrent Budget	Revised Budget		
	ITEM	1 st year	2 nd year	Total
R-1	Coordinating Office	10,300	10,466	20,766
R-2	Food for Work – Seed Farms	32,744	16,571	49,315
R-3	Transportation	11,430	7,117	18,547
R-4	Planning Meetings	1,432	1,163	2,595
R-5	Salaries of Agronomists	7,919	9,419	17,338
R-6 & R-7	Pesticide/Fertilizer for Corn Seed Farm	1,846	2,326	4,172
R-8	Mass Media on Nutrition	697	0	697
R-9	Anthropometric Survey	1,646	1,250	2,896
R-10	Nutritional Supplements	21,275	8,140	29,415
	Subtotal	89,289	56,451	145,740

Grand Totals & Overheads	Revised Budget		
	1 st year	2 nd year	Total
Total of Investment and Recurrent Costs	233,137	71,016	304,153
Overhead, Travel & Fundraising –7.5%	17,485	5,326	22,812
Grand Total	250,623	76,342	326,965
CIDA Portion	190,000	10,000	200,000

As noted earlier, we would like to request that CIDA increase the December 2006 payment from \$20,000 to \$40,000, so that we can buy seeds for the next primary season. Attached is an advance payment request for this amount. The rest of the budget will be covered by AIM, aside from the remaining \$10,000 that CIDA will send upon completion of the final project report.

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