



With the construction of low-cost greenhouses in communities, Mumita Holdings, has helped farmers upgrade from the use of mosquito nets to shield their seedlings from heat waves and heavy rains. PHOTO CREDIT: ELIAS NGALAME.

Low-cost irrigation kits boost vegetable production in Cameroon's Southwest

By Ngalame Elias

With rainfall patterns increasingly erratic, producing food crops all year round has become increasingly difficult for many smallholder farmers in Southwest Region of Cameroon.

Experts say this problem is particularly significant in the region given that a total of 2.6 million people are uncertain as to whether they will have a meal every day.

To increase crop yields and meet growing demand for food in Buea, the region's capital, smallholder farmers

are adapting to the unpredictable rainfall patterns by adopting low-cost greenhouses and irrigation systems, and climate-smart agricultural practices.

Thanks to support from Mumita Holdings Limited, a social enterprise that promotes quality and sustainable food crop production, a group of over 70 vegetable farmers has succeeded in improving their crop yields and incomes.

"Our objective has been to achieve SDG 2 of ending hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and

promote sustainable agriculture," says Munaga Emmanuel, coordinator of Mumita Holdings.

Mumita provides smallholder vegetable farmers with low-cost greenhouse technology solutions and irrigation systems such as sprinklers and drip systems, in addition to sensitisation programmes to raise awareness about climate change adaptation.

"Many of our members have for the past two years doubled and even tripled their vegetable production thanks to the use of low-cost





To increase crop yields and meet growing demand for food in Buea, the region's capital, smallholder farmers are adapting to the unpredictable rainfall patterns by adopting low-cost greenhouses and irrigation systems.

PHOTOCREDIT: ELIAS NGALAME



greenhouse technology," Agnes Epie, President of Buea Vegetable Farmers Network says.

The farmers have also received training on reducing the use of pesticides and fertilisers as well as post-harvest techniques.

"We have seen decrease in the quantity of wasted vegetables thanks to knowledge about post-harvest techniques," says Agnes.

Experts say the use of modern technology in agriculture will significantly boost the fight against food shortage and hunger in Cameroon.

"With the construction of low-cost greenhouses in communities, we have helped farmers upgrade from the use of mosquito nets to shield their seedlings from heat waves and heavy rains," says a field representative of

Mumita.

"The low-cost greenhouses are made from long lasting local material with capacity to accommodate more seedlings and hence increase their productivity."

In addition, Mumita produces dehydrated vegetables to reduce post-harvest losses and increase their shelf life by incorporating a zero-waste plant. This converts indigenous vegetable staples into semi-finished, nutrient-rich products that meet market demands, reduces malnutrition, and enhance food security.

By providing free capacity building, consultation services, quality planting materials and regular follow-ups, the company is able to grow and retain its customer base among farming communities.

"We have been able to positively impact society through employing the youth, increasing income and improving the livelihoods of vegetable farmers and local communities," says Matiedje Gislaine, co-founder of Mumita, which employs 33 young people.

With funds received from the Global Center on Adaptation through the Youth Adapt programme, Mumita is set to purchase equipment such as packaging machines, vegetable dehydrators and freezers to increase production capacity and efficiency.

To deliver on its goal of meeting food security in Africa in an efficient way, Mumita is also seeking to raise additional financing in the form of equity and attract strategic partners, the management says ■