

Appendix 3b – Policy brief

Project: 10-062AU

Title: Economic exploitation and CO₂-sequestration of a native West African tree – a short-cut out of rural poverty



This project bridges the gap between science and development work by providing new knowledge about the life improving prospects of the natural resource Parkia. Parkia is important for economic and subsistence reasons in Burkina Faso. However, Parkia and its associated food product soubmala have an unrevealed potential to induce greater positive impact on the Burkinabé society than seen today. The dissemination activities, three papers, a planting guide, and two implementation projects, all provide direct ways of improving the livelihoods of the Burkinabé people through food security, poverty reduction, women empowerment, and sustainable use of natural resources. More specifically, the commercialisation potential of soubmala and the climate mitigating potential of Parkia has been investigated based on field data on soubmala quality, management practises, value chain structure, trade patterns, supply chain analysis, and CO₂ sequestration potential. Of the implementation projects, one,

planting and CO₂ certification of 50ha of Parkia trees, is already implemented. The other, commercialisation of soubmala, is in the design phase. Both administrated by the Danish NGO SocieTrees.

Parallel to the research activities, two implementation projects have been initiated and managed: a Climate mitigation project (already implemented) and a Commercialisation project (currently in the planning phase). These implemetation projects illustrate how our research findings can be implemented into development work. Both projects are coordinated by the Danish non-profit NGO SocieTrees, of which I am both the chairman and founder. It would not have been possible to implement the two projects without the research results of this PhD since research on *P. biglobosa* is very limited. Previous to this PhD, data on *P. biglobosa*'s age-specific biomass was not available.

Additionally, there was only limited information available on optimal management practises for the species, all necessary to be able to implement the Climate mitigation project. Finally, information concerning the Burkinabé soubmala market including value chain structure, trade patterns, supply chain design, and product quality was completely



missing, all being prerequisites to be able to implement the Commercialisation project.



The conclusion from this project must be that combining different fields and expertises is possible, and that it is indeed possible to implement research findings during the time span of a PhD. Moreover, it has proven possible to make changes in the local communities when focusing on the overall objective and having a more applied approach to science. And finally, the tree *Parkia biglobosa* and its food product

soubala can indeed change the livelihoods of the rural people of south-western Burkina Faso. The major lesson learned through this project is that combining different fields and expertises is possible, and that it is indeed possible to implement research findings during the time span of a PhD. Moreover, it has proven possible to make changes in the local communities when focusing on the overall objective and taking a more applied approach to science.

