



## **MID-TERM REPORT**

**13364-1: Community Education for Sustainable Forest Conservation and Climate Change Mitigation**

*July 2013 – December 2013*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In June, 2013 the Environmental Governance Institute (EGI) received financial support from the Rufford Foundation to undertake a project on Community Education for Sustainable Forest Conservation and Climate Change Mitigation in the following 11 villages of Mamfe subdivision of Manyu division: Eyangntui, Eshobi, Egbekaw, Small Mamfe, Efemefek, Bachou-tai, Eyanchang, Nchang, Besongabang, Nfaitock and Okoyong. The aim of the project is to halt and reverse forest degradation and loss of biodiversity by promoting tree growing and participatory forest management practices. The project is part of a wider strategy within the organization, which combines conservation education with support of alternative livelihoods activities in Manyu division. The following is a mid-term report on the progress of project activities and results.

## 2. PROGRESS ACHIEVED (ACTIVITIES)

### 2.1. Organize community mobilization meetings on project activities



Community and gender officer talks to community members during mobilization exercise

During the months of July and August 2013, the Community and Gender Officer, the Environmental Education Officer and the Community mobilizer travelled to the targeted villages to hold meetings with community members. The village chiefs participated actively in announcing the date and venues of the meetings, and in some cases, even hosted the meetings in their residences/palaces. During the meetings, EGI staff introduced the proposed project, explained the expected outcomes to the village communities and solicited their commitment to participate in the planned activities. They carried out discussions about the state of forests in the area and agreed on modalities for

addressing deforestation and improving agricultural practices.

The mobilization meetings also included a familiarization tour through the villages in order to discuss not only the level of destruction of trees, but also to identify areas both in individual farms and community lands, where they could reforest.



EGI mobilizer inspects forests with community members

## **2.2. Organise 3 awareness workshops on the potential and benefits of conserving indigenous forests and agroforestry initiatives**

Each village appointed representatives to attend a joint workshop that was held in Mamfe town on 23rd August 2013. Apart from discussing the importance and benefits of agro-forestry, each village brainstormed about the types of trees they need, and the reasons for choosing these tree types. These suggestions were debated during a plenary session and documented and have formed the basis of further consultations with forestry and agricultural officers.

One main workshop was held in Mamfe town in August 2013. 10 villages were targeted for the work shop but two (Eshobi and Eyangtui) were absent due to poor communication network and bad road so information did not get to them on time. To conclude the meeting, each village identified a volunteer who will attend training and serve as a focal person for their village.

The workshop was attended by the Divisional Supervisor for Agricultural Extension and the Personal Assistant to the Divisional Officer, who both hailed the participatory approach and expressed their willingness to collaborate with EGI in implementing the project. In addition, EGI established contact with Manyu Community Radio who featured the event extensively, as did the National Telegraph, a Mamfe based newspaper.

## **2.3. Produce and disseminate awareness materials on fruit growing and tree planting practices**

In August 2013, EGI produced 100 t-shirts which were distributed to the participants of the agro-forestry workshop in Mamfe and to community members in the villages. Furthermore, two radio shows addressed the project on the Manyu Community Radio, and one article was published in the local newspaper that has circulation in Mamfe sub-division. In this first quarter of 2014, additional talk shows will be aired on Manyu Community Radio. One of EGI's approaches is to train young school going children on sustainable practices, through school environmental clubs. During the reporting period, we collaborated with some teachers to produce an environmental club guide. The guide has a section that helps teachers to carry out practical lessons on tree planting with their students. This guide is now ready to go to print and will be distributed to schools in February 2014.

## **2.4. Work with village communities to identify indigenous high value tree species**

This exercise was carried out during the agro-forestry workshop that was held in August 2013. The suggestions made by community members were further discussed with representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER), Ministry of Flora and Fauna (MINFOF) and the Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDD). Based on these discussions, EGI started sourcing for seedlings for the following trees: doussie (*Afzela* spp.: *Afzelia bipidensis*, *Afzelia pachyloba*); Azobe (*Lophira azata*), bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*), njangsa (*Ricinodendron heudelotii* spp.), and mango trees (*mangifera* spp.) kola (*Cola vera*, *Cola acuminata*, *Cola nitida*), plums, coconut.

## 2.5. Establish farm demonstration plots and tree nurseries within schools for education purposes

A participatory learning approach was used to carry out this activity, in which people were able to learn by doing. With technical support from a professional forester from the Ministry of Flora and Fauna (MINFOF), the identified community volunteers were trained on the identification and establishment of appropriate tree nursery sites in their villages, and how to care for seedlings before transplanting. A rapid assessment was also done in the schools to determine how much environmental education activity is going on. This is a first step in a plan to train students about tree planting.



At the same time, EGI started sourcing for seedlings that had been selected by villages, such as bush mango, njangsa and bitter cola and timber species. The main nursery has been established in Nchang village, from which seedlings will be distributed to other village nurseries.

## 2.6. Compile print and multi-media case studies about the project

Tree nursery constructed using locally available materials

This is an ongoing activity. During our monthly review meetings, we go through a process where we discuss emerging challenges and successes and derive lessons that we incorporate into this and other projects. Our media and public relations officer has been tasked with documenting some of the identified cases.

## 3. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE: PLANNED VS. ACTUAL

PROJECT ACTIVITIES	STATUS	EXPLANATION AND ACTION TO BE TAKEN
Organize community mobilization meetings on project activities	Completed	None
Organise 3 awareness workshops on the potential and benefits of conserving indigenous forests and agroforestry initiatives	Partially done	1 more workshop scheduled for quarter 2 of 2014
Produce and disseminate awareness materials on fruit growing and tree planting practices	Partially done	Additional radio show will be aired and guides for environmental club activities will be distributed to schools in quarter 1 of 2014
Work with village communities to identify indigenous high value tree species	Completed	None

<b>Establish farm demonstration plots and tree nurseries within schools for education purposes</b>	Partially done	Village sites identified and school contacts made; tree seedlings will be transferred to the villages after procurement is complete
<b>Organise a short intensive course for the local extension workers on sustainable agroforestry production systems and use of natural resources</b>	Not done	Scheduled for quarter 2 of 2014
<b>Undertake evaluation study taking account of the experience, best practices and lessons learned</b>	Not done	Scheduled for quarter 2 of 2014
<b>Compile print and multi-media case studies about the project.</b>	Ongoing	
<b>Prepare and disseminate final evaluation project to all stakeholders.</b>	Not done	Scheduled for quarter 2 of 2014

#### **4. PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING OUTCOMES**

The expected outcomes for this project are: Informed and trained village communities with enhanced capacity to engage in forest and biodiversity conservation. So far, the level of participation and engagement of village communities in the project, organization of village communities around the chosen volunteers and the allocation of village plots for tree planting, all attest to the fact that our training has resonated with the concerns and needs of the communities. This has laid a foundation on which EGI can build to increased community members` capacity to engage in participatory forest and natural resource governance will be achieved.

In the long term, the project aims to contribute to improving carbon sinks and as such to mitigating climate change.

#### **5. CHALLENGES, SUCCESSES AND LESSONS LEARNT**

##### **5.1. Selection of communication materials must be targeted to reach the widest audience with appropriate content**

Our experiences in the field have resulted into some reflection about how we can effectively use our communication budget. For example, we printed and distributed t-shirts as per the proposal, but upon careful analysis, we felt that we would reach more people with radio. We will air more shows on Manyu Community Radio, which is very popular and airs across the entire division. At the school level, our assessment reveals that whereas posters are a good way to attract children`s attention and help to simplify complex messages, they are more effective when coupled with some practical learning activities that help the children to get a better understanding about how their environment works. Therefore, we have decided to increase our work with teachers who coordinate environmental education in schools. We are training them on

effective methods to teach children about tree planting, and to give them guides for reference and additional material.

## **6. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION**

### **6.1. Fundraising**

As stated in the introduction, this project is part of a wider organizational strategy on promoting sustainable use of resources through education and supporting alternative livelihoods. In this regard, we have continued to fundraise to boost our activities. With support from Environmental Education and Conservation Global (EECG), we were able to organize meetings with teachers to develop a guide for environmental clubs, which among others, addresses tree planting by children.

### **6.2. Communication, monitoring and evaluation**

The Community mobilizer has been instrumental in ensuring that the project is running according to schedule and that community members are actively participating. At the same time, the two program staff in charge of the project carry out field visits at least twice every quarter and are in constant communication with the volunteer community resource persons to keep updated with progress. They report plans and achievements at the weekly EGI program meeting, and presents written progress reports at the end of every month.

EGI first reported about the Rufford Foundation support in the inaugural newsletter EGI Bulletin in December 2013, and has also put updates of the project on the website. The second edition of the EGI Bulletin, due out at the end of January 2014, also includes an article on the agro-forestry project.