



CENTRE FOR NURSERY DEVELOPMENT AND ERU PROPAGATION

(CENDEP)

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# Bafut Watershed Restoration & Protection

## Progress Report Volume 1: October 2010



In August 2010, CENDEP started working with three communities (Mughie, Akofungubah and Adiemokong) in Bafut in the North West Region of Cameroon to restore and protect their degraded watersheds. This is through the use of a forest management system called analog forestry. This system was developed in Sri Lanka by *Ranil Senenayanke* and is being practiced in many countries across the globe. Analog forestry work started in Cameroon with a pilot project in Bui Division with support from the Netherlands Committee of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN NL). It is now being replicated in Bafut with financial assistance from the Rufford Small Grants for Nature Conservation.

*Participatory physiognomic study of the Nta'ayah remnant montane forest:* The project team and members of forest and water management committees from the three communities have already carried out a physiognomic study of one of the remnant montane forests in the area. During this study they were able to identify keystone species necessary for the establishment of an analog forest. A Keystone species can be described as a tree species that acts as an indicator of faunal activity within the forest ecosystem (habitat, feeding, resting nests etc) and their presence or absence may determine the abundance of wildlife (mammals, rodents, birds etc) to the casual observer. In analog forestry it is important to identify these species especially as we are interested in bringing back lost plants and animals to the area. Keystone species can be identified through observation or interviews with community members like hunters. The local people assisted in the identification of these and other species, naming them in their dialect. They were taught how to describe the structure of a forest. This is essential in guiding them to select tree species to use in replicating a forest with the same structure and function as the remnant one. The local people are not only interested in restoring the degraded watershed but also in seeing more wildlife in their community.

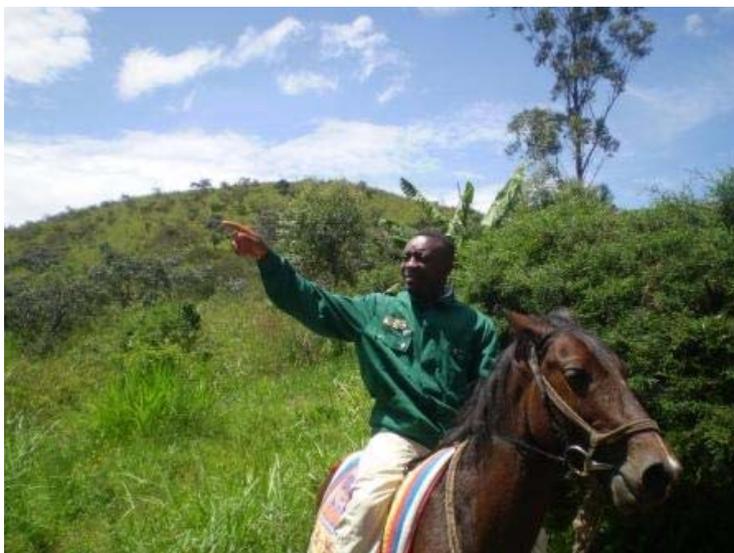
Following this, a seed collection expedition was carried out to gather native tree species seeds from remnant forests in the eco-region. As the forests had almost completely disappeared it was difficult to find tree seeds. The remnant forest surveyed was very distant from the community and not very rich in plant diversity. Only seeds from two tree species were ready for collection. So the project is also obtaining seeds from outside the project area (introduced species) to increase the biodiversity of the area. The New Forest Project is supporting the project with agro-forestry seeds but these seeds are used mainly with the farmers on the buffer zones of the water catchments earmarked for protection. By the end of the second month of the project community members were already identifying and providing information on important tree species in the area whose seeds were already getting mature for harvesting. Some of the members even embarked on collecting the seeds for the project.



**Baby tree nurseries:** Three community tree nurseries have been established in Mughie, Akofungubah and Adiemukong as well as two school nurseries in Akofungubah and Mughie. These nurseries will provide tree seedlings to bring back the lost forests while at the same time serve as a tool to educate pupils on tree nurseries and community watershed restoration and protection activities. School head teachers have revised their schedule to allow their pupils to participate

in environmental education activities and the children are very excited taking part in outdoor activities. The children are unfamiliar with the term analog forestry and need to be reminded every session. So their teachers are proposing different terminologies that the children are conversant with. The children are learning how to prepare nursery seed beds and care for young plants in the nursery. In the coming months they will be taught how to transplant the seedlings into polythene bags and how to harden them up before taking them to the field. Three tree nurseries shall be created in the primary schools selected to participate in the project. This will give room for the children to participate in outdoor activities that they cherish much.

**Compelling community support:** The people of the Njimuyah community (one of the three villages) say it is their first time to work with a non governmental organization. Njimuyah



is one of the most enclaved and underserved communities in the entire Bafut Fodom. They have a very poor road network with very limited access to the rest of the communities. The motorcycle put at the disposal of the field staff could not cope with the bad roads and was replaced by a horse donated by a bonafide cattle grazier, Mr. Ngwa Christopher Mukwasi. This is in contrast with our just ended initiative in another community where farmers and graziers

were at loggerheads, with constant destruction of planted trees by cattle. The Bafut Council supported the project with 280 tree seedlings. The Njimuyah Development Manjong (NDM) which is the over-all development organ provided feeding for physiognomic team during the entire period of the physiognomic survey. Two farmers liked the idea and have allocated parts of the farmland to be converted into analog forests. Project staff are assisting



Tools were distributed to the various communities to facilitate nursery work. The women were not very happy with the distribution because the tools bought were tools mostly used by men. It was a mistake made by the project team. The three management committees are asking the project to assist them in legalizing

their institutions but no provision was made for this sort of activity in the project budget.

At the beginning participation was low. The situation changed when chairpersons of the water/forest management committees joined the field staff to sensitize the population in churches and meeting houses.

The potential threat to the young seedlings by domestic animals was previewed and nurseries sites fenced with local materials



#### *Exploring adaptation strategies to climate change:*

Some members of the project staff who are currently participating in an online training course in community adaptation to climate change took advantage of field activities and engaged the 3 communities in conducting a participatory community needs assessments with the aim of addressing some of their priority needs/problems. The training is intended to design community based adaptation projects that may attract funding from donor organizations. It is hoped that by the end of our engagement in these communities, we would have completed a project outline and a ready-to-launch and fund project that addresses some of the priority needs of the 3 communities.

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