

MISEREOR Lenten Campaign 2017

Feature Article

FOREWORD

'THE WORLD IS FULL OF GOOD IDEAS. LET THEM GROW.'

Africa – full of good ideas! Is that our image of Africa? Or don't other things leap to mind when we think of Africa: corruption and crisis, conflict and carnage, disaster and disease? Or is it the big five that we think of first (elephants, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, lions and leopards)? Or the 4 D's: democratisation, diversification, decentralisation and dynamisation?

In the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, God says to His disheartened, disillusioned and homeless people: 'Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? (Is 43.19) This very phrase might have come from one of the farmers in Burkina Faso who are at the centre of this year's Lenten Campaign.

Africa deserves, and is worth, another careful look. Particularly Burkina Faso, the partner country of our Lenten Campaign 2017. It is one of the ten poorest countries on Earth. Yet it also has a very vibrant civil society which, following a long and highly authoritarian regime and an attempted military coup, has forced a democratic election, and is now pressing ahead with improving people's lives, fully expecting to succeed. It has resourceful farmers, who seek solutions to their day-to-day problems with great strength and inexhaustible creativity, and are even capable of surprising agricultural scientists with what they come up with.

Burkina Faso is a country with a programmatic name: 'The land of the upright people'. We are inviting you to get to know these upright people. Like all human beings, they need our support and solidarity. Strength and neediness are part of everyone's makeup. The inhabitants of the Sahel, which covers large swathes of Burkina Faso, are well aware of this. The theologian Anne Béatrice Faye assumes that it is this very experience of neediness that makes them large-hearted people with a strong sense of community and solidarity. They are familiar with the situation in which they will need others, and they know what others can give. This is how their wealth of human relationships arises in the midst of a simple life.

We'd like to move beyond both the platitudes of Afro-pessimism ('Africa is a lost cause. It's got no future.') and naive Afro-optimism ('The future of the world will come from Africa. '), by advocating a realistic look at this 'open space, vacant, untethered, limited by nothing, unhindered' (R. Kapuscinsky) that we call Africa. 'What we need', said Horst Köhler in his speech before the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the German Bundestag at their Africa conference on 16 March 2016, 'is a fresh, impartial perspective on Africa, a new way of speaking about Africa, free from Eurocentrism, full of curiosity and open-mindedness about our neighbouring continent in all its diversity and its contradictions, its opportunities and its challenges.'

This perspective makes it clear that there is not just *one* answer to the many questions. At both the theoretical and practical levels we need many approaches, we need to try out many things, and we need to conduct research. Mistakes and errors will be unavoidable. In this feature article we will be presenting a number of approaches to the problems that exist, and offering them for discussion.

According to Anne Béatrice Faye, Africans are 'Midnight children'. 'Born at midnight, the countries of Africa must pass through a time of deepest night before they are able to see dawn on the horizon.' (Moerschbacher)

For us – shoulder to shoulder with people in Burkina Faso – the Lenten Campaign 2017 should be just such a voyage of discovery. Please join us on that journey.

Pirmin Spiegel, Director General, MISEREOR

It is better to see something once than to hear about it a hundred times. There is poverty and there are many of the problems in Africa, but we mustn't forget that Africans want to develop. There are people who are working very hard to develop. We should also report on this side of things, rather than just on armed conflict and other problems.
Djeni Lekoun , Responsible Officer for Action Research at DIOBASS

SEEING

BURKINA FASO – IN BRIEF

Form of government: Republic

Head of state: Roch Marc Christian KABORE

National holiday: 11. December / Independence Day

Currency: CFA (XOF) franc, 1 EUR = approx. 656 XOF

Languages: French (official language) plus languages of various ethnic groups

Size of territory: 274,200 sq. km.

Capital: Ouagadougou

Religions: Islam is the most widespread religion. There is an influential Catholic minority. The various indigenous religions are still present.

Population: approx. 19 million

Age distribution: Approximately half the population is below 17 years of age.

Population growth: 3%

Human Development Index (HDI): 0.402; ranked 183rd out of 188 countries (Germany = 0.916; ranked 6th)

Main exports: Gold and cotton

Burkina Faso-German economic relations: Relatively limited. In 2014 Burkina Faso ranked 149th in terms of volume of foreign trade within Germany.

The work of MISEREOR: MISEREOR has been supporting projects in Burkina Faso (known until 1984 as Upper Volta) for over 50 years. The current focal areas of our support strategy are water supply, food security and violence prevention. Ecological sustainability and citizen participation are mainstreamed as cross-cutting issues in cooperation with partners.

Sources:

National Institute for Statistics and Demographic Data of Burkina Faso (INSD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), German Federal Foreign Office

N.B. In many cases the statistics differ, are imprecise or out of date. Here we have used only statistics that are relatively undisputed, current and official. They represent facts and data taken from the latest publications of the aforementioned institutions. In the case of religions we deliberately avoided using figures, as the discrepancies are too large and a qualitative approach seems more appropriate.

BURKINA FASO – 'THE LAND OF THE UPRIGHT PEOPLE'

Burkina Faso is a multifaceted country in manifold ways. Located in West Africa, it became independent in 1960. It is one of the poorest countries in the world, and until 1984 was called Upper Volta.

The renaming of the country is a visible manifestation of the creativity and vitality of a people who seek solutions to their problems.

The name 'Burkina Faso' is a mixture of two vernaculars: Moore and Dioula. In Moore, 'Burkina' means 'honourable' or 'upright'. In Dioula, 'Faso' means 'land of the fathers', 'motherland' or 'home'. Consequently, we can translate 'Burkina Faso' as 'Land of the upright people'.

Also remarkable is the way the country's citizens refer to themselves: 'Burkinabè'. The ending 'è' remains unchanged in all cases, regardless of whether masculine or feminine, or singular or plural. This ending comes from another vernacular: Fulfulde. 'è' in Fulfulde means affiliation.

In Burkina Faso, culture has long enjoyed major importance, and continues to do so. In the cultural sector, the country is gaining stature and recognition both nationally and internationally. The country's allure in this domain is illustrated by two major cultural events that are held on an alternating basis: the pan-African film and TV festival FESPACO, which is held biennially in the capital Ouagadougou, and the National Culture Week SNC, which is staged in the country's second-largest city Bobo Dioulasso

In Burkina Faso, culture has been and is used constantly and consistently to open people's minds, promote cross-tribal solidarity and facilitate peaceful coexistence.

In the post-colonial era the country has been relatively successful in developing and disseminating an understanding of culture as action. Culture is not construed as an abstract and unchanging set of symbols. It is a political act. It is a process of continuous and dynamic reflection on preservation and renewal. It is synonymous with a spirit of creativity rooted in tradition.

In the country's recent history, this understanding of culture has repeatedly brought forth strong protest movements and profound political change. In Burkina Faso it is impossible to overestimate the role of creative artists in strikes, popular uprisings and the overthrow of regimes, as well as in democratisation and the promotion of human rights.

This understanding of culture has also led to the consolidation of the idea of individual effort across all social strata in Burkina Faso. This explains why farmers in Burkina Faso take their fate into their own hands both humbly and with firm resolve at one and the same time. They do not expect solutions to their many problems to fall out of the sky. They know and demonstrate that responses to their challenges must and can come from their muscles and their brain. The solidarity that they expect from their fellow human beings therefore involves two simple things: not preventing them from solving their problems, and listening to them.

'We certainly advocate help that helps us to do without help.' Thomas Sankara, President of Burkina Faso 1983-1987, in a speech before the UNO on 4 October 1984

The highly active civil society made a key contribution toward bringing about the presidential elections on 29 November 2015, in which the opposition politician and former prime minister Roch Marc Kaboré was elected head of state with 53.49 per cent of the vote. Expectations of the current government are now correspondingly high.

'My country Burkina Faso is the land of the upright people. Here many different ethnic groups live together. A country where most people live from agriculture, and cultivate sorghum, millet and cotton.'
Salam Sawadogo, a farmer from Gambre Sale

THE PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY MISEREOR IN BURKINA FASO

The situation in Burkina Faso is challenging. It is challenging for the people there, and for us. The Burkinabè need to take action. Before we start asking ourselves what we could and should do now, before we bring our own responsibilities, ideas and solutions into play, we should first of all take a look at what our partners themselves are doing. What action are they taking in the face of their situation of poverty, hunger and educational crisis? How are they managing their resources, their knowledge and their potential, and in what direction are they driving their development process?

We'll find out the answers to these questions as we look at the work of our two partners DIOBASS and PASMEP. As we look at these initiatives in Burkina Faso, we'll draw inspiration from the Lenten Campaign slogan: 'The world is full of good ideas. Let them grow.'

CREATIVE WAYS OF IDENTIFYING NEW FARMING METHODS

A project supported by DIOBASS, one of MISEREOR's partners in Burkina Faso

Since 1990, DIOBASS has been using action research to support farmers' groups in identifying local solutions to their problems, and harnessing their unused potential.

The approach does not only rely on traditional knowledge. DIOBASS also supports a joint learning process in which the farmers conduct experiments and develop new solutions together, and then disseminate these themselves.

'Our chickens and guinea fowl were often sick and many of them died', recalls Salamata Ouédraogo. This 53-year-old lady is sitting in her little yard, which is situated on the edge of Toeghin, a village in Burkina Faso. As the mother of six children who was widowed several years ago, the deaths of each one of her animals were a minor disaster. In Burkina Faso, some 80 per cent of the population live from crop and livestock farming. Keeping chickens and guinea fowl is a job for a woman, and is an important source of everyday income. Salamata Ouédraogo had had enough of sick chickens, a lack of eggs and prices for the treatment of animal diseases that were far too high. When she attended a workshop run by DIOBASS, MISEREOR's project partner, things fell into place for her. She realised that what she wanted to do was conduct research and develop effective agents against parasites, diarrhoea and animal diseases.

The non-governmental organisation DIOBASS, which is based in the capital Ouagadougou and was established in 1997, is enabling her to do so. One of the approaches involves analysing difficulties and challenges in farming, seeking solutions through action research, and finally disseminating successful and state-tested products. To achieve this, DIOBASS is working with farmers' organisations in seven of Burkina Faso's 13 provinces. Secretary-General Djibril Koura explains how important it is that the work is not performed on a top-down basis. DIOBASS pursues a participatory approach that makes the farmers the pivotal actors.

And this was what happened following the workshop that Salamata Ouédraogo attended in 2001. When various working groups formed there, Salamata immediately knew what she was most interested in: animal farming, and particularly raising chickens. 'Sometimes I only had three chickens per year', she laments. Today, Salamata Ouédraogo is president of the research group *wend manegda* – which translates as 'God protects us'. She had tried to look after the poultry as best she could, look out for diseases and raise the chicks. But she never quite managed. Instead, she harboured a growing desire to at long last obtain effective treatments against common poultry diseases.

Poultry farming is just one area that the farmers' organisations are addressing. While cropping used to be dominant, more and more farmers are now also keeping cattle. Often they keep just one or two animals which they use for working the fields, and sometimes hire out for a fixed sum of money. People who have achieved wealth and prosperity can afford an entire herd, however. This becomes problematic when one of the animals falls ill to the so-called *bourgoundi yolsgo*, as the pox epidemic is called in Morée, the most widely spoken language in Burkina Faso.

One of these is in the village of Koungo. The animal's back is bare. Where a white coat would once shine, today it has bare patches of skin. Fortunately, outbreaks of the disease are rare. But when it does strike an animal, the loss is huge. One head of cattle that is large, healthy and well fed will fetch a price of up to CFA 375,00 (EUR 571.64) for its owner. In exceptional cases, the price may be as high as CFA 600,000 (EUR 914.63). But an animal suffering from the pox will fetch at most CFA 200,00 (EUR 304.87). The disease causes the animals to become emaciated. And worse still, the disease is contagious, and if it is left untreated the animal will die.

For pastoralists like Issa Kinde this is a huge problem. Issa Kinde lives in Koungo and is president of the *tege wende* association, which brings together a total of 33 groups in three provinces. Each group comprises 30 to 40 members. 'We are not civil servants', he says with a smile. This is why the animals are a savings account and collateral, he explains. 'If someone in my family falls sick, for instance, then I'll sell one of them.' He will use the profits to settle the doctor's bills and pay for the medicines.

The members of *tege wende* no longer wish to accept losses in their herds, which is why the research group decided that it simply had to find its own solution to the pox epidemic. In systematic trials with five crops, which they planned and implemented together with DIOBASS, they identified two crops as being key. As well as components of the baobab tree, the pods of the neré tree are crucially important. Initially they took mature pods, but did not obtain any significant effect. Ultimately it was a precise observation that helped them understand what was happening. 'At some point we mixed those that had been picked at by birds, but not eaten.', explains Mr Kinde. It took four years to finally make the breakthrough.

Mr Kinde explains that they also received some helpful hints from the Fulani. This ethnic group, which is spread right across West Africa, lives from pastoralism. DIOBASS made such meetings and journeys within Burkina Faso possible. This enabled the researchers from Koungo to also obtain further findings on livestock farming and pasture management. Now they know not only how to best treat the pox, but also how to improve hygiene in enclosures and pens, as well as which trees are best avoided when grazing in order to avoid infestation with ticks, which are vectors of the disease. The result is now healthy livestock.

A good 30 minutes by car from the provincial capital Yako, Vincent Ouédraogo is standing in his field. This is located between Tinkoaguelga, where he lives, and the town of Gomponsom. Here the soil is soft and loose, and feels pleasant to walk on. This is nothing like the area around the field at all, which is hard as a rock. It is difficult to imagine that things were like this everywhere just a few years ago. 'At the beginning we had no idea how best to till the fields', laughs the farmer, who works a plot of one hectare.

This area, which provides the main source of income for a family of eight, is not large and therefore needs to be managed as well as possible. 'With the help of DIOBASS I've achieved many things', he says, and looks around with a sense of satisfaction. For example, he has enclosed his field by building mini ramparts from chunks of laterite. These *digettes* not only look trim, but are also beneficial in that they prevent fertile soil from being washed away in case of heavy rainfall. Another method that Vincent Ouédraogo uses is called *zai*. These are planting holes that are filled with fertiliser, thus restoring fertility to the soil.

One thing he is particularly proud of almost makes the field look a little disorderly at first glance. But Mr Ouédraogo knew very well what he was doing when he planted the *baghanga* tree (*Pilistigma reticulatum*). 'You can use the bark to build houses, and the animals eat the fruits.' He also explains that the leaves are just perfect. He uses them as fertiliser for the field, and his wife uses them to make sauces. This is how Vincent Ouédraogo manages to get the maximum out of this one hectare. Planting the trees has yet another benefit, though. It enables farmers to preserve the park landscape that is so typical of the region. In other regions it has already disappeared. At the same time, important and beneficial trees that no longer grow spontaneously due to the leached soils are being planted systematically.

This restructuring of farmland and the products developed seem unspectacular at first glance. To some extent it is difficult to imagine why medicines such as *tao tao* or *sa-yan* are

so effective against poultry diseases, or why the powder is so effective against the *bourgoundi yolsgo* pox epidemic. These products have barely been scaled up at all. In 2015, for instance, the *wend manegda* research group sold a total of just 2,400 sachets of medicine. Nor are other groups able to boast high figures.

Salamata Ouédraogo sees things differently. 'We sell. This proves that our products are good.' The crucial plus is cooperation with the state agricultural research institute INERA (*Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles de Burkina Faso*), which has tested some of the products and found them to be of high quality. Just how effective they are is something that Salamata sees every morning when she feeds her chickens. There are no longer just three of them. Depending on the season, there are up to 30 that come running for their millet grains right away when she calls them. This means she has more eggs, and can slaughter chickens for a feast, or if necessary sell them.

The fact that she conducted research together with other women in order to obtain these resources has also forged a bond between them. *Wend manegda* has for instance already spent some of the income on a joint meal, which is likely to have a positive effect on the community.

It is now important to network the various research groups even more closely. Although contacts and sharing among the groups do arise through workshops and fairs, there are plans to develop this even further in the future. Ultimately, this will also improve the scaling up of the medicines and innovations within Burkina Faso. So far, the knowledge that DIOBAS has gathered and further developed has already been published in various forms. Creating a digital database together with organisations working in similar areas would make sense, particularly concerning the active substances in the plants and trees studied, their interactions and the possible applications. Old knowledge, rediscovered knowledge and newly developed knowledge could then be used by numerous initiatives. At the same time the knowledge could also be better protected. Rather than allowing the knowledge to be exploited by large pharmaceutical companies, this will enable those who discovered it and as many farmers as possible in Africa to benefit from it.

The experiences of DIOBASS demonstrate that Burkina Faso is home to multiple success stories regarding the preservation and development of farmers' knowledge and expertise. The key prerequisite for this is the participatory approach. The participants themselves decide what topics they wish to conduct research on, how they will proceed and how they will design their experiments. This gives them confidence in their own abilities, and strengthens their sense of solidarity. At the same time it is a good way to blend local knowledge with modern research. This is confirmed by the cooperation with the state agricultural research institution INERA.

The holistic approach has also contributed to the success of these activities. Rather than focusing on a single project designed to generate as much money as possible, the approach aims to tackle issues at the root, whether it be animal and poultry diseases, improved cropping methods or optimised conditions for livestock farming. What is optimal is the fact that the results are specifically designed to be accessible to farmers with few financial resources.

This boosts their motivation. Farmer Vincent Ouédraogo is the best example of this. Initially he had barely any experience in crop farming, and few financial resources. Now he is proud to present his achievements. Though everyday life in this rural area still involves a great deal

of hard work, his standard of living has improved. He puts this down to his entrepreneurial spirit and his enthusiasm for innovations. This means that he'll also be able to continue developing 'his business' in the future.

'The product components were here, but we weren't aware of it. DIOBASS drew it to our attention. There is a solution right in front of your eyes, but you walk past it every day without knowing.'

Adamo Sawadogu, An inhabitant of Koungo

THE MINI DAIRY IN TAMBOLO

A project of PASMEP, one of MISEREOR's partners

PASMEP supports semi-sedentary livestock farming families in intensifying their livestock farming by cultivating fodder crops, increasing milk production by crossing robust local breeds, and taking the milk produced to local markets through mini dairies. (www.pasmep.org)

When Djedi Diallo has time, she sits down beneath the large tamarind tree that stands in the middle of Tambolo, the village where she lives. Then she watches the cattle herds moving through the village. Sometimes she nods approvingly when she sees a particularly well fed animal. Now 50 years of age, she cannot imagine a life without cattle. 'They ensure our survival', says Djedi Diallo, who is a Fulani.

The Fulani are one of West Africa's largest ethnic groups. They live between the Atlantic and Lake Chad. Geographically speaking, this makes them the most widespread ethnic group in the region. Nonetheless, they have barely any political voice. One key reason for this is their mobile way of life. To this day, many Fulani remain semi-nomadic. Fathers and sons move across the region with their herds, which are sometimes huge, while the women stay at home with the old folk, daughters and infants, and manage the household. They also take care of the cows and calves around the homestead.

However, rapid population growth in West Africa (according to World Bank estimates, the population of Burkina Faso for instance is growing by an annual 2.9%, and today is just under 19 million) is causing growing conflicts over resources that are becoming scarcer and scarcer. Some accuse the pastoralists of allowing their animals to trample on the land farmed by sedentary farmers, destroying their crops. The pastoralists complain that what was once pasture has been converted to cropland, and that former grazing corridors have long since ceased to exist. This, so they say, is making access to important pastures and watering points increasingly difficult. However, the Fulani reap more mockery than understanding when they voice this concern. People often say that a Fulani will do everything for his cow, and loves her more than he loves his own wife.

In the village of Tambolo, which is some 10 km from the provincial capital Pô, Djedi Diallo shakes her head vigorously when she hears this. She explains that the animals are not just their source of pride, and their capital. 'We live with them. When we need money, we sell a calf, and that's how we sort out our problems.' For daily income, however, it is more

important to produce milk. This is why MISEREOR's project partner PASMEP (*Plateforme d'Actions à la Sécurisation des Ménages Pastoraux*) is supporting the mini dairy.

Inaugurated on 13 May 2015, it has played a central role in the village ever since. 'Our village has changed as a result', says Mariam Diallo. She is the president of the women's union of the *zemstaaba* association (*zemstaaba* = 'harmony/agreement'), which is responsible for running the dairy. As well as Mariam Diallo, five other women also work at the dairy.

Two female staff members are responsible for accepting the raw milk and processing it into yoghurt every day. Salam Diallo, the accountant, keeps a list of which woman has delivered how much milk. Apart from that, milk production and processing is a woman's job. On average, each producer supplies between three and six litres. On some days a total of up to 50 litres are then accumulated.

According to Mariam Diallo, the quantity of milk has improved since the project was launched. In some cases, she explains, the cows only used to produce between half a litre and a litre. The yield was particularly low during the dry season, when the feed contained few nutrients and above all else was scarce. 'Today they produce two to three litres. On a very good day, it might even be as much as four litres', says the 59-year-old. During the initial phase of the project they were trained in feed production, she explains, and they learnt how closely this was related to the milk yield.

Another aspect she sees as very positive is the literacy course that took place in 2015, and was attended by 30 women. The literacy rate in Burkina Faso is currently estimated to be 36%, though the figure for the Fulani is likely to be far lower. Particularly in the past, their way of life made it difficult for them to attend school. Mariam Diallo emphasises that today almost all children from the village go to school.

When she is on duty, Mariam Diallo sometimes spends the entire day in the mini dairy, which comprises two rooms and a roofed terrace. The women are very careful to ensure that none of the visitors bring dirt into the dairy. The terrace is swept regularly, and the women make sure the hygiene recommendations are complied with.

Inside we hear the humming of a gas-powered fridge, where the freshly-made yoghurt is kept. Electricity is also supplied by two solar modules. These are the basic requirements for keeping the mini dairy running. Like many other places in rural Burkina Faso, Tambolo is not connected to the national power grid, nor is it possible to say when it might be.

In the past, the lack of electricity supply was a key argument for critics of domestic dairy production. It was always argued that milk could not be produced for sale either in Burkina Faso or in other countries in West Africa, because it would not be possible to maintain the chill chains. Using generators was too expensive and thus uneconomical, so it was argued, hence locally produced milk would be unable to compete with imports from Europe. The project in Tambolo demonstrates that this is indeed possible at a low level, provided that the cooling system is appropriate to local conditions, the quantities are not too large and the transport routes are not too long.

When Mariam Diallo has finished her morning routine, and for a moment none of the women are there to deliver milk, she again gazes searchingly around the rooms. And once again, a smile darts across the face of this tall lady, who comes across as reserved when you first meet her. The mini dairy has brought an improvement in her quality of life. 'We used to suffer

a lot', she starts to explain. 'We often used to walk to Pô, transporting the milk on our heads. Selling it was barely worth our while, and was disproportionate to the amount of work we had to put in.' Nowadays, most of the women do not have to walk more than a few hundred metres. The flexible opening hours are also convenient.

The building has also given the village a centre, which people use as a meeting place. This is why benches and chairs also been put in place. Five small shops have now sprung up around the building, selling tea, soap and ground coffee for instance. This development shows that the inhabitants of Tambolo at least have a little cash.

Djedi Diallo, one of Mariam's sisters-in-law, is very pleased about the fact that the mini dairy enables her to earn money of her own regularly and without any great difficulty. Since this mother of five looks after the four cows, she also keeps the profits. Two of the cows are currently giving milk. On good days this means she earns CFA 2,400 (EUR 3.65). This is a considerable sum for her. It is estimated that 44.9 per cent of the general population in Burkina Faso live below the poverty line. 'Even if one day I might only have one litre, I know that I will earn something', says Djedi Diallo, who is delighted to have a certain security that she never had before.

'I can pay the school fees, and I can buy clothing and shoes for my children. Sometimes I even buy something new for myself', laughs Djedi Diallo. She thinks it is enormously important that women have money. 'In many areas we are stronger than men. We can put plans into action that they can't. We think of things they don't think of.'

Sometimes it is a coin worth CFA 100 (15 cents) for one of her children. That will pay for a sachet of yoghurt made in Tambolo, for example. Every time 15 litres of milk have accumulated, a new batch is started. One litre produces six plastic bags, which sell for CFA 600. A litre of milk costs CFA 500. So far the women have neither tapped into large markets, nor have they established links with wholesalers. The inhabitants of Tambolo and the surrounding villages buy the yoghurt, explains Mariam Diallo. Sometimes customers also come from Pô, the capital of Nahouri province. She also says how helpful the sign is that points toward to the project. It is located on the road to the Ghanaian border.

The mini dairy demonstrates that it is indeed possible in Burkina Faso to produce milk and yoghurt for the local market on attractive terms. At relatively low cost for the building and the purchase of the gas fridge and the solar modules, the village of Tambolo has achieved huge results.

In this setting, the social aspects are just as important as production itself. The mini dairy has become the centre of the village – something that the women of the *zemstaaba* association particularly appreciate. This also means they feel responsible for running it. When it operates, many people have a more or less regular income for the first time in their lives. They are then able to invest this in taking care of their families, and especially in the education of their children. The lessons learned to date with the mini dairy in Tambolo demonstrate how successfully the existing resources and potential of the Fulani can be utilised. The quantity of locally produced milk can increase significantly through targeted measures such as fodder crop cultivation, hay cutting and storage. In the long term there are plans to increase the cows' milk output to 6 litres a day by cross-breeding with goudali stock from northern Nigeria.

So far, marketing has focused chiefly on the neighbouring population around the village. Located just off the national road, Tambolo will have further potential to offer in the future: an

important border market is just 10 km away. Here demand is strong among travellers, and the nearby provincial capital Pô Is also a potential market.

All things considered, though, something else that is important is flourishing as a result of local milk processing like we see in Tambolo . Through these activities people are gaining self-confidence and acknowledgement, which is hugely important for an ethnic group that is often marginalised. 'I always used to think our milk was poor compared to the milk from Europe', says Djedi Diallo. The mini dairy has changed that fundamentally. 'Now we can transform it, do whatever we want with it.'

Both projects are excellent examples of the Lenten Campaign slogan: 'The world is full of good ideas. Let them grow.' We might adopt this attitude as we look at Africa, and think again about the way we act.

'We need to achieve three goals for the mini dairy. We need to produce more. To do that, we need more animal feed. We need to organise ourselves better as a group, and we must build a loyal clientele.'

Kumbo Diallo, A farmer from Tambolo

AGRICULTURE IN BURKIINA FASO

Burkina Faso's national economy is dominated by agriculture. Agriculture accounts for 38% of the gross domestic product (GDP), and enables approximately 80 per cent of the country's population to make a living. Cotton is the country's most important agricultural export, and indeed is the only notable agricultural product exported to the global market. By contrast, live cattle, leather and hides, as well as fruit and vegetables, are exported to the neighbouring countries within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS (*)).

In Burkina Faso's semi-arid climate, farmers practice rainfed agriculture to cultivate the staple foods millet, sorghum, maize, manioc and cowpeas. In the dry north the rainy season lasts just three months, while in the more humid south-west it lasts up to 6 months. Although farmers in Burkina Faso have faced an increasingly arid climate since the late 1960s, since 1980 the entirely smallholder-based sector has increased national production by 4% per annum. National grain production has thus kept pace with the annual population growth of approximately 3%. This growth in production was achieved largely by extending the area under cultivation. Only a small percentage was achieved through intensification. Nonetheless the challenges remain huge, given that there will be twice as many mouths to feed in 35 years as there are today.

Over the same period, international donors and to a large extent agencies such as MISEREOR have been able to make major progress with the construction of small irrigation schemes. These enable local producers to use the dry season productively, supplement their diet and generate income. The majority of the irrigation schemes (figures as at 2001) are used for vegetable and rice cultivation. More than 400,000 people make a living in fruit and vegetable cultivation alone. Most of them are young, and an estimated 100,000 of them are women. Vegetables are cultivated not only for domestic consumption, but also for export. Within just a few decades, an important branch of production has emerged that accounts for approximately 11% of the value created in agriculture.

Although rice production doubled between 1980 and 2007, farmers were unable to further develop their potential for production due to the competition from rice imported more cheaply from Asia. It was not until the global market prices for rice began rising in 2008 that domestic rice production rose sharply. So far, countrywide only 10% of the land that could potentially be irrigated (600,000 ha) has been put to productive use. This trend demonstrates the potential for production that smallholders have when the right market incentives are in place, and when a large number of small-scale irrigation schemes are successfully developed.

Cotton cultivation remains strategically important for the economy of Burkina Faso. There are 325,000 farms cultivating cotton, the majority of them in the south-western parts of the country. A large proportion of producers cultivate their crop on plots of just 1 ha of cotton. Agricultural inputs for cotton cultivation, extension and the purchase of cotton are organised within a formal system. Since the 1960s, the productivity of cotton production has been continuously increased. This success story is based largely on 70 years of breeding by the agricultural research community, and cooperation with France that enabled Burkina Faso to develop varieties with particularly long fibres and excellent spinning properties, while increasing productivity per unit area. In Burkina Faso today, so far only cotton farmers have reliable access to inputs such as seed, mineral fertilisers and pesticides. (On the role of genetically modified cotton, see: Peter Dörrie, Zurück zur Natur, WELTSICHTEN 5-2016, p. 47-49).

Livestock farming in Burkina Faso is practised in large part by the Fulani, who make up 7.8% of the country's population. In mixed herds comprising cattle, sheep and goats, they also produce milk. A large proportion of the Fulani have been semi-sedentary for decades, i.e. they practice both crop and animal farming. During the cropping period a small segment of the herd remains in the villages, while the larger part goes on 'transhumance' (seasonal migration to suitable grazing grounds) from the beginning of the rainy season in June until November. Depending on how the rainy season turns out, the herdsmen take their herds along familiar grazing routes, before returning to their villages after the harvest. And again depending on the rainy season, they may also lead their herds into Burkina Faso's neighbouring countries. Crop farmers and livestock farmers have been cooperating in manifold ways for generations. Prosperous farmers entrust their cattle to the Fulani. Pastoralists and crop farmers also enter into agreements that give the herdsmen and their herds access to crop residues in the fields. The crop farmer obtains valuable fertiliser from the night-time enclosures of the herd. Growing population density, and the conversion of forest and pastureland as well as important livestock corridors into cropland, are causing growing conflict between crop farmers and animal farmers. More intensive forms of livestock farming, such as fattening, dairy production and poultry breeding are emerging, chiefly around urban agglomerations, because this is where demand for milk and meat tends to be strong and sales good (see below: The dairy sector).

Adapting and innovating

Changes in the prevailing conditions have created major challenges for farms over the last few decades. As well as a more arid climate and high climate variability, farmers face an increasing loss of soil fertility and soil erosion. These are the result of the disappearance of fallow periods, and the conversion of forest and pastureland into cropland. In the course of structural adjustment programmes beginning in the 1980 and continuing into the 1990s, the state made significant cuts to agricultural services such as extension, agricultural credits and the supply of inputs etc. Over the last few decades, farmers have opted increasingly to

supplement farming as a livelihood with various other sources of income such as retail, or have migrated in search of work. Farmers made these choices in order to better protect themselves against crop or income losses. They needed this strategy because first of all the sources of income available did not in themselves offer basic livelihoods, and secondly because they needed to minimise risks.

Faced by manifold problems in crop and animal farming such as pest control, animal health, storage, processing and marketing of their products, producers felt left to fend largely for themselves. And faced by solutions that were often either inaccessible or unaffordable, farmers have demonstrated huge creativity and ingenuity in developing innovations of their own. They have done so independently of agricultural research institutions. Although the latter have a mandate to improve crop and animal farming practice, the technological packages they develop, which are usually designed to raise productivity, are often aimed at more prosperous farmers and are therefore barely accessible or too expensive for smaller, resource-poor farm. For years, MISEREOR has been supporting two projects that enable producers to develop solutions of their own.

The development context

Development strategies often rely on modern technologies and investment in large-scale agriculture. In an agriculture-based economy like that of Burkina Faso, in which the majority of people earn their livelihoods in and through agriculture, every development measure and every investment must be measured not only by its profitability, but also by the number of people it enables to generate income and get by, either as self-employed producers or through formal employment.

Establishing a large number of small dairies would create additional income for many people in Burkina Faso, thus strengthening their purchasing power. Establishing a single central, large-scale dairy supported by international investors might, on the other hand, generate only a limited number of jobs. At the same time there would be a risk that monopoly-like structures could emerge in the dairy sector, and that small local dairies and their many small suppliers could be crowded out.

To develop agriculture, African governments have often relied, and continue to rely, on modern technologies produced through agricultural research. For the majority of farms, however, the solutions developed in this way are of barely any relevance. The potential of smallholders and mobile livestock farmers such as the Fulani to develop innovative solutions themselves has been demonstrated by a large number of 'research activities with and by farmers'. If the majority of crop farmers and livestock farmers are to benefit from agricultural research, then approaches developed (partly) by these stakeholders will in the future need to be mainstreamed as part of the core business of agricultural research.

If an elephant and a camel till the field together, it will grow large.

Dairy production in Burkina Faso: No one mentions the Fulani

Milk production, conditions in the sector and producer prices are also a controversial topic in Burkina Faso, a country with 10 million cows and a population of some 90 million. Milk production is important for the traditional Fulani herdsman (see above). At the same time, since the milk quota was lifted in Europe more and more powdered milk is reaching the world market, including Burkina Faso. Every year Burkina Faso imports powdered milk worth some

CFA 130 billion, which is equivalent to EUR 198 million. Moreover, in Burkina Faso alone imports of powdered milk enriched with vegetable fat have risen to over 5,000 tons over the last five years. The government intends to support its own dairy sector by injecting millions. Here it is relying on two large regions of the country: the area around the capital Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso. It envisages that around 250 million litres of milk will be produced there in the future. The government's plan also includes building two large dairies in Koubri in the Ouagadougou region, and in the Bobo-Dioulasso region. It envisages these as becoming the country's *bassins laitière* (milk tanks).

The worrying thing about this is that the traditional settlements of the Fulani in the north and east of the country do not have a part in the government's plans. Yet these are the very people who need better prospects for income and employment.

And among the Fulani there are already a number of interesting initiatives in which micro dairies are being established, which are designed to be and can be an important element in poverty reduction.

Because the milk is good, the bush is good too (an adage of the Fulani)

However, these are threatened by European agricultural and trade policy, and the Economic Partnership Agreement that the EU intends to enter into with the ECOWAS countries.

The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with Europe and the dairy market in Burkina Faso – a disastrous combination

After over 15 years of tough negotiations, the European Union has concluded its negotiations with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). This is designed to replace the free market access that the EU had granted unilaterally since the 1970s to the 78 ACP states (the majority of which were former colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and the South Pacific).

The reason for these negotiations was the incompatibility of the trade preferences of the Lomé Convention and the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Nine Latin American banana exporters had complained that unlike the ACP countries, they were unable to gain duty-free market access.

Free access to the EU market can be secured by entering into reciprocal free trade agreements that are recognised by the WTO – albeit at a price, which is that the ECOWAS countries must also open their markets to the EU.

Since the negotiations began, the EPAs have come under criticism from African and European civil society. Many governments also take a critical view. Nigeria and Gambia are refusing to sign the ECOWAS-EPA. As a result, the planned debate concerning signature by the European Parliament was postponed until November 2016.

One point of criticism raised is that the EU is attaching higher priority to its trade policy goal of facilitating market access and ensuring that it is able to meet its demand for raw materials at world market prices, than it is to development goals. Logically, it was not the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development that conducted the negotiations, but the European Commission's Directorate-General for Trade.

What does this mean for the dairy sector?

One key point that was long a matter of dispute was which products could be exempted from this liberalisation and thus continue to be protected by tariffs.

The planned agreement now envisages that the ECOWAS countries will be allowed to retain customs duties for around one quarter of products. At least officially, the decision as to which groups of products this will apply to is solely a matter for the West African countries to decide. They will first of all need to reach agreement among themselves, however. Unlike the example set by the East African Community, ECOWAS has now decided to exempt from the lowering of customs duties only fresh products in the dairy sector such as milk and yoghurt. For powdered milk and vegetable fat-enriched powdered milk, customs duties must be abolished entirely within a few years.

This will undermine the potential of the dairy sector for reducing poverty. It is not entirely unlikely that lobbying by European dairies played a role in this decision. They are currently seeking to increase their investment in milk processing in West Africa and buy up existing African companies or acquire holdings in them. As a result they have achieved improved access to an important market and their subsidiaries in Africa have been able to obtain the raw material powdered milk rather more cheaply.

The price of powdered milk in a supermarket in Burkina Faso compared to milk from Burkina Faso. 'There should be a policy to support the entire dairy sector, so that all milk producers can increase their production and obtain a good price. But that will not work if cheap powdered milk from Europe competes with domestic production', says Korotoumou Gariko, pioneer of the micro dairies in Burkina Faso. 'Powdered milk already costs half as much local milk, and we find small bags of it everywhere on markets and in kiosks. Milk produced from powdered milk and vegetable fat from Europe costs the equivalent of around 34 cents, while local milk costs between 76 cents and EUR 1.10 per litre.'

Dairy farmers in the region will lose out. They have been unable to obtain the greater external support that they have been calling for for so long. On the contrary, customs duties on imports from the EU will be abolished altogether, and this will be laid down in the EPA on a permanent basis. This makes a development such as that in East Africa, where high customs duties on imports of dairy products have helped integrate smallholders and nomads into value chains, virtually impossible.

'They want to turn us from producers into consumers.' René Millogo, coordinator at MISEREOR's partner organisation PASMEP, which is supporting the establishment of micro dairies.

'Trade relations between Europe and Africa – one-sided dominance, as ever'

Europe is squandering for ever an opportunity to reshape relations with countries in Africa

As the world's largest economic power with a volume of trade of almost a third of the global market in goods and services, the European Union has very 'subtly' succeeded in gaining access to the markets of a number of non-industrialised countries that are among the poorest in the world, accounting for just under 1% of world trade. What a blessing for the might of European trade!

With a will to suppress resistance in Africa, the Commission is resorting to improper means of generating pressure, ranging from ultimatums to the threat of abolishing preferential access to the European market for non-LDCs (Least Developed Countries).

The 'EPA straitjacket', as the director of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Ignacio Ramonet, so accurately described it, is therefore putting African countries under more pressure than ever before. Never have the 'Economic Partnership Agreements' deserved their name as little as they do today. There is simply no way this could be described as a partnership or an agreement on equal terms.

These agreements are neither partnerships nor 'development instruments', as the European Commission or its Directorate-General for Trade claim. For the African signatory states, the EPAs will mean the loss of billions in customs revenues. At the same time their scope for shaping development through policymaking will be constrained significantly, because the countries will be forced to pursue trade on the terms dictated by the Commission, completely dissociated from their actual economic situation and their own needs and priorities. African exports will continue to be subjected to a considerable degree to Europe's very strict rules of origin.

So how should the EPAs be a better way of supporting African development than what existed before, when they deliver nothing but what Europe has been granting the ACP countries for more than 40 years?

By dictating its own ways of working and its own terms, Europe is squandering the unique opportunity to build a new relationship with African countries which would finally put an end to the European dominance of Africa that is a relic of the 19th century. This is regrettable, deplorable even.

PERCEIVING

NEW IDEAS ARE GROWING – DO YOU NOT PERCEIVE IT?

1. Seeing the new anew – 'I am doing a new thing; do you not perceive it?'

The question as to the situation in Africa, and in our specific context the situation of farming families in Burkina Faso, prompts us first of all to ask questions of ourselves. Two questions we need to ask ourselves are: How do we look? and What do we see?

There is a solution right in front of your eyes every day, but you walk past it every day without knowing. *An adage of the Mossi*

In the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, God asks His people 'Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.' (Is 43.19) After years of Babylonian exile, there is a way out, a way to freedom, a

way home. Evidently the people first need to see that for themselves. One can get used to the old, the well-trodden paths, the standard perceptions (and preconceptions), even if they entail a lack of freedom, alienation and homelessness. Suddenly something new crops up – Don't you perceive it?

How do we perceive Africa? Are things as Horst Köhler already described them on 1 July 2007 in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* newspaper: 'In this country we've become accustomed to associating Africa almost automatically with poverty, corruption, disease and war. Unfortunately, all those things do exist. But it's time to look more closely, and throw clichés overboard.' This is what the words of the prophet also encourage us to do. We need to see Africa in a new light. We need to move beyond our preconceptions and clichés, beyond our perceptions that are the product of colonialisation and centuries of 'white' ways of looking at this continent. Perhaps this new way of looking will also help us to see the 'other Africa'. The Africa that is not only the frequently unmitigated disasters that are delivered to our doorstep, but also the endeavours of farmers in Burkina Faso, their resourcefulness, their staying power, their huge achievements in adapting to climate change and population growth, and their will to live. We are fortunate to have discovered the 'upright people' who take control of their lives in the face of all the adversities of the Sahel.

2. 'People don't develop other people, people develop themselves'. (Joseph Ki-Zerbo)

This quote from the Burkina Faso writer, politician and Alternative Nobel Prize winner Joseph Ki-Zerbo points us in the right direction. It is people who develop themselves. 'The key to this is in the mind', as he puts it.

'Together we are chasing down ignorance and hunger' Maurice Oudet, White Father and longstanding partner of MISEREOR

The theologian Anne Béatrice Faye from Senegal, who today works in Burkina Faso, calls this 'sleeping on your own mat', or: the 'mat of indigenous development'. In the language of the Bible, this translates as: 'Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.' (Prov 5.15)

He who sleeps in a house knows better where the roof is leaking. An adage of the Mossi

In the New Testament this is dealt with under the talents bestowed on people. These are not a gift that we might put in a drawer and forget about. We are supposed to make something of them. The talents, these gifts, become a task (see Mt 25.14ff). This is where Anne Béatrice Faye also sees Africa's possible contribution to global development. The gift bestowed on people in Africa is the 'priority of social relationships.' 'If societies in Africa were often successful in their struggles, this was thanks above all to their capacity to draw on their wealth of human relationships.' This usually remains a 'simple life that is rich in relationships'. Anne Béatrice Faye is far removed from idealising a life of this kind. In view of the fact that mere economic growth is not a solution, she adheres to a principle: 'It is self limitation and simplicity that enable a human being to maintain a just relationship to him- or herself, to human society in the widest sense and to the environment.' Recalling to mind the newly formulated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in this respect we Europeans might think that we are a developing country ourselves. The UNO believes that everyone must

develop according to the criteria of the SDGs. The debate concerning how we wish to live on Earth is a debate for everyone, worldwide. All countries have their success stories, and all must admit that they have faced setbacks. All can say what life offers them, and what price they have to pay for that. Development is necessary and possible everywhere, and the key to it is in the mind.

3. Let them grow.

From the Burkinabè's own strengths and resources, new things can grow which are their own. The new can be entirely new, or it can draw on old, traditional, 'indigenous' knowledge that is being used in new ways. It is created through processes of trial and error that take years. Different forms of knowledge come together in such processes: traditional knowledge and modern agricultural research. It is important that those involved meet on equal terms, and seek to enrich each other. Not everything need succeed right away. The farmers in the Bible also underwent this same experience. Weeds often grow amidst the good seed, or sometimes even poisonous weeds that destroy the good seed. At the beginning it is often difficult to distinguish between the two. This is why Jesus says: 'Let both grow together until the harvest.' (Mt 13.30) The weeds are then to be burned, while the wheat is to be gathered in the barn. Good ideas and innovations have to be allowed to grow. Those that are no use must be removed, and those that show promise allowed to develop further in their own way.

'Life is about making choices. This is why we need understanding, so that we can make the right choices and act accordingly.' *Maurice Oudet, White Father and longstanding partner of MISEREOR.*

4. 'A land flowing with milk and honey'

The many small innovations are steps that according to the Biblical understanding lead to a new, just society. The Bible advocates not having too small a vision of the human being. It advocates giving voice to humankind's grand dreams, and persevering in turning them into reality. In the Old Testament, the image of a just society is the land 'flowing with milk and honey' (Deut 26.9). The economics of the Bible assumes that there is enough for everyone. 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want' (Ps 23.1). 'The earth has yielded its increase' (Ps 67.7). This is about living not against nature but with her and her reality, and sharing her goods fairly.

There is still forage grass from last year, and the first green shoots are already there to see. *An adage of the Fulani.*

This is why the missionary to Africa Maurice Oude sees the human person as the 'steward of the Earth'. She is tasked to make the habitat entrusted to her into a garden, and till and keep it. This is why God's first gift to the human person is the intelligence that she must use. With this intelligence, she is able even in an inhospitable situation to create a place to live that supports a life of dignity. The good gardener does not work against the climate, the soil, the frequency of rainfall or the potential for irrigation that nature provides. He learns to discover the abundance of his Earth, and to live and work with it. Anne Beatrice Faye terms this 'conviviality' (meaning a way in which humankind and creation live together, each respecting the other's specific traits but developing a shared mode of existence for all). Africa's culture has a particular strength in this respect.

From this perspective, a new world is possible. 'But according to his promise we wait for *new heavens* and a *new earth* in which righteousness dwells' (2 Pet 3.13). And 'there can only be justice for all', says the Congolese theologian Boniface Mbanza, for the people of Africa and the people of Europe, for the people of the whole world. God's new world is opening up a future for the human person, and for the Earth itself. Now we are still hearing the 'cry of the earth and the cry of the poor' (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, 49). These cries will not go unheard. At the end 'death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away. Behold, I make all things new' (Rev 21.4ff).

'Here I am just the humble spokesperson of a people that refuse to watch their own death after having stood by passively and watched how their natural environment died.' (Thomas Sankara, President of Burkina Faso from 1983 – 1987 in a speech to the SYLVA environmental conference in Paris on 5 February 1986)

5. On the speck and the log

And what about us here in Europe? Many of us see the mistakes in Africa, but do we also see Europe's mistakes? Jesus uses a rather strong image for this: 'How can you say to your bother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye", when there is the log in your own eye? (Mt 7.4-5). And don't we Europeans have enough specks in our own eyes: the long history of the colonies that have still not been compensated, and the slave trade, the land grabbing, the exploitation of resources, the export of arms and agricultural goods, and of used clothing and waste, to Africa?, The way we treat refugees from Africa who are knocking on our door. And not least our lifestyle, for which the poor in particular have to suffer and that is taking away from the Earth the air that it breathes?

In Burkina Faso, people are being prevented from solving their problems. They are unable to realise their potential and ideas. There are structural reasons for this that are rooted in the country's history, and national power relations and interests. The policies of international players such as the EU are also partly responsible. Through their huge commitment, the people of Burkina Faso have struggled for a new beginning with a democratic government. It is also the task of the international community to support and safeguard this new beginning with a 'democratic dividend', so that the huge expectations are not disappointed.

Without getting caught up in one-sided or incorrect apportionments of blame, there probably are enough objective reasons to enquire about the role of European policy, and about how we might turn our own lives around. We need to take the log out of our own eye, so that we can see clearly; so that our perception of the world changes, and with it our awareness. Last but not least, we need to take a fresh look at the way we act with and for Africans. And who knows, perhaps this new perspective will take us forward here in Europe too. That is the aim of the Lenten Campaign.

We have all been promised 'abundant life' (Jn 10.10), without distinction. To achieve it we also need the wisdom of Africa, so that together we can enter the 'land flowing with milk and honey'.