

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMES**

CAMGEW	–	Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch
CDVTA	–	Community Development volunteers for Technical Assistance
GBHS	–	Government Bilingual High School
GHS	–	Government High School
GHS	–	Government Technical High School
GROUP SUSA	–	Sustainable Agriculture Common Initiative Group
GHS	–	Government Secondary School
JMBC	-	Joseph Mary Baptist College
MINEPIA	–	Ministry of Livestock Fisheries and Animal Industries
MINFOF	–	Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife
OCDA	–	Oku Cultural and Development Association
OHCS	–	Oku Honey Cooperative Society
OREP	–	Oku Reserve Protection
REPACCOL	-	Regina Patris Comprehensive College
SOPISDEW	–	The Society for the Promotion of Initiatives in Sustainable Development and Welfare
UA	–	Upper Six Arts
US	–	Upper Six Science

The views of students and pupils in this booklet do not necessarily reflect those of Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW). While producing this document CAMGEW tried to keep the originality of the articles that were produced by students and pupils.

## **PROJECT TEAM**

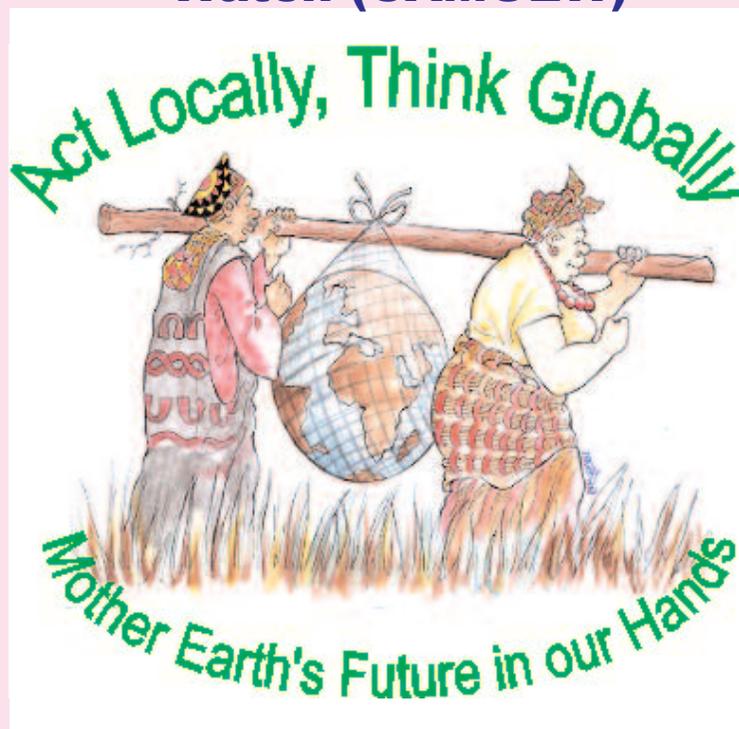
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# Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW)



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Stichting School van Z.M.  
Koning Willem III  
en H.M. Koningin Emma  
der Nederlanden



Cameroon Gender and  
Environment Watch

This Environmental education with children and youths in the Oku Community forest was funded by Stichting School van Z.M. Koning Willem III en H.M. Koningin Emma der Nederlanden-Netherlands and administered by Both ENDS-Netherlands

# VOICES FROM THE OKU COMMUNITY FOREST



A collection of poems, essays, stories, and sketches from young people on their realities in the OKU Community Forest



Produced : 2013

# Acknowledgement

Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) wishes to thank Stichting School van Z.M. Koning Willem III en H.M. Koningin Emma der Nederlanden-Netherlands for financial support and Both ENDS-Netherlands for administering this grant.

CAMGEW is also grateful to The Society for the Promotion of Initiatives in Sustainable Development and Welfare (SOPISDEW) for support in environmental education. Through Tah Kenneth, Tatah Confidence and other teachers in primary and secondary schools in Oku, we were able to assemble students and children to sensitise them on the importance of the forest.

We wish to thank the following authorities for creating a favourable environment for this work to be done: the Oku Council; Divisional Officer for Oku-Lieuwotue Patrick; Traditional authorities; Mr Nformi Nestor-Chief of Post of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) for Oku for his technical support in nursery development and tree planting; Fofuleng Esao-Sub Delegate of Ministry of Livestock, Fishery and Animal Industry (MINEPIA) for Oku; Fai Ndishangong- Home based Oku Cultural and Development Association (OCDA), Bang George-Oku Honey Cooperative Society (OHCS) manager, for the technical support on apiculture, Oku Community Radio for communication and media environmental sensitisation; community based organisations like OREP, SOPISDEW and GROUP SUSA in Oku; and all other persons who assisted directly or indirectly for being very resourceful and collaborative in the course of this project. CAMGEW acknowledge receiving bee farming training materials from Bees For Development- UK. This material helped us greatly in training.

Many thanks go too to the CAMGEW team Wirsy Emmanuel Binyuy-Project leader; Njine Yufenyuy Pamela ; Ngek Divine; Sevidzem Ernestine Leikeki , Eric Kelese ; Wirdin Benice-Volunteer and Fai Chiateh Alfred that never spared any efforts in realising this project.

# 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, by integrating gender and young generation 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 her 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".

## About the Project

This work is done under a project titled “Engaging local people in the management of Kilum community forest for improved livelihoods” funded by Stichting School van Z.M. Koning Willem III en H.M. Koningin Emma der Nederlanden-Netherlands and administered by Both ENDS-Netherlands. This activity included field lessons with children and youths in the Oku Community Forest. Young people received lessons on the importance of the forest, problems that plague the forest, how these problems could be solved and how every community members can participate in its management and regeneration. Youths and children had also class lessons and visits to various forest and institutions that depend on the forest to provide service to the public, fight poverty and unemployment. Visits were meet to Oku Honey Cooperative Society to learn about bee farming, honey process and honey marketing. Children and youths received training on bee farming. Students and youths visited the Oku water catchment in the forest and learn how water is collected in the forest, channelled to water treatment tank and the process of water treatment and distribution to the Oku community. Students and children were then allowed to produce drawings, sketches, poems, reports, essays, conversation, etc on Oku Community Forest. Their works raised Oku Community Forest problems and proposed solutions. The best articles were selected to produce this booklet. The students and pupils received prizes for best articles produced in form of books and writing materials. The articles are very interesting and educative. We encourage you to read.

CAMGEW is proud that teachers of primary and secondary schools were also engaged in this work. They were part of this activities. The knowledge and skills teachers got will improve on the way they will offer biology, environmental education, geography and nature studies lessons.

## Presentation of OKU

Oku is found in Bui Division of the North West Region of Cameroon. The population is English speaking. Oku has the largest remaining Bamenda Highland Montane Forest with a large crater lake called Lake Oku. The Oku Community Forest is the first community forest in Cameroon. The forest is the largest remaining habitat for Bannermans turacco-a red feathered bird that is only found in the Bamenda Highland Region and is classified by IUCN Redlist as endangered. Kilum Mountain is the second highest mountain in Cameroon and Central and West Africa after Mount Cameroon. Honey from Oku Forest is white in colour and is commonly called Oku White Honey. It is cherished nationally. It is being processed to become a Geographical Indication Product. Oku has a rich culture. Carving is highly practised in Oku. Oku is a touristic destination.

## Poverty and Environmental Protection

A poor community will depend much on its natural resources like the forest of Kilum found in Oku. Examples of such activities are poor method of bee keeping, firewood fetching as a source of fuel and carving activities. These activities geared towards poverty alleviation can be detrimental to the environment if not controlled.

Firstly, poor method of honey harvesting using fire and not smokers leads to bushfire that destroy the forest, animals and beehives. Bees are killed. All of this destroys the cherished Kilum forest.

Trees will soon disappear causing dryness of water sources. As trees die soil erosion will be common.

***Ngong Nancy.***

***G.H.S. Elak Oku UA2***

## The Importance of Forestry

Forestry is a very important aspect of the society and the economy. This is because some forest trees act as medicine, food, and firewood to individuals and the nation's economy as a whole. It also acts as a source of income and also employs many. Therefore, forestry should be encouraged in our economy as this will lead to high standards of living to citizens and a favorable balance of trade.

***Miranda Ghaifee***

***Form 3 GBHS Kumbo***

## The need to conserve Oku Traditional Forest.

Many years ago there lived a man in Oku called Mkong Moteh. He ruled as the Fon of Oku. This Fon was very strong and when he was about to die, he instructed his subjects to burry him in the Oku forest. They did not follow his instruction. He was buried in the fon's burial ground. One day it was discovered that the Fon had left his grave to the forest where he settled. This large part of the forest was later protected through forest regeneration to conserve this shrine.

More so, many shrines in Oku where god's are found are also highly protected to conserve these areas for future generation and take care of gods. This is done through the planting of trees in the areas.

Apart from traditional conservation of the forest in Oku, non governmental organizations (NGOS) like Cameroon Gender and Environment watch (CAMGEW) are also regenerating the Oku forest. We all know that life depends on the forest as it provides us with oxygen, water, prevents erosion and provide medicinal plant like Prunus africana.

***Nai Evaristus***

***Form 4 GHS Elak***

## A Report of Oku Community Forest Regeneration Education

On Friday the 27th of July 2012, we attended a field trip. This field trip was sponsored by Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW).

At the time we arrived there, the Director of CAMGEW introduced himself and after the introduction, we were taken to the nursery beginning with form five to upper sixth and closely followed by form four. I was lucky

to be one of those students. We were first taken to a nursery that was encircled by a life fence. The major crop nursed there was *Prunus africana* locally known as quinine tree. From the name one can imagine the kind of sickness it can cure which is malaria. Malaria is just one out of the several illnesses that can be treated by *Prunus africana*.

While at the life fence, we were taught on how to create a nursery for example the use of polythene pots to fill soil, the type of soil that is suitable for tree nursery and what should be done if the germinated seeds are ready for transplanting. When I saw the nursery I thought I had seen the largest nursery in Oku until we went to the second nursery owned by CAMGEW. It was a nursery with about 7000 nursed trees. It had a variety of trees, some of which were good to be planted around crops. The nursery was surrounded by a dead fence. While in the second fence we learned the importance of *Prunus africana* nursed as a tree. This nursed tree is important because it has medicinal value, it produces white flowers and for this reason bees are attracted to it and that is why the honey in Oku Community Forest is white and rich. The tree also serves as water shed tree because it grows where water is found.

We enjoyed ourselves while learning because the CAMGEW team was so friendly and gave us the opportunity to ask questions in areas we did not understand. Also the weather was good and there was no rainfall. At the end of the field trip CAMGEW offered us some refreshments, every one of us left very happy. To conclude the field trip was wonderful and a memorable day.

***Ngum Delma.***

***Form four, GHS Elak Oku.***

## **Afforestation”**

Forest guards, firewood fetchers, it is all known that we have to regenerate our forest so that our forest trees increase while our water also increase. It is all known that we have to nurse more trees, and plant them in the empty spaces that are in the forest, in our farms or around our homes. The one in the forest belong to the community while the ones in our farms or around our houses belong to us and we have the right over it.

When you plant these trees they are not only important in water, conservation but also for treatment of diseases that can kill like prostate cancer and malaria. So, I encourage you my brothers, sisters and fellow mates that we should plant more trees for a better future.

***By Desmond Shyka***

***Form 3 GHS Elak Oku***

## **How the Tradition of oku Treats a Person caught Performing an illegal act in the Forest.**

The Kwifon of Oku gets all reports of any illegal acts in the forest, for example cutting of fresh wood which is mostly done by carvers, hunting of birds like the Bannerman’s turaco (fen) that is found only in the Western Highlands forest of Bamenda. The feathers are highly used to confer titles on traditional authorities. As the greatest authority in the land, the kwifon acts as follows;

Send a juju (masquerade) with an injunction to place on the defaulter's compound or house. An injunction is like convocation and cannot spend a night in your compound. The defaulter will now take the injunction to the palace. The kwifon will levy charges on the defaulter. Since he or she is guilty and unable to defend the charges, the kwifon now punishes according to the act committed. The sanction is always very heavy. This discourages the rest of the population from exploiting the forest in a negative way.

Non Governmental Organizations' (NGOs) like CAMGEW with the support of the kwifon are playing a vital role in preserving this our Kilum mountain forest.

*By Tagha Ermelinda  
GHS Elak Oku, UA3*

### **How is man Affected when the forest is Destroyed.**

- If the forest is destroyed it will lead to the release of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere which will not be good for man.
- If man destroys the forest there will be lack of water hence leading to problems such as hunger and diseases.
- When men destroys the forest all the bush animals will die
- If man destroys the forest there will be no medicines for the cure of diseases
- When the forest is destroyed it will lead to landslide and erosion
- Destruction of the forest will also lead to global warming

### **The Role of Animals in Maintaining The Forest**

1. Some animals such as rodents like rats, help in the planting of seeds by digging holes where seeds are put.
2. Some birds such as the sun birds help in pollination by carrying pollen or shaking it off flowers which then fly from one plant to the other
3. Birds and some rodents also help in seed dispersal by carrying the seeds in their stomachs and when they defaecate, the seeds then germinate
4. Rats help in decomposition of leaves by digging holes and putting the leaves in them.

*Langai Elvis  
GHS Elak Oku Form 5*

### **Do not do the following in the forest**

People should not smoke in the forest because it causes forest fires.

People should not cut down forest trees from the forest.

We should not play in the forest carelessly because it destroys trees growing and grass

*Miranda Ghaifee  
GHS Kumbo Form 3*

## Deforestation

Once in a while there lived a man name Ekane. This man was an illiterate in forestry but lived beside a forested area. Mr Ekane cut down nearly all the trees in the forest for construction of houses, house furniture and fuel

He realized shortage of water, oxygen, and there was unproductive soil as a result of soil erosion. All these problems result from deforestation without afforestation as this happened; Ekane did not know the cause of his problem until a seminar was organized about forestry.

This seminar was organized by the then Minister of forestry and Wildlife in Cameroon. On the occasion the people were advised to replace the cut down trees so that they will not suffer from shortage of water, oxygen and unproductive soil and other problems in the society as a result of deforestation without afforestation. He continued by saying that they should reduce the rate at which animals and birds are killed. Furthermore, he educated the people on the importance of the forest to the society and economy. If they preserve the forest, communities in our country will never suffer from the above mentioned problems and the economy of the country will experience growth. He encouraged them to nurse trees such as Prunus africana, Iroko, Eboni, Mbete and Sapele in which some act as medicinal plants, food and timber.

Mr Ekane was present in this seminar and learned many things and vowed not to destroy but to plant more trees for what he did in the pass was out of ignorance

So our society is also advised to do this for the good of the society and the economy.

***By Miranda Ghaifée  
Form 3 GBHS KUMBO***

## The importance of the Forest and measures to conserve it.

The forest is a place that host many types of living things such as animals, birds which all fall under biotic factors. The forest is one of the pertinent natural gift which needs serious conservation because it contribute greatly in moderating the climate and also to the economic activities as we will see later.

The forest has helped in moderating climate in many parts of the world. If not of the forest we will see that the world's climate is becoming too harsh

Also the forest has helped in preventing soil erosion. This has greatly reduced the washing away of the top soil which is fertile. This activity is done by the root of trees which penetrate and hold the soil firm. Furthermore, forest helps in providing water which is used in irrigation during the dry season. If our forest is cut down we will discover that there will be no vegetables in the dry season as a result of shortage of water for irrigation.

Forest conservation is also necessary because some of the trees in the forest such as Prunus africana is very important in the treatment of diseases such as malaria and prostate cancer.

Also forestry is also important because tourists do visit the forest for site seeing and as a result much money is being added to our economy.

Conclusively, we have seen that it is very important to conserve the forest because of its numerous importance. To do this the government should sensitized the public that only matured and dry trees should be felt down. Should need be and that after felling one tree, about ten should be replanted.

Also the government should permit non governmental organizations like CAMGEW to regenerate the forest when ever they wish to.

***By Choughe Claudette Niyah  
Form 2 GHS Elak Oku***

## Water from Kilum mountain forest.

Oh! water from Kilum  
How important you are,  
You make life easy,  
Provide water for many organisms  
You are used for energy production in far distant lands.  
Oh water from Kilum  
Your presence in Oku makes the humble people proud of you  
You cool our bodies in the hot heat of dry season  
You ease digestion and wash away ectoparasites from our animals  
Oh Kilum water  
Just like the tree planted by the rivers, so is my life gloomed by you  
Just like a baby depends on the mother's milk, so do I depend on you for  
life,  
Just like the thief is drawn to the scene of the crime, so do I draw near to  
you when I am tasty  
Oh Kilum water  
When your colorless, tasteless and odorless nature leaves Kilum and runs  
down the valleys to Oku, our pride increases because we never lack  
Oh! water from Kilum  
How important you are because without you life is impossible.

*Ngangwa Dorian  
JMBC Ndu  
Lower Sixth arts.*

## A poem on Forest Laws

Oh laws, laws, laws;  
A legal policy to our forest;  
I admire you very much.  
As you solve problems equitably  
Oh! laws, you protect our forest;  
You teach us a moral lesson about our forest  
You are like a hen incubating her eggs  
  
Forest laws, forest laws!  
You are an adviser to the whole universe,  
You are the modernizer,  
You are the best teacher and a moral character!  
For without you the universe suffers a lot.  
Without your presence there will be serious hunger and starvation  
  
Oh! forest laws, forest laws;  
I pray for you very much because you are the best regulator.

*By Moh Emelda Kinjie  
UA6 GHS Elak Oku*

## Trees

Trees, trees, how great thou are!  
Wonderful creatures of the land!  
Who grows without fear!  
With faith and determination!

How great thou are!  
You grow without being fed!  
You don't care of your parents!  
To shelter you day and night!  
Trees! How great thou are!  
You continue to give to the wicked man without caring of their envious hearts!

You who provide them with rain,  
Good climate and host animals that man all live by.  
Have they ever provided you anything?  
Being made by magic hands!  
You never discriminate,  
You never refuse to be fetch ,  
Trees big or small, we wonder who made trees!

*By Desmond Shyka  
Form 3  
GHS Bamungo*

## Hunting

Hunter! Hunter! Hunter!  
You have destroyed a lot of animals  
Free but you dare to do the reverse!  
Don't kill our animals again for food!  
When you see the animals in parks!

Do you not admire them?  
If yes, why do you kill them again?  
In our own forest, in our own forest!  
The more you kill the animals, the more the number reduces  
Making our forest not worthy of  
What should be, but when you allow them do multiply!  
Making our forest what it should be  
For multiplication is better than subtraction!

Police, police, where are you?  
If they fail to create a park, arrest them at any time, moment, day without delay!

**By Desmond Shyka  
Form 3  
GHS Bamungo**

## The OKU Forest

Oh! My forest  
May God bless you.  
You forest you harm not  
You hurt not  
Forest you help and give hope  
Oh my forest  
May God bless you.  
You have made me rich  
Look at these trees and animals  
Look at these Prunus africana and of trees I will sell them  
And become a rich man  
You forest, the trees and animals  
You fores, the Prunus africana and barks of trees  
Now I am protected from illness  
How can I forget you?

Oh! my dear forest I love you most  
You have made me to become a rich man  
You help me to get some medicinal plants  
Our animals and plants multiply every day  
Life is sweet and lovely  
How can I forget you?

Oh! my dearest forest  
You help me to fetch firewood  
May our ancestors guide you

*Kwang Leslie*  
*GTHS OKU Form 3*

## Oh! Kilum Forest, Oh! Kilum Forest.

What a type of thing to exist  
How I wonder how you are up there  
There in the mountain you are full of trees grasses, animals, water, fire-  
wood and birds  
I have interest in you every day  
Thou art the giver of all that thy creatures love

Oh! the forest  
Without you we will not succeed in life  
You provide us water which no one can live without  
You provide us with firewood  
You help to give us a good climate  
Mr. Forest you have employed so many  
You provide honey to the people of Oku and the world at large

Ah! Mr. Forest you hate people who destroy you  
Even those who set fire on you  
You love people who replant you  
Because of this an Oku man learn to be true and faithful to you

*By Ngum Marbel*  
*GSS MBAM OKU*

## **Kilum forest**

We are lucky that we were born here  
Near Kilum mountain forest  
There are many things in this forest that God has given to us  
Leaves and barks of trees like Prunus africana for our medicines  
Let us protect our forest for good water and sweet white honey

Oh wildlife like the black monkeys  
Beautiful birds and every thing in it  
For there is pleasure in the society where nature forms  
For I love Kilum mountain forest than man  
Sweet, sweet, is the forest of Kilum, so let us protect it for its fruitfulness.

***Ful Marceline  
UA6GHS Elak***

## **A Forest**

FOREST, FOREST, FOREST

What a thing to have  
What a thing to reserve  
Without the forest life will be difficult  
Without the forest many bad things will happen

As good as you are  
You are a good mother who takes care of the family  
Water, honey, medicine and dry wood are our basic needs and they are  
from you  
Without the forest many animals will be homeless,  
Animals in the forest sit and discuss freely,

Forest, forest, forest!  
What a thing to have,  
Many people need a forest and are unable to have it,  
Oku is lucky to have the Kilum mountain forest,  
Oku forest is lucky to have many species of trees e.g Prunus africana  
which is the best specie.

Oh! what a place to be.  
The forest is happy when we preserve it,  
It rejoices when we guard it against danger,  
The forest provides good climate,  
It provides good health, happiness and peace  
Oh what a thing to have

***By Njiah Delphine  
Form 4 GSS Jiyane***

## **The Love For Kilum Forest**

Oh! my beloved forest I love you so much.  
Thou are so good to me,  
You make me worthy of you.  
The trees thou created make me listen to sweet songs of bird.  
Thou make me eat thy fruits,  
Thou make me drink from thy sources,  
Oh! my beloved forest, the Prunus africana that thou had provided help  
us so much.  
It has given me so much water,  
Its barks has help provide us medication.

Oh! my beloved Kilum forest I love thee so much,  
Thou hate a lumber man who has taken upon his tools to destroy you.  
Oh! my forest! the wild beasts embrace you for their home,  
The good God embraces you for his creation,  
I will also embrace you for my livelihood.

*By Tanjong Shantal*  
*UA3 GHS Elak Oku*

## **From the Forest of Mount Oku**

Oh! our enchanted, charming and magical forest.  
I admire you so well because you make our dear fatherland so important.  
Your occupants have no effects to the users,  
Your change of appearance in the night makes you an enchanter.  
Your wish for the courageous ones makes more loving.

Oh our magical Mount Oku forest, the deeds of your occupants create  
much attraction to us,  
Your soft footed squirrels' jump skillfully like light in the sun.  
Your wood peckers make us to pay attention to you,  
The rattling sounds of your trees give you magical powers,  
Your golden snakes has no harm to your users.  
Oh Mount Kilum, you are a courageous forest I have ever seen in my life.

*Ngong Nancy*  
*GHS Elak Oku*  
*UA3*

## **THE FLOWERS OF MOUNT KILUM**

Oh! Sweet, sweet flowers of Kilum forest,  
Fair well for my love for you is unshakeable,  
Why do you die so soon? Wait until evening,  
So that we can sing and pray together,  
I enjoy your white flowers so much.  
The sweet nature of your flowers provides us with white honey,  
Your beautiful smell makes our living pleasant,  
Your colorful nature makes our environment more beautiful.

Oh! our sweet, sweet flowers of Kilum,  
You flavour to our honey.  
I regret why your life span is so short.  
Oh sweet flowers your life is so short,  
Oh sweet flowers your life is compared to the season of spring,  
Your life is like that of the morning dew that dries so soon.  
Your death logically marks the end to man and any other living thing,  
I plead that this logical end should not come too fast.  
Oh our sweet, sweet flowers of Mount Kilum,  
Stay with us until evening,  
For I love you so much!

*By Ngong Nancy*  
*GHS Elak Oku*  
*UA2*

## **Kilum Forest; The Great Provider**

You are the greatest provider and life manager,  
You provide good drinking water to us in Oku and tribes beyond,  
You provide to all the animals around you,  
You provide for treatment of diseases,  
You provide wood for cooking and heating,  
You provide habitat for many animals and birds,  
You provide employment to many people in Oku,

Oh! Kilum forest, you are important to us.  
Without you we cannot survive in Oku,  
You are the best we have ever known.  
We pray that you should remain whom you are with your valuable resources.

**By Ngum Blessing  
GHS Elak OkuUS1**

## **I am your pride, I am called Kilum Forest**

I am the Kilum forest,  
I am proud to be what I am.  
Without me, you have no water to drink in Oku,  
Without me, you have no oxygen to breath,  
Without me, you cannot produce medicines.  
Oh the people of Oku, you have seen how important I am  
You have to do everything possible to make sure that I remain your pride forever.

**By Tefi Evelyn  
GHS Elak Oku, US1**

## **A poem on Kilum Mountain Forest**

Sweet melodies, sweet melodies, sweet melodies from Kilum Mountain forest.

The birds of the Kilum mountain forest provide sweet melodies.  
Special birds are only found in Kilum Mountain forest and nowhere else in the world. Bannermans turaco -so special bird, you are one of these birds that provide sweet melodies.

Oh! Kilum Mountain forest, where clean air and water is obtained.  
Without water mankind cannot live.  
You provide us with oxygen and take away the dreadful carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, thus preventing global climate change.  
Oh! Kilum forest, you provide social, economic, and environmental benefits to our community. You provide wildlife habitats, recreational opportunities, prevent soil erosion and flooding in our community. This is not found in other communities. Oh! Kilum forest you are important to us.

For you to stay Kilum forest, we must protect you against bush fires, do re-afforestation in some areas, restrict the cutting of fresh wood and reduce the consumption of resources from the forest. If this is done to you Kilum forest, you will stay and continue to provide the present and future generations with your useful resources.

**By Tagha Ermelinda  
GHS Elak Oku,  
UA3**

## Oku Forest

A forest, one of the natural resources;  
It provides water;  
It provides air;  
It regulates climate;  
It act as a source of fuel;  
It provides a good scenery and attracts tourists;  
It is a source of money.

Deforestation should be stopped for it can lead to a desert;  
Afforestation should be practiced,  
A forest, a home for most living organisms,  
A forest, a natural resource to have.

*Ndansack Solange Meseh*  
*GHS Elak Oku Form 3*

## Wildlife of the Kilum Forest

The wildlife of the Kilum forest;  
The natives of Oku,  
Stop killing the animals of our forest.  
They will provide us income as they attract tourists to our community  
Oh! how we love our animals,  
Stop killing them;  
Stop destroying them;  
God made us the natives to be the boss over the animals,  
To love and care for them,  
But not to destroy them.  
Oh! how we love our animals.

*By Lundeghe Etheline*  
*GHS Elak Oku Us2*

## OH! Our Forest, Where are you heading to?

There is already the fear that in the years to come our forest will be empty of valuable tree species. It is evident that every effort is made on daily basis either knowingly or unknowingly to completely exhaust the environment of much needed resources. This problem arises because peasant farmers burn the forest in the dry season. Many of our trees species have been lost because of the activities of such farming and the only solution is to pass a law against the burning of the forest. Also, cattle rearers on their part allow their herds of cattle to graze about, and by so doing destroys what is left of grass. There are regulations on the use of the forest but it is clear that some people have decided to ignore the regulations.

To solve this problem, farmers need to be educated on the better ways of farming without burning the forest and cattle rearers on their part need basic education on the possibilities of confining their animals. It is high time some elementary afforestation methods are given to Cameroonians in the form of seminars so as to reawaken the minds of people on the need to be careful while using the forest.

## What makes our Environment uncomfortable?

Fire, where do you come from?  
Do you know that you have destroyed a lot of things in our environment?  
You have made our soils red and as a result no fertility,  
You have cause hunger in our society,  
You have made many families homeless,  
You have killed a lot of animal species in our community forest,  
You have also destroyed a lot of trees in our forest  
For those who cause bushfires, you are warned because you are destroying the forest and very soon there will be no water in our society.

You are going to bear the cost.

Please our people don't cause bushfires again so that our trees, animals, people and homes will increase every day in number.

***By Desmond Shyka  
Form 3 GHS Babingo***

## **A Story about the Forest**

The forest of Oku is very big in size. So many things are found in the forest but some persons want to destroy it. Looking at the forest we see many trees and grass that are nice looking. These trees produce flowers of different colors.

The government of Cameroon and the council are trying to stop people from destroying the forest.

***Keng Sharon  
Form 1 GHS Elak Oku***

## **How we can protect the Forest**

We can protect our forest by not setting bushfire,

By not keeping animals in the forest because they destroy trees;

By not smoking in the forest;

We can also protect by planting trees like Prunus Africana.

What the law says that we should not do in the forest,

We should not cut fresh trees in the forest;

We should not smoke in the forest;

We should not burn fire in the forest.

***Keng Sharon  
Form 1 GHS Elak Oku***

## **How a Forest is Destroyed**

When many people depend on the forest;

When people burn trees found in the forest;

When people farm around and destroy roots of trees;

When people smoke in the forest;

When people cut down trees.

***By Chung Dora***

## **My Forest**

You are very great and beautiful,

You are always evergreen,

Without you my forest, we cannot cook food, drink water.

You are very good,

You cannot shade your leaves in the rainy season,

The rainy season is always good for you.

You need tree planting to ever remain there

***Nyingchia Joyceline Sey  
GSS Jiyane***

## **No Oku Forest, No Future for Oku!**

Without the forest, people will not live,

Without the forest, we cannot get good drinking water,

Without the forest, tourists will not visit us,

Without the forest, people will not have a place to keep their beehives

Without the forest, people will not have a place to fetch fire wood.

***Miranda Ghaifee  
Form 3 GBHS Kumbo***

## The importance of the forest

Oh! Mr. Forest what a great man you are!  
Do you know that you are wonderful?  
Without you people cannot survive.

Oh! Mr Forest  
We know that every thing comes from you,  
You provide water for humans, animals, as well as plants,  
The water that comes from you is fresh,  
People drink and become healthy,  
It is from you that we eat food,  
This is because you provide water for our crops to grow.

Oh! Mr Forest, do you know you are humble, great and powerful?  
So you give us good health and riches,  
There are some trees in you that are medicinal,  
The trees give good health, energy and power to your people,  
You also provide us with firewood that we use in cooking.

Oh! Mr Forest, do you know there is no one like you?  
People visit you all the times for site seeing and also to benefit from you  
Oh! I wish I were you.  
Thank you for your kindness.

*By Ngum Rosemond  
GHS Elak-Oku*

## MR FOREST

Hi Mr Forest how are you and your family?  
I hope you are doing well?  
Where do you live?  
Where do you come from?  
Who are your parents?  
What do you eat?  
People love you because you are the only source through which man can  
earn a living,  
You provide medicinal plants like *Prunus africana*, fuel wood, wood which  
is use for the construction of houses, bridges, furniture and also a habitat  
for birds and animals that live in you.

Oh! Mr. Forest, you are so kind to us, but people hate you!  
They destroy you fresh and even cut some parts of you which are still  
fresh.  
Oh! Mr. Forest, how great you are to human beings?

*By Ngum Rosemond  
GHS Elak Oku*

## Oku Community Forest

Oh my dear Oku community forest,  
What a good friend you are?  
Your riches are many,  
Your water is a source of life to us,  
We have good medicinal plants,  
These plants produces good flowers that provide bees with nectar that

gives us the unique Oku white honey known world wide.

Oh! Oku forest, what a good friend and source of life you are to me, my friends, family members and the world at large.

How could life have been without your fresh waters, white medicinal honey, medicinal trees and grass? You provide home for many birds and animals and you alone form a habitat for Banamans tauraco.

You absorb the carbon dioxide from the air and make it clean for our breath. You are the solution to the world's problem of climate change. Oh! my dear people, take care of the Oku community forest and the forest will take care of you

**Ngum Frida**  
**Class 5**



## Agro-Forestry and Prunus Africana

**Cynthia;** Hello! Blessing.

**Blessing:** Hi! Cynthia.

**Cynthia:** How do you feel after the interesting fieldtrip about agro-forestry and Prunus africana, together with the water catchment?

**Blessing:** Well Cynthia, I did not quite understand the lectures on the ecosystem as well as its importance. For the water catchment I was satisfied.

**Cynthia:** If so, I will help you.

**Blessing:** I will be very happy if you really do

**Cynthia:** So Blessing when dealing with agro-forestry, Prunus africana and plants, we have to know about the ecosystem which is a natural unit consisting of living and non living things interacting to result in self maintainance. An ecosystem is made up of biotic factors where agro-forestry lies since there are plants which are the living things in an ecosystem. Then abiotic factors which are the non living things in an ecosystem like water and rocks. Some examples of ecosystem are aquatic ecosystem which is water. Arboreal which are parasites like epiphytes that lives on trees and terrestrial ecosystem which exist on land like deserts, savanna and forest ecosystem where our tropic lies. Since our topic deals with forest and savanna ecosystem made up of trees, plants, herbs and grass.

**Blessing:** Thank you so much for this explanation. You know you are my best friend.

**Cynthia:** Don't mention that, what are friends for any way.

*By Muoka cythia  
Repacol-Nkar  
Form 5*

## Do you Know?

**A:** something very important!

**B:** What is that?

**A:** The forest! the forest! the forest!

**B:** Which forest do you mean?

**A:** I mean the Oku forest that has many potentials.

**B:** What type of potential does the Oku forest has?

**A:** Listen very well. In this forest we have our drinking water, firewood, and beehives which produce white honey that is unique in the world

**B:** Is that all?

**A:** No the forest has many good trees that has been recognized by a group known as Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) to be important to man and nature. This group sees its importance in preserving this forest. In fact, there are many trees in this forest but there is one called Prunus africana. This tree has white flowers. This white flowers help to decorate the forest and bees also visit and take nectar which produces the Oku white honey known world wide and is being considered a Geographical Indication Product. These trees need to be preserved. Do you know that the climate change is because of the destruction of the forest?

**B:** Is that why we have low yields these years?

**A:** Exactly we need to plant new trees like the 7000 trees that will be planted by CAMGEW in August 2012 and protect against bushfires, in order to regain good health, good yields and income from the sale of forest products as well as food and medicine. Protection of our forest is the most important thing we need today.

*Nditoh Rhoda  
Form 5*

## A Dialogue

Ngum: How are you?

Njong: I'm fine thank you

Ngum: Can you please tell me what you people were taught over there?

Njong: We were taught on the type of trees to be planted, how to protect our forest, things we should not do in the forest.

Ngum: What type of trees were you taught to be planted?

Njong: We were taught to plant trees like *Prunus africana*.

Ngum: What is the use of *Prunus africana*?

Njong: It is use for medicinal purpose and bees also collect nectar from it's white flowers.

Ngum: What are some of the things we should not do in the forest?

Njong: We should not smoke in the forest, we should not rear animals in the forest, and we should not cut fresh trees.

Ngum: How can we protect our forest?

Njong: We can protect our forest by planting new trees like *Prunus africana*, we should not plant *Eucalyptus* trees which draws water from the ground and we should not cut fresh trees especially the young ones.

Ngum: Thank you for the brief explanation

Njong: You are welcome and thank you.

*By Jum sofilia Fien*

*GHS Elak Oku*

*Form 4*