

PROMMATA's cooperation charter for its agricultural development international missions

Introduction

For many years, the association PROMMATA have been frequently called to intervene with agricultural development projects in countries with little or no industry, where rural populations have difficulties to reach food self-sufficiency.

Today, PROMMATA have intervened in 3 African countries, 2 Est-European and one in the Middle East. These experiences and the current NGO pending inquiries showed the necessity to set up this charter.

The charter's objectives are :

- Clarify the ways of interventions and the terms of the partnership
- Precise the necessary elements to fulfill the projects
- Give the project every opportunity to succeed in short term and to perpetuate in the long term.

For these cooperation programs, the association uses employed trainers. These interventions have a cost which is shared between all the players, in a solidarity and cooperation economy logic.

Our work is always part of a partnership with one or many NGO, and local partners (farmers group, associations, formation center, elected representatives, unions, ...)

The past experiences in cooperation showed that only the small and well supervised projects have an opportunity to succeed. The implication of a local partner is fundamental, because if the technology is certainly easily transferable, it needs to be adapted to the social and cultural constraints of the concerned region. For this, the players need to work together, and be careful not to export the development logics aside with the production logics.

In the same line of thinking, it's important to remind that the goal of the association is not to sell its own tool-holders and tools around the world. PROMMATA favor the autonomy, doing complete technology transfer. The equipment sent at the first mission is the only one sold (at the French price) ; it is used for the first tests, demonstrations and is a pattern for the local production.

Finally, when a partnership begins for a new project, the association suggests the setting of a convention, in order to study together the project feasibility and manage it. As every project is different, every convention is adapted on a case-by-case basis.

Our values

The association's objective is the PROMotion of a Modern Mechanization for Draft Animals (PROMMATA in French). It is the direct heir of Jean NOLLE, who for 50 years, and in 80 different

countries, have invented tools for the “forgotten small farmers”.

What is the meaning of our work ?

The small farmers with who we cooperate and who are using the PROMMATA tools and techniques, participate to two evolutions :

- The valuation of draft animals, in relation with the use of Modern Agricultural Machines for Draft Animals (MAMATA in French).
- The implementation of new agricultural practices favoring environmental sustainability (soil and water conservation techniques).

Draft animals valuation

In the rich countries, the motorized mechanization of agriculture lead to the massive elimination of draft animals. Today's farmer, bound hand and foot by a sophisticated technology, chemistry and genetic, work under the watchful eye of his banker. The secondary effects of this flurry of technology caused the bankruptcy of small farming and the loss of respect for the nourishing earth : subsidized productivism, soil destruction and water poisoning, mono-culture and loss of biodiversity, patent of living forms and food forgery, Etc.

This generalized industrialization instrumented by imperialist multinationals abandoned the poorest, who today only have their arms to farm (more than 80% of the world farmers work by hand, and very few of them produce more than what they need to reach food self-sufficiency).

Animal drawn agriculture could be the alternative to this non-sense, offering to the poorest the possibility to extend and diversify their cultivated land, while saving their strength and energy. Producing energy, draft animals can really help family agriculture, but an improvement of the breeding conditions, the working techniques, and the design of tools appropriated to the real farmers is needed.

PROMMATA's tools (the MAMATA) are adapted to every draft animal, type of soil, and weather conditions. They are designed based on the true farmers needs, and with three main principles :

- Versatility
- Standardization
- DIY

The owner of a PROMMATA tool-holder can then choose his tools, based on his specific work methods, his environment, and his animal. PROMMATA developed three different and complementary tool-holders :

- The **Polynol** : for big cultivated area, rather no slope, strong animals, relatively industrialized countries.
- The **Ariana** : no slope, less versatile, strong animal.
- The **Kassine/Kanol** : the smallest, very versatile, and cheapest.
- The **Matavigne** : a prototype for vine growing is in development.

The most affordable and widespread is the **Kassine**.

The Kassine/Kanol, a tool-holder adapted to small draft animals

A specificity : versatility

The Kassine, a tool-holder designed mainly for truck farmers, can be pulled by every draft animal, whether with a draw-bar, thills, or traces. Thanks to its lightness, flexibility and adaptability, the Kassine is particularly efficient with donkey, and manageable by everybody (children, women, hobbyist...).

The Kassine also value donkey, giving them the opportunity to work in the fields. It is often the only animals that the poorest, mainly in the southern countries, can afford. Beast of burden above all, he participates without letting up to many tasks but is hardly used for tillage. Not strong enough to plow the fields, he is discredited and poorly maintained. Besides he is not taboo like horses or zebus and everybody can to lead him (in general women only have their arms to work their plots of land). Developing tools appropriated to his strength give to the poorest a lot of perspectives of production and work conditions improvement. And through this action, PROMMATA also contributes to improve the donkey population, his equipment and work utilization.

New agricultural methods

Draft animals impose to work the soil smoothly. The partly traditional and regular practice of plowing asks for a lot of strength, and creates a plow-pan that increases considerably the risks of erosion, especially in the sensitive lands. So based on its experiment, PROMMATA developed other ways to till and maintain the cultures with draft animals, from seeding to harvesting. Improving the soil's life, increasing the part of land dedicated to truck farming, replacing most of the manual tasks by animal power (for example the zai technique in Africa is extremely hard to put in place with the traditional daba and takes 2 to 3 weeks/ha, while it can be efficiently done with a Kassine and donkey in 3 days/ha), valuing direct seeding and raised beds, favoring water retention, and preventing soil erosion are asserts brought by modern draft animals agriculture.

Cooperation organization

The most important point in order to succeed in a development project is a good control by the local players and populations. Cooperation actions can only favor a sustainable development if only the local players take over the project right in the beginning, participating to the project organization and deciding by themselves its ways of progress.

PROMMATA commits to support the local players and keep exchanging with them till the achievement of the project, when they can be considered as autonomous. For the associations, the project is a success when it becomes sustainable.

Success : when the farmers and craftsmen master the new techniques and became autonomous. We stop talking about a project but popularization ; the pioneers start to train, in their turn, nearby communities who want to join this modernity.

Sustainable : when the all the sustainability point are certain : environmental, socioeconomic, social, cultural, and financial sustainability.

So the project has successive steps, happening in a relatively short period of time, but still giving time to each player to liken these new discoveries.

Typical progress of the missions

- **1st step : Evaluation and partnership setting up.**
 - Show and explanations on the MAMATA (PROMMATA's tool-holders and tools) by the trainer sent on the spot.
 - Study of the local fabrication feasibility.
 - Search of key persons to insure the project's continuity (agricultural trainers and craftsmen). The personal commitment of these persons is essential because they are the foundations necessary for the project realization.
- **2nd step : stay/formation in France : technology and know-how transfer**

The formation organism PROMMATA welcome the future trainers and key persons met during the first mission, for two weeks in general. During this period of time they are supervised by PROMMATA's technicians and trainers.

One interesting aspect about the MAMATA's credibility is the feeling to belong to a network. The new trainers realize that common techniques, applied with the same tools, link farmers from all around the globe.

The formation programs are adapted to the specific needs of each person, but always have a common base including : the tools standardized fabrication (plans, jigs...), tillage techniques with the MAMATA, agriculture techniques without plowing, breeding, use, care and equipments of donkeys...

A competence certification is given to the interns/trainers at the end of their formation.

- **3rd step : back to the country, strengthen the experience**

The goal of this step is to finalize the know-how transfer, last step before the project autonomy, now carried on by the local players : **PROMMATA's trainer goes back to the country.**

This third mission allows to :

- Finalize the workshop if necessary
- Ensure the quality of the first tool-holders and tools made by the workshop
- Assist and strengthen the agriculture trainers
- Debrief with the first MAMATA users, on the difficulties causes by the changes bought by the project.

However, at this stage, the sustainability of the project is not ensured, whatever comes out from the last evaluation. Many factors can slow down, or even shut down the pioneers will. So monitoring missions are necessary in order to back up the local players, during the period of time necessary to implement real stability conditions, establishing in their habits the new techniques and spreading them through their own country.

Conclusion

The goal of this condensed text was to expose and precise the spirit and details of PROMMATA's interventions abroad ; however, we are aware that every project is above all a human adventure and is always unique.

So this chart is a very first step in our partnership, allowing us to plan together in the best conditions, the start of our common project.

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PROMMATA is a not-for-profit association created from the 1901 law, and also a formation organism. The status can be sent on demand.