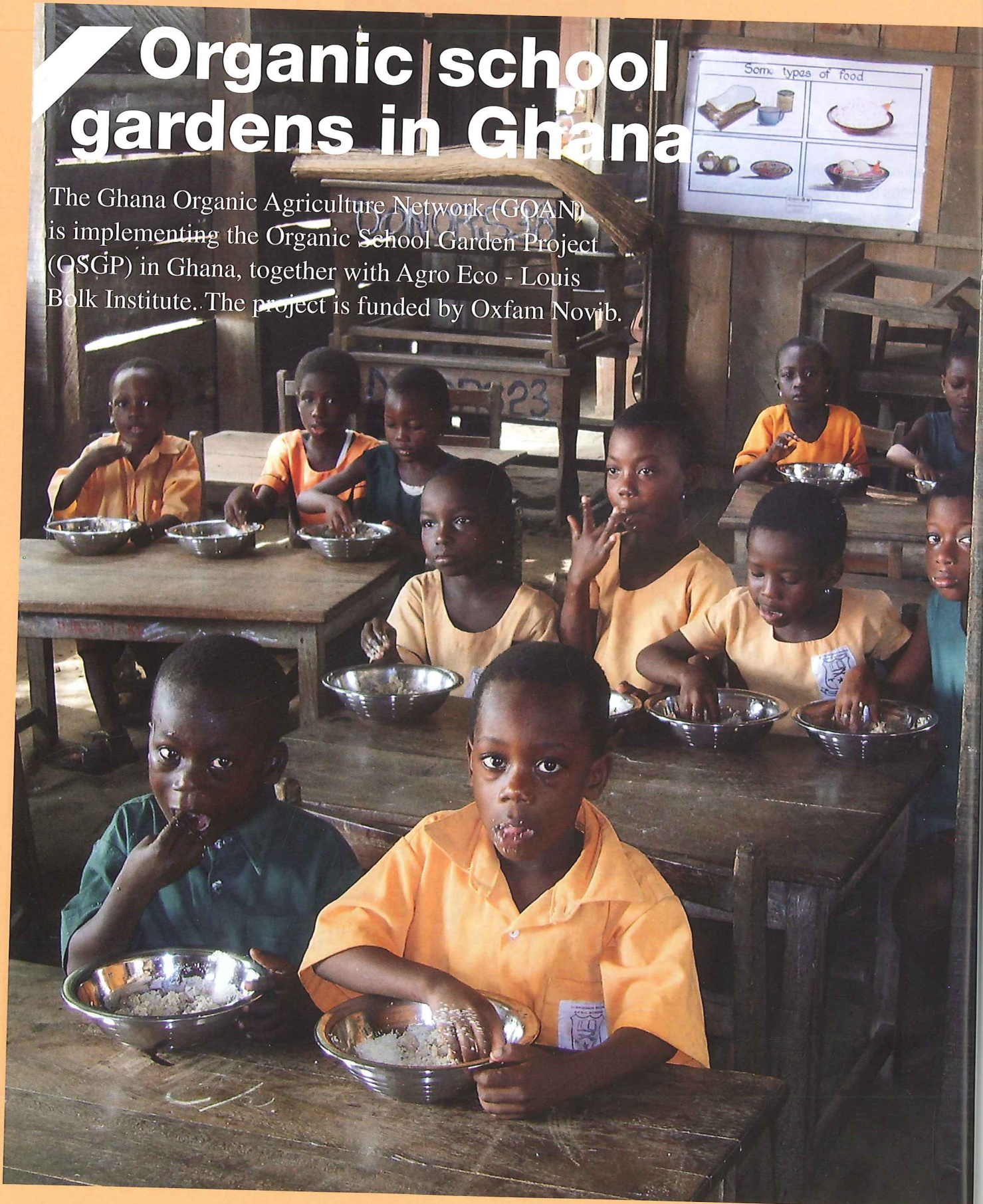


BY INGE VOS

Organic school gardens in Ghana

The Ghana Organic Agriculture Network (GOAN) is implementing the Organic School Garden Project (OSGP) in Ghana, together with Agro Eco - Louis Bolk Institute. The project is funded by Oxfam Novib.



The OSGP has developed organic gardens in 24 schools in Ghana over the past three years. The gardens produce vegetables and fruits that are used in the pupils' meals. The organic gardens are also being used as demonstration fields for Farmers Field Schools (FFS), to train local farmers in organic farming practices.

The Organic School Garden Project started in 2008 with 10 schools in 7 different districts. Each school has a 1-acre organic garden. The gardens produce organic vegetables and fruits for the pupils' meals, providing them with healthy, safe and nutritious food (no pesticides or residues) which is also environmentally friendly. Crops grown in the gardens include leafy vegetables, cabbage, tomato, pepper, onion, aubergines, okra, carrots, water melon, citrus and pineapple.



The Government of Ghana established the national Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) a ten year programme established in 2006. Its aim is to provide balanced meals to school pupils at primary schools, but it has done little to stimulate the local production of ingredients required to prepare the meals. The OSGP complements the GFSP by stimulating the production side. It was set up after extensive consultation with the Director of Finance and Administration of the GFSP, who provided input into the design of the project.

Each one acre organic school garden also serves as a demonstration farm for training adult farmers using the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach. Each FFS has trained around forty farmers, with another forty farmers attending open days and going on exchange visits). In total, the OSGP has trained 1920 farmers in 24 different communities within 3 years.

The OSGP financially supports the schools in developing their organic gardens, especially during the first year of operation, when garden tools need to be acquired. When the school garden is well established it can operate independently, providing organic vegetables and fruits to the school pupils. ■

