



Fiche Expérience

WORKSHOP

for the SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Farmer-Managed Nurseries in the RECASE Project

As part of the RECASE project, Adenya and Duhamic-ADRI support vulnerable farmers who are members of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), with the aim of strengthening their socio-economic capacities and enabling them to become agents of social change in Rwanda. In addition to the training they receive (on livestock management, agroecology, nutrition, CBO governance, etc.), the project has developed a community solidarity approach built around six components:

- establishing farmer-managed nurseries,
- setting up collective vegetable gardens,
- creating *tontines* (community saving groups),
- livestock redistribution,
- activities funded through the *Former to Transform* Participation Fund,
- and joint collective actions.

A capitalisation process has been carried out across all these initiatives to document the methods developed and lessons learned, while also highlighting the complementarity between the different components of the RECASE project's community solidarity approach.

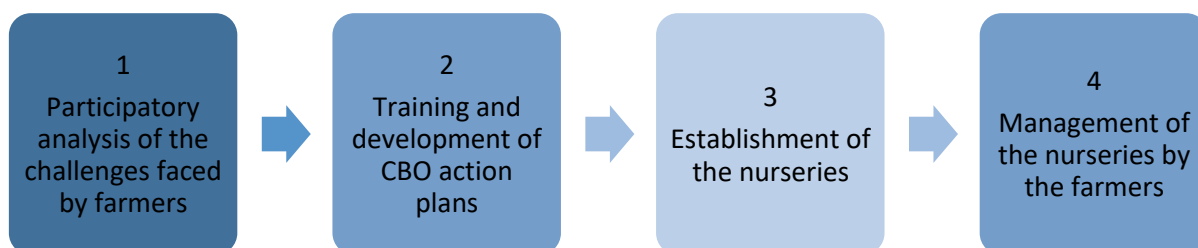
Overview

The farmers supported by Adenya and Duhamic-ADRI cultivate very small plots of less than 0.25 hectares. Their land has become degraded and prone to erosion. In addition, they face shortages of firewood and fodder for their animals.

The establishment of farmer-managed nurseries was supported by the project team through training in agroecology, agroforestry, and nursery management techniques. The aim was to enable farmers to become self-sufficient in obtaining forestry, agroforestry, and fruit tree seedlings—helping them to combat soil erosion and infertility. The nurseries also provide farmers with fodder as well as stakes for climbing beans. Income generated through the nurseries further strengthens farmers' economic autonomy. This factsheet presents the different steps involved and the impacts achieved through the establishment of these nurseries within the framework of the RECASE project.

Process of Establishing Nurseries

The capitalisation on nurseries within the RECASE project highlighted the main steps involved in setting up farmer-managed nurseries:



1. Participatory Analysis of Farmers' Challenges

The first step consisted of a **participatory analysis of the problems faced by farmers**. The aim was to identify, together with members of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and other local stakeholders, the main challenges they encounter. Collectively, they determined the priority collective action to be undertaken in response. During this process, the creation of farmer-managed nurseries at CBO level was identified as a priority.

2. Training and Development of Action Plans

The second step focused on **training and action plan development**. CBO members received training in practices such as agroecology, agroforestry, and the techniques needed to set up a nursery. Afterwards, an action plan was drawn up at the collective level, detailing activities and sub-activities, needs and support required, responsibilities, and the implementation period. The choice of nursery location was also defined: it had to be close to a water source and accessible by vehicles to facilitate activities.

3. Establishment of the Nurseries

The third step was the actual **establishment of the nurseries**. Essential tools and materials were acquired, including seeds (agroforestry and fruit tree species), watering cans, hoes, rakes, seedling bags, and other necessary equipment. Structures such as sheds were then built to shelter and protect the seedlings.

4. Management of the Nurseries by Farmers

The **nurseries are now operational and managed directly by the farmers themselves**, with support from the RECASE team. Regular activities are scheduled, such as sowing, watering, weeding, hoeing, and transplanting. Once the seedlings are ready, they are distributed to both members and non-members of the CBOs, as well as to other interested clients. This helps spread agroforestry practices and strengthens the sustainability of the nurseries.

Technical Training in Agroecology

Agroecology training is first delivered to facilitators, then to farmer-facilitator trainers (PaFos), who in turn train the members of their CBOs with the support of community facilitators. During the distribution of seedlings, the opportunity is also taken to provide refresher training for beneficiaries on agroforestry and fruit tree practices, as part of wider agroecological methods. The aim of this training is to show them how to plant a seedling (measuring the hole, using manure, removing the seedling bag, etc.), in which location (in the field or along terraces), at what spacing between seedlings, and how to maintain the plants until harvest, while stressing the importance of agroforestry.



Technical agroecology training in a nursery of the RECASE project



Effects and Impacts

The establishment of nurseries in villages has led to an increase in the number of forestry, fruit, and agroforestry seedlings in the region. Farmers have strengthened their skills in nursery installation and management.

Income from the sale of seedlings has also risen considerably, contributing to improved living conditions for households. In addition, the seedlings planted have boosted the availability of fruit, forestry, and agroforestry trees in the area. Their production has therefore played an important role in improving the livelihoods of vulnerable households.

The planting of agroforestry trees has had multiple impacts: it has enabled the natural fertilisation of fields, thereby promoting more sustainable farming. Moreover, species such as *Grevillea* have significantly contributed to a positive transformation of the regional landscape.

The capitalisation process highlighted the factors that either facilitated or hindered the establishment of nurseries:

Enabling Factors	Limiting Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Training received in agroecology, agroforestry, and nursery installation techniques ⇒ Ownership of the initiative and commitment from members of the CBO that launched the activity ⇒ Good monitoring and follow-up of planned activities ⇒ Availability of the necessary inputs provided by the RECASE project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Climate change, with reduced rainfall leading to poor sales of seedlings ⇒ Theft of seedlings from the nurseries ⇒ Limited use of certain agroforestry species, such as <i>Calliandra</i> and <i>Leucaena</i>, which are less well known to the population, even though they play an important role in animal feed

Complementarity Between Actions Within a CBO

- The small livestock redistribution approach complements the nursery approach by providing the manure needed for nursery management.
- *Tontines* allow CBO members to borrow money when necessary to develop the nursery, while in turn, the income generated from the nursery enables households to save within the *tontine*.
- Collective vegetable gardens also benefit from the nurseries, which supply fruit and agroforestry seedlings.



Testimony from Sylvain Nzabamwita, farmer in Muganza sector, Nyaruguru district

I planted 10 avocado trees that were given to me by my CBO through our nursery. The first trees have already started producing fruit, and their sale brings me around 50,000 Rwandan francs per season. I have no other resource that can provide me with such an amount.

URL link to the article: [Farmer-Managed Nurseries in the RECASE Project - L'atelier de la transformation sociale](#)

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