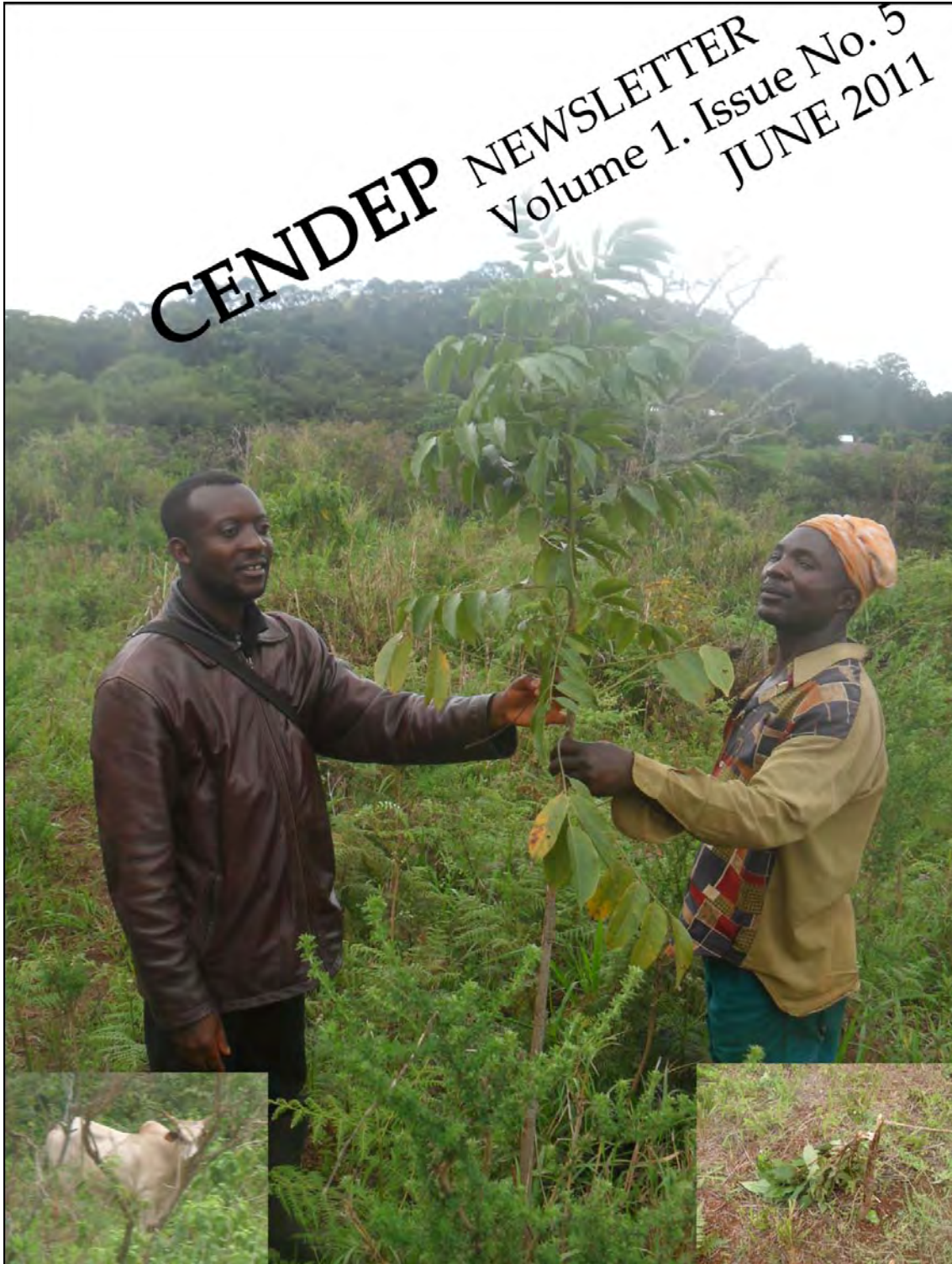


CENDEP NEWSLETTER
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“The news that the analog forestry project in Mbiame could continue, made possible by a newly received small grant from the New England Biolabs Foundation, was welcomed enthusiastically among former project participants”. (Max Frieda, CENDEP intern)

Who we are

The Centre for Nursery Development and Eru Propagation (CENDEP) was created in 1999 as a farmer group and legalized as a Common Initiative Group (CIG) on the 19th July 2000.

CENDEP promotes livelihood through dialogue, participatory education, training and research. She also promotes long term conservation and development initiatives and enabling policies in partnership with local community members and other partners

CENDEP's activities cover principally the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon. In the NW Region our activities are aimed at addressing issues of climate change indirectly. This is through our Analogue Forestry program through which we are assisting local communities to establish permanent forests to buffer extreme weather events and also to act as carbon sinks. The interest and participation of the local population is driven by their assurance on the water supply services of permanent forests.

In the SW Region our activities are centred on domestication and development of the value chain for Eru. Eru is a perennial crop which starts to produce after 3-5 years, and then can be productive for 30-50 years. Value chain development activities are carried around the Mount Cameroon Region and in the buffer zone of the Korup National Park. Sustainable agriculture and environmental education activities are carried out in the two regions.



CENDEP Newsletter (CN)

CN is a bimonthly update of the field activities of CENDEP.

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Dear Readers,

We are glad to announce that during the recent meeting of the New England Biolabs Foundation, the trustees approved a grant in the amount of \$US7500 for CENDEP to continue the restoration and protection of the Mbiame Community Watershed, in the NW Region Cameroon using analog forestry techniques. In Bafut, a similar project funded by the Rufford Small Grants Foundation is drawing to end. Detail updates on the project can be accessed online at:

Max Frieda and Jelke Brandehof ended their internship with us. While Jelke was working on the marketing communication plan for Forest House, a subsidiary of CENDEP, Max Frieda carried out his research on "Land-use change and resource control among Bakweri villages on the slopes of Mount Cameroon".

Max Frieda also shared with us his personal reflections on CENDEP. He charted a course for internship in CENDEP suggesting that "Interns from a liberal arts background could be charged with communication plans, targeted research, and international networking. Those with experience in the natural sciences could work on analyzing environmental impacts associated with past (or future) projects in the context of climate change and ecological degradation. Likewise, the expertise of business students would be very useful developing the capacity of Forest House, CENDEP's commercial branch. Of course, fundraising should be an integral component of any internship. As an organization itself, CENDEP could invest time in developing a fundraising strategy which provides a guide for locating appropriate donor organizations and writing effective proposals"

Gnetum spp. domestication technology transfer within the Central African sub Region: The FAO supported the training of 46 participants from Congo and the Central African Republic on the domestication of eru.

CAMEROON VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT NGOs MEET TO VALIDATE ACTION PLAN:
From June 8 to June 10, 2011 former partner organisations of the Inter-church Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO, The Netherlands) in Cameroon, met in a workshop to validate a five year action plan for the promotion of value chains for selected agro-foods; cassava and maize and Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs); honey and Njangsang. This plan falls within the Cameroon Sustainable Forest Management Programme (CSFMP) initiated by ICCO, the Netherlands and a coalition of her partners in Cameroon prior to the departure of

ICCO from Cameroon. The elaboration of the action plan was coordinated by a Program Development Facilitator (PDF) recruited to assist the coalition partners.

Obituary: In May 2011, CENDEP lost one her contact farmers, Mr. Ekuka Pius. He was delegate of the Bakingili Eru Farmers Group since 2004. Mr. Pius settled in the coastal village of Bakingili in the SW Region of Cameroon after his retirement from the Cameroon military and was very active in development and conservation work. In addition to the domestication of *Gnetum spp*, a forest vegetable, Mr. Pius received training on other crop propagation techniques like maccotting, grafting and budding. The Bakingili Group eru nursery established with financial support from IUCN NL in 2004 was transformed into a multipurpose tree nursery supplying assorted fruits and other useful tree seedlings to farmers in the Bakingili community. This was through the initiative of Mr. Pius after he received further training. This diversified sources of income for his group.

Lastly our team travelled to Yokadouma to train farmers on bee keeping. We shall report on this training in the next issue of this newsletter.

Youndjie Koleoko Gabriel

CEO CENDEP.

Continuing the Unfinished tasks

We are glad to announce that during the recent meeting of the New England Biolabs Foundation, the trustees approved a grant in the amount of \$US7500 for CENDEP to continue the restoration and protection of the Mbiame Community Watershed, in the NW Region Cameroon using analog forestry techniques. This one year initiative will enhance the just ended 3-year IUCN NL funded project to expand and conserve the Mbiame communal forest for the provision of ecosystem services notably water, biodiversity and carbon. The goal of this project is to enhance the water supply potential of the Mbiame communal forest through the following objectives:

1. The restoration of the degraded communal forest using analog forestry techniques.
2. The improvement of tree cover in the peripheral zone of the water shed through the practice of agro-forestry i.e. incorporating trees in farmers' fields.

It is worth noting that at the time of departure of our Dutch donors, IUCN NL and ICCO, CENDEP was carrying out two projects namely "*Eru chain development*" and "*Restoration of the degraded montane forests in Cameroon using analog forestry techniques*". The Eru chain project had a strong social and economic component as it was basically to assist small scale eru farmers to produce and market eru for their livelihood improvement.

CENDEP and the Mbiame community are particularly grateful to the NEBF for giving them the opportunity to continue the reforestation of their degraded watershed. CENDEP will continue to provide the much needed seeds and technical advice while

On the other hand the forest restoration project was very strong from the ecological standpoint. For example, seven natural resource management committees were trained on tree nursery establishment and this resulted in the establishment of 7 community nurseries. 11000 tree seedlings were produced and part out planted in 31 ha of degraded forest land. Six trained farmers produced and sold tree seedlings to the project and community members. The restructuring of the local Forest Management Committee (FMC) permitted women to play an active role in forest management activities. Farmers acquired knowledge and material support in income generating opportunities. Income worth €550 was generated from honey as revenue for forest conservation activities.



Some of the surviving trees in farmers fields

will continue to provide the much needed seeds and technical advice while



When the IUCN NL project ended some farmers maintained small nurseries. These nurseries contained mostly medicinal species like *Pygeum Africana*.

relying on the expertise of the trained seed producers for seedling production. This time we shall pay more attentions on supporting the trained farmers who have been establishing private nurseries.

It should be noted that at the start of the project in June, more than 600 tree seedlings were ready for field planting.

The NEBF support will greatly enhance the activities of the Forest Management Committee (FMC), made up of volunteers who receive no payment from the state or from their community for the work that they do. As of now the external boundaries of the forest is estimated at about 750ha; much of it being degraded and scrubland. CENDEP plans to institute a phased approach at restoring and reforesting these lands given the necessary financial inputs from donors. This project

will pave the way for the elaboration and institutionalization of a Payment For Ecosystem Services (PES) in order to ensure that the sustainability of the work of FMC. Please follow this link to read our field staff's report for the month of June 2011: <http://cendepnews.blogspot.com/2011/07/nebf-newsletterjune-2011.html>



Mahogany: a valuable timber tree in farmer's field

About some 150 km away in the Bafut chiefdom we were also promoting analog forestry for watershed and biodiversity protection. The destruction of tree seedlings by cattle was not evident and cattle farmers showed interest and participated in

reforestation activities because they were happy with the introduction of tree species they considered medicinal for their cattle. As the project draws to an end in a few months the main activity has been the planting of tree seedlings that were produced during the last 10 months. During the last two months, over 2483 mature tree seedlings were out planted in the field as well as on individual farmlands. The number planted still falls short of the earmarked 5000 seedlings, but efforts are being made to meet the target before the project ends. Read our field staffs monthly report:

<http://cendepnews.blogspot.com/2011/07/rsg-newsletterjune-2011.html>

Internship: Max and Jelke speak out after their internship in CENDEP

Max Frieda University of Washington¹

"Land-use change and resource control among Bakweri villages on the slopes of Mount Cameroon"

In particular, I was impressed with the analogue forestry work that CENDEP had undertaken in Mbiame in the North-West region; the project was already providing benefits to communities in the form of honey and increased capacity to engage in agro-forestry seedling production, while working to restore the local environment. The news that this project could continue, made possible by a newly received small grant from the New Englands Biolabs Foundation, was welcomed enthusiastically among former project participants.

I have also been exposed to the obstacles that CENDEP faces in achieving its goals. Not surprisingly, the main issue in this regard is lack of resources. The recent withdrawal of funding from ICCO, CENDEP's main donor, has put the organization under financial pressure and significantly reduced the capacity to fulfill objectives. Clearly, financial stability is important in development work, as an organization must be flexible during the course of any given project as new factors emerge which require strategy

To say the least, the past two and a half months interning at CENDEP have been both enjoyable and highly educational. In addition to gaining valuable field experience and firsthand knowledge of conservation and forestry, I have had the rare opportunity to become directly involved in the operation of a development NGO, getting a clear sense of the daily work that CENDEP does and the challenges that the organization faces. I have come away with a deeper appreciation of the commitment and persistence required for this kind of work and a sense of optimism about the potential of groups like CENDEP to promote long-term positive change.

I consider myself very fortunate to have worked with the individuals I met at CENDEP. The staff were not only technically skilled and highly capable, but were extremely helpful in arranging a program which allowed me to make the most of my time in Cameroon. I was able to travel to a number of important CENDEP project sites and converse with farmers and community members about their

various experiences. I was deeply moved by stories of hardship and struggle, as well as inspired by the persistence and innovativeness of those I encountered. I was also able to see some of the work that CENDEP has done so far and the benefits it has brought to community members in sites around the North-West and South-West Regions. In particular, I was impressed with the

¹ Land-use change and resource control among Bakweri villages on the slopes of Mount Cameroon: report is available online at

<http://cendepnews.blogspot.com/2011/06/internship-reportmax-frieda.html>

analogue forestry work that CENDEP had undertaken in Mbiame in the North-West region; the project was already providing benefits to communities in the form of honey and increased capacity to engage in agro-forestry seedling production, while working to restore the local environment. The news that this project could continue, made possible by a newly received small grant from the New England Biolabs Foundation, was welcomed enthusiastically among former project participants.

I have also been exposed to the obstacles that CENDEP faces in achieving its goals. Not surprisingly, the main issue in this regard is lack of resources. The recent withdrawal of funding from ICCO, CENDEP's main donor, has put the organization under financial pressure and significantly reduced the capacity to fulfill objectives. Clearly, financial stability is important in development work, as an organization must be flexible during the course of any given project as new factors emerge which require strategy adjustments. Unless a project budget ensures that extension agents can work in communities for extended periods of time, with regular follow up visits and participation from stakeholders, successful realization of project objectives can be threatened. For example, cattle grazing near the Mbiame forests have destroyed a number of seedlings which CENDEP has planted in degraded forest areas. CENDEP staff have identified the need for strategic community dialogue and potential preventative measures such as fence-building to avoid further damage. However, despite this need, CENDEP has only limited resources to help community members confront this problem.

With this in mind, future CENDEP interns can serve as an important organizational resource in a number of ways. To maximize the use of interns' time, a clear plan of work should be developed, setting an overall objective alongside realistic and measurable week-by-week goals. These could be tailored to the specific skills of interns and work towards increasing the ability of CENDEP to generate knowledge and create awareness about the importance of the work it is doing. Interns from a liberal arts background could be charged with communication plans, targeted research, and international networking. Those with experience in the natural sciences could work on analyzing environmental impacts associated with past (or future) projects in the context of climate change and ecological degradation. Likewise, the expertise of business students would be very useful developing the capacity of Forest House, CENDEP's commercial branch. Of course,

“Interns from a liberal arts background could be charged with communication plans, targeted research, and international networking. Those with experience in the natural sciences could work on analyzing environmental impacts associated with past (or future) projects in the context of climate change and ecological degradation. Likewise, the expertise of business students would be very useful developing the capacity of Forest House, CENDEP’s commercial branch. Of course, fundraising should be an integral component of any internship. As an organization itself, CENDEP could invest time in developing a fundraising strategy which provides a guide for locating appropriate donor organizations and writing effective proposals”



fundraising should be an integral component of any internship. As an organization itself, CENDEP could invest time in developing a fundraising strategy which provides a guide for locating appropriate donor organizations and writing effective proposals. Once a strategy is formulated, it would be easier for interns to develop the skills and knowledge needed to take an active

role in fundraising. This would not only streamline the fundraising process and produce better results, but would serve as valuable education for interns who plan to enter the non-profit sector.

Finally, to offer an unsolicited suggestion: as a student coming from a liberal arts perspective, I would like to see CENDEP integrating more social aspects into its efforts. CENDEP currently does brilliant work in pursuit of environmental and economic objectives, but I strongly believe that the organization could enhance its global image, attract a more committed network of supporters, and, most importantly, make more of a lasting positive impact in communities if it actively promoted social justice and ethical development. Of course, this is often already a de facto outcome of CENDEP's work, but could be integrated more strongly into project goals and advocated within organizational objectives. In this understanding, CENDEP might establish strategies to ensure, for example, that benefits of projects are enjoyed equitably among target communities, that participation is a key principle in projects, that all stakeholders in value-chains are on an equal playing field, and that empowerment of women and vulnerable groups is given priority. In a world where "development" is increasingly becoming a tool of the powerful to maintain the status quo, CENDEP must set itself apart and make clear its commitment to working for the sole benefit of the least powerful members of society.

To conclude, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all the staff at CENDEP for facilitating my internship and providing such a memorable and important experience. I have already made plans to continue working with CENDEP once I return to the US, and hopefully, I will have the opportunity to return to Cameroon during the course of my graduate studies. For now, though, I am simply grateful to say that during my time here, I have not only made important partnerships, but good friends.

Farewell but no goodbye!

Jelke Brandehoff,

Hogeschool Zuyd, Maastricht School Of International Communication

Five months in Cameroon have flown by so fast, it feels like it was just yesterday I arrived at Douala airport. Looking back, I had a very nice time here in Cameroon and in particular with the CENDEP staff. From the first moment they made me feel very welcome and accepted. I am very grateful to them for giving me the chance of doing my internship with their wonderful organization, because it was a very valuable experience for me that taught me a lot, about my capacities but also about myself.

Now, let's not make this a very sad and sentimental story but I just wanted to have said this. And, to be honest I do feel a little sad about leaving Cameroon. To make it even more confusing I am very happy at the same time: happy to see my friends and family again, to be able to eat food I am familiar with, to take a nice hot bath for at least two hours etc. I sincerely hope though that I can hold on to the "No-stress-attitude" for a couple of months instead of immediately going back to our crazy "why-don't-we-have-more-than-24-hours-in-a-day-lifestyles". If anything my Cameroon experience taught me to be more patient and to think in possibilities and opportunities instead of impossibilities. The patience thing was stimulated by the fact that I have spent at least one or two hours per week just waiting for people, and the other one was inspired by the always positive and hopeful state of mind of the CENDEP staff.

I hope that I was and that I can stay of value for CENDEP. After this summer I hope to enroll in a Master program called Globalisation and Development Studies at the Maastricht University through which I hope to learn more about the day to day issues the globalization process brings along for people in developing countries like Cameroon. Doing my internship with CENDEP has definitely inspired me to want to know and learn more about the well-being of NGO's in developing countries, the problems they face, and how this problems could possibly be solved in such a way that it does not interfere with the local and/or national culture.

I would like to thank you people who take the time to read the CENDEP newsletter and I hope my contributions over the past months have been enjoyable. Take care, and who knows in what way we might come across each other again in the future!

Warm regards,

Jelke Brandehof

Gnetum spp. domestication technology transfer within the Central African sub Region

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) through the execution of a project (Projet GCP/RAF/441/GER) dubbed "Enhancing food security in Central Africa through the sustainable management of non-wood forest products" chose the domestication of *Gnetum spp.* as one of the Non Wood Forest Products that if valorised could ensure food security among local communities in the sub region.

Gnetum spp. commonly known as "eru" is a climbing vine that grows under shade in 5 regions of Cameroon and in forests of the Central African sub region. It is widely consumed by the populations inhabiting this sub region with huge market potentials for export to Nigeria, Europe and the United States.

The Centre for Nursery Development and Eru propagation (CENDEP) has several years of experience in the domestication of *Gnetum spp.* as well as the training of local communities on the techniques of domestication of these species.

It was based on this experience that the FAO regional coordination office after proper scrutiny chose CENDEP to share its experience and success story to local communities in the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic.

This news article covers training events in the two pilot sites of Abala and Madingo - Kayes in the Republic of Congo.

Workshop process

In each of the pilot sites, after all administrative protocols had been duly observed, the FAO national coordinator presented a brief overview of the objectives of the project, the activities already undertaken and the planning of future activities for the next two months. The trainers from CENDEP proceeded with fulfilling the different training outputs of the workshop. The detailed workshop report (in French) is available on request.

Altogether 46 participants were trained, who will subsequently become trainers in their different village communities and local organizations.

Recommendations & lessons learnt

The domestication of *Gnetum spp.* using stem cuttings is a new technology in the target communities. Based on lessons learnt in Cameroon where adoption is advanced, the following issues need to be considered/looked into.

01. Community members in the pilot sites would need technical accompaniment in the out-planting of young seedlings of *Gnetum spp.* into individual or group farms as well as in the management of those farms. Eru is a slow growing plant and it is important to sustain the enthusiasm of the trainers by helping them overcome the initial problems they may encounter at the beginning. The training of trainers during the workshop is already a positive step in this direction. Periodic backstopping of these trainers is essential for success.
02. In the pilot sites, there's a complete absence of civil society organizations that can disseminate the technology to other community members. The creation of farming groups/common interest groups similar to the common initiative groups in Cameroon is a workable strategy in spreading the technology to new farmers.

Pictorial presentation of the workshop



The divisional officers of Abala (left) and Madingo – Kayes (right) with FAO national project coordinator during opening ceremony of training workshop in both pilot sites.

The attainment of the different training outputs was done in a participatory manner through question and answer sessions and practical hands-on demonstrations.



Trainees learn how to construct a rooting propagator as the focal point of the project and trainers look on.



Harvesting *Gnetum spp* vines in the forest for propagation



Preparing stem cuttings for placement in the rooting propagator



Hands-on approach in daily monitoring of plants in the rooting propagator



A cross section of workshop participants from Congo

CAMEROON VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT NGOs MEET TO VALIDATE ACTION PLAN

From June 8 to June 10, 2011 former partner organisations of the Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO, The Netherlands) in Cameroon, met in a workshop to validate a five year action plan for the promotion of value chains for selected agro-foods; cassava and maize and Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs); honey and Njangsang. This plan falls within the Cameroon Sustainable Forest Management Programme (CSFMP) initiated by ICCO, the Netherlands and a coalition of her partners in Cameroon prior to the departure of ICCO from Cameroon. The elaboration of the action plan was coordinated by a Program Development Facilitator (PDF) recruited to assist the coalition partners.

The development of the action plan began in the last quarter of 2010 with the implementation of an intermediary project whose main outcome was a strategic plan for the coalition partners. Key components of the intermediary project included sensitization and information workshops, baseline surveys/market studies, mapping of target products and strategic planning. It was not possible to finalize the action plan during the previewed time. Several reasons accounted for the delay in the implementation of this project but it is very likely that the general dissatisfaction that resulted from the sudden loss of a long time partner might have been the key reason as some partners were yet to recover from the shock. It was thus agreed that the validation workshop serve as a forum for every partner to have a common understanding of the document. Finalization would be done by the Cameroon agro-food Value Chain Development (VCD) leader, CERUT (Centre for the Environment and Rural Transformation) in collaboration with the PDF. One of the good news at the workshop was the desire by ICCO to provide further support to ensure the preparation of a final document that could be submitted to any other donor. The coalition partners were all at different levels in the implementation/understanding of the Value Chain Development Concept with the lead organization CERUT as well as CENDEP already well advanced with the pepper and eru value chains respectively.

To reduce the gap between the various partners, seven information and sensitization workshops were organized within Cameroon bringing together over 214 participants from various stakeholder groups with objectives to:

1. To sensitise and inform all stakeholders of the actions involved in the development of value chains for cassava, maize, njansang and honey and bi-products in Cameroon;
2. To enable stakeholders involved to have a better understanding of the Value Chain Development concept and their roles and responsibilities;

3. To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the different selected chains;
4. To brainstorm on who a chain leader should be and how stakeholders could network;
and
5. To chart a way forward for the different subsectors.

The results of the baseline and market studies were used to update the strategic plans of the partner organisations concerned. It is interesting to note that during the sensitization and information workshops, some participants were already inquisitive as to what would happen if no funding was found to implement the VCD project. By offering to give further support to ensure the finalization of the action plan for the coalition partners, ICCO is indirectly addressing this issue. This is because the plan could be submitted to any other funding partners.

If you are interested in supporting this program or know where we could access funds for it, please contact our leaders:

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Obituary



Late Mr. Ekuka Pius (first from right)

In May 2011, CENDEP lost one her contact farmers, Mr. Ekuka Pius. He was delegate of the Bakingili Eru Farmers Group since 2004. Mr. Pius settled in the coastal village of Bakingili in the SW Region of Cameroon after his retirement from the Cameroon military and was very active in development and conservation work. In addition to the domestication of *Gnetum spp.*, a forest vegetable, Mr. Pius received training on other crop propagation techniques like maccotting, grafting and budding. The Bakingili Group eru nursery established with financial support from IUCN NL in 2004 was transformed into a multipurpose tree nursery supplying assorted fruits and other useful tree seedlings to farmers in the Bakingili community. This was through the initiative of Mr. Pius after he received further training. This diversified sources of income for his group.

The Bakingili Eru Group was one to the groups trained by CENDEP that were already realizing revenue from the production of eru, even though at a small scale. They acquired a substantial piece of land from the village chief that was gradually being converted into a small forest for the cultivation of eru through the leadership of Mr. Pius. He was a good partner of the programme for the sustainable management of natural resources in the SW Region of Cameroon.

Mr. Pius narrated his intentions to train youths especially his children and all interested community members in every aspect of agriculture that he had engaged in

Bakingili is a small village at the foot of Mount Cameroon. It is located a few Km from Debundscha. Debundscha is popularly known for being the wettest town on the African continent, but records have placed it behind the town of Ureka on the island of Bioko in Equatorial Guinea, which receives about 10,450 millimeters (418 ins) of rainfall annually making it the wettest place in Africa, followed by Debundscha with an annual rainfall of about 10 299 millimeters (411.9 ins) coming second in overall rainfall average in Africa. The village of Debundscha is also listed among the top five rainiest places in the world after Lloró, Mawsynram, Mount Waialeale and Cherrapunji, with all of them receiving over 10 000 millimeters (400 ins) of rainfall annually.

A month before his death, Mr Pius met with students and volunteers working with CENDEP and recounted some of the benefits his group had working with CENDEP.

Among them were the training in grafting, budding and maccotting and the partnership with CENDEP that enabled his group to be able to sell the eru seedlings they produce through CENDEP's network. He expressed joy that some of his group members who dropped because of the slow growth of eru were coming back. This meant that more and more people were becoming interested in the cultivation of the vegetable and so it would be difficult for it to disappear. Of importance was the interest shown by the youths. Their production was still consumed within the community as there were not yet surpluses to take to nearby markets. He narrated his intentions to train youths especially his children and all interested community members in every aspect of

agriculture that he had engaged in. He was also interested in linking the two small farms of eru his group had established to make a bigger farm. One of the main problems they were facing as group was the theft of eru from their farm but this never deterred them.

Our partnership with the Bakingili Eru Group has been fruitful in many fronts. We greatly mourn the passing away of Mr. Pius and hope there shall be a good replacement for him to ensure the continuation of conservation work in the Bakingili community.