

Project Update: May 2016

The second major activity of this project started well on schedule in the beginning of April, running to the end of May. Due to a breakdown in our field computer, we couldn't prepare this update by the end of the first week of June as per our reporting plan. The aim of this activity was to develop community-level and broader public awareness on the agro-economic and social benefits of bats in our ecosystem, and secure public acceptance on the need for conservation.

Methodology

1. The project team made contact with two school authorities of the Government High School in Ekona, prior to the start of this project to set the operational modalities. Suitable dates were proposed and it was agreed that some teachers will support the project team in delivering lectures to students on bat conservation. The lectures were in the form of power point slides accompanied by question and answer sessions to ensure the students were knowledgeable about bats and conservation.



Name plaque at entrance of Government High School Ekona

A total of 830 students between the ages of 11 and 18 in two colleges were sensitised on the ecological importance of bats in our ecosystem, with the key take-home message being the role they must play in protecting the environment and championing the course for bat conservation. At the end of every lecture, students were presented with a hypothetical conservation case for which they had to provide practical solutions.

Picture frame of power point slide presented to students: Students are tasked with teaching the population of Ekona to protect bats.

Your Mission

The people of Ekona, in Fako Division, have decided to eliminate all of the bats from their city and forests. They think that all bats are dirty, carry diseases, and have no use other than being killed for the sake of it or for meat. Your job is to teach the people of Ekona about bats and help them to learn why they should keep and protect the bats in their town.





Student points to slide to answer question during lecture

- Following the launching of the project with an announcement on local radio, the project team was accorded airtime every Wednesday on the Planet Watch programme to sensitise the community on the socio-ecological importance of bats and the need for concerted action towards conservation.

Project leader, Numbissi Tenku, in local radio studio talking to the public.



- Four movie nights were organised for video/YouTube streaming of educational documentaries on the role of bats in our ecosystem. The movie nights were preceded by social events to attract people and engage them in bat conservation quizzes and various discussions on environmental protection.



Project facilitator in action to moderate activity at social event.

Farmers listen to sensitisation lecture for bat conservation and sustainable cocoa farming.



4. In the course of the community sensitisation on radio, the project team took contact with all 352 farmers who committed to participate in the project. They were organised according to how close their plantations were to each other, and through this approach some of the sensitisation lectures were held in cocoa plantations. This was to create a natural connection to the subject matter of the project. Farmers acquired new knowledge on bat-friendly agriculture and the various cocoa production practices that must be adopted to promote a win-win outcome from engaging in bat conservation.

Farmers prepare for sensitisation lecture on bat conservation



The next activity in this project will run for two months from June to September, and will entail the development of nurseries and planting of fruit/non-fruit trees. The aim will be to secure trees and put in place a recovery route for restoration of lost food chains for bats and regrow destroyed habitat.