

Project Update: September 2019

In continuation of the first project, community education and capacity building took place during this period whereby we intensify our education on the need to conserve forests and riparian ecosystems. This was done through talk shows and discussions on local radio, small gatherings, religious gatherings and community gatherings.

The education took place in the proposed community thus Menji, Kulmasa and Maaluwe and extended it to other neighbouring communities including Saan, Saanpina, Baccie, Kuur and Kpaala where over 700 people (including adults and children) have been reached. These communities are very close to the Black Volta in upper West Region and biologically diverse system comprising tropical/terrestrial forests and riparian vegetation. Based on our field observation the vegetation supports diverse flora (such as *Pterocarpus erinaceus* (EN), *Vitellaria paradoxa* (VU), *Khaya ivorensis* (VU) and *Azadirachta indica* (LC), and fauna such as the white colobus monkey (VU) and crocodile species such as West African dwarf crocodile *Osteolaemus tetraspis* (VU), Nile crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus* (LC), slender-snouted *Mecistops cataphractus* (CR), African buffalo *Cyncerus caffer* LC, *Hippopotamus amphibious* (VU), *Alcelaphus buselaphus* (EN) and fishes such as the *Alestes*, *protopterus* and *Hydrocynus*.

The opinion leaders consulted us and requested that we extend our education and other activities in the communities due to activates such as bush burning, farming, poaching of animals and felling of trees including endangered trees. According to the leaders the Forest and Wildlife Divisions have identified the area a potential Community Resource Management Area (CREMA).

We therefore approached the Forest Services and Wildlife Divisions which they confirmed the plan of assisting the communities to develop the area as CREMA in future.

The Forest Services Division has supported us to raise over 5000 *Khaya ivorensis* seedlings to extend our tree planting in degraded portions in this area.

Based on our observation the landscepe is very rich however, some areas need to be planted to speed up restoration and require an urgent need to convert the area into CREMA to halt all manner of illegalities. As a result of this we (the project team of Rufford) who are the staff of Environment and Agraforestry Foundation, an NGO which was registered in 2017 with Emma Baah Agyapong is a Co-Director/Project Coordinator, Martin Kusi as Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Nasirudeen Abdul Fatawu as Project Officer and Abdulai Mohammed as the Field Officer submitted a concept to French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) for funding on behalf of the communities for the establishment of the CREMA. As a result of this a delegate from the funding agency come to Ghana to inspect the area and confirmed the need to establish the CREMA which the concept has been accepted and yet to submit full proposal on 15th of this month for approval.

In the cause of the education, 7 days intensive training was conducted with 30 members thus 10 from each community comprising of Environmental Management Clubs (EMC) and Community Fire Management Advisory Groups (CFMAG) with the support of Ghana

national Fire Service and Forest Services Division. These members have been accepted by the communities with the backing of the Chiefs in each community as people that will oversee the management of the areas (forests and wildlife) and continue the spread of conservation messages during and after the project period. Their duties and roles have been stated in a simplified handouts to guide their operations and there were tasked to sign membership agreement to ensure commitment.

Prior to the acquisition of Rufford funding, we had already mobilised communities to start with the establishment of tree nursery to continue the rehabilitation of degraded areas. So far more than 5000 *Khaya ivorensis* 100 *Tecktona grandis*, 100 *Terminalia superba* seedlings have been raised to restore portions of degraded areas at Menji, Klumasa and the new communities by the support of Lawra Forest Services Division.



Picture 1: Showing community education at a religious gathering at Menji



Picture 2: Capacity building of EMC and CFMAG members by the support of Ghana National Fire Service Personnel



Picture 3: EMC and CFMAG members presented with protective ware and tools for effective management of forests and wildlife



Picture 4: Capacity building of EMC and CFMAG members by the Project Team



Picture 5: EMC and CFMAG members signing agreement on their involvement and commitment



Picture 6: Picture of our model nursery at Klumasa



Picture 7: Field visit at the proposed CREMA area during field visit by FFEM representative (one with a heart close to the Black Volta River)