

FSN FORUM DISCUSSION No. 33  
**IMPACT OF CASSAVA DEVELOPMENT ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION  
OF THE RURAL POOR**  
FROM 15 APRIL TO 15 MAY 2009

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Dear FSN- colleagues,

My name is Michael Carbon. I have been working as an evaluation officer for the Office of Evaluation (OE) of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). OE evaluates IFAD's projects and programmes to assess what works and what doesn't and to determine how far IFAD's policies and strategies are successful in tackling poverty alleviation in rural areas.

The Benin Roots and Tubers Development Programme (PDRT), co-financed by IFAD and the West African Development Bank (WADB) is currently being evaluated by our office. This national programme, implemented from 2001 to 2008, has focused mainly on cassava, supporting the development of sustainable input supply (seeding material in particular), production, processing and marketing of cassava products in Benin.

In this context, as the IFAD Lead Evaluator for this evaluation, I would like to know about your experiences regarding **development projects and programmes that focus on a single staple crop such as cassava.**

Your experiences and insights related to the following points could greatly help our current evaluation:

**1. Impact of projects and programmes focussing on one staple crop:**

- What impact on income and food security of the rural poor has been demonstrated? Who gained and who lost?
- Are there any studies on the nutrition value of roots and tubers, and cassava in particular? What would the impact be on the nutrition status of the population when there is a gradual shift from a maize and bean based diet towards a cassava based diet?
- What impact on the environment (soils, forest, water resources, wildlife etc.) can be observed when cassava becomes more important in the farming system? How could negative environmental impact be mitigated?

**2. Lessons learnt**

- In general, what can we learn from projects and programmes focussing on one single commodity, in particular those focussed on cassava?
- What approaches were (or could be) used to target the benefits of this type of projects to the poorest and most food insecure population groups?

Your inputs will help us to place our evaluation in a broader context and focus on items for learning that are of particular interest to the development community.

More information on the project and on the Office of Evaluation of IFAD can be found on the IFAD website following those links:

<http://operations.ifad.org/web/ifad/operations/country/project/tags/benin/1127/project%20overview>  
<http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/index.htm>

The evaluation report will be prepared over the summer and shared with the forum for comments.

Many thanks to all and I look forward to your rich contributions,

Best regards,

Michael Carbon  
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Office of Evaluation  
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)  
[www.ifad.org/evaluation/index.htm](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/index.htm)