

Natural forest in Segue, Koro-Mopti Circle, Mali¹

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SUMMARY

Soon after independence, the centralized management of natural resources by the State through legal forest instruments drafted on the basis of a metropolitan model, despite the diversity of national resources, brought about the gradual depletion of these resources, in addition to conflicts between the communities and the Forestry Department.

In 1988, after an analysis of its role and of the pressure on natural resources, the Water and Forest Department of Koro initiated an attempt to manage part of the forest. The neighbouring communities rejected the idea because of the inherent constraints.

The developments that followed the establishment of democracy in Mali further deteriorated the relationships between the Water and Forest Department and the communities. In addition, people indulged in overexploitation of forest resources.

As part of the search for forest conservation alternatives, the department asked its partner, CARE International, to set up a project aiming at providing support to the communities for a better organization of sustainable management of forest resources. CARE International then carried out surveys in the Segue Forest and identified the objectives. A five-year project, to be carried out from 1997 to 2002, was designed and financed by the European Community through CARE UK.



1. Only a summary of this case study is available in English. For the full text in French see p. 369-374.

The experience of the Segue Natural Forest Management Programme in local planning and development is very recent and is based essentially on the community management of local resources. The intervention consists in providing institutional support in the form of emerging legal structures representing the interests of all the users of the forest resources.

To date, the following results have been obtained:

- achievement of a better knowledge of community problems in the area;
- use of institutional cartography;
- identification of forest and agricultural potentials;
- establishment of a permanent dialogue among the users; and
- establishment of local institutions for natural resource management.

However, constraints still exist. They are either cultural (related to the diversity of many ethnic groups), economic (related to poverty, diversity of needs, and illiteracy), or territorial (related to the border with Burkina Faso).

Traditional institutions for natural resource management, ignored since the independence period, are today determined to assert themselves.