

Project Update: August 2019

1. We invited a blacksmith (resource person) who demonstrated how the local energy-efficient stove is made. Women, men and youths were in attendance.

The programme had the following objectives to be achieved:

- a) By the end of the energy-efficient programme, the participants should be able to demonstrate the knowledge of making an energy-efficient stove.
- b) They should be able to make useable energy-efficient stoves using the program available materials.
- c) More women should be able to independently (without further guidance) demonstrate how to use the stove.

Outcome of the programme for that day

The programme was a success as some youths and a few women demonstrated the making of the energy-efficient stove with little or no further guidance. More women and young ladies were able to cook using the stove without much guidance.

2. The "save a species' initiatives" was a tremendous success. We asked the students in different communities to choose different animals or plants that they felt were threatened in the communities and came up with plans to save them. The contest of the 'save a species' was accepted among them with more zeal and sense of dedication. With the weekly conservation lessons and field experience the students got from the programme, they have demonstrated good understanding of practical conservation required in their communities. Students were divided into two groups - one given the task of developing a simple conservation plan for animals and the other group designed a plan to conserve plants that are highly sought and logged for firewood in the community.
 - a) A group of students planned and work towards protecting barn owls (*Tyto alba*) which they realised were the most persecuted in their community. The traditional belief system of the communities consider owls to mean evil or spell doom, they kill them on sight. The students scheduled time for talks and sensitisation to their parents and other community members on how useful the birds are in checking population of other animals and how natural they are contrary to the traditional belief that they are witches or controlled by witches and wizards. Most parents believe the children considering the facts coming from them. Most people believe that children don't lie hence there is truth in what they said. The students were able to save some barn owls that were removed for killing from their nests by other people. They also protected the *Tyto alba* nestlings that fall off from their nesting places by looking for ladder to return them safely. We were truly surprised at the enthusiasm and passion the students demonstrated in the protection of animals and plants' species. Other students and groups worked on projects to save the pied crow (*Corvus albus*), northern red bishop (*Euplectes franciscanus*) and a local plant which is the most sought and used in domestic cooking.
 - b) Seedling distribution: The many seedlings being raised in three schools that served as the centres for raising the seeds to seedlings were distributed in May and June, all in the rainy season. The sharing was done through friends of the nature's club facilitators and school principals who supported the effort massively. The village heads, youth leaders, and women leaders were involved

in the sharing of the seeds and seedlings in different communities who planted it accordingly.

- c) More interactions with hunters and women were carried out to consolidate on the impact had on them in the series of orientation and sensitisation sessions. The interaction session was for discussion. Different hunters shared their experiences in animal rearing venture. Others shared information and experiences on alternative ways of life different from the hunting. The programme was a source of encouragements and advice on how to earn a living from animal rearing and other businesses and oral submissions and suggestions on more of similar fora to support them with information and get them rooted in their chosen animal husbandry practices.

End of session Project Evaluation

- a) A large conservation programme was organised at the end of third term (July ending, which is also the end of the secondary and primary schools' academic year) in which students involved in the programme (club members of Friends of the Nature) from different schools met at a centre to interact and share information. The programme for that day began with a final match of a football competition that began 2 weeks earlier. The football competition was tagged, "save our species conservation football competition." The different team named themselves according to different animals and plants' species (barn owl team, pied crow team, afforestation team, vulture team, Moringa team and the bat team). The winners were given gifts and footballs in the present of large crowds which included parents, students and school administrators. Debates and quiz competitions were featured during the programme. There was presentation by two experts on why afforestation is necessary and how to do it. Another presented on living peacefully with animals which are part of our environment. The programme ended successfully with questioning sessions from the presentations and presentation of gifts to the winners in the different competitions organised.
- b) The second phase of the survey using questionnaire to ascertain the impact of the programme in the schools and communities was also administered and is currently being analysed.

On behalf of all the programme's team members, I want to thank Rufford for giving us the opportunity to contribute towards a safer environment. Through the programme, actions were spurred among the people, gainful interactions and happiness were enhanced as people share information, asked questions and were involved in solving environmental problems like in puzzles. Generally, this project has been able to spark positive attitudinal thinking, orientation and action in people's interaction with their environment. Thank you so much!