Project Update: March 2011

After the flooding of the project site for the past six (6) months (i.e. June to November 2010) due to heavy down pour and the overflow of the Keta lagoon, it was realized that the survival rate of tree species planted were as follows:

Tree species	Survival rate(%)
Cassia mangium	*5%*
Acassia	95%
Mahogany	15%
Eucalyptus.	95%
Red Mangrove	95%

Hence, for the woodlots, the project is concentrating on raising tree species like; Acassia, Eucalyptus, Red and White Mangrove for its tree nursery since these species have been found suitable for the area with a very high survival rate. So far, the project has raised a tree nursery of over 7 thousand tree seedlings and is on-going which will be ready for transplanting and beating up and expanding the woodlot and mangrove regeneration along the banks of the Keta lagoon at Adzato.

The project resumed its activities like; clearing weeds competing for space and nutrients among the red & white mangroves planted along the bank of the lagoon and the woodlots/growing trees planted on degraded lands, raising of tree nursery, beating up dead seedlings, livelihood support (Goat, duck & local fowl), public awareness creation through practical field interaction with community youth, women and men in conservation practices are on-going, educational tours, workshops & field visits, practical and participatory field training/hands-on demonstrations to learn/develop skill in organic farming practices, fuel efficient stove construction are on-going. These activities are supposed to be on-going in Adzato community and its environs even if RSG sponsorship support ends.

Public awareness creation

T-shirts embossed in front with RSG logo and at the back with conservation messages like:

- **Conserve WETLANDS to Support LIVELIHOOD.**
- **WETLANDS are FISH HABITAT, PRESERVE them.**
- **WETLANDS PROTECT LIFE & PROPERTY from Floods, KEEP THEM ALIVE.**

Day-to-day field and community informal interactions & knowledge/skill sharing on nature conservation techniques and environmental management with over 500 community people involving school pupils, youth, women and men have been on-going. Sharing of wildlife educational material and film shows on Nature conservation and environmental management are still on-going at any given opportunity during community gatherings in Adzato and its environs. Environmental management materials on success stories of Songor ramsar site were distributed.

Educational workshops & trips to areas with tangible success stories

Educational tours to these areas indicates how people of those communities manually cleared creeks choked with reeds due to siltation by using ropes to tie the stem of the reeds and pulling them out of the choked creeks and restoring of degraded mangrove sites by planting of mangroves species at the banks of the creeks/degraded lands and restoring of vast degraded lands with exotic tree species. The communal spirit of the people of the Songor Ramsar Site has improved the ecosystem resulting in a huge edifies of mangrove forest and woodlot. Moreover, the people of Adzato interacted on the field with the people of Ada (who with their success stories) sharing experience and skill, which increased the will and desire of the Adzato people to replicate what they saw by devoting time and energy to change/improve the ecosystem of Adzato. Other environmental management lessons like; water & land pollution with fertilizer, in-organic materials, human excreta, detergents, indiscriminate cutting of trees and mangroves, bushfire control/avoidance were also some of the practical field lessons learnt. Currently small community gatherings are on-going at Adzato where the community project implementation committee have started re-strategising with the youth, women and men of Adzato town to compete with the people of Songor Ramsar Site on Nature Conservation.

Practical and Participatory Field Training workshops/Hands-on demonstrations

Modern techniques in Mangrove/tree nursery establishment, Transplanting/care of growing seedlings, were practically demonstrated on the field which has resulted in the rescuing of degraded lands. Planted trees for the woodlot and mangroves along the bank of the lagoon have grown to a height of 3-20ft tall. About 75% of the planted seedlings survived and are doing well. The other 25% could not survive due to reasons like, lack of fresh water(salty nature of the soil due to the lagoon) before the rains set in, soil type not suitable for certain tree species, too much rains & flooding in the area, though the flooding was good for the mangroves but not for the established woodlot. Tree species suitable for the project site are Acassia, Eucalyptus, White and Red Mangroves. Hence the project has embarked on raising nursery of these species for long-term nature conservation activities. Mangrove regeneration now covers/has rescued 1,200metres stretch long in length by 15metres in breath of the banks of the lagoon and woodlot on degraded lands covering an area of about 10 acres/4 ha of land (rescued land).

Organic crop (tomato and pepper) farming is mainly practiced by the people and this project emphasized on good practices for better yields.

Fuel efficient stove construction using local materials (cow dung, sand, grass, clay and stones) from the project site. The grass was chopped into pieces with a knife and was mixed with a well pounded clay, sand and cow dung to provide a mesh-like fine nature and to get a thorough mixture of clay. Some water was added to the mixture and pounded together to obtain a fine and a more malleable mixture which was moulded into slaps. Three stones were arranged on the ground in a rectangular form which serves as pillars to hold the structure together and a cooking pot (considering the sizes one may use) was placed on top of it. The malleable mixture was then moulded around the stones with the pots still on the stones to get the required bottom size of the pot. The cooking pot was removed and the inner layer of the shape formed was also plastered with the malleable mixture.

This fuel efficient stove was built with just a little opening for fuel wood and air passage, as well as the open top where the bottom of the cooking pot is placed, to conserve and make maximum use of energy generated and prevent energy losses and less use of fuel wood/firewood.

Some wildlife-based economic ventures such as local breeds of goat, duck and fowl rearing is on-going. Other economic activities which could enhance the livelihood of the people of Adzato are; value addition to their weaving (sleeping mats, plate mats, fruit bowls, baskets, fans, money bags, laundry baskets, hats etc) business using reeds and other local materials in the project area, expanding the woodlot, mangrove regeneration, tree nursery, introduction of grass cutter farming and practical demonstration of awareness creation in nature conservation could be further pursued if a second phase of funding is supported by RSG.

There has been lots of contribution and commitment to restoring and conserving a degrading wetland ecosystem by the people of Adzato.

Educational Materials Printed and Distributed

Some Adzato Project implementation community leaders at a ToT workshop on Community Conservation: Picture by Martin Ahorbo

Some Adzato community leaders at a ToT workshop on Community Conservation: Picture by Martin Ahorbo

Sections of the established tree nursery: Picture by Martin Ahorbo

Fuel-efficient stove constructed & in use: Picture by Martin Ahorbo

Left: Practical field experience, training & knowledge sharing. Middle: Educational Tour to Ada (Songor ramsar site) wetland site. Right: At Tekekope woodlot site at Ada (sponsored by RSG) for experience, skill & knowledge sharing: Picture by Martin Ahorbo

Field interaction & sharing of knowledge: Pictures by Martin Ahorbo

Field interaction & sharing of knowledge: Pictures by Martin Ahorbo

Some Field Pictures Before & After RSG Sponsored Project

Adzato school Headmistress and pupils also involved in the project inculcating tree planting (conservation) values in the youth & children for nature conservation: Picture by Martin Ahorbo

Mangrove Regeneration:

Before RSG intervention

Banks of the lagoon without mangrove: Picture by Martin Ahorbo

After RSG intervention

Banks of the lagoon with growing mangrove seedlings: Picture by Martin Ahorbo

Degraded Land before RSG intervention

Rescued land After RSG intervention: Pictures by Martin Ahorbo

One of the project implementation committee community members clearing weeds competing leaders saving a growing seedling from being with Growing Eucalyptus seedlings at the woodlot swallowed up by weeds after the floods

The middle valley-like portion of the woodlot that could not survive the floods, hence earmarked for planting white mangrove: Picture by Martin Ahorbo