

Project Update: March 2008

Brief Report Second Phase of Sensitisation Meetings against Illegal Hunting and Bushmeat Trade — 10-17 March 2008

CAD recently concluded an additional series of three community-based sensitisation meetings in Muabi, Enyandong and Babubock communities as our conservation education strategy to enhance sustainable wildlife management in the Bakossi and Muanenguba forest regions of Cameroon. Funded by the Rufford Small Grants Foundation, these meetings aimed at raising community awareness against poaching, poor hunting practices and bushmeat trade with particular focus on the conservation of endangered species such as chimpanzees, drills which are under legal protection and included under IUCN Red List. Over 104 local hunters and bushmeat traders, community chiefs, councilors, bushmeat consumers from 19 newly identified villages have been fully sensitized against illegal hunting activities in the project area. Since project inception, 220 people (from 19 villages) with interest in hunting and bushmeat issues have been identified and fully sensitized.

During brainstorming sessions of each meeting, local people enumerated various hunting practices and methods used, most of which were non-selective, wasteful and totally prohibited by the Cameroon's wildlife law. While local populations appreciate wild animal resources as an important socio-economic and cultural asset (they are a source of food, income, medicine, cultural value and source of pride and strength) they were equally assisted to recognize the negative impact of these unscrupulous practices on wildlife and people. The meetings provided an opportunity for local communities to understand their user rights over bushmeat as well as the legal implication in killing and trading in endangered and protected species currently under severe stress.

Furthermore, a preliminary explanation of some aspects of the wildlife law was done and, participants collectively defined grassroots' strategies for controlling and monitoring undesired hunting practices. A total of three Follow-up Committees have been formed to work towards the creation of additional wildlife management groups in the project area. It is worth noting that local communities have been very receptive and eager to learn about the law, but expressed dissatisfaction about the aspects of double punishment and the complete prohibition of the sale of bushmeat on which they rely for survival. It should be noted that this exercise is an integral component CAD's ongoing campaigns for the protection of endangered wildlife species in the Bakossi and Muanenguba forest regions of Cameroon.



