

PfD's main work in Benin is Pineapple Processing for Export (PINEX), a nearly \$15M, eight-year project funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which seeks to strengthen Benin's pineapple value chain. The key objectives of PINEX are to improve productivity and marketing/trade opportunities among over 5,000 producers, approximately 60 processing companies, and about one dozen export companies. PINEX achieves these objectives by providing technical assistance to stakeholders and increasing their access to key inputs such as credit and fertilizer, increasing marketing opportunities, and improving food safety practices and certifications.



Selling Fresh pineapple at the international Fruit Logistica Fair, Berlin Germany
(Photo Credit: Mechak Ahlonsou, PfD)

Even with the challenges of the pandemic, production of Benin pineapple in 2021 should be about 600,000 MT with sales at \$66.3M. PINEX has assisted eight pineapple-processing companies in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) certification, a key international food safety standard. Since 2017, PINEX has facilitated international trade visits for 43 Beninese companies producing or exporting pineapple products to various countries, including to Togo, Ghana, Niger, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Senegal, France, Germany and Italy.

PfD has also been working in Benin since late 2019 with another American non-governmental organization, Technoserve, to create a commercially successful juice blend between pineapple and "cashew apple." The cashew nut when growing on trees has beneath it a fruit called "cashew apple" which can yield a juice though its taste is somewhat astringent. By mixing sweeter pineapple with the cashew apple juice the idea is to create a more palatable product.



Cashew apple processors during good processing and hygiene practices training (Credit: Ahlonsou Mechak)

In this project, PfD has trained ten cashew apple processors on good processing and hygiene practices and provided them with tools to improve the quality of the product such as thermometer, refractometer, pH-meter, juice filter and bottles. PfD has supported cashew apple processors to take part in national and international trade fairs and regional market tours to advertise and distribute their products and build trade partnerships. During the Regional Agricultural Product Fair (FIARA) in Dakar, Senegal in May and June 2021, for example, cashew apple processors sold 12,000 12 ounce bottles of cashew apple and pineapple juice. This project is also piloting the creation of a cashew apple and pineapple jam.

In addition, PfD in Benin has been working since 2018 with American NGO, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), in their school lunch program in the country. To help supplement American food aid used in the school lunch program with Beninese produce, PfD has been working with several farmer associations in northern Benin, promoting best agricultural and food safety practices at 12 community farms from which the CRS program purchases products for the aforementioned supplementation of American food aid. In particular, in this regard, PfD has worked with and trained "master farmers" to build sustainability and promoted affordable solar dryers which significantly reduce post-harvest losses.



Improved corn harvested on a community farm.
(Credit: Ilyace Amadou, PfD)