



Leaves of Hope

Attiéké, which is couscous made from cassava root, is one of the national foods of Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), located in the horn of Africa. Those who travel from Côte d'Ivoire to visit ex-patriots living in other lands are expected to bring this precious food with them. It is typical to wrap the prepared *attiéké* in the leaves of a common



plant, which grows wild in the bush. This is the way it is packaged by the people who sell it from stands along the road or in towns.

The staff of Entrust's partner project in Africa, More than a Mile Deep (MMD), along with the brethren of the village of Babadougou, have started calling these leaves the "leaves of hope." Why? After being involved in our course on HIV/AIDS, pastor Sie Hien realized that the issue of poverty was the next challenge to cope with in his churches. He brought the church leaders together to expose them to MMD's approach to holistic ministry. He invited the

director of MMD in Côte d'Ivoire, Ouattara Koumbondohou, and board member, Yoro Kanon, to share some basics on poverty alleviation.

Previously, the MMD participants in Babadougou were too poor to save any money. After the training they received, their eyes were opened to the God-given natural resources at hand right in the bush around them. Today, even the poorest member in the church is able to save approximately \$2.20 a day. They just have to go into the forest and cut these leaves for wrapping *attiéké*, which grow like weeds. Now, HIV/AIDS is no longer seen as the disease that condemns people to poverty. God has made a way where there was no way and no hope, through these "leaves of hope."

Ouattara, the country director, shared, "My long-term vision for MMD is to see the ministry spread all over Côte d'Ivoire. I think that is not only a dream; it is a challenge that is attainable. We just need to work hard. We need to have good facilitators and to keep having our board members encouraging us and involved in the work, because it is teamwork. We need to be connected to our fellow coordinators across Africa and to hear how they are ministering in other places, even if our specific situations are different. Reaching my country is my dream."

"I have seen, at different times, the smoke of a thousand villages—villages whose people are without Christ, without God, and without hope in the world."

Robert Moffat, missionary