

Project Update: December 2009

1) Introduction

In August 2008 a number of pilot activities which were started and form the basis of much larger interventions in future have started yielding positive results. The Rufford Small Grants Foundation (RSGF) grant last year to AHHF project has enable more conservationists, local inhabitants communities, farmers, hunters, NGOs, researchers and businessmen to work in the area. Agroforestry, the cultivation of trees and agricultural crops together, can mean a more dignified life for small-scale farmers, hunters, women groups and youth without jobs in our area. A life without hunger and poverty, a life with a lot of possibilities for communities around the Togo Plateau in Ghana. The awareness had resulted in raising income for the local community, investment in infrastructure and environmental conservation and improved awareness on natural resources management among the local community to stop escalating the poaching incidents and hampering conservation efforts currently underway in the Togo Plateau.

2) Each project has the following units:

- ***Training and Community Empowerment Unit***, with the main aim to support identified and registered farmers and hunters groups for alternative empowerments, in collaboration with the Zone Manager, other NGOs, identified communities were all organized to address training needs among the community level project field staff and stakeholders.
- ***Seed Unit***, with the task to purchase, store and distribute quality seeds of requested species to the farmers and hunters groups.
- ***Adzicels Happy Home Foundation Project Agroforestry Demonstration Centre*** (AHHF-PADC) (except in the Kawu area) established in 1999 with the aim to demonstrate a variety of agroforestry practices to show target farmers and hunters groups, local leaders, other NGO's, schools and a general public the potential of agroforestry.
- ***Agro nurseries*** established with the aim of producing and supplying sufficient variety of target species of tree seedlings to farmers and hunters groups to interplant with the crops in the new fields.
- ***Monitoring and Evaluation Unit***
- ***Administration Unit.***

3) Agroforestry

This has enabled a majority of our poor small-scale farmers and hunters now living in rural areas or in the Togo plateau, as well as around the eco region, to improve their situation through the development of a larger nursery plantation. RSGF provides funds to improve their livelihood, knowledge that is sustained in the society and transferred to coming generations. That the families get a new knowledge base, higher and more secure living conditions and thereby improved self-respect. This year it is our aim to integrate agroforestry and sustainable food production within the farming systems of small-scale farmers in the ICBCTA Project and make it the engine of economic growth and poverty alleviation and the effect of the work of the AHHF and RSGF, therefore a large-scale nursery has been created and developed to

contribute towards improved livelihood of small-scale farmers, hunters and other local stakeholders in the target area around Togo Plateau.

4) Poverty alleviation

Our immediate objective for creating and the establishing a large trees nursery plantation this year is to develop the proposed selected flooded area designed outside protected area to be used for agriculture to integrate Agroforestry in food production and agriculture to reach several household levels within the next 5 years. This plan will substantially increase food and nutritional security for the poor, increase fuelwood availability for surrounding communities and also increase soil nutrients for farmers through nitrogen fixation tree species, including the availability of income for the inhabitant's families.

In this part of Ghana, most people living in rural areas are very poor. Therefore rural development is essential in poverty alleviation. Agroforestry and sustainable food production takes people from poverty and hunger to a situation of self-sustained food and fuelwood production (sustainable energy) - these are essential needs to rural Africa communities. AHHF has taken bold initiative in agroforestry and sustainable food production as the general agricultural practice, economic decline and increasing poverty is turned into its opposite. Agroforestry and sustainable food production starts an economic growth that alleviates poverty and hunger not only locally or for the families living around the Togo Plateau but also regionally and countrywide. Due to present global economic pressure, many people especially the youth in our area are forced to move to cities due to rural poverty. Often to meet conditions of even worsen poverty and misery in slum areas of big cities, increased rural productivity through agroforestry and sustainable food production enables more people to stay in rural areas, avoiding urbanization in despair and, hence, reducing pressure on the cities.

In our daily work in rural communities we frequently see examples that agroforestry and sustainable food production improves the livelihood of small-scale farmers. Families who now can afford school fees and health care without environmental degradation, families who eats three cooked meals per day, widows who can support themselves and their children not depending on in-laws, women who don't have to walk long distances to get fuelwood since they now have it in their near by adjacent lands, groups of farmers who manage passion fruit plantations or goats and get income from the sale. RSGF now makes a difference needed for communities around the Togo Plateau in Ghana.

5) Sustainable environmental benefits arising as a direct result of Rufford grant

Several issues have arisen from RSGF support to biodiversity conservation as direct result to environmental benefits in the region, such as resource management systems, enhanced wildlife, land resource management, the development of sustainable resources of threatened and/or rare medicinal plant species, and threatened and declining agro-biodiversity. Specific management plans for selected priority areas have been developed and remedial programmes designed and implemented in cooperation with local communities taking into account adjacent social and agricultural systems. Collaborative biodiversity management plans has been drawn up for at least three priority protected forests and two wildlife reserves. Criteria used in the

selection of priority areas was based on *inter alia*, the biological diversity in the area, main threats facing the area, the potential or actual cooperation and participation of local communities, poverty alleviation and the net global benefits.

6) Major activities for the period

Early this year a number of activities were also started in sustainable food production and alternative sustainability/ food security by organized groups of women, small scale farmers, youth and hunters groups as key to fighting poverty in the area, support to the women, farmers and hunters groups and field staff were made available by AHHF project committee.

(i) Public education and awareness continuation

Between October – December 2009 a comprehensive public education and awareness campaign at all levels was carried out and continued in the target communities. The natural resource management, sustainable food production, security and alternative agricultural development plans was an extension of the pilot activities in nature conservation components to all stakeholders and was directed to the widespread sustainable conservation and protection of critical tropical forests resources.

(ii) Sustainable farming/production and marketing cooperation

Small-scale farmers and groups of farmers who have increased their production over subsistence level, and may who need assistance were all organized into farming groups e.g. to produce food stuffs, to sell their products; organize transport and supplies, access micro-credits etc. Adzicels Happy Home Foundation has now started cooperation with Finattrade Group of Companies Partners (MIDA) an investment group in Africa engaged in manufacturing and distribution of goods and services to provide market for our rice farmers, and they are presently carrying out a study for such cooperation with our NGO. MIDA will benefit from this cooperation due to the fact that a critical mass of farmers whose attention has been diverted from environmental degradation now have a production that enables them to demand cooperative efforts like sale of products, saving-lending schemes etc. This cooperation will have a head-on start because of the foundation of contacts and good will laid by AHHF NGO. The Adzicels Foundation will also gain good will for facilitating further development through cooperative partners.

But most and mainly the participating hunters, farmers, youth and women groups will gain from further development and improvements in the livelihood of their families, villages and organizations.

(iii) Training workshops and technical extension services

In communities where we work the density of our extension service is much higher than that of the Ministry of Foods & Agriculture (MOFA). Contacts with government extensions are very close, in some cases even formalised so that governmental employees are voluntarily integrated in our organisation. The work of Adzicels Foundation and our contacts with local authorities are very much appreciated by the authorities, locally and on district and community

levels. We are also invited to participate in national and regional discussions on rural development, agroforestry and general biodiversity conservation issues in the region.

We have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ghana Police Service (Criminal Investigation Department), (GPS,CID), Ghana Wildlife Society (GWS), and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN-Netherlands) country representative (Professor Dorm Adzobu) on exchange of information and on biological areas of conservation in the region. We also have MoUs with University of Development Studies (UDS) in Ghana and Nyakpala Agricultural University also in Ghana.

(iv) Forest community's Unit Task Force

This year the few patrol guards and Forests community's Unit Task Force who had been trained were able to make a number of arrests on illegal timber logging and hunting activities, a number of loaded timber containers and small scale timber contractors was also seized from illegal operators and timber merchants at Togo Plateau, some of those arrested were members of the government contractors too, hunters, bushmeat traders and local and foreign big and small scale timber merchants. The Volunteers Task Force who provided information was congratulated for hard work by both Divisional police commander at Hohoe, community stakeholders and Ghana forestry Commission (GFC) for reporting such illegal activities for the arrest. Each case was tried at the Districts Magistrate level Courts at Jasikan, Kpando and Hohoe in each individual districts respectively and victims were prosecuted accordingly to new forest legislation.

7) Works of the foundation, Community, other NGOs and Contacts

The Adzicels Happy Home Foundation (AHHF) started in 1999 with a cry in the SPORE 'AHHF' to help stop the spread of environmental degradation in Africa. We now have 10 years of experience. During this time we have assisted a lot of small-scale farmers and rehabilitated large areas of degraded lands but also learned a lot from local communities and from others. AHHF Programme is the collective one directly to poor farmers, hunters, youth and marginalized women groups in Ghana especially Volta Region.

Every year, small-scale farmers are provided with conservation education to use sustainable methods to grow many foodstuffs, such as tree planting, agroforestry and land rehabilitation systems. This is done to prevent soil erosion, produce fuelwood, timber, and fruits, to generate income and to improve the environment, i.e. to improve livelihood - for this generation and the coming ones financed by RSGF, SeaWorld & Busch Garden Conservation Fund USA, Rainforest Information Centre (RIC) Australia, and local stakeholders, the project capable of producing better results Since 2006, the first time when we received the donor aid, we have improved further and become even more efficient. Direct contact with the farmers, knowledge of natural resource management makes AHHF projects an extremely effective development one in the region.

Locally in each project community we were able to built close contacts with other natural resource management and development NGOs, few of them are Wofabeng Agroforestry and

Environmental Development Group (WAFEDEG) and All Age Development Center. We invite each other to meetings and activities and share information about each other's activities. Groups organized in one organization can be contacted by another organization, and vice versa. We also refer to other organizations in areas outside our own competence, and are referred to by them in agroforestry/agricultural / conservation issues.

The long and close contact Adzicels Foundation has with farmers, groups of farmers and local authorities was very valuable for various kinds of information and development. We have been very positive to cooperation with other organizations on these issues. We are currently discussing with Ghana Aids Commission and Pro-link about linking information about HIV/Aids to our stakeholders.

