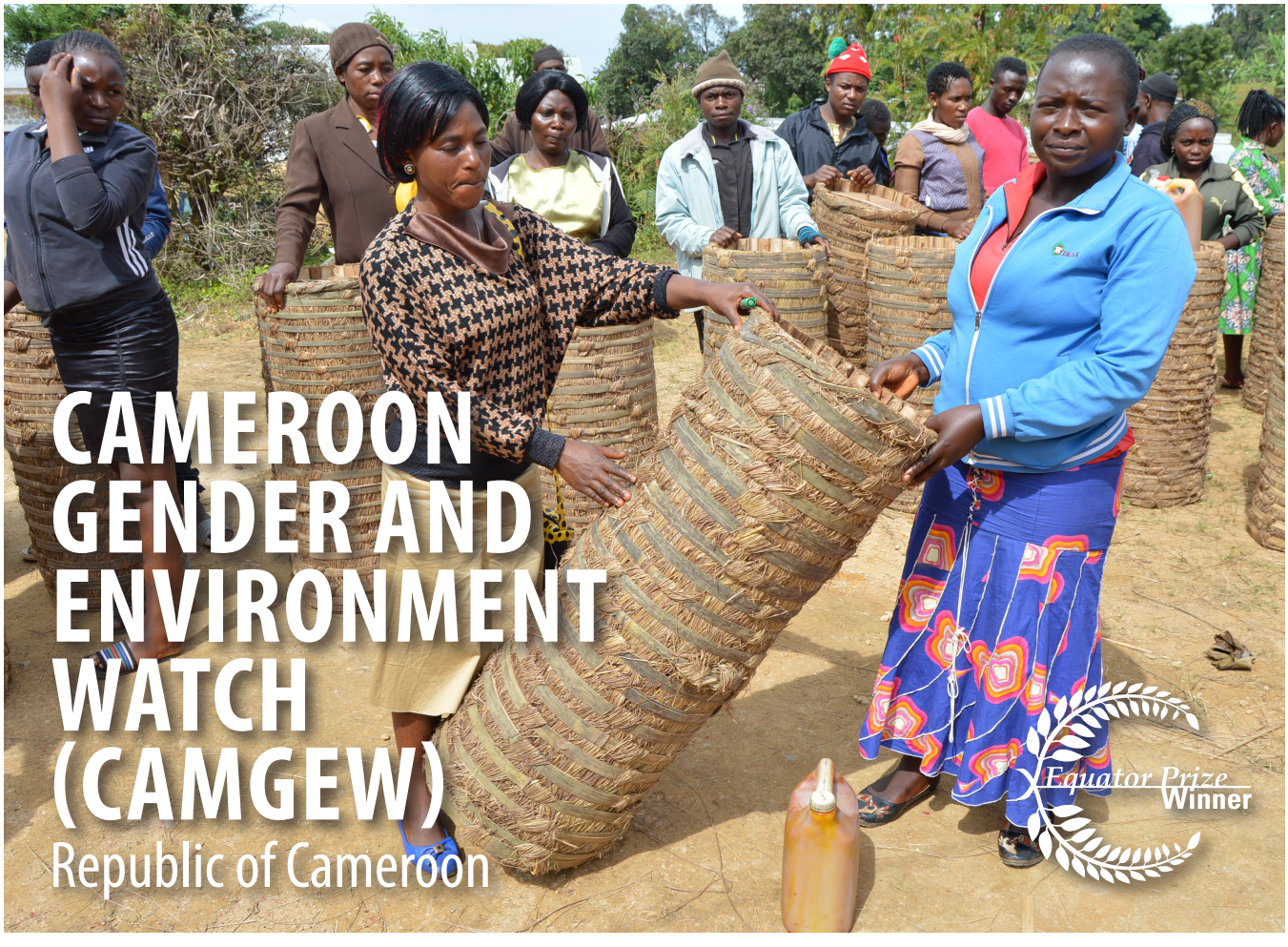
EQUATOR INITIATIVE

UNDP



CAMEROON GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT WATCH (CAMGEW)

Republic of Cameroon

Equator Initiative Case Studies

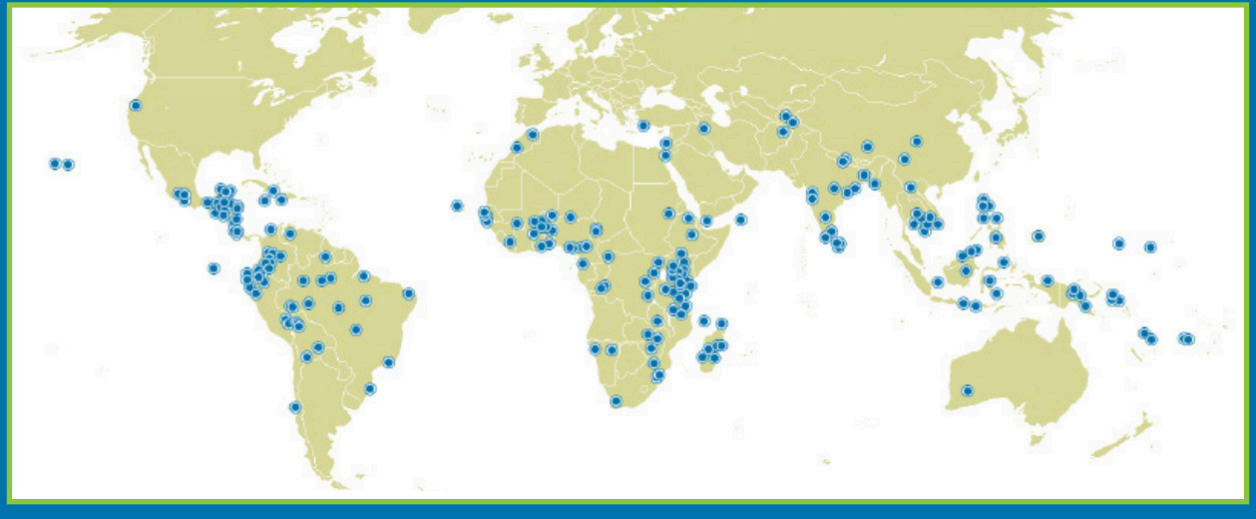
Local sustainable development solutions for people, nature, and resilient communities

UNDP EQUATOR INITIATIVE CASE STUDY SERIES

Local and Indigenous communities across the world are advancing innovative sustainable development solutions that work for people and for nature. Few publications or case studies tell the full story of how such initiatives evolve, the breadth of their impacts, or how they change over time. Fewer still have undertaken to tell these stories with community practitioners themselves guiding the narrative. The Equator Initiative aims to fill that gap.

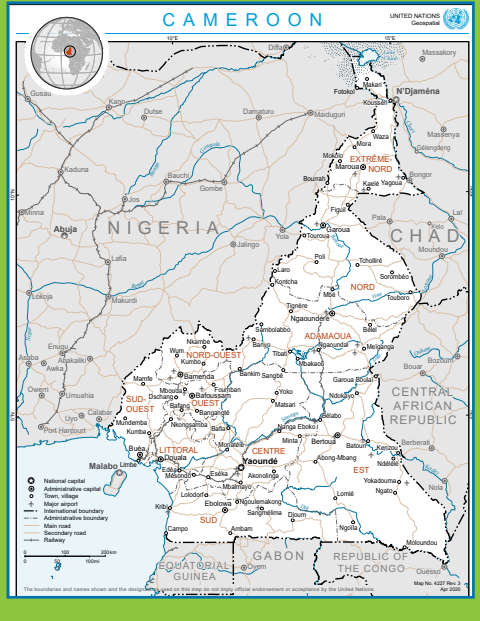
The Equator Initiative, supported by generous funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), awarded the Equator Prize 2019 to 22 outstanding local community and Indigenous peoples initiatives from 16 countries. Each of the 22 winners represents outstanding community and Indigenous initiatives that are advancing nature-based solutions (NBS) for climate change and local sustainable development. Selected from 847 nominations from across 127 countries, the winners were celebrated at a gala event in New York, coinciding with UN Climate Week and the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly. The winners are sustainably protecting, restoring, and managing forests, farms, wetlands, and marine ecosystems to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, help communities adapt to climate change, and create a green new economy. Since 2002, the Equator Prize has been awarded to 245 initiatives.

The following case study is one in a growing series that describes vetted and peer-reviewed best practices intended to inspire the policy dialogue needed to scale nature-based solutions essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



PROJECT SUMMARY

Created in 2007, Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) supports women's empowerment, community livelihoods, and sustainable ecosystems, while addressing environmental challenges in the Northwest Region of the Republic of Cameroon (Cameroon). Recognizing that local livelihoods are deeply integrated with the health of local ecosystems, the group has planted 80,000 bee-loving native trees in degraded areas of the Kilum-Ijim Forest. The trees naturally sequester carbon, protect key watersheds, provide nectar for bees and food for animals, and contain medicinal values. At the same time, CAMGEW has trained 1,388 bee farmers in honey production for market, while also training 772 farmers in agroforestry to bolster soil health and provide alternative firewood sources. To empower women farmers, CAMGEW has offered business training for 1,580 women and micro-loans for 1,325 women. In a time of ongoing conflict in Cameroon, the organization has made a powerful impact on the health of local ecosystems and the well-being of local communities.



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KEY FACTS

Equator Prize winner

2019

Founded

2007

Location

Kilum-Ijim Forest, Oku District, Northwest Region, Republic of Cameroon

Beneficiaries

Nearly 3,000 direct beneficiaries in the Kilum-Ijim Forest region; indirect beneficiaries include seven community forest institutions and 44 villages

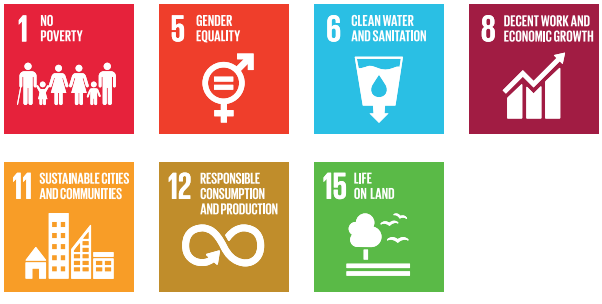
Thematic areas

Biodiversity conservation; Women's empowerment; Forest conservation/sustainable development

Fields of work

Ecosystem restoration; Eco-enterprise or green business; Non-timber forest products

Sustainable Development Goals addressed



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

EQUATOR PRIZE 2019 WINNER FILM

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In the Northwest Region of Central Africa's Republic of Cameroon (Cameroon), the volcanic Kilum Mountain Range meets the Ijim Ridge. The region is home to the 3,011-metre-high Mount Oku stratovolcano, featuring Lake Oku at the explosion crater and the Mount Oku cloud forest surrounding the peak. The 20,000-hectare Kilum-Ijim Forest is the largest remaining area of Afro-montane rainforest on the African continent. It is the last remaining habitat for the Bannerman's turaco (*Tauraco bannermani*), a bird listed as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. The region also provides critical habitat for the Newtonia camerunensis (*Newtonia camerunensis*), a leguminous tree only found in Cameroon listed as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List.

The forest's particular ecosystem properties have made it the only place in the world where one can find the naturally white and creamy honey referred to as Oku White Honey. Its distinctive qualities are produced by native trees, including African cherry (*Prunus africana*), listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. Oku White Honey is one of only two products in Cameroon certified as a Geographical Indication Product, recognizing its unique endemic properties. The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) recognizes the forest covering Mount Oku and the Ijim Ridge as a key biodiversity area in the wider Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot.

The Kilum-Ijim area hosts 18 community forests predominantly used and managed by three tribes, the Nso, Oku, and Kom, as well as a Plant Life Sanctuary protected by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife near Lake Oku. The area is known for traditional healers, wood carving, and non-timber forest products (NTFPs), such as honey, mushrooms, medicinal plants, and spices. While tribes continue to value the forest, the growing population of nearly 300,000 people among 44 villages within walking distance of forested areas has increased pressures on the ecosystem.

Origin and structure

Recognizing that the Kilum-Ijim Forest region holds incredible potential for livelihood improvement, in 2007, Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) formed to increase awareness about forest benefits and revive traditional forest-friendly livelihood activities. One of those activities is the promotion and development of a honey value chain. CAMGEW leaders noticed that when traditional forest beekeeping increases, community engagement in the forest increases, and community members become a first line of defence to protect the forest from fire. Honey and honey by-products, such as soap, candles, honey juice, and wine, create local income and sustainably provide for local household needs.

CAMGEW's mission is to achieve a society free from poverty, gender inequality, and unsustainable environmental practices. The group's work strengthens the community's capacity to engage in eco-businesses and forest regeneration. CAMGEW's initiatives specifically strive to include and engage women and young people. CAMGEW believes that the planet can be sustained by putting social and environmental justice at the centre of development. Bees showcase this truth, as they pollinate 40 percent of global food crops, making them crucial not only to honey production, but also to food security and human survival.

CAMGEW is a local non-governmental organization (NGO) that has a General Assembly of members, a team of paid staff, and a Board of Directors. Funding is primarily generated from foundation grants. The General Assembly is in charge of electing members of the Board of Directors. It also meets annually with the staff and Board of Directors to participate in reporting and decision-making activities.

LOCAL CHALLENGES

Forest degradation and fragmentation

Bushfires, agricultural encroachment, and unsustainable forest harvesting have significantly degraded and fragmented the Kilum-Ijim Forest. In 2012, seven bushfires destroyed large swaths of Kilum-Ijim, and, in 2014, another fire destroyed more than 1,000 hectares of the forest. Additional forest fires have resulted from unsustainable honey harvesting methods and cigarette smoking. Farmers along the forest perimeter also use slash-and-burn techniques to clear land for agricultural cultivation. These fires have gradually encroached on forested areas and have, at times, grown out of control. Forest fires threaten the trees and plants on which bees and wildlife survive. The smoke from burning vegetation can also disturb bees.

Forests in the region have also been encroached upon by domesticated animals. Herd grazing in the forest alters natural habitats by changing soil properties, degrading and shifting vegetation, and reducing tree regeneration.

Similarly, tree cutting for various purposes threatens forest regeneration. Trees are cut for firewood and construction, and young trees are often specifically harvested for carving items like walking sticks, fencing, tools, and hive-mounting sticks. African cherry trees, which have vital medicinal properties and whose populations are vulnerable, are targets for illegal and unsustainable harvesting, which additionally degrades the forest.

Pollution, the introduction of invasive and exotic species, and rodent over-trapping also threaten forest regeneration. The forest has been polluted by non-compostable plastics, bottles, and metals, while seeing an increase in invasive species, such as eucalyptus, cypress, and pear trees. Population growth intensifies pressures on the forest.

Without mitigation, small-patterned forest degradation and fragmentation can lead to large-scale forest loss. As forests cool the earth and naturally sequester carbon, forest ecosystem losses threaten to intensify heat and amplify climate change.

Irregular weather patterns prompted by climate change

Climate change has been linked to irregularly timed arrival of rainfall in the area. Changes in weather patterns have already caused confusion for bees, affecting their honey and food production. In 2018, rains arrived extremely early, causing trees to produce buds for leaves without flowering. If flowers did bloom, harsh rains quickly washed away their nectar, depriving bees of their food. That same year, honey harvests dropped by 40 percent. This trend, marked by changing weather patterns followed by reduced honey production, has been observed for several years. Bee farmers have expressed concern about navigating this climate-related impact to local livelihoods. They have also expressed need for knowledge, methods, and actions to support climate adaptation.

Honey production and marketing challenges

As community members develop more hives and honey outputs increase, the local market risks becoming saturated. While urban and international consumers are interested in Oku White Honey and Kilim-Ijim Forest products, CAMGEW members have learned that consumers perceive their products as low in quality due to a relative lack of value-added processing and refinement. CAMGEW members will need to further organize to increase their collective output of honey, leverage larger buyers, and develop value-added processing and packaging that satisfy the standards of a global urban market.

Gender inequality

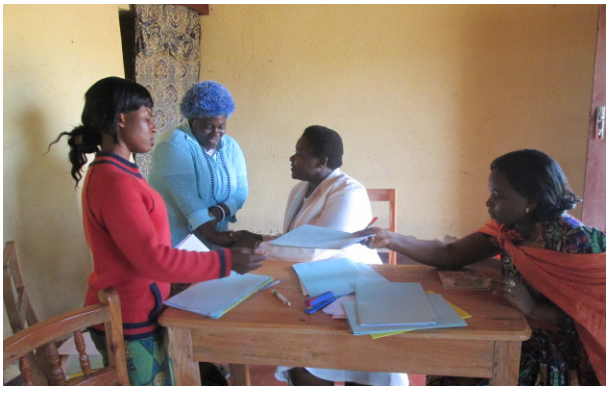
Women and youth suffer the most from poverty and unemployment in the villages around Kilum-Ijim. Although women contribute immensely to household labour and raising children, this work is not valued economically, preventing socio-economic mobility. Similarly, women are not equally included in decision-making and governance. Women have similarly been excluded from apiculture and forest-management activities, as these are often dominated by men.

Political instability and social unrest

Cameroon is comprised of Anglophone and Francophone regions, having been colonized by Germany and then divided into French- and British-controlled areas after World War I. While each region gained independence, they re-unified as one country in 1972. In 2016, the Anglophone regions of Cameroon began to protest against the perception that French-speaking citizens were favoured, for example through the use of French in courtrooms and schools. These protests grew and conflict incited separatist groups to begin fighting for independence. Insurgence affects daily life in Kilum-Ijim Forest communities, including people's ability to work, access basic necessities, and maintain safety. Many forest community members have been displaced, killed, or become refugees in other countries, including Nigeria.

"We came up with the idea of bee farming because we saw that bee farming will get the whole community involved, as they will keep their hives in the forest, with the hives in the forest, they will harvest honey. Honey equals money."

Ernestine Leikeki Sevidzem, CAMGEW Social and Environment Officer



LOCAL RESPONSES

Community forestry

CAMGEW has helped reinvigorate and reorganize community forest governance structures, while ensuring the inclusion of women. Since 2007, CAMGEW has organized elections for seven Forest Management Institutions (FMIs), whose leaders are elected by community members to manage community forests in the Kilum region. Prior to this work, FMI leaders were more than 10 years past their terms of office. CAMGEW also created a multi-stakeholder forest platform for FMIs to exchange ideas on forest issues and assist each other in decision-making.

CAMGEW has focused efforts on ensuring women actively participate in forest management and land-use decision-making. As part of this process, CAMGEW ensures one third of FMI and honey cooperative leadership positions are reserved for women.

CAMGEW provides trainings in forest-friendly enterprises to bolster community engagement in forests, recognizing its links to forest protection. Trainings and resources are provided in honey production, agroforestry, organic coffee cultivation, and sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products (NTFPs).

Collectively, CAMGEW members are helping to protect 20,000 hectares of forest through their stewardship. CAMGEW has also launched community reforestation projects. Recognizing that native plant species are vital to honey and crop production in the region, CAMGEW members have eagerly helped to restore 200 hectares of deforested and otherwise degraded areas, planting more than 85,500 bee-loving trees, including the vulnerable African cherry species. CAMGEW members have also helped create three nurseries growing 100,000 trees.

KEY IMPACTS

Community forestry

- CAMGEW members have protected 20,000 hectares of forest.
- Elections have been organized for seven FMIs in Kilum.
- CAMGEW has provided agroforestry training to 772 farmers.
- CAMGEW has trained 1,018 beekeepers in honey production and beeswax extraction.
- From 2012 to 2019, 80,500 bee-loving trees were planted in the Kilum-Ijim Forest.
- Three nurseries supporting 100,000 trees were established.

Beekeeping training and support

In Kilum-Ijim, forest apiculture has been practiced for centuries. Traditional apiculture knowledge, including how to make beehives by hand with local resources, collect bees, and place hives, has been passed down orally within families and communities. Instead of managing beehives in one location, traditional forest beekeepers would move hives next to forest plants that provide unique pollination characteristics. A few such plants, like the brittle-wood tree (*Nuxia congesta*), in combination with the environment, are particularly influential in creating Oku White Honey and its exceedingly rare properties.

In addition to being highly regarded locally, including for its medicinal and health benefits, Oku White Honey is gaining a broader international market. Since being certified as a Geographical Indication Product by the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI by its acronym in French), demand for the product has increased, and prices have risen annually.

Recognizing that traditional apiculture safeguards forests from threats like bushfires and agricultural encroachment, CAMGEW began assisting communities in reconnecting to apiculture as a livelihood practice. From 2012 to 2019, CAMGEW trained 1,388 community members in apiculture, including in honey production, quality control, and beeswax extraction. The group also distributed 1,388 starter beehives to trained bee farmers. CAMGEW beekeepers harvest Oku White Honey produced by the honeybee (*Apis milifera*), stingless bee honey produced by the stingless bee (*Meliponini*), and brown honey produced by domesticated bees. While brown honey can be white in colour, it lacks the unique flavour and texture of Oku White Honey. Many community members are finding the practice lucrative and are pursuing more knowledge and training to grow their beehives.

CAMGEW assisted in organizing 1,200 bee farmers into five Oku White Honey cooperatives to increase collective output and streamline processing and packaging. The group was also instrumental in helping women gain one third of the leadership positions in each cooperative. CAMGEW organizes training on cooperative management and leadership. It also provides equipment and materials, which have improved the quality and quantity of honey production

KEY IMPACTS

Beekeeping training and support

- From 2012 to 2019, CAMGEW trained 1,388 bee farmers in honey production, quality control, and beeswax extraction.
- From 2012 to 2019, CAMGEW distributed 1,388 beehives to trained bee farmers.
- CAMGEW organized 1,200 bee farmers into five Oku White Honey cooperatives with women occupying one third of leadership positions.

Honey value chain and marketplace development

In 2016, CAMGEW launched the CAMGEW Honeyshop, a resource centre and sales shop for Kilum-Ijim Forest honey. The Honeyshop provides downward pressures on bushfires, as it provides a steady and secure market for honey, while encouraging beekeepers to engage in sustainable forest management to protect their hives. The CAMGEW Honeyshop purchases honey from local farmers and sells to a broader urban market in Bamenda, the capital city of the Northwest Region of Cameroon. The shop also sells honey end products, apiculture equipment and materials, beehives, consultancy services, and beeswax. Since 2016, when the shop began buying Kilum-Ijim beekeeper honey at a steady rate, bushfires have been significantly reduced, nearing elimination. Beekeepers have, in turn, become advocates for the forest in their communities.

CAMGEW also utilizes the Honeyshop's resource centre to train community members on value-chain development and value-added honey by-products, including honey juice, honey wine, beeswax candles, soap, and powder soap. Trainees receive 235 litres of kernel oil and 70.5 kilograms of beeswax as start-up resources. These products help community members sustainably earn incomes, while reconnecting with forest resources. They also provide essential goods for their communities, whose residents at times cannot safely access larger goods markets due to socio-political unrest.

KEY IMPACTS

Honey value chain and marketplace development

- In 2016, CAMGEW created the Honeyshop in Bamenda to advance the honey market.
- From 2012 to 2019, 142 youth and women participated in three-week trainings on entrepreneurship and honey value-chain development.
- From 2012 to 2019, 74 women received training on beeswax soap, powder soap, and candle production, while 42 women received training on honey juice and honey wine production.
- Bushfires reduced to just one in 2017. No bushfires were recorded in 2018 or 2019.

Microfinance for women and youth

CAMGEW has launched a microfinance division specifically aimed at empowering women and teenage community members by providing access to economic resources. CAMGEW offers women and youth microfinance loans for start-up businesses and provides coaching, training, and follow-up support. Borrowers are organized into groups to increase collaboration, idea exchange, and accountability. In conjunction with loans, CAMGEW has conducted training on business skills, honey products, dressmaking, shoemaking, hairdressing, and other income-generated activities. In this pursuit, CAMGEW has also provided counselling and support for women in additional areas, such as rights in marriage; navigating physical, psychological, and economic abuse; pre- and post-natal nutrition through local foods; and sexual and reproductive health education, including pregnancy prevention, especially for teenage girls.

KEY IMPACTS

Microfinance for women and youth

- As of 2018, 1,580 women attended trainings in business skills.
- As of 2018, 1,325 women received microfinance loans valued around US$5,500.
- Training and loan support have been provided to 18 youth for honey value development; 24 women for dressmaking, shoemaking, and hairdressing; and 20 women for recycling plastics to produce fashion accessories and home goods.

DATA, MONITORING, AND REPORTING

Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch's (CAMGEW's) initiatives support the goals, including Article (7) on Identification and Monitoring, of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which Cameroon signed in 1992 and ratified in 1994. The group's work specifically contributes to reporting on multiple National Targets (NTs) outlined in Cameroon's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), the national policy instrument that supports implementation of the CBD, as well as implementation of the global Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ABTs). CAMGEW's data collection, monitoring, and reporting initiatives can be leveraged to support the development of national reports on implementation, which are periodically required of Parties to the CBD.

For example, Kilim-Ijim beekeepers and forest users are engaged in data-collection and monitoring activities as they visit the forest on a daily basis. Planted saplings need consistent follow-up, so community members observe them frequently, in addition to monitoring their beehives. They also monitor multiple species of traditional and livelihood importance, as well as extinction risk. These include African cherry (*Prunus africana*), a medicinal tree listed as vulnerable on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species; *Newtonia camerunensis*, an endemic leguminous tree listed as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List; and Bannerman's turaco (*Tauraco bannermani*), a bird species listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List. Other species observed include *Carapa grandifolia*, used locally as preferred firewood; *Syzygium staundtii*, whose flowers, according to Indigenous knowledge, are important for bees; and *Pittosporum manii*, a medicinal tree providing food for the endangered Bannerman's turaco.

Members provide daily updates to CAMGEW on the state of the forest. CAMGEW staff keep a record of the species, number, and locations of saplings planted from reforestation projects, working closely with community members to ensure reforestation efforts are successful. As a result, the planted trees are growing well without destruction.

Beekeepers also closely monitor their bees, including the stingless bee (*Meliponini*). They record data on honey production of Oku White Honey, brown honey, and stingless bee honey, as well as the arrival of rains, harvest dates, harvest yields, and market prices.

Beekeepers and other CAMGEW forest users also monitor the forest for fire, becoming the first line of defence for fighting bushfire outbreaks. For instance, when one bushfire occurred in 2017, more than 70 community members, including many CAMGEW beekeepers, rushed to defend the forest. As a result, only five hectares were burned. Forest Management Institutions, working in partnership with CAMGEW, also conduct regular patrols, while CAMGEW staff members conduct weekly monitoring visits to follow up on the state of planted trees. As a result of these close monitoring and reporting activities, incidence of bushfire has reduced to near elimination.

Cameroon has not yet released its Sixth National Report (6NR), which will document national-level progress toward implementing the CBD through NTs set forth in the country's NBSAP. However, it is clear that CAMGEW's ongoing monitoring efforts have the potential to enrich Cameroon's 6NR and other national reports.

POLICY IMPACTS

National policy impacts

CAMGEW's work is influencing policy at local and national levels. For example, the group's work in Kilum-Ijim has won several national and international awards, drawing public attention to the importance of the forest, while encouraging and reinforcing national policies aimed at protecting biodiversity. The group's work engages thousands of community members and consumers in the story of Oku White Honey and the biodiverse forest ecosystem in Kilum-Ijim that enables its existence. CAMGEW's framework for local forest governance, which requires at least one third of leadership positions to be held by women, also has the potential to prompt gender-mainstreaming changes across institutions nationally.

At the national level, CAMGEW's work is also helping Cameroon further implement a range of NTs in its NBSAP. For example, CAMGEW's promotion and advocacy efforts contribute to progress on NT 1, which aims to increase awareness about biodiversity. Together with forest communities, CAMGEW assists in sustainably managing 20,000 hectares of Kilim-Ijim community forests, garnering support for forest protection and threatened species conservation, and leading reforestation projects that have planted more than 80,500 native trees. In doing so, CAMGEW's work contributes to Cameroon's NT 6, which aims to reduce ecosystem degradation and fragmentation; NT 7, which focuses on the sustainable management of endemic and threatened species; and NT 13, which focuses on community-based ecosystem management. CAMGEW's empowerment of women through microfinance, training, and leadership also contributes to Cameroon's NT 19, which focuses on gender mainstreaming through the country's efforts to reach its biodiversity targets. Likewise, by improving the livelihoods of local community members, CAMGEW contributes to progress on Cameroon's NT 16, which focuses on increasing incomes of local communities through the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Contributions to the global agenda

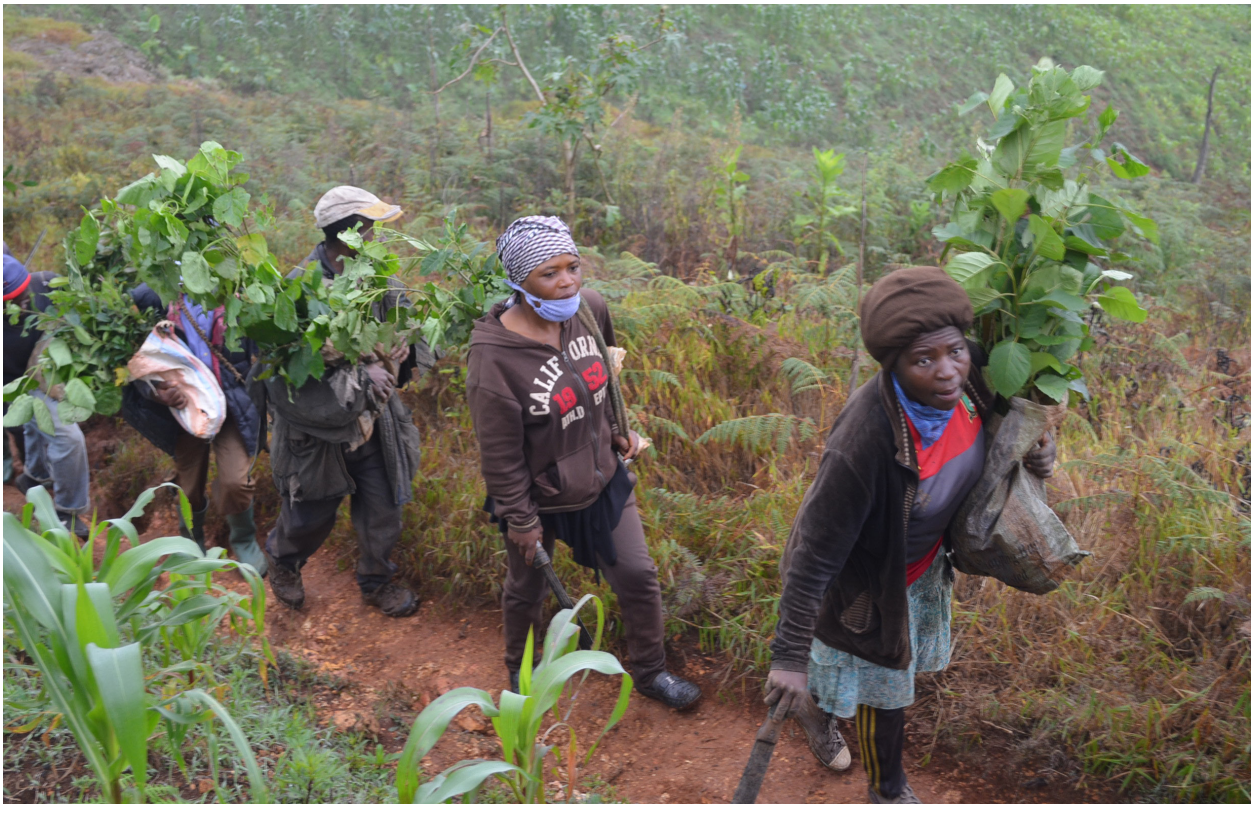
At the global level, CAMGEW's local actions have contributed to delivery of numerous important multilateral agreements, including the CBD and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda).

Related to the CBD, CAMGEW's work offers key contributions to the global Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ABTs) that are aligned with specific NTs in Cameroon's NBSAP. The organization's advocacy work has advanced ABT 1, which focuses on increasing awareness about biodiversity and the steps people can take to conserve and sustainably use it. CAMGEW has also increased action on ABT 5 to reduce the rate of forest loss, degradation, and fragmentation. Bushfire incidence rates show that, when community members have beehives in the forest, they no longer burn the forest, and, instead, become forest defenders. CAMGEW has contributed to ABT 7 by increasing areas under sustainable management and ensuring biodiversity conservation. Since 2007, CAMGEW has replanted endangered tree species and increased capacity of community forest management institutions.

Finally, CAMGEW's efforts to save bees and the unique forests and plant species that sustain them contribute to fulfilling ABT 12, which works to prevent the extinction of known threatened species and improve their conservation status. Together with forest communities, CAMGEW is actively improving the conservation status of the rare and unique Oku White Honey, as well as the stingless bee, the endangered Bannerman's turaco, the critically endangered Newtonia camerunensis tree only found in Cameroon, and the vulnerable flagship African cherry tree, among others.

CAMGEWs work at the intersection of gender, livelihoods, and nature likewise contributes to numerous Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. For instance, by providing apiculture training and support as well as microfinance, CAMGEW has improved livelihoods of local community members, thus contributing to the goal of no poverty (SDG 1). CAMGEW's mandate that women represent at least one third of all leadership positions supports the goal on gender equality (SDG 5). Through sustainable management of the Kilum-Ijim Forest and its biodiversity, CAMGEW has contributed to the goal related to life on land (SDG 15).

Additionally, CAMGEW's specific leadership on gender mainstreaming within it biodiversity conservation efforts contributes to progress on the CBD's 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action.



"We were trying to look at the major problems that we saw and that was poverty, unemployment, and gender inequality. And also, ignorance of the opportunities that were existing. How do we blend the problems that we are facing in the forest, which is a resource, the poverty which exists, and the unemployment?"

Emmanuel Binyuy Wirsiy, CAMGEW Director

REPLICATION, SCALABILITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Replication

CAMGEW's work presents significant opportunity to be replicated by other communities, both in Cameroon and beyond. CAMGEW actively reaches new groups, as trained community members become trainers of trainers in their own villages. The CAMGEW Honeyshop has also become a demonstration centre and hub for research and learning in the urban centre of Bamenda, allowing the education and advocacy about saving bees and conserving forests to transfer to new areas. CAMGEW has also set up exchange visits between honey cooperatives, bee farmers, and bee farmer groups, as well as with experts in the honey value chain and sustainable development. CAMGEW has also shared knowledge with marine organizations considering providing CAMGEW's framework for apiculture training to fisherfolk as an alternative to fishing, which is diminishing.

Scalability

Nationally, CAMGEW shares knowledge and experience with various civil society groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), contributing to the potential for national-level scaling up through policies and strategies. In Cameroon and beyond, honey has become a valuable product for promoting sustainable livelihoods. Bees support 40 percent of our global food supply, making it critical to protect them at global scale. In the case of forest communities across the globe, honey production could incentivize forest protection and increase economic wellbeing. When scaled to a national or larger scale, this activity, along with a suite of practices in agroforestry and the sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), could restore traditional knowledge and connection with forests, as well as promote livelihoods that are in balance with nature.

Sustainability

CAMGEW members are personally invested in beekeeping and honey enterprises, which support livelihoods and provide essential products for communities. This personal ownership increases the long-term sustainability of the model. CAMGEW has experienced growth from three to seven staff, with more than 50 percent of staff being women. CAMGEW has built long-term support for projects by joining several supportive networks, including the Cameroon Women Thrive Network, Empowerment Women in the United Kingdom and United States, Young Africans Leaders Initiative, and Cameroon Future in Our Hands. CAMGEW recently established a university internship program, bringing in additional support from passionate post-graduate students with expertise in conservation, microfinance, and sustainable development. Despite gender bias, CAMGEW has garnered commitment from forest institutions, cooperatives, and decision-making boards to ensure one third of leadership positions are held by women. The acceptance of this rule shows receptiveness to change and a desire for CAMGEW's projects to continue.

FUTURE PLANS

CAMGEW plans to create a revolving fund to support buying honey from bee farmers and reselling it in the Honeyshop. Farmers are currently paid after the final sale, but could better utilise earnings if they were provided at the time of harvest. CAMGEW also plans to establish additional native bee-loving tree nurseries, amplify reforestation efforts, and increase education and advocacy about the importance of bees and ways to conserve them. CAMGEW plans to increase capacity-building and training, including training for women and youth on value-added honey products and entrepreneurship. CAMGEW will also launch trainings related to the production of bee farming equipment; how to harvest various bee products, including propolis, bee pollen, royal jelly, and bee venom; and skills in quality control, packaging, and marketing.

PARTNERS

- ***Bees for Development:*** Provides financial support.
- ***Both-ENDS-Netherlands:*** Provides financial support.
- ***Bui and Boyo Senior Divisional Officers and Oku, Jakiri, Belo, Njinikom, and Fundong Divisional Officers:*** Government administrators collaborate on land use.
- ***Cameroon Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF):*** Supports protection of forest heritage.
- ***Cameroon Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries, and Animal Industry (MINEPIA):*** Increases protection of bees and develops honey value chain.
- ***Councils of Oku, Jakiri, Belo, Njinikom, and Fundong:*** Promote local sustainable development.
- ***Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF):*** Provides financial support.
- ***Fondoms of Nso, Oku, and Kom Tribes:*** Protects forests as a traditional heritage with shrines.
- ***Forest Management Institutions (FMIs):*** Supports forest monitoring.
- ***French Global Fund for Environment (PPI-FFEM):*** Provides financial support.
- ***Future in Our Hands:*** Provides financial support.
- ***Kilum-Ijim White Honey Association (KIWHA):*** Umbrella organization for Oku White Honey; increases training and development of honey value chain.
- ***Koning School Netherlands:*** Provides financial support.
- ***Man and Nature:*** Provides financial support.
- ***MIVA Switzerland:*** Provides funds for CAMGEW work vehicle.
- ***New England Biolabs Foundation:*** Provides financial support.
- ***Oku Honey Cooperative Society:*** Supports apiculture work.
- ***Oku Rural Radio, Boyo Community Radio, Bui Community Radio, Kumbo City Radio, and Jakiri Community Radio:*** Communications channels support awareness building.
- ***Plant a Tree in Africa:*** Provides financial support.
- ***Rufford Small Grants Foundation:*** Provides financial support.
- ***SOPISDEW, OREP, OCDA, SHUMAS, BERUDA:*** Contributes ideas to increase project effectiveness.
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