

CENTRE FOR NURSERY DEVELOPMENT AND ERU PROPAGATION

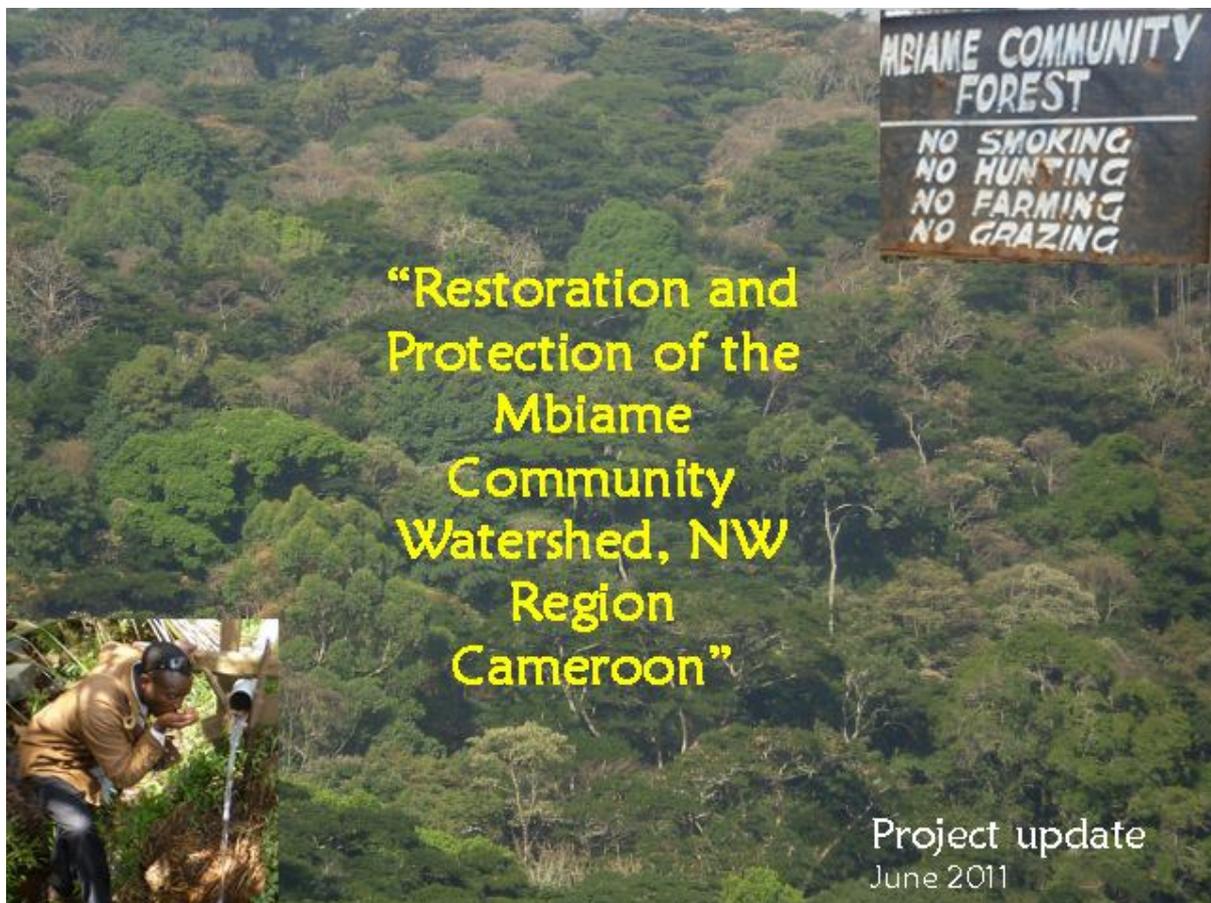
(CENDEP)



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Project update
June 2011

Dear Readers,

NEBF Newsletter is a bimonthly update of the field activities of CENDEP within the framework of the project “Restoration and Protection of the Mbiame Community Watershed, NW Region Cameroon”. This project is a one year project with financial support from the New England Biolabs Foundation. The project will run from June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2012. Please visit our blog (<http://cendepnews.blogspot.com/>) regularly to get an update of the project. Your suggestions are welcome.

CENDEP is a community based organization that is active in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon and recently in the Central African subregion. CENDEP promotes the domestication of non wood forest products and restoration of degraded forest areas using analog forestry. She is also involved in promoting value chain development for non wood forest products like honey and eru (*Gnetum spp.*).

We are glad to announce that during the recent meeting of the New England Biolabs Foundation (NEBF), the trustees approved a grant in the amount of \$US7500 for CENDEP to continue the restoration and protection of the Mbiame Community Watershed, in the NW Region Cameroon using analog forestry techniques. This one year initiative will enhance the just ended 3-year IUCN NL¹ funded project to expand and conserve the Mbiame communal forest for the provision of ecosystem services notably water, biodiversity and carbon. The goal of the present project is to enhance the water supply potential of the Mbiame communal forest through the following objectives:

- a. The restoration of the degraded communal forest using analog forestry techniques.
- b. The improvement of tree cover in the peripheral zone of the water shed through the practice of agro-forestry i.e incorporating trees in farmers’ fields.

¹ Netherlands Committee of the International Union for the Conservation Of Nature

The news that the analog forestry project in Mbiame could continue, made possible by the New England Biolabs Foundation grant, was welcomed enthusiastically among former project participants and staff of CENDEP who suffer from limited funding cycles and pre-determined strategies of donors that often fail to produce desired outputs due to the inability of the local actors to sustain initiated actions.

This news was communicated to our field staff when he was taking round one of CENDEP's intern, Max Frieda from the University of Washington, to see some of the work that CENDEP does. Despite the end of the IUCN NL funding CENDEP maintained in contact with the community and together having been exploring other sources of funding to continue the work started with IUCN NL support. During the visit with the intern 848 tree seedlings belonging to 7 different species were identified to be ready for field planting. The seedlings were produced by farmers who were trained by CENDEP in the previous project. The seedlings were immediately transported to the forest for planting in July 2011. Thus the project started on a good footing.

Following the grant award by the NEBF, a sensitization meeting was organized in the palace of the fon (traditional ruler of the Mbiame people). The meeting was to review the activities of the project and schedule activities for the first month. Women, youths and traditional authorities as well as council authorities took part in the meeting. After addressing some of the pertinent questions posed by community members especially on the measures to be taken by the project to safeguard tree seedlings that shall be planted out in the degraded forest areas from being destroyed by stray animals, the following recommendations/resolutions were adopted:

5 hectares of degraded forest land was targeted for cultivation during the short farming season that would last from August to November during which short cycle crops like beans, potato, tomatoes, huckleberry etc would be cultivated alongside the planted 848 mature tree seedlings identified. During the meeting 15 farmers were selected to join the 21 who were authorized to farm in the forest because of the training they had received from the previous project.

12 farmers were selected to establish private nurseries to produce seeds for the project. This now brings to 18 the number of farmers who will be involved in seedlings production. The NEBF grant has taken the process ahead by helping in privatizing seedling production. Villages that participated in the previous project will no more run community nurseries. One of the difficulty in managing community nurseries was that they were sometimes abandoned to a few devoted community members. Community nurseries shall however, still be established in new communities to enable the new comers to be trained on tree seedling production.

In addition:

The following conditions were agreed by the 18 farmers who expressed interest in seedlings production.

- a) Each individual farmer must be able to produce tree seedlings of at least 7 different local species including fruit trees like mangos, avogado spp, and Kola nuts.
- b) Nurseries must be well managed especially during the dry season to ensure that seedlings produced are healthy for out-planting. The said nurseries must equally be located in accessible areas to ease transportation of seedlings to the planting site.
- c) All the farmers involved in seedlings production must equally participate in all other project activities like fire tracing and monitoring of planted treess.
- d) Polythene bags shall be provided to farmers by the project but only after the field technician is fully convinced of what the farmer has put in place.
- e) Mature and healthy tree seedlings shall be bought from the farmer at a price to be agreed.
- f) Before tree planting next rainy season, all private nurseries shall be examined and the best 3 in terms of tree species, healthiness of the

seedlings and better management of the entire nursery shall be awarded prizes.

To promote sustainable agricultural practices around the peripheral zones of the forest through the promotion of agro forestry, the project will be assisting farmers with agro forestry seeds. A request will be submitted to our partner New Forests Project for agro-forestry seeds to add to those that are locally available.

To improve the survival rate of tree seedlings that shall be planted, farmers agreed to establish a dead fence that can last for at least 3 years using poles of eucalyptus that shall be eradicated from the forest. This dead fence will be closely followed with a life fence using erythrina and other life fencing tree species. Farmers asked the project to support this effort by providing nails that will be used for the dead fence.

A negative development since the end of the last project has been the unpredictable attitude of some local authorities who seem to be “playing a hide and seek game”, as one community member lamented. The management of cattle has remained a major setback for the survival of planted trees. That is why farmers are putting more emphasis on controlling the trees and their crops through life fencing.



Not all the trees planted in the former project survived