



**CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP AND MATERIAL  
SUPPORT TO RURAL WOMEN, IN COMMEMORATION OF  
THE 2024 INTERNATIONAL RURAL WOMEN’S DAY.  
Under the “EmpowerHer” Programme.**

**HELD ON 22 OCTOBER, 2024.**

**REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP**

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

African Resource Group - Cameroon Ltd, with material support from SOWEDA, Buea organized a capacity-building workshop on 22 October, 2024 in commemoration of the 2024 International Rural Women’s Day which in Cameroon had as theme “Rural Women and Import Substitution: Opportunities and Challenges”. The workshop aimed to train rural women on methods of improving their agricultural yields using low-cost organic farming techniques geared towards climate change mitigation; train rural women on climate-smart agriculture, and empower rural women by fostering a sense of unity and solidarity among women and allies. The workshop also aimed at celebrating the achievements of rural women across various sectors; raise awareness on gender equality and women's rights; and elaborate ways of reducing the cost of living for rural women in Cameroon via ARG-CAM’s “EmpowerHer” Programme.

**II. ATTENDANCE**

In attendance were several rural women farmer group leaders from Bova village within Buea Sub-Division; as well as the Quarter Head of Bova 2 who represented the Chief of Bova Village. Overall, the meeting was attended by 20 people including the staff of ARG-CAM Ltd and representatives from the Divisional delegation of Youth affairs and Civic Education for the South West Region .

The List of workshop participants is on annex 2.

**III. OPENING SESSION**

The Manager of African Resource Group, Mr. Edmund Linonge Njoh presented the overall objectives of the workshop; while highlighting the work of ARG-Cam Ltd via its “EmpowerHer” Programme in empowering rural women in a range of areas through skills development;

networking; and also supporting policy reforms that enhance their economic and political participation. He elaborated on the importance of the International rural women's day as an opportunity for rural women to come together to assess their agricultural activities and other aspects concerning their communities; and network to sustainably plan their future and gain knowledge and skills to improve on their agricultural and agribusiness activities; as well as the overall development of their rural communities. Finally, he acknowledged the material support received from SOWEDA, Buea and then gave an outline of the objectives of ARG-CAM's "EmpowerHer" programme and the expected outcomes of the workshop.

The "EmpowerHer" programme objectives include the following:

1. Empower women and young girls via capacity building and skills development to stimulate their economic, social and political development.
2. Celebrate the achievements of women across various sectors.
3. Raise awareness about gender equality and women's rights.
4. Foster a sense of unity and solidarity among women and allies.
5. Inspire action towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

#### **IV. EXPERT LECTURES AND PANEL DISCUSSIONS FEATURING PROMINENT FEMALE LEADERS.**

1. **"Empowerment of Rural Women Farmers in Cameroon by Fostering a Sense of Unity and Solidarity among Women and Allies; and Celebrating the Achievements of Rural Women across Various Sectors."**

This presentation was done by **Mme Embelle Lilian**, a Youth Counselor and the Sub-Divisional Delegate of Youth Affairs, Buea.

She began by saying that agriculture is an honourable and indispensable profession and that rural women should be proud of their work as the main food producers of the nation, their contribution towards food security and improvement of the livelihoods of their families and communities; as well as reducing imports of agricultural products in Cameroon. She said this workshop was in line with the theme of this year's international rural women's day celebration which is "Rural Women and Import Substitution: Opportunities and Challenges", and that is why this workshop is impacting knowledge which could help them take advantage of the opportunities in the agricultural sector.

She stressed that rural women should participate fully in decision making, take up leadership positions in their communities as agents of development not only in the agricultural sector but

also be active and contribute to the social, political and economic development of their communities, and the country as a whole. She also advised that rural women should work together as groups, assist each other in their various fields of interest, improve on their agricultural techniques and products, and gain customers and partners; which will lead to an improvement in the livelihoods of their families, communities and the nation as a whole.

She finished by celebrating the achievements of rural women in Cameroon as food providers and agents of positive change across the social, political and economic spheres.

## **2. “Methods of Improving the Agricultural Yields of Rural Women Using Low-Cost Organic Farming Techniques Geared Towards Environmental Sustainability.”**

This presentation was done by Mr. Andoh Akeson Akeh, the Agriculture, Livestock and Aquaculture Consultant of ARG-CAM, Buea.

He began by applauding rural women for being the bread basket of the nation and for contributing to food security and encouraged them to take pride in their agricultural activities which is an important tool for improving their livelihoods. He however exhorted the rural women to practice sustainable agriculture which is a farming system that aims to maintain production in the long-run without degrading the environmental resources natural base, by using low input techniques that improve soil fertility, by maximising recycling, enhancing biological pest control and diversifying production.

He reminded the women that agriculture serves as a cornerstone of human society, playing a crucial role in feeding billions of people, driving economic growth, and shaping the development of civilizations throughout history. It has been instrumental in providing the essential food resources that support populations and foster social structures. However, the increasing reliance on industrial farming practices such as the increased use of inorganic fertilizers, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), artificial feed additives and chemical pesticides has raised significant concerns regarding environmental sustainability, soil degradation, and food safety. As these challenges become more pressing and visible in the form of climate change impacts, biodiversity loss, and public health issues, the urgent need for alternative approaches to farming is clear.

Mr. Andoh explained how organic farming is a promising solution to the above complex challenges. Organic farming is an agricultural practice that avoids the use of synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and artificial feed additives. Instead, it promotes the use of natural fertilizers such as compost, manure, green manure, and

vermicomposting, along with biological pest control, crop rotation, and intercropping. These methods help enhance soil fertility, improve water retention, and boost crop resilience to pests and diseases. Organic farming also encourages biodiversity by maintaining healthy ecosystems around farmlands.

He said by practicing organic farming, opportunities abound for rural women to increase their agricultural yields using low-cost inputs, make higher profits and improve their livelihoods; given that in recent years, the demand for organic products has surged significantly due to growing consumer awareness of health and environmental issues. Many consumers now prefer organic products, believing them to be safer, healthier, and free of harmful chemicals. Additionally, organic farming is often associated with better treatment of animals and sustainable practices that contribute to climate change mitigation. Therefore, promoting organic farming is crucial for achieving sustainable agricultural practices and addressing the challenges posed by climate change, soil degradation, and food security.

The consultant told the women that sustainable agriculture is a necessary approach to ensure the long-term viability of our farming systems and the health of our planet. Adopting sustainable practices helps preserve natural resources, reduce environmental impact, and maintain farm productivity. He then gave ten essential practices for sustainable agriculture that every farmer should consider as follows:

### **1. Crop Rotation and Diversification**

#### **Benefits:**

- Improves soil health by breaking pest and disease cycles.
- Enhances nutrient availability and reduces soil erosion.
- Increases biodiversity, leading to more resilient farming systems.

#### **How to Implement:**

- Rotate crops with different nutrient needs and pest resistance.
- Include cover crops to protect and enrich the soil.

### **2. Integrated Pest Management (IPM)**

#### **Benefits:**

- Reduces reliance on chemical pesticides, minimizing environmental impact.
- Promotes natural pest control through beneficial insects and biodiversity.
- Enhances crop resilience and health.

#### **How to Implement:**

- Monitor pest populations regularly.

- Use biological controls, such as introducing predator species.
- Apply chemical controls only when necessary, and choose less harmful options.

### **3. Conservation Tillage**

#### **Benefits:**

- Reduces soil erosion and water loss.
- Enhances soil organic matter and fertility.
- Promotes beneficial soil organisms and root development.

#### **How to Implement:**

- Minimize ploughing and tilling to maintain soil structure.
- Use no-till or reduced-till methods whenever possible.

### **4. Efficient Water Management**

#### **Benefits:**

- Conserves water resources and reduces waste.
- Improves crop yields by providing optimal moisture levels.
- Reduces runoff and soil erosion.

#### **How to Implement:**

- Use drip irrigation or other efficient watering systems.
- Monitor soil moisture levels to avoid overwatering.
- Collect and store rainwater for irrigation use.

### **5. Agroforestry**

#### **Benefits:**

- Enhances biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Improves soil health and prevents erosion.
- Provides additional income through diverse products.

#### **How to Implement:**

- Integrate trees and shrubs into your farming system.
- Choose species that complement your crops and local climate.

### **6. Organic Farming Practices**

#### **Benefits:**

- Promotes soil health and biodiversity.
- Reduces chemical use, improving environmental and human health.
- Enhances market opportunities with organic certification.

#### **How to Implement:**

- Use organic fertilizers, such as compost and manure.
- Employ natural pest control methods and crop rotations.

- Avoid synthetic chemicals and genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

## **7. Soil Testing and Management**

### **Benefits:**

- Ensures optimal nutrient levels for crop growth.
- Prevents over-application of fertilizers, reducing environmental impact.
- Improves long-term soil health and productivity.

### **How to Implement:**

- Conduct regular soil tests to monitor nutrient levels.
- Adjust fertilization practices based on test results.
- Incorporate organic matter to improve soil structure and fertility.

## **8. Pollinator Protection**

### **Benefits:**

- Supports crop pollination and yields.
- Enhances biodiversity and ecosystem health.
- Promotes resilience against pests and diseases.

### **How to Implement:**

- Plant pollinator-friendly habitats, such as wildflower strips.
- Avoid using harmful pesticides during bloom periods.
- Provide nesting sites and water sources for pollinators.

## **9. Renewable Energy Use**

### **Benefits:**

- Decreases greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel dependence.
- Lowers energy costs and enhances farm sustainability.
- Reduces environmental impact.

### **How to Implement:**

- Install solar panels, wind turbines, or other renewable energy systems.
- Use energy-efficient equipment and practices.
- Explore bioenergy options, such as biogas from organic waste.

## **10. Sustainable Livestock Management**

### **Benefits:**

- Reduces environmental impact and enhances animal welfare.
- Improves soil health through managed grazing.
- Enhances farm biodiversity and productivity.

### **How to Implement:**

- Practice rotational grazing to prevent overgrazing and soil degradation.

- Provide adequate space, shelter, and nutrition for livestock.
- Integrate livestock with crop production to recycle nutrients.

He concluded by saying that adopting the above ten essential practices can significantly contribute to sustainable agriculture, ensuring that farming remains productive and environmentally responsible for future generations.

### **3. “Raising Awareness on Gender Equality and Women's Rights; and Elaborating Ways of Reducing the Cost of Living for Rural Women in Cameroon.”**

This presentation was done by Mme. Hannah Ewoke Kana’a, an expert in women and youth affairs and development.

She began by explaining the concept of gender equality in simple terms which she said means equal rights or being fair to both boys and girls or women and men. She said gender equality also means elimination of discrimination against girls and women. It also means empowerment of women so that they can be partners in development, human rights, humanitarian action, peace and security.

She explained the importance of gender equality which included the following points:

- Promoting women’s leadership and political participation.
- Empowering women economically.
- Ending violence against women.
- Support women to participate in peace process and security effects.

Furthermore, she listed various ways to apply gender equality in families such as:

- Share household chores to children equally irrespective of their sex.
- Support women’s economic, social and political empowerment.
- Celebrate positive masculinity.
- Empower the next generation.
- End harmful gender based violence practices.

While elaborating on the ways of reducing the cost of living for rural women in Cameroon, she encouraged the rural women to diversify their economic activities and try to have various sources of income. She emphasized that all parts of the agricultural value chain are important and profitable, so if rural women decide to specialize in any of them, be it agro-transformation, processing, vegetable farming, livestock production, seed multiplication, restaurant, pastries etc, it could be a source of livelihood for themselves and their families; and contribute to reduce their cost of living. She also encouraged women to package and properly brand their products so as to



increase the value, marketability and profits. She also advised them to network and connect with others doing similar economic activities so that together they can improve on their farming and agribusiness practices and profits.

#### **4. “Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Geared Towards Climate Change Mitigation.”**

This presentation was done by Mr. Bradley Fotabong, the Head of Programmes and Partnerships, ARG-CAM.

He began by thanking the women for coming, and honored the hardwork and dedication of rural women farmers who are key to feeding their families and communities in the country.

He defined climate smart agriculture as an approach that increases agricultural productivity while adapting to climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and gave the three Pillars of CSA which include the following:

1. Increased productivity: Grow more crops with less effort.
2. Resilience: Protect farms from climate risks (droughts, floods).
3. Reduction of emissions: Use eco-friendly farming techniques.

He went on to explain why we need to practice climate smart agriculture given that we face changing weather patterns, droughts, and other challenges that impact our crops, livestock and livelihoods; and told the participants that Climate smart agriculture (CSA) helps us adapt to these changes.

Moving on, he elaborated on CSA Techniques for Farmers which include:

- Soil Health: Using organic matter, mulching, and rotating crops improves soil fertility and helps retain moisture.
- Water Conservation: Practices like rainwater harvesting and drip irrigation conserve water and improve crop yields.
- Crop Diversification: Growing a variety of crops can protect against losses from climate-related risks.
- Agroforestry: Planting trees alongside crops provides shade, improves soil, and prevents soil erosion.

Next, he gave the benefits of practicing climate smart agriculture for rural women farmers such as:

- Better yields and better incomes: CSA can increase crop productivity and income for rural families.

- Resilience to climate change: These methods protect farms from extreme weather and ensure long-term sustainability.
- Women's Leadership: Rural women are at the heart of agriculture, and by adopting these practices, they become leaders in their communities.

He proposed the next steps which rural women farmers can take including:

- ✓ Knowledge Sharing: To share what they have learned with their neighbors and communities.
- ✓ Start Small: Implement one or two techniques on a small part of their farms, before going large scale.
- ✓ Seek Support: Work with local agricultural organizations and NGOs for training and resources support.

Mr. Bradley Fotabong concluded by saying that by adopting climate smart agriculture (CSA), rural women can secure a better future for their families, communities, and the environment. Together, we can make our agriculture/farms more productive, stronger and more resilient.

## **V. REACTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS**

- The rural women expressed their gratitude to the workshop organizer (ARG-CAM) and partners (SOWEDA, Buea) for the impactful training and agricultural inputs support; and asked them to organize more of such workshops so as to extend the impact to a greater population of rural women.
- The participants were also happy to know more about gender equality and learn of the impact of some great women in the social, economic and political spheres in Cameroon.
- Mme Joso Njega from Lavione Group, Bova II said she was happy to learn new agricultural practices such as climate smart agriculture which will help her to better protect her crops from harmful environmental factors especially at the nursery stage; and also boost her crop productivity.
- Another participant appreciated the knowledge gained concerning integrated agriculture and organic farming which she described as economical citing the use of poultry droppings and pig dung from the animal section as manure in their vegetable farms.
- Mme Sarah Ikome Jemes Group, Bova II said she learned a lot from the workshop about making profits not just directly from farm products but also from the sales of processed, transformed and packaged products.
- Mme Naeke Kate Ebenye from Djenga Bonjimba Group, Bova II appreciated the opportunity to attend such an impactful workshop, and said she really learned a lot from

the different resource persons, especially on the importance of sustainable agriculture and organic farming using low-cost inputs.

- Mme Cecilia Ndiva from Yodal Group heartily thanked the organizers and partners for the material support which she said will help them to reduce input cost and so increase farm profits.

## **VI. KEY OUTCOMES OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP**

Following the different expert presentations, sharing and deliberations, the workshop achieved the following:

1. Delivered knowledge, skills, and strategies to help rural women improve on their agricultural yields using low-cost organic farming techniques geared towards environmental sustainability.
2. Fostered a sense of unity and solidarity among rural women and allies.
3. Delivered knowledge and skills on climate smart agriculture geared towards climate change mitigation
4. Celebrated the achievements of rural women across various sectors.
5. Underscored the challenges to import substitution of agricultural products, and the opportunities therein for rural women.
6. Raised awareness on gender equality and women's rights.

## **CLOSING**

The manager of ARG-CAM Ltd, Mr. Edmund Linonge Njoh thanked the resource persons/experts and all the participants for their active participation, genuine sharing and commitment to empowering rural women to help them improve on their livelihoods and the development of their communities and the country as a whole. He implored the rural women to carry back all they knowledge and skills acquired to their farming groups and fellow women; and encouraged them to contact the resource persons whenever they need advice on their own farming/agribusiness activities.

After the distribution of farm inputs (fertilizers, cutlasses, spraying cans) provided by SOWEDA, Buea; the ARG-CAM manger assured the rural women of continuous support from ARG-CAM's and its partners' towards their agricultural activities via the organization of subsequent capacity building workshops to continue empowering rural women in Buea and Cameroon as a whole.

**Annex 1: Programme of Activities for the Capacity Building Workshop and Material Support to Rural Women, in Commemoration of the 2024 International Rural Women's Day Under the "EmpowerHer" Programme.**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>
<b>10:00-11:00</b>	<b>Arrival of Participants</b>
<b>11:00-11:05</b>	<b>Opening Prayers/Refrain of National Anthem</b>
<b>11:05-11:15</b>	<b>Opening of Session, Outline of the “EmpowerHer” Programme and expected outcomes of the workshop by the Manager of ARG-CAM, Mr. Edmund Linonge Njoh.</b>
<b>11:15 – 11:25</b>	<b>Presentation by Mme Embelle Lilian: Youth Counselor and Sub-Divisional Delegate of Youth Affairs, Buea on “Empowerment of Rural Women Farmers in Cameroon by Fostering a Sense of Unity and Solidarity Among Women and Allies; and Celebrating the Achievements of Rural Women Across Various Sectors”.</b>
<b>11:25-11:35</b>	<b>Presentation by Mr. Andoh Akeson Akeh: Agriculture, Livestock and Aquaculture Consultant, ARG-CAM on Methods of Improving the Agricultural Yields of Rural Women Using Low-Cost Organic Farming Techniques Geared Towards Environmental Sustainability.</b>
<b>11:35 – 11:50</b>	<b>Discussion on Current Actions by Stakeholders. Questions and answers.</b>
<b>11:50-12:00</b>	<b>Presentation by Mme Hannah Ewoke Kana’a: Expert in youth affairs and development on “Raising Awareness on Gender Equality and Women's Rights; and Elaborating Ways of Reducing the Cost of Living for Rural Women in Cameroon”.</b>
<b>11:45-11:55</b>	<b>Presentation by Mr. Bradley Fotabong: Head of Programmes and Partnerships, ARG-CAM on “Climate Smart Agriculture Geared Towards Climate Change Mitigation”.</b>
<b>11:55-12:10</b>	<b>Discussion on Current Actions by Stakeholders. Questions and answers.</b>
<b>12:10- 12:15</b>	<b>Closing Remarks</b>
<b>12:15- 12:30</b>	<b>Refreshment</b>

**Annex 2: List of Workshop Participants Including Rural Women Farmer Group Leaders; Youth and Women Empowerment Experts; and ARG-CAM Staff.**

<b>Affiliations</b>	<b>Representative Members</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Jemes Group, Bova II</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mme Ngale Regina</li> <li>● Mme Sarah Ikome</li> <li>● Mme Enanga Ngunde</li> </ul>	Rural women group leaders
<b>Djenga Bonjimba Group, Bova II</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mme Naeke Kate Ebenye</li> <li>● Mme Evelyn Monjowa</li> </ul>	Rural women group leaders
<b>Lavione Group, Bova II</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mme Sarah Kinge</li> <li>● Mme Joso Njega</li> <li>● Mme Claire Ndive</li> <li>● Mme Judith Mbella</li> </ul>	Rural women group leaders
<b>Eyole Bova II and Yodal Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mme Cecilia Ndive</li> </ul>	Rural women group leader
<b>Presenters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mr. Edmund Linonge Njoh</li> </ul>	ARG-CAM Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mme Embelle Lilian</li> </ul>	Sub-Divisional Delegation of Youth Affairs, Buea.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mr. Andoh Akeson Akeh</li> </ul>	Agriculture, Livestock and Aquaculture Consultant, ARG-CAM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mme. Hannah Ewoke Kana'a,</li> </ul>	Expert in women and youth affairs and development.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mr. Bradley Fotabong</li> </ul>	Head of Programmes and Partnerships, ARG-CAM
		Bova II Quarter Head
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mola Tilili Molea</li> </ul>	ARG-CAM Driver

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