

Project Update: January 2010

Report on Alternative Enterprises Being Promoted to Curb Illegal Hunting and Bushmeat Trade in the Bakossi Landscape Region

Since 2008 the Community Action for Development (CAD) has been tackling critical issues affecting wildlife resources and people's livelihoods in the Bakossi Landscape area in the S.W Region of Cameroon with committed financial support from the Rufford Small Grants Foundation. Besides raising community awareness about the plight of endangered species and promoting primates conservation, the project builds local capacities and supports hunters in viable micro-enterprises intended to curb the ever rising pressure on wildlife resources in the region. These conservation-related livelihood support systems are not only contributing to people's living conditions but equally kindles their interest in taking a leading role in wildlife management. During the third phase of this project we continued to assist local populations in enterprises such as pig farming, beekeeping, snail farming and small scale poultry.

1.0 ACHIEVEMENTS IN SUPPORTING LOCAL LIVELIHOODS

1.1 Pig Farming

We continued to support piggery activities of our target groups through on-farm training and the provision of improved piglets to hunters and bushmeat traders. Ten pigs have been bought and distributed to 10 local hunters (six men and four women). Three of the hunters have gone ahead to introduce more pigs into their farms. This has raised the total number pigs in the field to 13. It should be recalled that our approach here is that of Passing-Over-the Gift. In this case, when a beneficiary group produces piglets, one piglet is passed on to a newly identified hunter or bushmeat trader. CAD pig farms are spread over in Ndibse, Nteho, Nkack, Muaku and Bangem.

1.2 Snail Farming

As a newly introduced innovation in the region, this activity is increasingly attracting local interest, particularly among women and children. Beside the provision of six bundles of plastic nets and snails to four wildlife groups; seven snail farmers (four men and three women) have been involved in this activity with a total of 4,250 snails on their farms. Some of the farmers are already earning income from this venture. It is worth noting that although snails serve as an important alternative to bushmeat; this valuable resource is itself subject to severe threats not only in our project area but in West Africa in general where it is heavily collected for food and income.

1.3. Beekeeping or Apiculture

1.3.1 Expansion in Beekeeping Activities

We have bought and donated 10 beehives to project beneficiaries. In addition, the Nteho Wildlife Group has constructed and installed an additional three hives through self effort. This has brought the total number of beehives installed to 12 Out of this number, four have been colonised by honey bees (*Apis mellifera*). In addition, some members of wildlife groups are helping to build the capacities of fellow community members in this venture.

1.3.2 Provision of Beekeeping equipment

In order to facilitate practical beekeeping, CAD purchased and donated bee farming equipment to beneficiary groups and individuals. These include 10 hives, 12 veils and six smokers. Excepting beehives, the equipment serves as protective clothing for bee farmers during hive inspection and honey harvesting processes. The distribution of this equipment is as follows:

	Bee suits	Smokers	Veils	Bee hives
Pepper soup women	5	2	5	4
Hunters (men)	6	3	6	6
CAD	1	1	1	0
Totals	12	6	30	10

1.4. Small-Scale Poultry

Another alternative enterprise being promoted among hunters is small-scale poultry using both local and improved breeds. Seventy chickens have been donated to local people. The farms exist in Ndibse, Nteho and Nkack. Local people are generating significant income from the sale of fowls as they serve as suppliers to CAD.

1.5. Organic Gardening

We sustained efforts in the diversification of the food and income sources of local people as well as influencing their hunting habits. Following the distribution of seeds, we have assisted wildlife groups and individuals to set of vegetable farms. Eight vegetable farms (three group farms and five individual farms) have been established involving 12 women and three men. In addition, almost all families we worked with grow at least one type of vegetable in home gardens. Vegetables cultivated include egusi, fluted pumpkin, okra, bitter leaf (*Vernonia* sp.) and *Amaranthus* sp. However most of the seeds supplied failed due to the long drought period experienced in the area this year.

1.6 Basketry

Though not initially planned, we supported one hunter in basketry as alternative income-generating enterprise to illegal hunting. This enterprise has a local and tourism market that we found worth promoting. Baskets are used locally by both men and women in harvesting and transporting farm produce to markets as well as for storage.

1.7 Establishment of a Pig Demonstration and Breeding Farm

In order to ensure regularly supply of piglets to hunters and bushmeat traders, we set up a small pig breeding farm with an initial stock of two pigs (one sow and a boar). Besides supplying piglets to needy people, the unit will also serve as a learning center for the entire community.

1.8 Preparation and Signing of Protocols with Project Beneficiaries

In order to clarify the roles and responsibilities of both CAD and local communities in project implementation, CAD signed protocols of collaboration with all project beneficiaries. All

those who are signatories to this agreement have decided to decline from illegal hunting and take over other profitable activities such as beekeeping and piggery.

2.0. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- We are faced with the problem of inadequate working materials and equipment to expand in these activities. As such we are unable to support all the several requests that we receive from new communities.
- Due to the difficult terrain in which we operate, the lone motorcycle we have regularly breaks down and this make extension very difficult.
- Some people who are involved in illegal hunting activities hide their identity as hunters and bushmeat dealers for the fear that they will be arrested. This therefore makes the identification process very difficult.
- The volunteers serving at CAD do not receive salaries and what they earn as allowances is unsatisfactory. While this could weaken staff commitment to work, it also puts Management in the fear that staff could leave CAD in search of other more paying jobs.
- Two of our pig farming groups suffered from the recent African swine fever epidemic

3.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is also the need to intensify and expand in the newly introduced alternative sources of income and nutrients so that people spend more time on them than going hunting. In addition, a study of a marketing strategy to add value to produce from these activities is necessary to increase local profit margins.
- CAD will also need further strengthening of local wildlife groups put in place by way of legalisation and capacity building in monitoring and control of illegal activities, especially now that part of the project area has been turned into a national park.
- There is the need to for an environmental education programme for school children who might grow up as hunters when they drop out of school for poverty reasons or weak academic performance. This will help to build an informed new generation that takes interest and leadership over wildlife protection at an early age.
- In order to understand the bushmeat market situation in the project area, there is need to conduct a bushmeat market survey to generate baseline information to inform conservation and decision-making.
- There is the need to improve CAD's networking capacity through registration with national and international networks so as to ensure information and experience sharing with organisations having similar conservation objectives.
- Need to organise training workshops on each of the above livelihood systems, particularly in the area of beekeeping and pig farm management so that local people's skills will be more developed in these activities than in hunting.

We wish to extend our sincerely gratitude to the Rufford Small Grants Foundation in the UK for the financial support given us to execute this project. We hope this collaboration grows more and more. We equally extend our thanks and appreciation to all the local groups, individuals and other conservation organisations that have assisted us in one way or the other.

