

## **Project Update: September 2014**

The present study funded by the Rufford Small Grants is planned to be executed from November 2013 to October 2014 and aims to strengthen the conservation of *Colobus vellerosus* (Geoffroy's colobus), one of the least studied and highly threatened primate species in Benin and promote the valorisation of Kikélé forest through ecotourism.

### **Short report for the second step (March to August)**

During the second step of this project we have conducted information, education and awareness activities with population and schoolchildren. The members of the Management Committee and ecoguides have been trained. The movies that will be used for the production of the short documentary had been recorded.

#### **Information, education and awareness activities**

Different size of posters, leaflets were produced and distributed to stakeholders at all levels (population, township, schools, university, NGO, conservation agencies). These materials have been also used for information education and awareness sessions with forest management committee and local authorities. The topics of the awareness sessions were environment protection, protection of forests and wildlife, valorisation of biodiversity through ecotourism and waste management.

The rules and regulations have been established for the environment club and the activities have started using the training kit we have produced. This kit is composed of a plate of Benin diurnal primate's species. These young students began sessions to clean the forest waiting to find solutions to the issue of waste management around the sacred forest. Until now the environment club has cleaned the forest twice.



Left: Chief of village (also member of the committee) explaining ecotourism to population during an awareness session. Right: Awareness session with the schoolchildren. Right: Poster for awareness sessions.

#### **Training of ecoguides and committee members**

Kikélé forest management committee's members and the five ecoguides have been trained. The topics addressed in these sessions are:

- ecotourism: fundamentals, expectations of an ecotourist, etc.
- technical of reception and guidance;
- designing an ecotourism tour;
- accident management: first aid.

During these training sessions, the ecoguides, the committee members together with the trainers have identified and tested two ecotourism tours.

One of these circuit will valorise the village and the culture. The second will valorise the forest and the colobus. The participants have now aptitude to conduct ecotourism activities at Kikélé and to propose another ecotourism tours for a better conservation and valorisation of the forest and its wildlife.



Left: Ecoguides and trainers. Middle: Designing ecotourism tour in the forest during the training. Right: Designing ecotourism tour in the village during the training.

### **Production of a short documentary**

We have recorded videos that will serve to produce the short documentary for the promotion of ecotourism tours in Kikélé.

### **Planning for the next step**

The meetings with the management committee of Kikélé forest to identify opportunities and constraints linked to the conservation and valorization of Kikélé forest through ecotourism have started. We will write an actions plan based on the result of these meetings and organised a validation workshop.