

Rural entrepreneurs in Africa move ahead through b|u|s training programme

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Experiences from b|u|s entrepreneurship training in Burkina Faso

The challenge

Agriculture and all related activities within different value chains represent a very big potential for Burkina Faso. It occupies 90% of the active population and produces 70% of the country's export goods: cotton, groundnuts, sesame and animals. In general, agricultural production is stable but not very effective. The agricultural sector is characterised by low productivity, lack of investments, difficult access to markets, deficits in information and difficult access to credit.



BUS-Training in the region of Diébougou, Burkina Faso

Important reasons for these deficits are, among others:

- lack of know-how in enterprise management competencies,
- rural producers, traders and processors have poor skills in relation to the market,
- service delivery in the agricultural sector is sub optimal.

Similar problems exist in many other African countries. If they could be solved, more value could be added to the agricultural sector by intensification, diversification, specialisation and better integration in national and international markets.

Within the scope of cooperation between Germany and Burkina Faso, the "Programme for Agricultural Development" (PDA) of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) has been implemented since

2004. Its objectives are the sustainable increase of income and improved food security of the rural producers.

An important PDA approach is the development of value chains for selected products. In addition, more market orientation should be reached through technical qualification and the promotion of entrepreneurial attitudes and skills among agricultural producers. These services should be offered by local educational and consultative organisations and thus further develop the market for rural services.

From September 2006 to June 2007, a training programme was implemented in the PDA within the scope of a pilot project commissioned by the GTZ. It aimed at sensitizing and training farmers, producers and traders for entrepreneurial activities. Instead of developing a training programme completely anew, it was decided to customise a successful training programme from

Germany to the needs and conditions of agriculture in Burkina Faso.

The concept

Based on preliminary investigations, GTZ selected the b|u|s training programme of the Andreas Hermes Academy (AHA) which had been evaluated by experts in Burkina Faso as relevant and applicable. b|u|s stands for farmers' entrepreneurial training and comprises a systematic development process which leads participants to more success in business and to a better quality of life. Entrepreneurial competencies are trained in stable participant groups which are coached by the same trainer. The training does not focus on technical specialist knowledge, but rather on developing personal abilities which help in coping with

individual challenges and in utilizing available opportunities. The objectives and important contents of the three b|u|s courses adapted for Burkina Faso are presented in the table below. There are several other b|u|s training modules on strategic management, marketing, negotiations, network management, investments, business management etc. which may complement the three initial courses.

The partners

The project was carried out for GTZ jointly by AHA in Bonn with the consulting firms GEFAK mbH and QMC in Marburg. The b|u|s training programme was developed by the AHA which is its sole organizer in Germany. AHA has been engaged in Burkina Faso for 15 years in a partnership project in Kienfangué near Ouagadougou. GEFAK mbH is one of Germany's market leaders for consultation and information systems in the field of regional economic promotion and implements consulting projects abroad. The consulting firm Quality Management Consulting QMC is specialised in developing value chains and quality management.

The training process

15 local trainers were selected and trained after training content and methods were adapted to the conditions in Burkina Faso. The application of three b|u|s courses was tested with 150 rural producers in various regions. During the entire process the trainers received additional training and coaching by the international experts Ingo Binnewerg and Dr. Anton Bojanovsky. At the beginning of June 2007, the first results of the project were evaluated and discussed in a workshop with all partners. The results achieved are summarised as follows.

The methodology and contents of the b|u|s training, which has originally been developed for German farmers, can be adapted to the needs of rural producers in Burkina Faso. The content and methods for b|u|s courses 1-3 were developed and the training materials were translated into French and partly into regional languages. 15 qualified trainers were taught in applying b|u|s courses in villages. They have started to establish a b|u|s trainer network in Burkina Faso.

The impact

A first analysis and an external evaluation in September 2007 highlighted the effects which can be expected from the b|u|s training on rural entrepreneurs and the changes which can already be ascertained.



"I realized that I had too many activities. But you can not succeed if you disperse your energy. I stopped activities which had not been profitable to me. This is already a big step ahead. And I think I will better succeed with the remaining activities".

Farmer in Burkina Faso

As expected, changes were noted at the personal level. The participants mentioned an increased sense of responsibility, more careful decision-making, stronger consideration of the perception of others, realisation of their own potentials and capacities, better planning and organisation of activities as well as consideration of economic efficiency.

With regard to their families, the participants themselves realised as effects a more rational management of available income, better management of conflicts and communication within the family, more self-control and openness, and stronger support of the school education of their children.

As effects on business operations,

creation of new economic activities, and improvement in product quality participants noticed better work planning, stronger sense of responsibility, more efficient production, stronger market orientation and concentration on profitable activities.

At the community level participants observed strengthening of solidarity between producers as well as recognition of the benefits of cooperation with others.

In summary, the pilot project was successful in introducing the b|u|s training programme to rural producers in Burkina Faso. The door is now open for a wider application in Burkina Faso, in neighbouring countries as well as in developing regions in general.

b|u|s training for effective value chain development

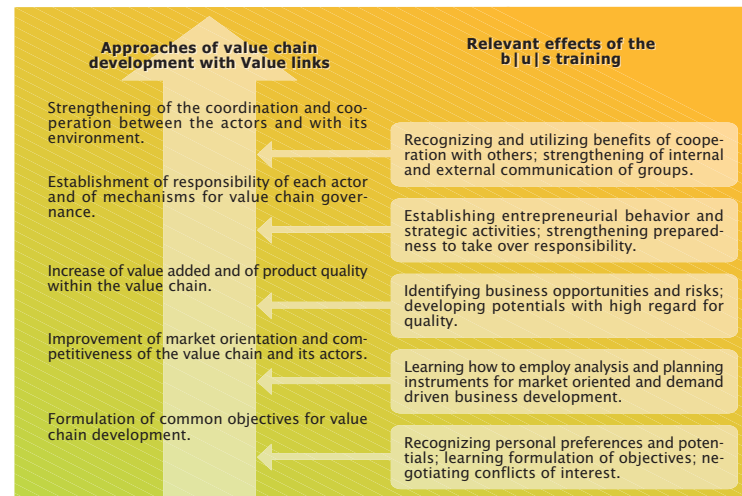
Entrepreneurship for value chain actors

The development of value chains demands professional qualification as well as entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviour of all actors. The b|u|s training supports entrepreneurs in optimizing their own abilities in aspects which are important for the respective value chain and in recognizing and utilizing potentials within the firm and its environment. In this way, b|u|s training helps each actor (producer, processor, service provider, trader etc.) to optimize their contribution to the value chain as well as their benefit from it. During the process, personal competencies and preferences as well as market conditions and potentials

are taken into consideration and are strengthened.

This is to be seen as a complementary support to the varied activities for capacity building and value chain development, e.g., in form of the ValueLinks approach. Such a combination of different approaches is expressly foreseen in the ValueLinks approach.

The experiences of the pilot project in Burkina Faso have demonstrated that b|u|s can be used as an effective instrument for the promotion of entrepreneurship at all relevant levels. The graph to the left shows how the approaches of value chain development (especially with ValueLinks) can be supported by the relevant effects of the b|u|s training.



Overview of b|u|s training programm

b u s course 1: Me and my world	
Objective	In the opening course, attitudes oriented at finding solutions as well as personal success abilities connected to success are trained. The participants discuss their current situation, objectives and perspectives and learn about the personal qualifications of successful business people.
Content	Applying the principle of personal responsibility; distinguishing problem-oriented and solution-oriented thinking; training of abilities for success in business; strengthening self assurance; increasing determination and motivation; strengthening the aptitude for decision-making and courage; developing proper and clear relationships as well as a positive image; finding the balance between concentration and relaxation.
b u s course 2: My enterprise	
Objective	Enterprise success must be based on realistic stock-taking. The 2nd course leads the participants to a future-oriented, strategic view of enterprise development. Hard facts, personal and emotional factors as well as expected developments are being analyzed.
Content	Describing the initial position of the own enterprise; understanding the dynamics of the economy; accepting the demands on the enterprise for satisfaction of individual needs; analyzing future perspectives; identifying the potential of the enterprise; analyzing the portfolio of business lines; recognising operational strengths and resources; developing ideas for further business development.
b u s course 3: My development concept	
Objective	Without clear conception of one's future, development cannot be purposeful and effective. Instead of having vague ideas, it is necessary to learn sketching concrete and clear conceptions for the future and to apply creative thinking for achievable objectives and strategies. The ability to make good decisions and to implement them with a systematic strategy is in the centre of the 3rd course. The participants analyze alternative options, get to know methods for decision making and compile their own development concept for implementation of their ideas.
Content	Becoming conscious of personal values and convictions; discovering own talents and strengths; defining expectations towards the own enterprise; checking concrete development objectives; thinking in alternatives and gaining new perspectives; coaching of creativity; managing problems and obstacles constructively; creating individual implementation concepts; planning the way forward for one's own enterprise

Dual use of b|u|s training

The b|u|s training can be applied in preparation of a value chain development project as well as a complementary measure to value chain development. In the first case, the b|u|s training supports choosing the most promising value chains, helps in identifying of suitable actors and in strengthening their competence for participation in the value chain. In the second case, the b|u|s training serves to strengthen the competence of the actors according to the needs of the value chain and improves the cooperation between them.

The target groups for b|u|s entrepreneurship training comprise all relevant actors: First of all, farmers and other rural business people who face problems with regard to their integration into the market economy and to making use of new opportunities; management and staff of economic entities along the entire value chain (traders, processors, service providers, exporters etc.) for more effective exchange and governance within the value chain; in addition, the b|u|s training enables representatives from public bodies to better support target groups from their position and to establish appropriate framework conditions.



Training of b|u|s trainers in Gaoua, BF



Focus on communication

b|u|s training for you

If you would like to learn how your target groups can move ahead through the b|u|s training programme and how your trainers can be prepared to conduct b|u|s training in your local conditions, please contact us for more information: krug@gefak.de

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