

Liangati Mubula Project

The Project Objective

The Liangati Mubula project is a project aiming to utilize Mubula fruits, a local indigenous forest fruit, in order to improve the livelihood situation of the members of the Liangati Nutrition Group (LNG). The goal is to valorize these available fruits that are currently mostly going to waste. The fruits shall be processed into marketable products that can be sold on Zambian formal and informal markets. As a result community members will have higher income, and this can improve their life and the life of their family members. The objective of the project is to enable the Liangati Nutrition Group to process and preserve wild fruits, increase the marketability of such fruits and generate income for the community members.

Why start this project?

The starting point for this project was the question how the situation for communities in remote rural areas of Zambia can be improved through building on existing resources. This meant activities should be based on the existing resources, qualifications, skills and interests of community members in the area.

The project was initiated during a meeting that was held in April 2016 at Liangati in Western Province of Zambia. The meeting was part of a visit by Toni Hassenmeier to Western Province. The intention was to understand the work of the Aquatic Agricultural Systems (AAS) project which was conducted by World Fish, previously. During the AAS project Peoples' Participation Service (PPS; a local NGO) had worked with the Liangati Nutrition Group, on behalf of World Fish. For the meeting in April the LNG members had gathered under a huge mango tree to talk to Toni about their AAS experiences.



The LNG members showed a very high level of dedication towards the AAS project and nutrition in general. On the question what kind of support they would prefer, if they had a choice, LNG members pointed out that during the mango season it would be impossible to sit under the mango trees, like we were doing. The reason for that is the fact that the ground would be filled with mangoes, which would be rotting, and every now and then more mangoes would fall from the tree, which could result in injuries. The LNG members expressed that they know mangoes can be processed into juice and sold. They know that some people sell fresh mangos to buyers, who take these mangos into town and sell them there. The community members feel that through this procedure they would be taken advantage of. Therefore, they expressed interest to process mangos into juice at the community level and to benefit from a higher level of value addition. Following the example of mango, other indigenous wild and forest fruits were also discussed as alternative option. It was agreed that Toni would conduct further research on processing options for fruits.

Start of the Project

In September 2016 two meetings between the LNG members and Toni took place under the same mango trees. On the first day the LNG members and Toni discussed the results of the research. One of the key points was that the mango variety found in Liangati is less favorable for processing. Therefore, the alternative fruits that were available at this point of the year were discussed, such as Muzauli and Mubula. It was then agreed to continue the meeting two days later and the community members would demonstrate how they make natural juice from Mubula fruits. A video showing how the juice and a natural sweets are made from Mubula is available here: <https://vimeo.com/tonator/mubula-juice> and <https://vimeo.com/tonator/mubula-sweets>. During this trip to Western Province Toni also met with a representative off PPS. In this meeting the idea was born to work on this project jointly.

In order to be able to create income generating activities from processing of Mubula fruits it is mandatory to have a market that is willing to buy these products. In February 2017 a brief market assessment was conducted in Zambia's capital Lusaka. The results showed a positive market environment. Different companies showed interest in locally processed indigenous forest fruits. Products or product lines of interest

included pulp or concentrate for juices and ice cream, jam or dried health products. For concretizing the interest and market potential these companies requested samples for testing. Consequently, during the next season of Mubula fruits product samples would have to be developed and tested.

In May 2017 the PPS board concluded to enter into the joint Liangati Mubula Project. Following that decision a meeting was held with LNG members, a representative of PPS and Toni at the community. During this meeting the next steps in the project were agreed and the focus on Mubula as the first fruit of interest was concluded. This decision set the framework for activities to follow. Mubula season is from end of August to mid October.

A co-operation agreement between PPS and Toni is expected to be finalized in September/October 2017 to formalize the assistance in the implementation of the project. The Liangati Nutrition Group will agree on a formal structure, which will then allow the group to formally enter into the co-operation agreement as well. So far LNG members selected a contact person for PPS and Toni to communicate with and coordinate meetings and periods of field activities.

Additionally, it is planned to support the project through a support NGO from Germany, which is expected to be operational before the end of 2017.

Feasibility Study (September/October 2017)

Between all parties it was agreed that the project phase for testing of Mubula products will be conducted between 25th September and 21st October 2017. The objective of this phase is the establishment of the viability of selling locally prepared products on the Zambian market.

In order to implement this approach a few people have offered their support, who have experience in e.g. juice and jam production. Through the support we will be able to build on their expertise and prepare products that can be sold in accordance with Zambian market requirements.

The table below shows a detailed overview of activities planned and the timeline behind.

Date	Activity
August/September 2017	Preparation of Trip and Activities
24. - 25.09.2017	Travel Berlin - Lusaka (Toni)
26. - 27.09.2017	Meetings in Lusaka with Partners and potential clients
28.09.17	Travel Lusaka - Mongu (Toni)
29. -30.09.2017	Meetings in Mongu (incl. Courtesy Calls), preparing work in Liangati
01. - 05.10.2017	Meeting with Liangati Nutrition Group, collecting of fruits and local testing of processing ideas, e.g.combinations with other fruits
05.10.17	Traveling of Team to Lusaka (2 members of LNG, 1 representative of PPS)
06. - 10.10.2017	Developing of Product ideas and Making of test products for testing
11. - 14.10.2017	Test sales in Lusaka, e.g. Shopping Malls, compounds, Markets
15.10.17	Traveling back to Mongu
16.10.17	Day off for all to rest
17. - 18.10.2017	Test sales in Mongu
19. - 20.10.2017	Lessons Learnt Meetings and discussion of next steps
21.10.17	Travel Mongu - Lusaka (Toni)
24.10.17	return flight to Berlin (Toni)

In preparation for those field activities, PPS will hold meetings with LNG and the Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE), as well as the relevant government authorities. This is to ensure smooth operations during the field work.

Following the test sales in Zambia some of the prepared products will be tested in accordance with German standards for food safety. This will be done to identify areas for improvement, to establish the nutritional value of the product and to know whether the products could be sold internationally.

Future Opportunities

Based on the results of the feasibility study and market testing the exact next steps of the project will be derived. This will culminate in the development of a business plan. To formulate a robust business plan information is necessary on a market for the products to be sold, the technology needed to make the product, the cost involved for the needed raw materials, cost of transport, labor cost and the availability of the necessary finances.

First discussions have been conducted with Zambia based development support programs to secure financial assistance. It seems very likely that the necessary finances will be accessible, if the project can show a positive market projection. The feasibility study will assist closing the existing gaps for formulating the business plan.

Additionally, contact has been established with an international university that has an interest in promoting the valorization of indigenous fruits in Southern Africa. If this cooperation is developed well, it can provide information that will assist in finding further market opportunities for the fruits.

How you could be part of the project

Conducting the feasibility study requires approximately 6,000 Euro. Some of the cost of the project could be reduced, if accommodation could be arranged through local hosts in Lusaka and Mongu or a car as well as some of the needed equipment could be borrowed for free. Currently, the project has no funding and relies on the good will of people involved in the project.

At this moment, we are looking some support and kindly ask you, if you could assist us with any of the following:

- Do you have a car, preferably a 4WheelDrive, that you could spare between 27th September and 21st October? Also temporarily available cars/transport would make a difference.
- Are you able to provide accommodation in Lusaka between 5th and 15th October for 1,2, 3 or even 4 people from Liangati and Mongu?
- Would you be able to provide accommodation for Toni in Mongu, while he is operating there?
- Do you have a blender or home fruit dryer that you could spare?
- Do you have a solar home solution or similar, including a battery that we could use for a few days in Liangati to conduct some tests with a blender and home fruit dryer?
- Do you have knowledge on how to organize test stands in Lusaka shopping malls, e.g. contacts to mall management and knowledge on legal requirements? Could you assist in preparing and/or conducting these test sales?
- Do you have knowledge in food processing and would like to assist us in preparing the test products?