

A REPORT
ON TREE PLANTING IN THE OKU COMMUNITY FOREST

14 to 29th August 2012

Project title

**'Oku Community Forest for benefit sharing' funded by World Bank and administered
by Catholic Relief Services'**

CAMEROON GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT WATCH
(CAMGEW)

Act Locally, Think Globally



Mother Earth's Future in our Hands

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ABBREVIATIONS

CAMGEW –Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch

DO – Divisional Officer

HRH – His Royal Highness

MINFOF – Ministry of Forestry and Wild Life

MINEPIA – Ministry of Livestock, Fishery and Animal Industry

OCF – Oku Community Forest

OCR – Oku Community Radio

OREP – Oku Reserve Protection

OCDA – Oku Cultural and Development Association

Acknowledgement

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INTRODUCTION

PRESENTATION OF CAMGEW

Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) is a non profit created in October 2007 with authorization number N° 000998/RDA/JO6/BAPP to solve environmental and women's problems in Cameroon. CAMGEW works locally and thinks globally, integrating gender in solving environmental problems in Cameroon. CAMGEW believes that the future of our mother planet-earth is in our hands and also that the planet can be sustained by putting social and environmental justice at the centre of development. CAMGEW seeks to achieve her objectives by liaising with other like minded organizations worldwide. She has resolved to function according to core values of honesty, engagement and dedication in total respect of its constitution. CAMGEW has as vision "Changing lives of women, children and communities while protecting the environment and as mission to fight poverty; promote sound environmental management, gender balance and economic sustainable development.

PRESENTATION OF PROJECT

CAMGEW won the World Bank organised Development Market Place Competition in Cameroon on good governance in the forestry, health and education sector in July 2011. The project CAMGEW submitted was titled 'Oku Community Forest Management for Benefit Sharing'. This project had to train 120 persons from groups (especially women groups) and schools on bee farming, provide them with 200 colonised beehives at subsidised rates.

The project objectives were as follows:

- Promotion of apiculture for participatory forest management. Community ownership of beehives in forest push them to protect their beehives from bushfires and harm thereby avoiding forest degradation,
- Increase number of trees in the forest through nursing and planting
- Increase awareness of various benefits from the forest that can help population fight poverty while protecting the forest

The project was to nurse and plant 7000 trees in the Oku Community forest. This bee farming training workshops were in this line. Considering that the participation of forest community in forest management is part of forest governance, CAMGEW through this project engaged local people to own beehives in the forest after receiving training for them to better manage the forest. Ownership of hives by people in Oku will push them to guide against bushfire and forest destruction as they protect beehives as source of income. Bee farming will give them a source of livelihood from the sell of honey harvested and make them see the importance to protect the forest. Oku white honey is already being considered as a Geographical Indication Product and it is hoped that the market for this honey will be secured.

CAMGEW was not only interested to train those who are involved already in bee farming, she was interested to have new groups who know nothing about bee farming trained and provided

with colonised bee hives that will give them a source of livelihoods and make them see the need participate to participate in the protection of the forest.

In a long run CAMGEW hopes to continue to work with trained groups in a network to maintain and increase their number of beehives in the forest, assist in honey harvesting, processing and marketing.

INTRODUCING TREE PLANTING ACTIVITY

Activities marking the campaign of regeneration of the Oku Community Forest (OCF) started on the 14th August 2012 when a delegation of six people left CAMGEW office at 8 am and visited the site at compartment III of Emfvu-mii Forest Management Institution (FMI). The regeneration exercise ended on the 23rd August when the Divisional Officer for Oku Sub Division together with the Oku Community Forest stakeholders launched the tree planting campaign to regenerate the OCF with 7000trees, mainly *Prunus Africana*.

TREE PLANTING ACTIVITIES

On the **14th August 2012** five people with the technical assistance of the Chief of Post for Forestry visited the site and feasibility studies were carried out. It was privileged that the tree planting be focused toward the two water sources where water is collected and used in Elak-town and other places. Channels were marked at a distance of 280meters and demarcated at a spacing of 4 meters from one spot to the other on the opposite sides of the traced line. This gave 70spots per line and 100lines were finally traced in which 7000seedlings would be planted. It should be noted that the interval from one line to the other is 5 meters. The activities started at 9 am and ended at 4 pm.

On the second day, 67men and women and 2 staff from CAMGEW visited the site at 6 am on **16th August 2012**. Three of the workers were selected to act as group leaders (Shang Lawrence, Ngum Godlove, and Koh Eric). The 64 others were divided into three groups each headed by one leader. Each group leader positioned one worker per line and at the end of the day the 64 workers slashed 64 lines of 280M. After accomplishing the days task every one went home at 2 pm.

On the third day the **17th August 2012**, 36 specialist of slashing were chosen to finish the 36 lines remaining and 28 others made up of women, students and young ones started the transportation of seedlings from the nursery to the planting site. Two group leaders controlled the loading and off loading of the seedlings and at the end of the day 666seedlings were transported to the planting site. On the other hand, one group leader controlled slashing and two staff did general supervision in the field. People came to work at 6am and retired home at 2 pm.

On the fourth day, **18th August 2012**, workers assembled at 6 am and everyone was doing transportation from the nursery to the planting site. 60 workers transported 2228 seedlings; three group leaders controlled the loading and off loading while two staff were for supervision. Workers went home at 2pm.

On the fifth day, **20th August 2012**, 72 workers came to work at 6 am and proceeded with transportation from the nursery to the planting site. They transported 2832 seedlings; three group leaders controlled the loading from the nursery and off loading at the planting site, while two staff supervised field work and transportation.

On the sixth day, **21st August 2012**, 74 workers started work at 6 am and making two turns to the forest instead of three, seedlings got finished after having transported 1279 seedlings. Transportation ended at 11 am and everyone started placing seedlings into the lines and positioning on spots where they will be planted. Three workers were placed into each line and controlled by group leaders. At the end of the day, at 2 pm 2000 seedlings were positioned.

On the seventh day, **22nd August 2012**, 67 workers arrived at 6 am. Six new leaders(Ngek Gilbert, Jai Umaru, Mbendam Isaac, Wirba Tata Henry, Ndimongang Gerald, Chung John Nying) were assigned to adjust sticks and check the 4 meter interval from one planting spot to the other inter-line. 58 workers continued with positioning seedlings on spots indicated with sticks, three leaders controlled the positioning and two staff members supervised the activities. The seedlings were completely positioned and sticks checked and adjusted. Work ended at 2 pm and workers went back home.

On the eight day, **23rd August 2012** was launching the tree planting proper of the 7000 seedlings of *Prunus Africana* in the OCF. Workers arrived the nursery area at 6 am. They were 72 workers and were divided into 8 groups of nine each headed by a leader. There after workers left for the forest. Leaders were positioned to their groups and group members written with markers on the first pegs of the lines. This partition continued to the last line at 7 45 am when every one was entitled to a days task.

Mean while, the Divisional Officer for Oku Sub Division and the OCF stakeholders, not forgetting some notables and members of the community were already arriving in the planting site accompanied by the Oku community Radio (OCR) and other Community Radios and one TV station. They animated the event leading to the launching of tree planting in the OCF and by 8 am speeches proceeded from the stake holders in this order.

The Chief of Post for Forestry, The Delegate of MINEPIA, The Representative of HRH the Fon of Oku who doubled as president of OREP, the Home Branch President of OCDA, The Representative of the Mayor of Elak- Oku Council, The Director CAMGEW and the Divisional Officer for Oku Sub Division. After the Divisional Officer's (D.O) speech, came a symbolic presentation of *Prunus Africana* seedlings by the D.O and OCF stakeholders and subsequent launching of the planting by the D.O facilitated by the Chief of Post for forestry in the presence of the population.

There after, journalist interviewed workers and as soon as authorities' retired home workers took their lines and the tree planting went on. The 7000 seedlings of *Prunus africana* were planted the very day under the supervision and coordination of CAMGEW staff, with the technical assistance from the chief of Post for Forestry in Oku Sub Division.

On the ninth day, **29th August 2012**, three hard workers selected in the course of the tree planting exercise meet at 6 30am and went to OCF to replaced dead sticks indicating tree spots

with live ones. On this day, the planted trees were checked and stray goats were already eating up the newly planted Prunus. These goats were chased away from the planted site but precautions should be taken.

CHALLENGES

- Stray goats eating the newly planted Prunus seedlings.
- Most forest land in compartment III is deforested and not covered during the regeneration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Hunt stray goats eating the Prunus seedlings.
- Propose a project limiting livestock to grazing line on the high plateau of OCF and apply agro forestry for animal forage
- Propose project on regeneration and protection of OCF for posterity interest.



CAMGEW model nursery of 7000 Oku Community Forest native tree (*Prunus africana*)



CAMGEW staff working in the nursery



Tree seedlings carried from nursery to the Oku Community forest for planting



Women transporting tree seedlings to the forest for planting in August 2012





Community leaders going to the forest to lead tree planting

First from left Director of CAMGEW Wirsiy Emmanuel, Second is Home President of OCDA Fai Ndishangong, third is Divisional Officer for Oku- Liewotue Patrick, fifth is Sub Delegate for MINFOF for Oku-Nformi Nestor and sixth is Fon of Oku's representative Shu Fai Ndifon Soom)



Community members going for tree planting in the forest



CAMGEW staff and Oku Youths participating in Oku community Forest regeneration



Community leaders launching tree planting exercise

SUCCESS STORY FROM PROJECT OBJECTIVE THREE

Objective 3: Increase awareness of various benefits from the forest that can help population fight poverty while protecting the forest.

Environmental education

Environmental sensitisation was carried out through Oku Community Radio, during holiday workshops and field visits to the forest with schools and community members. The population in Oku was sensitised on the importance of the forest, ways to conserve it, services that forest render to humanity, forest as carbon sink that mitigate climate change, forest for ecotourism, etc. Radio programmes were carried out in the Oku Community Radio twice every week on Mondays between 9 am to 10 am and Wednesdays from 4 pm to 5 pm by CAMGEW staff. The radio programmes were disturbed sometimes by power cuts. CAMGEW got support to carryout environmental education in schools to instil in students the need to grow up with love for forest in Oku from another partner. This made our forest education programme for children and students strong. CAMGEW worked in partnership with Useful Holiday Workshop organisers for students in Oku to support outreach activities in the forest sector. 250 students and pupils attended our outreach forest education.



Students and teachers from PSS Nkwen and St Paul College in Bamenda come for field work in Oku forest and CAMGEW nursery with CAMGEW invitation.



Visiting students from schools in Bamenda receiving lessons on beehive construction and bee farming.



Children on holidays receiving lessons on nursery development and forest regeneration



Children learning how to draw forest features in forest education lesson during holiday workshop



Drawn forest features by pupils during holiday workshop



Nature education for students on importance of forest to water in Oku water catchment in the forest



Nature education with children in the forest



Environmental education with children in the Oku Community Forest during holidays