

WHY INCLUDE WOMEN, CHILDREN AND THE INDIGENOUS “MBOROROS” IN APICULTURE AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION ACTIVITIES.



CASE STUDY: Kilum-Ijim Area

AN ARTICLE

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Today's children are tomorrow's leaders and need to be adequately educated and trained on a daily basis so as to better face life's challenges when they take up responsibility. For the change we seek, and for the measures we adopt in tackling environmental hazards to be consistent and sustainable, we have to integrate children in our strategies so that they learn-by-doing to make them resilient today, tomorrow and throughout their lives.

When children are adequately instructed on livelihood activities, they stand a better chance of fending for themselves when they become independent.

Vulnerable children around Kilum-Ijim inspired by bee farming trainings on hive construction, mounting, apiary development, honey harvesting and bees wax extraction saw the need to engage in apiculture. They afford their basic needs (food, clothing and education) from the sale of honey, local hives and bees wax.



A child planting in kedjem mawes Community forest.



school children receive EE Booklets at G.S Tankiy-oku



chief of Mbockenghas and community children ready for planting in Nchiyy



children learning-by-doing In CAMGEW'S tree nursery.

Incorporating youths in bee farming and tree planting has reduced the theft of honey, illegal and unsustainable harvesting of *Prunus africana* in the forest and has increased the output of non-timber forest products around the Kilum.

When children are constantly educated and made to feel the impacts of environmental degradation, they see the need to protect their environment.

Women on the other hand do rule the world, they haven't figured it out. When they do, men will know they don't have to measure themselves by their accomplishments but by what they would have accomplished with their abilities.

Peasant rural women around the Kilum- Ijim area are dependent on farm produce. To diversify their sources of income and to make them less dependent, they are trained and integrated into bee farming.

To guarantee the continuity of the bee farming activity after the death of the family head, and to impair the confiscation of apicultural assets by the deceased relatives, many households

around the Kilum-Ijim montane forest have adopted “*family bee farming*” which integrates women and children. Women with hives in the forest see the need to avoid encroachment and to prevent bush fires while farming around forest areas.

“No trees, No healthy environment”

Women are made to see the importance of trees through agro-forestry which integrates trees and crops on the same piece of land.

Leguminous trees are nitrogen fixing and help in improving soil fertility and crop yields.

Trees bind soil particles and check erosion.

Trees attract pollinators.

Trees serve as wind breaks.

Trees planted on farm boundaries check inter-farmer squabbles resulting from encroachment by neighbors.

Some fruit trees increase the farmers’ income from the sale of fruits like pears, mangoes, oranges etc.

Trees serve as a carbon sink and check droughts and climate change which are a “farmers’ nightmare”.

Many women and children around Kilum-Ijim are involved in the development of tree nurseries for forest regeneration and agro-forestry. The sale of tree seedlings adds to their income reducing their drudgeries.

When women are made to see the roles trees play for them, they shy away from deforestation and bush fires.



CAMGEW staff with Mbockenghas women and Mbororos after an agro-forestry training

Most of the hills around the Kilum-Ijim forest are inhabited by the indigenous “Mbororos” who are cattle rearers and shepherds. Most of them do not socialize or interact freely with non-Mbororos for stereotype reasons. Their settlements are often isolated on hills close to the forest.

As herdsmen, they deliberately cause bushfires which destroys the forest and its biodiversity by burning the hills for new pasture.

Most bee farmers in Oku and Bihkov colonise their hives on their grazing land.

They push down or simply burn bee hives for the fact that bees at times attack, sting and kill their sheep. They thus, frequently run into dispute with local bee farmers.

Peasant farmers around Kilum –Ijim are often irritated by the fact that grazing land is not fenced. These Mbororos allow their cows to destroy their crops.

More so, they often cut down matured trees on the pretext that it brings rain and lightning which kills their cattle and sheep. Controversially, these animals need water to survive.

Therefore, to make our dreams a reality in the domains of environment and food security, we have to incorporate Mbororos in our activities, else, they continuously undermine our actions. Harmonizing their interests with ours and educating them on *“the benefits of apiculture and trees”* to them particularly, might bring the change we’re opting for.



Environmental education lesson by CAMGEW with Mbororos on the hills of Ijim

Mbororos have continuously complained of drying streams and water scarcity for their animals. It is but common knowledge that trees provide a watershed and shade for their cattle and sheep. When educated, they will see the need to plant trees while abstaining from deforestation and bush fires.

Mbororos use honey in making most of their traditional medicines. This is enough reason for them to keep hives. Bee farming will also help increase their incomes. Involving Mbororos in bee farming will help check bushfires and frequent conflicts with bee farmers.

On a common table, farmers will acknowledge that sheep and cow dung serve as organic manure for their crops while Mbororos will also admit that crop stems and leaves after grain harvesting can serve as pasture for their cows. This might settle their differences.

Generally, integrating Mbororos in bee farming and other sustainable practices integrates them into social life while making the world greener.