

Project Update: January 2024

In the past months, we have been focusing on building the capacity of our citizen scientists in basic biodiversity monitoring procedures and field application of these procedures. All vascular plants and trees with dbh ≥ 10 cm within our study plots have been identified and counted, and their diameter and height measured by citizen scientists. All identified trees have further been classified based on their conservation status and ecological value, each assigned to a local use (e.g., food, fodder, medicine, timber) category. Besides plant assessment in our study plots, other plot scale variables such as litter depth, deadwood volumes, and tree canopy cover have also been estimated. Arthropod sampling has mainly focussed on the use of pitfall traps, sweep netting, beating trays and malaise trapping techniques. Sampling is now complete, with samples currently being identified by our citizen scientists with the assistance of experienced taxonomists volunteering on the project. Birds survey based on point counts and mammal sampling with the camera traps has also been completed.

Several multipurpose tree planting activities have also been carried out around school compounds, marginalised landscapes and sections of degraded community forests, aiming to enrich tree stock while enhancing the provisioning of ecosystem services for local communities.

Our team is currently focused on identifying arthropod samples, analysing the data from the vegetation sampling and reviewing the questionnaires from our socio-cultural survey.



Figure 1: Volunteer demonstrating camera set-up to citizen scientists.



Figure 2: Wildlife camera mounted for sampling mammals.



Figure 3: Wildlife camera set-up.



Figure 4: Wildlife camera set-up by citizen scientists.



Figure 5: Bird-watching time by citizen scientists.



Figure 6: Microscope set-up by citizen scientists.



Figure 7: Arthropod sample identification by citizen scientists.



Figure 8: Sweep netting for sampling butterfly demonstration.



Figure 9: Tree diameter measurement demonstration.



Figure 10: Distance measurement demonstration.



Figure 11: Tree diameter measurement demonstration.



Figure 12: Microscope set-up for identifying arthropods.



Figure 13: Citizen scientists planting trees in degraded community forest.



Figure 14: Citizen scientists measuring the distance between two trees.



Figure 15: Tree planting exercise.



Figure 16: A volunteer planting a tree.