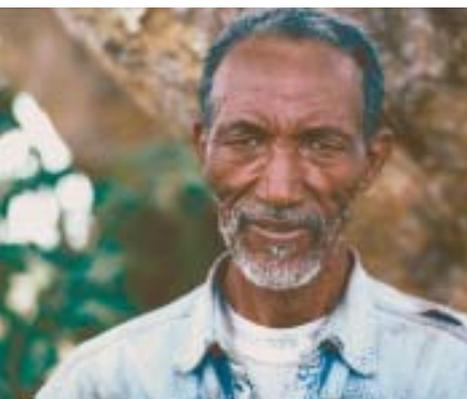




■ Tsetse flies The lucky village of Luke in the Gibe Valley

«Our soil is good, anything would grow here. But our ploughs lie idle because our draught oxen have died from the cursed Nagana disease», says Besir Gehreyesas, a farmer from Gibe-Ber in Ethiopia. His poor worn out hands hang limp by his side, as he adds: «However hard you work, you can't do a lot with only a hoe.»

His face shows the privation he has suffered. Only ten years ago he had owned over thirty Head of cattle. Now nearly everything has gone. His animals died from Nagana, a disease carried by the Tsetse fly. Oxen are Africa's agricultural mashinery, without them production on any scale comes to a halt. «Now we live suspended somewhere between life and death, all we can do is to give all our time and energy to get rid of the disease», he says.



His eyes range over the wide valley towards the neighbouring village of Luke. «They are lucky over there» he says. «They have put up Tsetse fly traps and are ready for the next invasion».

Over in Luke there is indeed a feeling of optimism, due to a

project started by ICIPE, the Research Institute for Insects. Staff from Addis Abeba came to Luke in the autumn and suggested catching the Tsetse fly with specialized traps. They said that this would reduce the fly population so that the disease would no longer be a danger. A deciding factor for the project was the financial support offered by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). BioVision supported the scheme.

First, ICIPE Eco-Trainers took blood samples from the cattle to establish the spread of the disease. After that the village delegated one hundred people to learn the basics of the Tsetse fly problem and the function of the traps. Finally they chose twenty men to become experts in servicing the fly traps. Two hundred and forty fly traps were placed in and around the village of Luke. Eco-Trainers visit the village regularly to note the number of flies

■ Editorial A Rational Approach



What good is it to save African herds from the sting of the disease carrying Tsetse fly, only to see them multiply endlessly, destroying the grasslands and dying of hunger. What does it profit to have wellwatered fields with rich harvests, if they are infested with Malaria mosquitoes bringing death to the people.

Complex problems need coordinated measures. Therefore we look at the Tsetse project in Ethiopia as a beginning. There will be further measures: a lasting fight against Malaria, the use of Manure and Compost, or vegetable plots protected by organic pest controls. In some areas, such in the ecologically friendly and financially possible battle against the Tsetse fly, the research was developed by ICIPE. But Animal Health is being supported by the International Animal Research Institute (ILRI). The training programmes and the link-up with Government Agencies is being funded by the Ethiopian Social Responsibility and Development Fund. We would very much welcome more partners.

A considerable part of our network reaches right to our Swiss supporters. A particular mention must be made here of the very substantial contribution from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) who made the Tsetse Project in Ethiopia possible. Heartfelt thanks are due for this.

Hans Rudolf Herren
President of BioVision/Director ICIPE

Continued from side 1

in each trap. These figures are then evaluated at ICIPE, to assess the spread and extent of the plague in the district.

The next invasion is expected at the end of the rainy season in October. Specialists at ICIPE will work out 'hotspots' where the greatest concentration of flies is expected and will warn the trap teams. The teams will place a close network of traps in the right places and will catch a massive number of flies. The leader of the project, Getachew Tikubet is confident that the plan will work. "The Tsetse fly uses the Gibe River as an entry corridor. If we can reduce the numbers around Luke, we shall then erect a trap barrier at the narrowest point of the valley to prevent a new influx in this area. And if we can get financial support we can extend the project to other regions", says Getachew Tikubet. These words must be music to the ears of Besir Gehereyesas who lives on the other side of the river.



Computer for Africa Overcoming the digital divide

One would not think that computers would be of first ranking importance in the struggle against poverty in Africa. And yet. The digital Revolution which is drastically changing life in the industrial world, must not stop on the borders of the developing countries. The Internet is a world encircling network for our scientific community, from which large parts of Africa are excluded. Without computers and no access to the Internet this divide between North and South will grow visibly. BioVision is committed to see that self-help is achieved in this area. Computers and the Internet are essential tools for researchers and Eco-Trainers. It was through the initiative of Member of State Council Rita Kieber-Beck of the Principality of Liechtenstein that BioVision received a gift of sixteen fully equipped computers which allow the training in modern information technique for Eco-Trainers. BioVision is most grateful for this gift and to Swiss Airways for transporting this valuable cargo free to Nairobi. Dr Brigitte Nyambo, Head of Programme at BioVision in East Africa is on e-mail: bnyambo@icipe.org

Preserving rare African plants Traditional know-how for healthy food

Saget, Terere, Managu, Murenda, Marengo or Kanjira, these are the names of the traditional vegetables in East Africa. Only some of them have English names, such as spider flower, cowpea or water spinach. Their botanical name shows to which plant family they belong. For example to the Cabbage family (Crucifera), the Cucumber family (Curcubitaceae), the Lime tree (Tiliaceae) or the Nightshade plants (Solanaceae). These local vegetables are just as rich in proteins, vitamins, calcium and iron as their modern counterparts. Indeed a child need only eat half the quantity of the (usually disliked) green vegetables of spider flower leaves to get the same quantity of iron as they would from spinach. Seen from this point of view, this plant could well be a success on the European market. But popular taste has changed also in countries like Kenya and there is actually not much demand for old fashioned vegetables. However recently there does seem to be a growing interest at local markets and for home growing plots. The problem is the seeds are no longer available.

For this reason BioVision has started a pilot project. Whenever Eco-Trainers from Mbita Point visit farmers, they ask for seeds of traditional varieties. A plot of 200 by 30 meters has been set aside on ICIPE land in Mbita, where these vegetables are grown for seed. These are then given out to interested farmers with the request to keep some seeds to be handed on to other farmers. This has two results: One, it is an inexpensive way to assist the nutrition of the people. At the same time it can prevent the permanent loss of old vegetable seeds which contribute to biodiversity.



Picture: Lulseged Belayun, ICIPE Eco-trainer (at back) inspects a team servicing fly traps

■ A day in the life of a schoolgirl

Tadu Shume, pupil in Luke



My bed is a hemp mat on the well compacted earth floor of our Tukul. The house is round and has a straw roof. At seven o'clock in the morning I throw off my blankets, get up to have a wash. I get water from the fountain and make coffee. Luckily the fountain is not too far from my home. Eco-Trainers built a cowshed at the edge of the village including a tank, into which all the manure goes. Biogas develops in the tank and the gas powers our water pump. This is great. I then I go to collect water. To do this I tie the pottery jar onto my back with a rope around my chest. I collect twelve litres of water and it is jolly heavy. But my mother is glad that I do this chore for her. I have one smaller and two elder sisters and a brother. We all have breakfast together. It's always

what has been left over from the night before: baked Kocho as a flat bread or as crumbs. The flour comes from the root of the Inset plant. Often we eat Kocho with cabbage. I like milk and fresh cheese with it, but it is rare, as we have only one cow left. After breakfast I join my friend Belay on our way to school. We mostly run the five kilometers to get there on time. I am only in the second form. Like all children from Luke I started school late, it is too far to walk for little ones. At twenty to eight a teacher stands in the playground. He rings a bell and school begins. We do language, English, Mathematics, Nature Study, History, Music and Art. My favorite subject is Amharic, our language. I have two teachers, I like them both very much. I want to become a teacher when I

grow up.

School finishes at two o'clock and we start on our long way home. In the middle of the day at the hottest time, it is very tiring. Mother awaits me with lunch. It's Kocho, the same as usual. After lunch I go with the other girls to collect wood and water once more. Finally there is time for play. I can't leave homework for too late, because by seven o'clock it's dark and the kerosene lamp does not give enough light for writing and reading.

Mother cooks supper on the fireplace in the middle of the room. She cooks on a flat disk made from clay, with a hole in the middle for the fire. She puts the pots round the hole and the coffee pot on top of the other pots. At ten o'clock we get together to eat. When it gets quiet in the Tukul I take my mat, put it on the floor and slip under the blankets.

From Peter Luethi



François Binder, SDC

■ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Valuable cooperation with ICIPE

For many years SDC has supported research and development activities into diseases carried by the Tsetse fly. One of the projects which SDC is co-financing with ICIPE is the Tsetse Roll - Back project in Ethiopia which combats the dangerous cattle disease Nagana. Francois Binder Section Head of SDC in East and Southern Africa says: Under the leadership of Dr Hans Herren, ICIPE has made considerable advances in Organical Pest Control. SDC appreciates this valuable cooperation which improves the living standards of the local communities.

SDC also has a longstanding relationship with the Tropical Institute in Basel (Switzerland) working together to defeat sleeping sickness which is carried by the Tsetse fly. As well as other projects they finance projects in Tanzania and support EANETT (East African Network for Trypanosomiasis).



■ TTU at ICIPE A network of instruction for Eco-Trainers

What started three years ago at the remote Mbita Point at Lake Victoria is to-day a transfer unit of Technology, a fully integrated Department of the International Insect Research Station ICIPE. Because of ICIPE's thirty years experience in the field of insect plagues, it has the scientific background knowledge to train advisors in ecological methods of pest prevention. Eco-Trainers will be able to put these methods into ways more readily understood by the farmers. Different courses are run by ICIPE to show the budding Eco-Trainers how they can motivate farmers to use these new methods. The concept of an ever widening circle of this new understanding seems to make sense. But it is a difficult to put into practice. For one the distances are enormous (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia are seventy times larger than Switzerland). Add to this that many Africans live close to the poverty line and have hardly any means nor the energy to learn something new. It makes it hard for the Eco-Trainers. However "one step at the time," says the old proverb and we have

made a few already. Only in this last half year 150 Eco-Trainers have attended different courses and improved their knowledge, which in turn they will be able to pass on in their daily work, thereby improving the situation of many. This was achieved with the cooperation of other Organisations, The Kenyan Institute of Organic Farming (KIOF), the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya, and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI).

*Dr Brigitte Nyambo, BioVision
Programme Coordinator East Africa, Kenya (second from left)*



Thank you for your help!

Water, every day something to eat and to be safe from illness. - Whenever I travel in Africa I am always horrified by the hard struggle for existence, which people in these countries experience. BioVision gives targeted support and assists people to help themselves.



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Your support enables BioVision to bring to fruition ecologically important projects. We hope that we shall be able to count on your generosity in the future. Grateful thanks for your contribution.
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