



Publication of Cashew Byproduct Study: Cashew apple processing creates additional income and nutrition for farmers groups

Two local women are busily bustling about in a concrete hall near Bobo Dioulasso in the cashew growing region of Burkina Faso. They wear protection gloves and hair nets while they cut small yellow cashew apples, process them in a juice grinder and operate an extractor machine. These women are members of a local farmers' cooperative which not only sells cashew nuts to local processors but also produces juice from the cashew apples. The cooperative provides training for selected women and equipment and shares the profit amongst the cashew apple delivering members. "Until last year we have not been using the cashew apples. After the harvesting season they were piling up in the cashew plantations and only the goats were eating them" one of the women explains. Almost all of the 10 billion kilograms of annually produced cashew apples go to waste although their processing is not too cost intensive and local demand is given: "Whenever we bring a couple of bottles of our juice to the local stores they are sold out the same day" reports one of the chairmen of the cooperative.

However the number of processors to pursue viable by product processing is very limited and farmers neither have knowledge about how to properly collect, store and transport the rapidly decomposing apples nor funds to establish organization owned processing units. Responsible for the loss of this great opportunity is farmers' lack of awareness about the value of the apple which can be processed into a wide variety of products such as wine, juice, bakery products etc. Different is the situation in Brazil where farmers and processors have already recognized the huge potential of cashew apples and exploit the possibilities of processing the fruit. At least around 15% of cashew apples are used for a variety of value-added products to date. Clear

procedures for collecting and post-harvest handling of cashew apples are established and farmers trained. The cashew apple juice – locally known as *suco de caju* – is famous as a healthy and tasty drink with millions of Brazilians.

Following the example of Brazil, the ACi also wants to make increased use of cashew by products, especially of cashew apples for juice processing which will have considerable advantages for different population groups. On the one hand there are large income increasing opportunities: the farmers and cooperatives (made up of at least 50% women) will benefit from higher incomes and profitability levels as well as from opportunities to invest in new specialized markets with higher profit margins. In addition, the regional economy will be strengthened and new employment opportunities can be generated. On the other hand, cashew apple juice has due to its richness in vitamin C and other antioxidants the potential of becoming a healthy part of the African diet, preventing malnutrition especially of children.

To tackle the opportunity for cashew farmers in Africa two new studies focusing on cashew by products were conducted on behalf of the African Cashew initiative (ACi) and are now made available.

Believing in the huge potential of cashew apple processing, the ACi will continue raising awareness to encourage African cashew farmers of investing in this future market. For this reason, ACi is in the process of completing a feasibility study to up-scale apple processing in Burkina Faso and Benin. Moreover, farmers as well as cooperatives are trained on good practices for cashew apple processing. Commercial processing centers are planned to be established close to plantations in order to create location advantages.

"What we gave to the animals just a short time ago allows me to repair the roof of our house after the rainy season now – I am absolutely convinced by the production of cashew apple juice," says the worker and focuses on the extractor machine again.