

13 Mar, 1998

Paul Meadows PCV
Corps de la Paix
BP 3194
Lomé TOGO

Bill Dillon, President
Santa Barbara Peace Corps Assn.
PO Box 91406
Santa Barbara, CA 93190

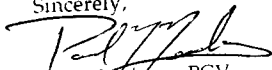
Dear Mr. Dillon,

How's everything going in Santa Barbara? Have you been able to stay dry through all the storms? I just wanted to drop you a quick note to let you know that the Women's Palm Oil Cooperative of Yotokopé has started its work. With the funding received from SBPCA it was able to purchase all the necessary equipment in order to begin producing oil. In the first two weeks of work they were able to produce about 60 liters of oil. They will continue making and storing the oil until the month of May, at which time they will be able to sell it at the highest market price possible. They are also continuing to contribute weekly on an individual basis in the form of "cooperative membership fees". As mentioned in the initial application, once the cooperative is making a profit they will start to save money to improve their worksite as well as buy a machine to facilitate their work.

I am enclosing two photos. the first one is the women working to clear the work-site. (nothing spectacular) The second is a photo of the cooperative itself. You will notice three men in the photo. (Unfortunately, I'm not in this picture because I'm taking it. Whenever my villagers take pictures of me you usually only see the top half of my head and a lot of blue sky.) The man seated is the chief of Yotokopé. The two men in back help with the bookkeeping and secretarial work. None of the women in the cooperative speak or write French and none have completed school past the 3rd grade. These women from Yotokopé are now making money on their own and gained a sense of self-respect and pride.

On behalf of the Women's Palm Oil Cooperative of Yotokopé, I would once again like to thank you for allowing us this opportunity.

Sincerely,



Paul Meadows, PCV
Yotokopé, TOGO