

Bafut Watershed Restoration and Protection

Editorial

Support small scale reforestation initiatives

Despite the increasing scarcity of arable farmland, local people in Cameroon are gradually recognizing the relation between water supply and trees. They are taking steps aimed at securing land for purposes of conservation and watershed management

You can promote their efforts by partnering with us

Our Contact:

cendep2001@yahoo.com .
Website: www.cendep.org

The Centre for Nursery Development and Eru Propagation (CENDEP) was created in 1999 as a farmer group and legalized as a Common Initiative Group (CIG) on the 19th July 2000. Her mission is to assist and/or train local people in the domestication, sustainable production and marketing of Non Wood Forest Products (NWFPs) and agricultural products of economic importance and in the sustainable management of natural resources”

This newsletter provides a bimonthly update of CENDEP’s project aimed at restoring and protecting three degraded watersheds in Bafut in the NW Region of Cameroon, with financial support from the Rufford Small Grants for Nature Conservation

Since January 1, 2011 we have continued to raise tree seedlings for field planting when the rains come in March-April. Because of the intense heat, the nursery shades were reinforced and additional 22,387 seeds belonging to 16 tree species sown in the community nurseries. 615 mature seedlings were equally potted. Sensitization meetings were held to disperse doubts and improve community ownership of the project. Fire tracing could not be carried out.



Progress Report Jan-Feb 2011

The main activities we planned for January and February 2011 were:

- routine nursery management
- environmental education in schools,
- fire tracing around the water catchments.
- Assisting more farmers in the design of their farms to incorporate analog forestry as a component of their land

Except for fire tracing all the planned activities were carried out.

A. Tree Nursery Management

Because of the intense heat, the nursery shades in Adiemokong and Akofungubah communities were reinforced. A new shade was constructed in Mughie to complement the natural shade that existed. This is expected to boost the survival rate of the germinated tree seedlings.

The potting of germinated seedlings as well as the sowing of new seeds was carried out in all the community tree nurseries. A total of 22,387 seeds belonging to 16 tree species were sown in the three community nurseries as indicated below.

Community Nursery					
S/N	Tree Species	Akofungubah	Adiemokong	Mughie	Total
1	Croton	250	248	256	754
2	Mellitia conrau	200	200	170	570
3	Polysia fulva	1900	1,848	1,880	5,628
4	Prunus spp	510	420	390	1,320
5	Trema	384	400	450	1,234
6	Hurungena	2800	700	2,900	6,400
7	Red maesopsis	200	200	200	600
8	Vitex	200	160	190	550
9	Cordia dichotoma	14	14	14	42
10	Mellitia conrau	200	200	200	600
11	"Sour salt"	39	-	-	39
12	Glyricidai spp	500	500	500	1,500
13	Acacia spp	350	350	350	1,050
14	Robinia spp	300	300	300	900
15	Sesbania spp	400	400	400	1,200
16	Moringa	40	40	-	-
Total		8,287	5,980	8,200	22,387

The potting of mature seedlings started timidly with just 615 seedlings potted. Potting was hampered by a shortage of polythene bags but would be addressed in the coming weeks.

B. Environmental education in schools

In our January 2011 Newsletter we reported that “an adamant school teacher in Government School Mughie converted part of the school tree nursery into a yam farm destroying some of the seedlings that were already sprouting”. The nursery was rehabilitated after sensitization. Thus pupils were once more able to participate in constructing a nursery to raise trees seedlings for the protection of their water shed. They also participated in the potting of the first batch of mature seedlings from the community nurseries.

C. Assisting farmers in the design of their farms to incorporate analog forestry

Following the sensitization carried out in the project sites on the benefits of incorporating analog forestry in the farm management plan during the previous reporting period, 11 farmers indicated willingness to test the approach. Three others, Mrs Suh Beatrice, Pa Akombo Shadrach, Francis Neba have also joined the group of farmers who are interested in owning private analog forests.

In addition to the planned activities the following activities were carried out:

1. Seed collection

Seeds as well as wildings were collected from the remnant forest in the communities. This was the initiative of the community members and their facilitator. The wildings had difficulty picking up as they were a bit over grown to be potted. This is helping in reducing the reliance of the community on external seed sources although they still express interest in some exotic species they have heard about or seen in other areas of the Cameroon such as '*njangsang*', '*njabe*', '*bibinga*'.

2. Sensitization meetings

Sensitization meetings were held in the various communities to improve community participation of project activities. Even though some devoted members were ensuring that project activities continue as planned, the project team thought it wise to involve a critical mass of the population in the activities. The sensitization meetings were a forum to evaluate the effectiveness of measures taken to improve on the performance of the project.

Thus it was realized that the roster/timetable agreed upon and established to ensure the participation of all the Forest Management Committee members on nursery maintenance was not strictly respected. This resulted in some members devoting extra time to work in the community nurseries.

The sensitization meetings were however very useful as they helped in improving community ownership of the project. For example during the meetings the community members suggested tree seedlings that could be collected from their forest instead of depending on outside sources.

The most positive outcomes of our work were:

- i. To make up for the tree seedlings lost during the previous period due to negligence in the management of the tree nurseries, a community member identified matured wildings in one of the remnant forests and suggested that they be potted for future use. This was done.
- ii. Forest Management Committee members were involved in the sensitization of community members that could not attend the sensitization meetings organized by the project. They carried out the sensitization during village quarter meetings.
- iii. Participation in project activities improved after a visit from the project management to clarify doubts in the minds of some of the community members such as some farmers secretly receiving monetary incentives from the project.

- iv. Eleven (11) farmers requested assistance in designing their farmland to incorporate analog forestry. At the beginning we targeted restoration of watershed. It is very interesting that the local people have quickly understood the benefits of analog forestry besides water provision.

The most disappointing outcomes of our work

One of the most committed community members, M. Ambe Akombo, was accused by detractors of receiving financial incentives on behalf of the community and keeping them to himself. He as one of the key caretakers of the community tree nursery and indicated he would stop his voluntary work if the situation was not clarified.

We talked to the community members to document their feelings.

“I personally see this project as beneficiary. This is because some of the plants found in the community nursery are useful for my cattle. When a pregnant cow eats the leaves of the vitex plant for example, it facilitates removal of the placenta after she calves. I would like to have my own forest where I can plan these trees for my cattle” **Mr. Christopher Mkwachi**

“Some projects gave our community members money . You do not have money, that is why many people do not turn out for the activities we plan” **Mr. Christopher Mkwachi**

“In the past I did not like participating in project activities because I had plans of leaving the village. Now I realize I have an obligation to my community and so I also put effort in group activities like others” **Godwin Neba: Secretary Mughie Forest Management Committee.**

News compiled by **Youndjie Koleoko Gabriel** (Project leader)

Contributors: Wirsy Eric F. Ngah Presley Bongnjo and Isidore.