

**A COMPILATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POEMS, RHYMES,
CONVERSATIONS, ILLUSTRATIONS, QUOTES AND SHORT ESSAYS
WRITTEN BY COMMUNITY CHILDREN AND YOUTHS AROUND THE
KILUM FOREST TO MARK KILUM FOREST DAY**

**CAMEROON GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT WATCH
(CAMGEW)**



Project title:

“Citizen Engagement in the Conservation of Kilum Mountain Forest”



Website: www.camgew.com

Email: Camgew@yahoo.com; camgew@gmail.com

Telephone (237) 675184310, 697037417

Address: P.O Box 17 Elak Oku, North West Region, Cameroon

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Compiled by Ponda Saah and Wirsy Emmanuel Binyuy

INTRODUCTION OF CAMGEW

CAMGEW is a not-for-profit organization created in October 2007 with authorization number N° 000998/RDA/JO6/BAPP to look for solutions to environmental and women's issues 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 the hands of men and women, young and old and also that this planet can be sustained by putting social and environmental justice at the centre of development. CAMGEW is interested in developing the value chain of brown honey in Bui Division of North West Region of Cameroon. CAMGEW has as mission "Environmental protection by strengthening the capacity of community members especially women and young people in eco-businesses and forest regeneration for livelihood improvement".

ABOUT THE BOOK

This booklet is a compilation of chosen environmental poems, rhymes, conversations, illustrations, quotes, short essays and lyrics of environmental songs written by community children and youths around the *Kilum Forest*.

These write-ups portray the perception and familiarity of community children and youths towards the forest. The children might not have observed the significance of inclusion of stylistic/literary devices and literary language in some of the poems in this book. Despite this, CAMGEW still maintains the originality of the writings of the children. CAMGEW made no changes on the poems presented by the children.

This booklet is the voice of community children who appreciate the beauty of nature and the benefits of living in a healthy environment. Its content summarises the Forest/Environmental problems for which man is responsible and the extent to which man suffers from these problems.

The message the children want to pass out in this booklet can be summarised in a few words;

“Refrain from unsustainable environmental practices like deforestation and pollution, its effects are evil and devastating and fall back on man”

PART ONE

ENVIRONMENTAL QUOTES/SAYINGS

1. Man owes Ecology an Apology - *Nshom Nancy Kefiy 19 Years*
2. I like Environmental Education because I want an environment that doesn't need protection

-Nyameyen Lucien Tiy 18 Yrs
3. When the last tree dies, the last man breathe his last breath

- Nshom Silas Mbuh 16yrs
4. When the last tree is felled and the last river dried, only then man will realise that all the currencies of the world put together cannot sustain his life.

- Nshom Falon Ghanyuv 16yrs
5. The environment provides enough to satisfy everyone's needs not every man's wants

- Zita Kefum 20yrs
6. I depend on natural resources for survival, Kilum-Ijim forest is the reservoir

Antoinette Nyuykighan 18 Yrs
7. I hug Kilum-Ijim forest for my livelihood - *Abel Langji 12 Yrs*
8. He that plants trees loves himself and his neighbours *Briand Makeji 14 Yrs*
9. The environment is where we all have a mutual interest , it's everything we have in common and it is in every one's interest to conserve it

--Clearijoys Nuyuybin 22 Yrs
- 10.The biggest threat to mother earth is the mistaken belief that someone else will conserve it *Yong Godlove Langji 16 Yrs*
- 11.One tree makes a million match sticks but one match stick can burn a million trees. Little things matter most.

Emmile Kongnyuy 27 Yrs
12. What we do to nature is a mirror image of what we do to ourselves

—Nshom Ruth Markeh 10 Yrs
- 13.Man cannot live without *Mother Earth* but planet Earth can live without man— *Njioh Banardine Yafe 28years*

14.The future will either be green or not at all - *Budji Kelly-sandra 11 years*

15.It's during the darkest moments that we struggle to see light. It will be deeply dark in an eroded, bare and polluted environment so much that we can't find light

--- *Nchinda Racheal 21yrs*

16.Man prefers to change not because he sees the light but because he feels the heat. It will be too late to change in a warmed planet, we will melt gently like snow

-- *Nchinda Racheal 21yrs*

17.Planet together let's make the world greener - *Ndifon Kindness 25 Yrs*

18.Why fell good trees to put out bad newspapers? *Nchinda Alain 12yrs*

19. If not for our lungs, air pollutants won't have a place to rest

--*Ndifon Estel Berinyuy 19 Yrs*

20.Which other planet can sustain life apart from *Mother Earth*? Don't destroy it, good planets are hard to find

--*Ndifon Hance 21 yrs*

21.Our future generation will never forgive us if we hand over a bare and warmed environment to them- *Budji Mirelle 10years*

22.Human life depends on water, the reservoir depends on us, save trees and create a reservoir. We never know the worth of water till the well is dry.

Ndifon Estel Berinyuy 19yrs

23. He who plants a tree saves a life - *Nshom Kelisha chifon years*

PART TWO
POEMS, RHYMES, CONVERSATIONS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND SHORT ESSAYS

1. Environmental Irony

If you tell me that the dragon was extinct from the face of the earth because it was capable of breathing fire and was a menace to human life, on what pretext do you want to get some rare birds, plants and animals extinct?

The irony is that man will get extinct because he is just a consumer and solely dependent on nature's produce for survival

By Tewi Malvis Tayeah 19 Yrs

2. Rhyme

Witchcraft !!! Witchcraft!!!

How wicked are you

Witchcraft is when you kill the bees,

Witchcraft is when you destroy its habitat

Witchcraft is when you get your crops pollinated by bees but still go on to steal bees' food

But Real witchcraft is when you call your lover "Honey"

Repent! Repent !

The danger that hangs over you is deplorable

Yes, it hangs over you like the "sword of Damocles"

By Pamela NGON 16 YRS

3. Poem

The Love of Nature

Man is connected to nature with blood ties

Without natural resources, man can't survive just for a minute

I love nature dearly

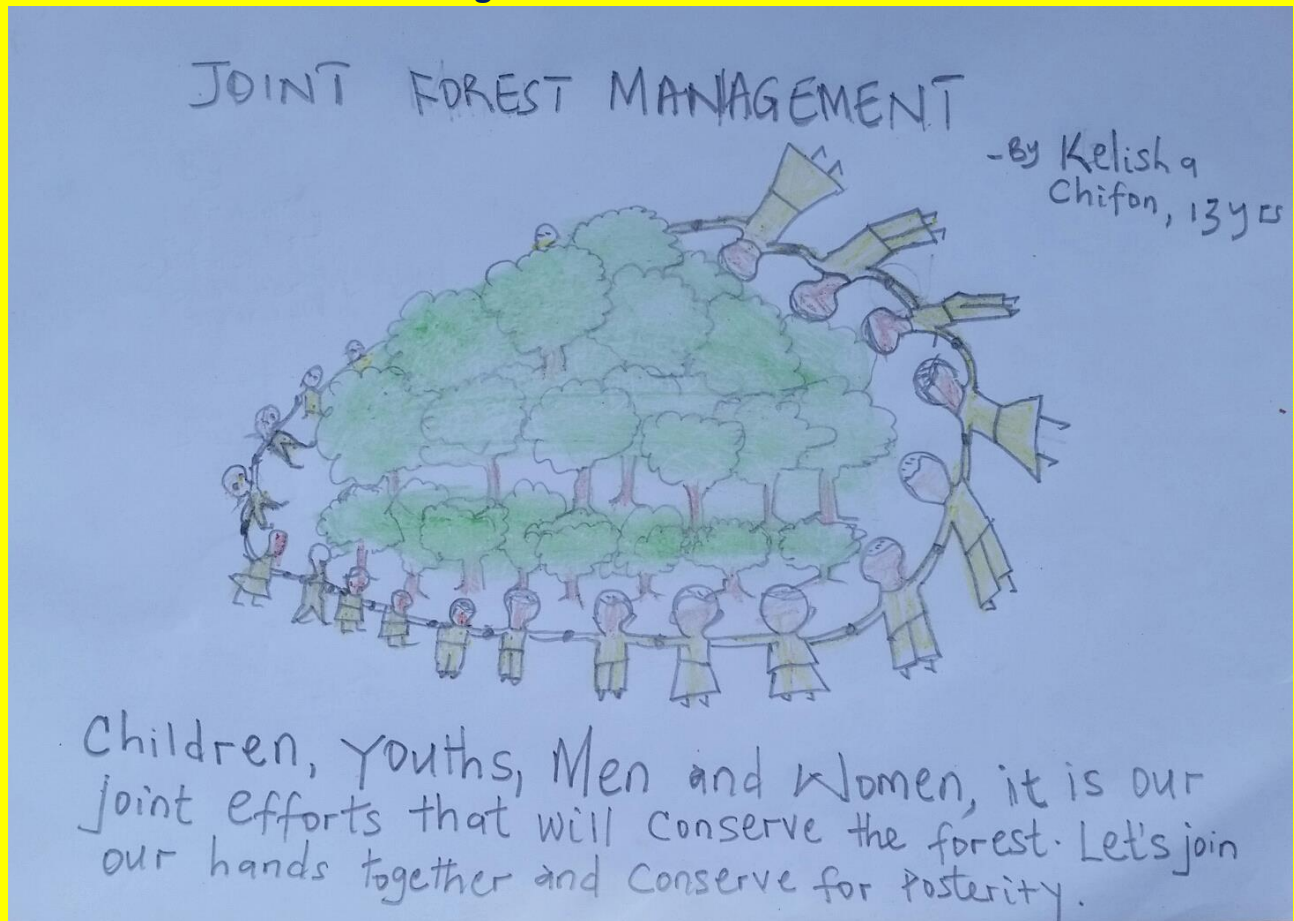
The best way to show love to nature is to put back into nature the equivalence of what you take out of it.

The potentials of nature portrays God's love for mankind

The love of nature is impartial

By Nyameyen Lucien Tiy 18 Yrs

4. Joint Kilum Forest Management



5. Poem

Kilum-Ijim Forest! My Refuge

Oooh Kilum Ijim forest

You are the source of the Oku white honey which is our means of livelihood

The watershed to the adjacent communities

You are the source of fresh air

You check against climate change

You are a habitat for many endemic plant, animal and bird species

You are a source of herbs for our traditional medicine

You are a grand reservoir for natural resources on which our lives depend

Ooh Kilum forest

You are my refuge

By Nshom Falon Ghanyuv 16yrs

6. Environmental song

Lyrics

We are lucky

We are lucky
That we were born here
Near the forest of Kilum mountain
There are many things in this forest that God has given to us.....
Leaves and barks of trees for our medicine.....
Good water and sweet honey
Oooh wildlife like the black monkeys
Beautiful birds that we have every where
Let us protect our forest
Let us protect our forest
Let.. us.. protect ..our ..forest

By Ruth Markeh 10 Yrs

7. Poem

The Honey Bee

Ooh Honey Bee
A little creature you are
With amazing impacts
You are so peaceful that you prey not on any other creature
You are too patriotic and too busy to mind about others businesses
You are the only insect that produces food eaten by man
Your honey contains all substances needed by man
Your honey contains enzymes, vitamins, minerals and water
In the act of collecting nectar, you pollinate flowers and ensure high agricultural yields
You act with intricate cooperation in an organised society
Honey bee
If you disappear from the face of the earth, man will have a few years to survive
It is in everyone's interest to maintain a healthy population of this creature.

By zita kefum 22yrs

8. Poem

Man - the Leading Threat to Mother Earth

Man!

You are the leading threat to mother earth

God gave you the power to rule over the things of the world

Not power to destroy the things of the world for your greed

Plants and animals have the right to live

Men planned for rapid industrialisation and destroyed virgin forests

This made rare birds and animals extinct

Every little creature was created for a purpose

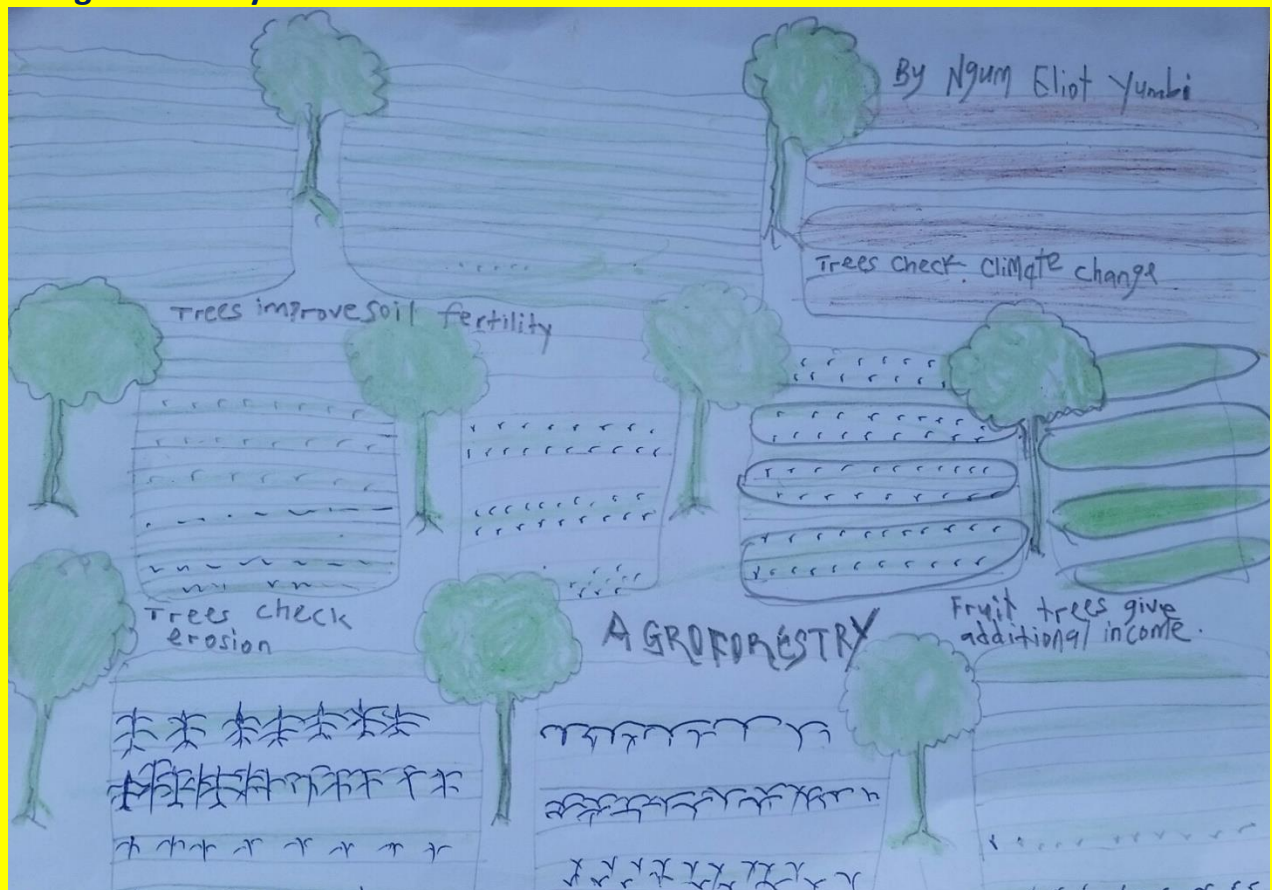
Man has no right to get them extinct at random

Ecological balance exists only when man will understand that God made these things to cohabit with him

Replenish what you deplete from nature

By Nshom Clovis Nchinda 22yrs

9. Agro-Forestry



10. Poem

Whose Job?

Forest conservation ! Forest conservation !
It was an important job that could be done
It was the responsibility of *four* people namely **EVERYBODY, NOBODY, SOMEBODY and ANYBODY**
Everybody was sure *Somebody* would conserve the forest
Anybody could have done it,
But *Nobody* did it
Somebody got angry about this because it was *Everybody's* job
Everybody thought *Anybody* could do it
But *Nobody* realised that *Everybody* would not do what *Anybody* could have done
It ended up that the forest disappeared
Springs shut up, droughts and low farm yields benefited from the confusion
and punched each individual on the face
Finally, *Everybody* blamed *Somebody* when *Nobody* did what *Anybody* could have done.

Lesson: play your part first. We all have individual interest in a communal property.

By Nancy Kefiy 19 Yrs

11. Poem

What do you Gain?

Man! Man!
What do you gain out of your greed?
Your greed has made you so wicked that you can't spare a cricket or even an ant
Wicked man!
What do you gain when you endanger plant and animal species?
What do you gain when you get some species extinct?
Greedy man!
Upon all the farms you have,
You are not satisfied
You still encroach into forest land to destroy trees and set farms
What do you gain when you destroy the habitat for other creatures?
Wicked man!

You can't differentiate your wants from your needs
If you do, you will let go your wants
Mother earth provides enough to satisfy your needs not your wants
Greedy man!
What do you gain?
It's your instant gains that will lead to your infinite pains

Tewi Raheal Kebong 17 yrs

12. Conversation

Ngum: Good morning my brother

Lon: Good morning

Ngum: Are you not going for the community work today?

Lon: which work?

Ngum: Tree planting in our community forest

Lon: Who will pay? And how much?

Ngum: It's not for pay

Lon: Hahahahaha i see you are a goat. This is real madness. It's not my family's farm? Come on, say something else.

Ngum: The forest is nobody's farm. It belongs to everybody because it serves all of us. It is only our collective actions that will help conserve the forest. It is everyone's responsibility and it is in everyone's interest to conserve the forest.

Lon: How is it my problem? Perhaps bee farmers are planting for their honey, firewood fetchers plant to compensate for their indiscriminate felling of trees, herbalists for their medicine, they all get their pay in one way or the other. What should I plant for? Nonsense!

Ngum: Trace the source of the water that flows through that tap in your house and tell me

Lon: I know it's from the forest

Ngum: That's enough reason for you to protect the forest. No trees, no water. The spring from which your grandfather use to collect water from some 10 years ago dried up because you felled all the trees around it

Lon: You offend me again. If I felled my father's trees, how is it your concern? Did that spring in your father's farm dry off when you felled those eucalyptus trees for timber and sold it to sponsor that your concubine with the money? I mean Belinda.

Ngum: I never meant to offend you. I'm sorry but leave Belinda out of this. Eucalyptus trees drain underground water and make rivers dry. They create

what an English man calls a "Green Desert". They are not good for water catchments and needs to be removed from the Kilum forest. Eucalyptus is an exotic tree species of the Kilum forest. Just forget about all those things and join me let's go and plant together in our water catchment area in the forest. It's our community forest and belongs to no one individual.

Lon: I will only go because it's you. If the forest is serving the entire community and doesn't belong to one individual then I also have the right to it. My problem is when some of you want to claim ownership of some parts of the forest and think they can force me to plant. Let me dress up, I will plant at least a thousand trees and I will make everyone know that I planted the trees. I will monitor them till they grow.

Moral: *For citizen engagement in conservation, patience and tolerance work where criticisms failed.*

By Nshom Clovis Nchinda 22yrs

13. Article Written By Lobte Annette 18 Yrs

Kilum Mountain Forest- A Touristic Destination

Kilum forest is a Montane Forest.

It is found on mount Kilum which is the second highest peak in central and West Africa after mount Cameroon. Its peak is 3011m above sea level. It is the largest remaining natural habitat in West Africa. It is a habitat for many endemic plant and animal species. For this reason, it is considered a biodiversity conservation hotspot.

Kilum forest is a habitat for the endangered Bannermanns taoraco- a red feathered bird classified under the IUCN Red list as critically endangered, the banded wattle eye, the zebra mice, and endangered plant species like *Newtonia camerunensis*.

Kilum forest hosts a crater lake which is a habitat for the lake Oku clawed frog (*xenopus longipes*) which is found only in lake Oku and no where again in the world.

It has beautiful scenery that attracts tourists.

Bee farming is one of the preoccupation of the forest people.

Kilum forest is the source of the Oku white honey which is certified as a *Protected Geographical Indication Product*. Oku white honey has a very promising market because it's rich in medicinal properties.

It is the watershed of the neighbouring communities. It's the source of many rivers that flow into neighbouring Nigeria.

The Oku people practise carving with dry trees from the forest

Oku is Cameroon and Africa in miniature.

It is a touristic destination. I can't wait to see you in Oku.

By Mildred Ghanyuv

Kilum Forest

Drawn by Nshom Silas Mbul

No Kilum Forest, No Oku

You give us life

You give us health

You give us wealth

Yaaa health is wealth

Ooh yes, your bees pollinate our crops; your trees check erosion and climate change

Ooh yes, Oku is known worldwide for your potentials.

Ooh yes I'm from Oku.

No Kilum Forest, no Oku

By Silas Mbuh 16 Yrs

16. Poem

A Million Reasons to Smile

Kilum forest

The priceless gift of nature

At Dawn, I am marvelled by the melodies produced by the whistling of your birds
and crickets and the whooping of your animals

I am marvelled by the swinging of your trees in the gentle breezes

Then dive my eyes across thy hills into the beautiful skies

Catching the rainbows and the rising sun,

And taking a breath of fresh air from thy trees

I see a million reasons to smile till Twilight.

By Yong Dickson Ntangle 16 Yrs

17. An Article

Pollution

Pollution is the discarding of waste or hazardous substances unto the environment more than the environment can accommodate. The various components of the environment that gets polluted are land, water and air.

This is caused mainly by man through his industrial, commercial and primary activities. These hazardous substances are called pollutants. Pollutants include household waste, dumped plastics, oil waste, smoke from factories and car exhausts and burning of farms. These pollutants contaminate land we live and cultivate on, the water we drink and the air we breathe.

The devastating effects of pollution fall back on man. Man suffers daily from water, land and air borne diseases that leads to high death rate. Man raises the dust, yet he complains there is too much dust. If not for his lungs, there won't be a rest point for the dust he raises. The biggest problem mankind has ever faced is man himself. We just shift the blame to have a clear conscience. We are all guilty. Until man refrain from his unsustainable environmental practices, he continues to live under the daunting effects of his actions. Pollution is as evil as war.

By Godlove Langji 16 Yrs

18. Poem

A wonderful wonder

Kilum forest

You are a wonderful wonder

You are a fountain of treasures

We are lucky we are the treasured

Through you, we see the beauty of nature

Your potentials are many that no tongue can tell

We are heavily indebted to you for the services you render to us

We are unable to repay you in full

We pledge to repay and service the debt regularly

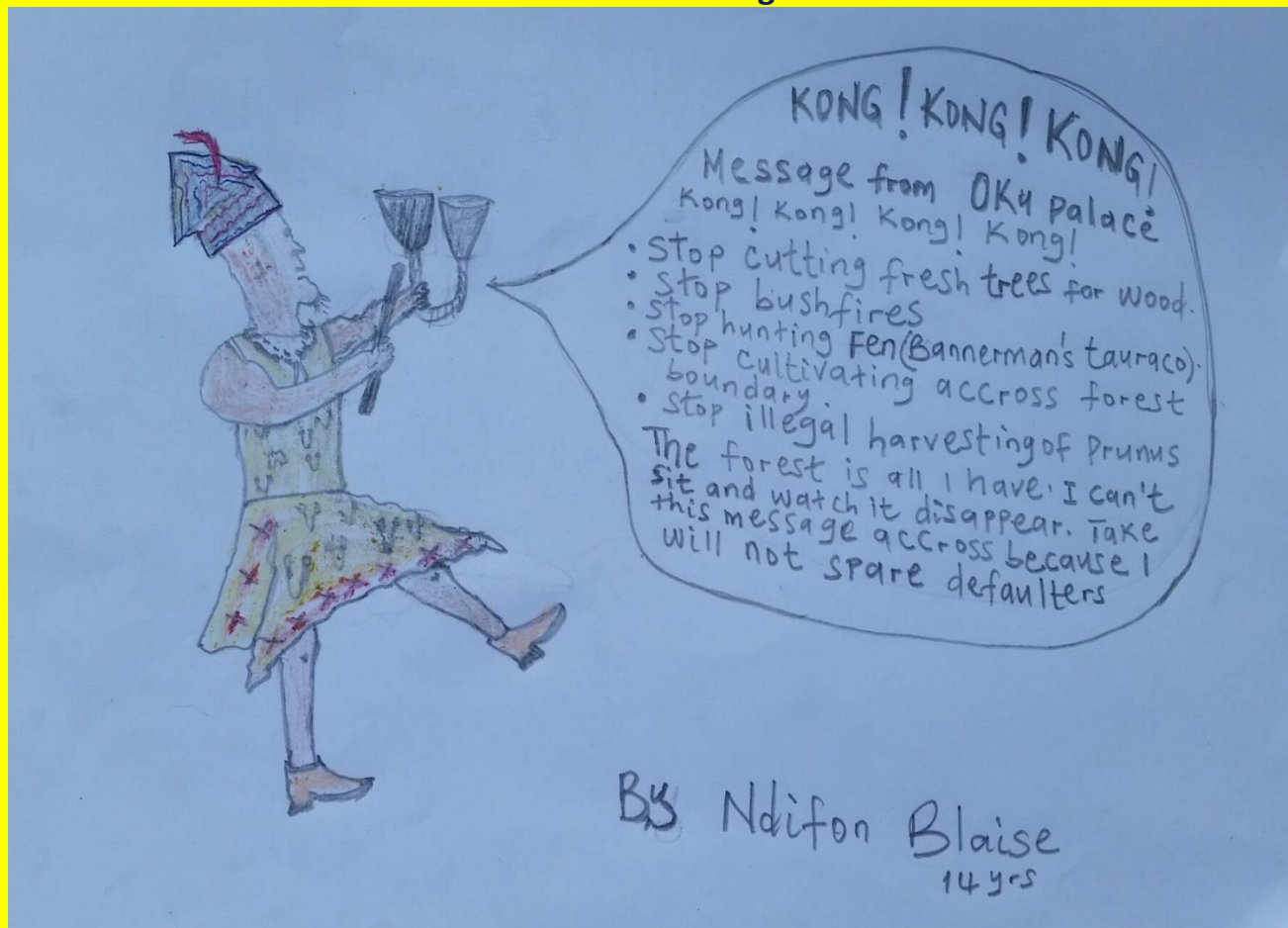
We will feel your account with plenty of trees

You are our resource bank

You are a wonderful wonder

By Nyameyen LUCIEN 18 Yrs

19. Role of Traditional authorities In Forest Management



20. Poem

The Dye Of Beauty

Kilum Forest

In you, we see the beauty of geography
In you, we feel the joy of love
When we look up to your rock faces
And the glittering reflections of the sun's rays on your waterfalls,
All we see is the beauty of nature.
Our hearts are gladdened;
When we see your animals display from hill to valley and from tree to tree,
When we see your multi-coloured birds fly across the blue skies,
When water waves wash our feet at the approach of Lake Oku
Our hearts are gladdened
The tasteless, colourless and odourless is your water.
Thy trees purify our air
Our lungs are not troubled
You are the dye of beauty
Thy beauty gives us infinite pleasure

By Ndifon Goodness Jingkoh 15yrs

21. Poem

I Know, Know Thee Not.

Know thee not, the implications of thy cruel environmental acts
The effects of thy deforestation, bush fires, over hunting and pollution

You know not, the whys of these problems you face today
Why thy springs shut up, thy rivers and streams dry off
Why thy crops bear not
Why thy death rate has suddenly increased at a geometric rate

Mighty man, I tell thee
What goes round comes around,
Thy problems results from thy cruel environmental acts

The forest exists to serve thee
Forest destruction accounts for thy sufferings

Stop! Stop!
Stop deforestation
Trees serve as a carbon sink and mitigate climate change
Trees protect thy water sources
Trees check erosion and desertification
Trees produce the oxygen you breathe
Stop bush fires
It destroys forest flora and fauna
Stop over hunting
It leads to the extinction of animal species
Stop pollution
I tell thee, the reservoir for land, water and air pollutants is thy body organs.
Man, save the environment and save thy life.

By Ngalla Alpha Ndifon, 15 Yrs

22. Poem

The Cry of the Poor Forests!

Save me, I exist to serve you!
Remember me too if you love me,
Remembrance is the greatest flower in the garden of love.

Who loves me?
Who will rescue me from the hands of my enemies?
My enemies who aim at extinguishing me from the face of the earth, who say I
have no right to life?
The children are protected by their parents,
The citizens are protected by the law,
The law is protected by the state.

But me! Poor forest! Who will protect me?
No hope for me, poor forest,
No hope for my trees and animals.

Every minute, I hear my poor and helpless animals crying for mercy.
Traps, fires, gun shots here and there, now and then.
My trees are burnt and cut down for your greedy drives.
I'm fatherless. Adopt me.
Oh man! You destroy me, yet I exist to serve you.
Is it when I'm no more that you will value my presence?

Who will help me?

It can only be you, powerful man!

Save me, make love to me, plant trees and I will serve you for eternity, I promise.

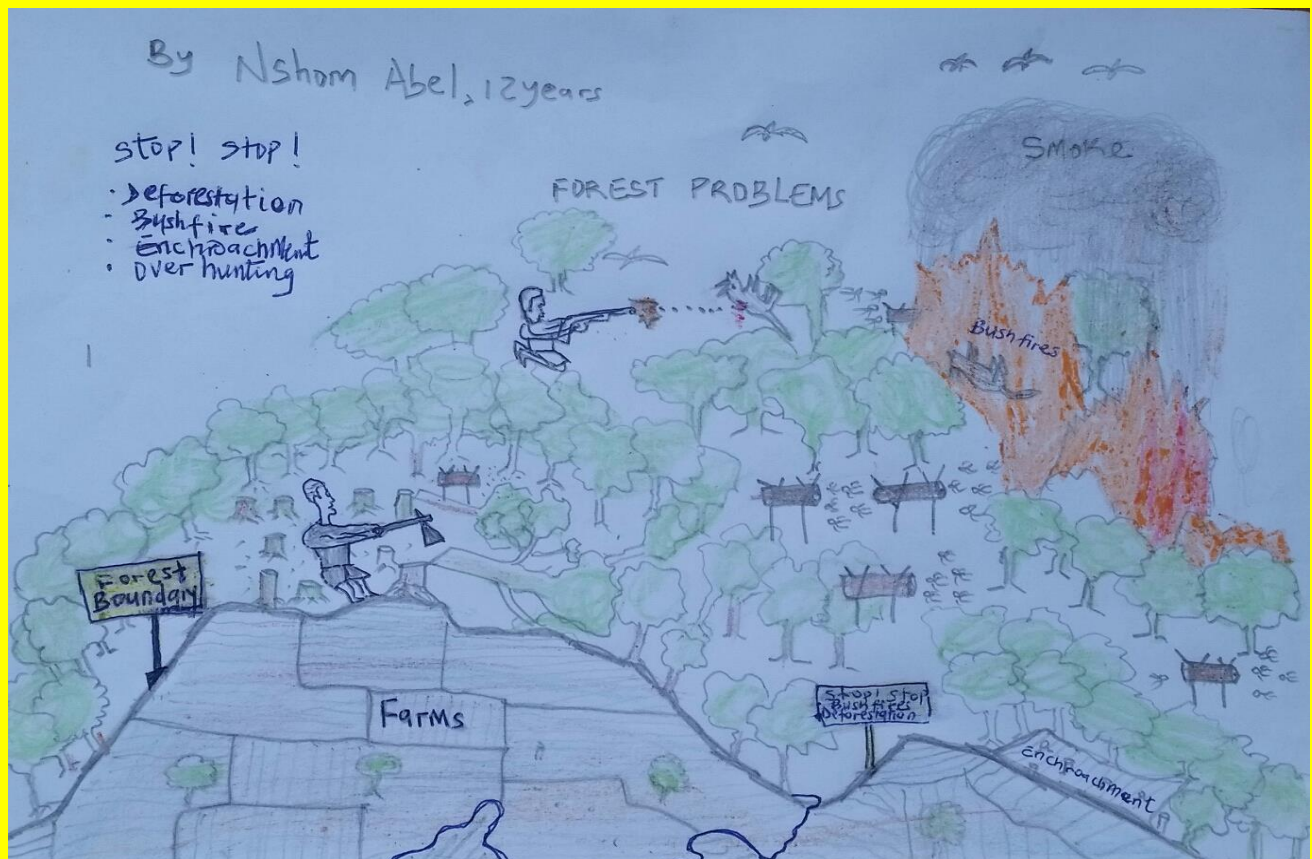
Why do you doubt my fidelity?

Do you doubt that you can't survive just for a minute without the oxygen my plants produce?

What you are doing to me is a plain reflection of what you are doing to yourselves and your descendants.

*By Langji Ponda Saah
Management Officer Nchiy Forest*

23. Forest Problems



24. Poem

Kilum forest

I am Kilum forest
I know you know my name
But you don't know who I am
You don't know who I am
Because you value everything I have but devalue me
I am the reservoir for your values
You need water and air for survival
I host endangered species of fauna and flora
I'm the home of the Bannerman's tauraco
I'm the source of the white honey
All I have is what interest you
Your interest is what makes my name
I can live without you but you can't live without me
I am Kilum Forest

Ngalla Median, 12 Yrs

25. Poem

We Are Prodigal Sons of Nature

Man!
You are a prodigal son
You denied Mother Earth
You tried to kill Mother Earth through your cruel activities
Your misdeeds are many that you are ashamed to come back to Mother Earth for forgiveness
Instead, you want to get adopted by someone else's mother
You move from house to house seeking for Adoption
You sought the adoption of Mars, Venus, Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and even the furthest Pluto
Shameful man!
No one can treat you well or understand you better than your biological Mother Earth
You got frustrated because adopted parents couldn't protect your interest

Man!
Join me; let's go back to Mother Earth

She is merciful and will forgive us
Her prime duty is to sustain her children
Let's show her love by refraining from *Pollution* and *Deforestation*.

Forgive me Mother Earth
Take me back
Without you, nobody sustains my life
I love you Mother Earth

Nshom Nancy Kefiy 19 Yrs

26. Rhyme

Kilum Forest

Ooh Kilum forest
How fresh are thy trees
How fresh is thy water
How fresh is thy air

Oooh Kilum forest!
How sweet is thy honey
How beautiful is thy scenery
How Bountiful Is thy Wealth
Ooh Kilum forest
I stand by you

Nshom Ruth Markeh 12 Years

27. Poem

Deforestation

Deforestation is your daily concern
Man you have taken it as a means to an end
Rather, deforestation is an end to the means
An end to the means of Survival
Our survival is an end
And to the means of making ends meet
Deforestation and its effects is an end to the means of reaching our end
An end to our survival
You just can't figure it now
Wait until you feel the heat by the end.

Yenika Ethel, 13yrs

28. Conversation

Bee Farming, a Lucrative Venture

Sentie: Hello guys! It's been long. How are you doing?

Ngek: we are fine and you?

Nchinda: where have you been all this while?

Sentie: My friends, I have been in the Kilum forest. It's a place to be.

Nchinda: where is the Kilum forest?

Ngek: And what have you been doing there?

Sentie: Kilum forest is a mountain forest. It occupies the slopes of mount Oku which is 3011m above sea level. It's the second highest peak in central and West Africa after mount Cameroon. It's the largest remaining habitat for endemic plant and animal species in West Africa. There is more about Kilum forest that I can tell you. I visit the forest regularly to harvest herbs for traditional medicine. You know I'm a traditional practitioner.

Ngek: okay, we thought you travelled to the coastal areas like Douala, Limbe or even Bertoua without telling us.

Sentie: hahahaha you know I can't. People go there for jobs but here I make a living from the Kilum forest. From the forest I make much money.

Nchinda: seriously? We are not traditional practitioners. Is there any other thing we can engage in to make a living from the forest like you?

Ngek: Good question. Yes tell us more about other forest activities

Sentie: Forest is wealth. Bee farming is one of the most lucrative forest activities. Honey has a promising market

Nchinda: what can we do to produce and sell honey?

Sentie: You just need to learn how to make a bee hive

Ngek: Where are we going to get money to buy materials to make the bee hives?

Sentie: ooh hahahaha making a local bee hive doesn't require any imported materials from the market. All you need is to get bamboos and grass. It is abundant here. Just find these materials and I will teach you how to do it.

Nchinda: How do we get the bees to colonise the hives?

Sentie: Bees locate the hives themselves and colonise them. When you clean your hives and make the environment convenient for bees, they colonise the hives. Mount your hives against prevailing winds, get rid of other creatures in the hive because bees do not like sharing a hive with other organisms.

Ngek: okay, I use to see brown and white honey. Which bees produce brown honey and which bees produce white honey?

Sentie: Bees are the same here. The very bees that produce brown honey produce white honey. White honey is harvested only from the Kilum forest.

White honey is certified as a Protected Geographical Indication Product signifying that it is harvested only from the protected Kilum forest. Tree species like schefflera manii, schefflera abyssinica and Nuxia congesta gives oku honey its characteristic white colour.

Nchinda: **but we also have these trees elsewhere**

Sentie: *Yes, but also, the altitude, soil characteristics, and climate of the Kilum forest account for the white colour of the Oku honey. Brown honey is harvested elsewhere. If you mount your hives in the valleys, you need to transport them to the forest at night or very early in the morning to the Kilum forest if you want to harvest white honey*

Ngek: **It's a strenuous activity**

Sentie: *Yes, nothing good comes easily. Strenuous but very lucrative because white honey commands a relatively higher price and is highly medicinal. I use it for traditional medicine preparation. You know I'm a traditional practitioner*

Nchinda: **What requirements do we need to take with the administration to make us eligible to mount hives in the forest? How much do we need to pay?**

Sentie: *It is our community forest and it belongs to no one individual. You don't need to pay taxes to mount hives in the forest. The only thing required of bee farmers is that they should continuously check against forest problems that destroy the forest and their hives.*

Ngek: **Thank you big brother. You can call me a bee farmer now.**

Nchinda: **You call me the “Honey Bager”**

Sentie: *Hahaha the pleasure is mine. Take it serious. We have to benefit from it as we conserve it for posterity. Catch you later. Bye bye*

Story by Yong Felix, 17 yrs