

Dear colleagues,

Please, find below the sixth newsletter of the 'Consortium for Improved Agriculture-based Livelihoods in Central Africa' (CIALCA). More info and reports can be found on the CIALCA website on www.cialca.org.

1. **Strengthening collaboration with development partners**

CIALCA has received increasing interest and support from important development partners. There are numerous examples, such as:

- (i) In Bas-Congo, WorldVision and Terre des Hommes are particularly interested in CIALCA's technical support to improve human nutrition.
- (ii) In North Kivu, the banana Xanthomonas wilt (BXW) pandemic is spreading rapidly. CIALCA provides advice on control and methods to rapidly multiply clean planting material. VECO is trying to source additional funding for this.
- (iii) In South Kivu, one of the partners, the Rama Levina Foundation, impressed President Kabila himself at the National Agricultural Fair in Goma, by presenting the technologies and activities carried out in collaboration with CIALCA.
- (iv) In Burundi, Concern is focusing on improving human nutrition by promoting dessert and cooking bananas (instead of traditional beer ones) via CIALCA.
- (v) In Rwanda, RADA and CIALCA teamed up to provide technical input to tackle the spread of BXW and expand macro-propagation.

PLEASE NOTE: training materials are continuously being added to www.cialca.org

2. **Market training**

A training of trainers' workshop on marketing and entrepreneurial skills was organized by the CIALCA economists from CIAT and IITA from 17-21 August 2009 in Ruhengeri, Rwanda. Some 20 participants from North Kivu and Rwanda successfully went back to their organisations to further transfer the skills acquired.

3. **CIALCA and cassava**

The Gates-funded CRS-led Great Lakes Cassava initiative (GLCI) has decided to expand its existing partnership with the CGIAR centres to CIALCA for the cassava-legume agronomy work led by TSBF. CRS colleagues from Rwanda, Burundi, and DRC visited trial sites in South Kivu and field activities start this month. GLCI was already partnering with IITA on varieties resistant or tolerant to brown streak and mosaic virus.

4. **Burundi developments**

With the start of CIALCA-II, activities and staff support have been rapidly expanding in Burundi. The CIALCA office in Bujumbura is up and running with support of ISABU. System characterization and legume germplasm evaluation activities in Gitega have started. These activities are led by Marie-Chantal Niyuhire (ISABU) and backstopped by TSBF.

5. **Teaming up with CATALIST**

The Netherlands-funded CATALIST project run by IFDC is teaming up with CIALCA to work on fertilizer recommendations and testing. In Rwanda, Celestin Ukozehazi (TSBF) has joined the team and he is being backstopped by Charles Murekezi (RADA) and IFDC. A joint training event was organized on agroforestry and ISFM.

6. **Attracting other projects**

CIALCA is permanently trying to strengthen its research and resource base. Examples:

- (i) [CIALCA-WUR workshop on WOTRO-funded project proposal](#)

From 18-21 August, 29 CIALCA partners participated in a project proposal workshop in Bukavu. The project led by Wageningen University (WUR) is entitled 'Improving nutritional security of vulnerable groups through minimizing conflict between food

security and income generation for rural households in Burundi, East DRC and Rwanda. Exploring farm-level trade-offs in the field of agronomy, economics, and nutrition will be the focus of three new PhD students in CIALCA.

(ii) VLIR project on evaluating fertilizer efficiency in South Kivu

This UCB-led project focuses on evaluating the feasibility of fertilizer use in farming systems in Sud-Kivu. The first activity comprises detailed soil characterization.

(iii) IDRC-funded project on collective action

A second project, lead by Diobass and supported by IDRC, is going to look at collective action for natural resource management.

(iv) BMZ-funded project on Forage crops in South Kivu

This project coordinated by Brigitte Maass will focus on livestock and forage crops. The first exercise was a livestock mapping exercise in 21 sites.

(v) VLIR project on bananas and plantains in Oriental province (DR Congo)

In collaboration with CIALCA, surveys are being conducted on banana and plantain in Tchopo district. There is a special focus on BBTV and germplasm

(vi) Harvest-plus activities on more nutritious bananas in Burundi and Kivus

High proVita Musa cultivars will be planted in Burundi and Kivu action sites.

7. Postgraduate students

Great progress for several MSc and PhD students:

Svetlana Gaidashova (ISAR) defends her PhD thesis on October 12 at UCL on AMF x nematode x environment interactions in EA Highland bananas. Armelle Copus (UCL) finished her MSc on coffee-banana systems in Burundi. Godfrey Taulya (IITA) obtained a PhD scholarship to progress banana crop/systems modelling work at Wageningen University to reinforce CIALCA. Celestin Ndayisaba and Jean-Marie Sanginga got support from TSBF to do an MSc on ISFM in cassava-legume and cereal-legume systems, respectively. Kasereka Bishikwabo (TSBF) will conduct a PhD on "Market access, collective action and mineral fertilizer use in Sud-Kivu, DRC" and Chantal Niyuhire (ISABU-TSBF) will do her PhD on "ISFM for cassava- and maize based farming systems in Gitega Province, Burundi". Niels Vanhoudt (KUL) finished his MSc at KUL on on-farm assessment of banana plant density in Rwanda, while Placide Rukundo (ISAR) and Aaike Cnops (KUL) finished their MSc at KUL on drought stress and water use efficiency of different Musa varieties. Patrick Karangwa (ISAR) started his PhD research on Fusarium (Foc), while Beatrice Ekesa (Bioversity) started her PhD on human nutrition in banana dominated production regions across central Africa. Christien Miroir (KUL MSc) has carried out a human nutrition survey in Bushenyi in the framework of Beatrice Ekesa's PhD. Three BSc students supported by Bioversity will help tackle BBTV and BXW. Two MSc and two BSc students supported by IITA help with banana market economics.

8. Staff changes and vacancies

Charles Bisimwa has taken over the coordination of the CIALCA office in South Kivu from Dieudonné Katunga who is now working in the CIAT forage project in South Kivu. Solange Zawadi has taken over the coordination of the CIALCA office in Rwanda from Speciose Kantengwa who is pursuing her MSc in the Netherlands. Pascale Lepoint joined Bioversity-Burundi. She has a pathology background and is particularly interested in BBTV and banana seed systems. George Akwah joined IITA-Burundi as an anthropologist and will explore ways to innovative partnerships and communication to reach scale. Three CIALCA-Bioversity agronomists have been recruited: Lwanga Charles Sivirhauma (North Kivu) will carry out research on Musa germplasm, Xanthomonas wilt and human nutrition, Jules Ntamwira (South Kivu) will work on germplasm, banana-bean intercropping agronomy and human nutrition, while Désiré Willy Emera (Burundi) will initially work on human nutrition.

Vacancies: Agricultural systems Post-doc at UCL in Belgium. Look at www.cialca.org

NOTE

This newsletter does not give a complete overview of all ongoing or planned CIALCA activities, but only features a few recent highlights. CIALCA encourages a wide distribution of its newsletter and accepts contributions. No rights can be obtained from the contents of the newsletter. Comments or contributions can be sent to p.vanasten@cgiar.org, g.blomme@cgiar.org, b.vanlauwe@cgiar.org