

## Project Update: May 2017

### Children's Bushcamp 2017

Between 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017, the second Children's Bushcamp 2017 in Bénoué National Park, North Cameroon was held. A very successful activity in which local children and their teachers get the opportunity to get to know their national park where they are living close to, and often have not visited yet. The protected areas in the Bénoué complex are currently heavily under threat by different types of human encroachments. It is important to teach the local communities about the importance of their ecosystem and why and how to protect it for future generations. In this project we are aiming for the young generations, since they are still open to learn and are often not fixed in old habits.

During the week, we have received three groups of around 75 children and their teachers to stay 1.5 days in Bénoué NP. In total, this means that 216 local pupils and 26 teachers have participated during the Children's Bushcamp!

**Table 1:** The groups, Schools and the number of participants during the Childrens Bushcamp 2017

Group	School	Number of Children	Number of teachers
<b>1</b>	E.P. Ganani	11	2
	E.P. Gamba	12	2
	Ecole de Parents Bawan	25	2
	E.P. Dogba	12	2
	E.P. Bilingue de Sakdje	20	2
<b>2</b>	E.P. Banda	12	2
	E.P Guidjiba	12	2
	C.E.S. de Bouri	15	2
	CITEC Djaba	15	2
	C.E.S. Bilingue de Sakdje	19	2
<b>3</b>	C.E.S. de Bouri	12	2
	Lycee Bilingue Mbe	24	2
	Lycee de Gamba	27	2

The children were picked up by busses at their schools early in the morning and brought inside Bénoué NP. After arrival, the day was started with a light breakfast. Then all children were again subdivided in three groups and received a name batch. Finally it was time to start the first lessons. During their stay the children received lessons in herbivores/carnivores, botany and ecosystem/habitat. Lessons were both theoretical as well there was an outdoor activity and indoor practice, over the 1.5 days that the children were in the park, they attended classes in all three subjects. Both the children as their teachers told us that they learned many new things regarding nature. Besides, they saw different types of wildlife (giraffe, hippopotamus, kob, buffalo etc.) for the first time in their life! After dinner and a good shower, the evening was closed with a nature documentary about large carnivores in a real bush cinema atmosphere. Children and the teachers slept in the touristic camp of Bénoué NP. Everybody was honoured to get the chance to sleep in the famous camp of which they had heard so much about in the villages. The next day, again one course was

given and before the children would head back home, a game of bingo was played, and all children received a diploma and photos were taken as a reminder of a wonderful time.

Courses were given by experienced teachers from Ecole de Faune Garoua. For the bush activities and practices, they were assisted by 16 eco-guards from Bénoué NP and 6 lion guards. They were important to tell about their bush experiences, but also to safeguard the security of all visitors. Moreover, we were blessed with well-oiled machine in the kitchen which served three meals per day on time. Two drivers from Ecole de Faune, Garoua were indispensable for bringing the pupils to and back school driving through rough terrain. Last, personnel of the Camp of Bénoué NP was kindly available for extra supporting activities such as pumping water, or helping in the kitchen.

