

Project Update: May 2012

Activities

The main activities realized in the framework of this project are presented as follow:

- *Presentation of project goals*

Activities on the field started in November 2012 through the project goals presentation to local authorities and to the populations of Sèmè-Kpodji, Ouidah and Grand Popo Districts. During this step, we took different useful contacts for the project activities implementation.

- *Surveys on mangrove uses and threats assessment*

The surveys were carried out in December, January and February (2012). For this purpose, we selected 180 informants (60 informants per selected District). Surveys were realized through structured and semi-structured interviews. The questions were related to the uses of the mangrove ecosystem as well as the perception of local population on driving forces affecting mangrove ecosystem viability and sustainable conservation. Preliminary data analysis showed that mangrove was used by local population to meet multiple purposes (firewood, fishery, salt production, construction wood, forage, poaching). The importance of those uses varied from one site to another. As the salt production represented the main use in Ouidah, the fishery and wood collection constituted the important uses of mangrove in Sèmè-Kopdji and Grand Popo. Moreover, we found an ethnization of mangrove uses in the project area. Indeed, the Houedah group was mainly involved in lagune fishery while the Fôn group was occupied in salt production.

Many threats were perceived by local population as affecting mangrove ecosystem viability. They were: anarchic urbanization, uncontrolled fishery and logging, and climate change.

- *Trees planting*

From the results of our surveys, we found that the mangrove tree planting is possible during the dry season when the water level is low. So that, we were constraint to begin mangrove tree planting earlier than as stated in the project. This explained that we started tree planting before Environmental education. The tree planting is still ongoing.



Degraded mangrove area selected for restoration (through tree planting)



Left: Explanation of the mangrove ecosystem restoration to local communities. Right: Women team involved in propagules collection and tree planting.



Mangrove tree planting by local communities



Supervision of mangrove tree planting by field assistant

Perspectives

The environmental education, the club discussion and the capacity-building are planned for the coming months. However, the schools which will be involved in the environmental education were already selected in each District and the teachers were also informed.