

Project Update: December 2008

The project started on December 1st 2008 with preparation meetings and establishment of close allies with the various traditional (the Chiefs and sub chiefs of Bambui and Kedjom Ketinguh (Small Babanki), and administrative authorities (Divisional Officer for Tubah, The Tubah Council) of Tubah and the two villages involved in the project. Announcement about the project was continuously made over the national radio (Cameroon radio and Television Corporation: CRTV), local churches of various denominations, mosques, farmers meeting groups, meeting houses, youth groups and by local village announcers or town criers. The project team met with the village chiefs (Fon's) and sub chiefs and briefed them of the project and the objectives. The Fon's of Bambui and Kedjom Ketinguh (Small Babanki) were so elated and impressed by such a program as they say will bring much spill over fruition effect to great apes (chimpanzee/Pan Troglodyte, specific class found in the Tubah Upland Forest) and to wildlife in general (rare species of birds, monkeys, antelopes, bats etc).

The Fon's of Bambui and Kedjom Ketinguh (Small Babanki) gave the project team the right and authorization to work permanently with the local dialects radio broadcasters (Mrs. Grace Kandeh and Mr. Awunti Gregory Gemuh respectively). The project team also worked closely with the Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife for Mezam Division, NW Region. This collaboration and networking with the delegation of Forestry and Wildlife (precisely the department of wildlife) has been very vital and instrumental in advice, inputs and in checking the information material and administrative procedure and making sure they are in accordance with the norms and laws of Cameroon.

In summary the following major activities took place during the month of December 2008

- Installation of Campaign Banners and posters at the entrance of the villages.
- Development of Program content for Media Campaign (Radio talks and slots) that took 2days.
- The identification of core team for media campaign and Capacity building of media team and volunteers.
- Radio Talks and slots over Cameroon Radio and Television Corporation (CRTV) in English (twice a week), Bambui and Kedjom Ketinguh dialects (every Mondays from 4:00PM local time), 3 version of audio slots (English, Bambui and Kedjom Ketinguh) is available, **(NB: Please see Text form of radio slot below).**
- Door-to-door sensitization, and distribution of T-shirts tracks and slogans by volunteers (one session in Bambui with the Muslim grazers community settlement in the close vicinity of the Tubah Upland Forest)
- Open sensitization and distribution of T-shirts with Kedjom Ketinguh village traditional councillors and quarter heads. Their traditional council has a membership representation of 188 members that are the voices of a population of about 25000 inhabitants.

- Tour/Visit to the Upland Forest by BAPESU and the Community (27th December 2008).
- Monitoring.

T-shirt Pledge

Anyone who accepts putting on the T-shirts does it with a pledge. Wearing of the T-shirt is an acceptance of a commitment by the people to protect the Great Apes (chimpanzee) of Tubah Upland Forest. As an indication they will respect the Great Apes as important to the environment. Please see attached pictures of Campaign T-Shirts.

Text Version of Radio Slot for Month 1

Stop the hunt of chimpanzees as bush meat in the Tubah upland forest. Chimpanzees (Pan Troglodytes) are our closest relatives and we human beings have a moral responsibility and a patriotic duty of protecting them. Chimpanzees are totally protected species of animal under class A. The law is clear about it as stated in section 101 of the Forestry Law No. 94/01 of 20/01/1994 and says: "Any person found, at anytime or any place, in possession of part of live or dead protected animal, shall be considered to have captured or killed it.

A fine of from 3 million – 10 million francs and a prison term from 1 to 2 years shall be imposed on whoever kills or captures a protected animal.

This is a message to the entire public and the Tubah population in particular from the Benevolent Association for the Protection of the Environment and the Socially Underprivileged (BAPESU), The Rufford Small Grants Foundation in the UK, and the Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife Mezam. **Beware**

New threats to the Great Apes (Pan Troglodyte) in the Tubah Upland Forest

There have been some new threats to the Chimpanzees of the Tubah Upland Forest emanating from a neighbouring village to the forest called as Kedjom Keku. The recently enthroned village chief of Kedjom Keku has established a shrine in the forest and this has attracted his people into the forest thereby making them discover abundant wildlife resources and pristine nature. This has established some huge degree of damages (practice of agriculture in the forest, deforestation, destruction of some of the main habitat area for chimpanzees, construction of huts). Additionally, a road has been established in the forest by some farmer inhabits of Kedjom Ketinguh (see picture attached).

Report on Tubah Upland Forest Visit and Open Community Sensitisation

Location of Sensitisation: Ardo Muslim settlement at the Tubah Upland Forest Neighbourhood. Thus Ardo settlement is under Bambui Village and its sub chiefdom. Date: 27th December 2008.

The visit to the Upland forest was very important in order to get an appraisal of the state of the forest and the chimpanzees and it was necessary to sensitise the immediate community around the forest on this issue. An open community sensitisation was given on the burning issue regarding chimpanzee's threats in the

forest by human activity. The Muslim community whose men practice mostly grazing of cattle as their principal income activity and women harvest and sell milk of cows, agreed that the chimpanzees are reducing in numbers due to human settlement, farming activities, hunting and bush burning in and round the forest. These chimpanzees that are of the Tubah forest are usually seen by the villagers in the early mornings when they come around to bask themselves on the rocky hills, are reportedly seldom seen lately due to increasing threats (aggressive cutting of trees, farming in and around the forest, hunt). The Muslim community strongly and unanimously agreed to take action in protecting these chimpanzees from disappearance by helping to preserve their natural habitat through their little daily positive actions. Christian Tabifor with the awareness team and field volunteers discourage burning of the forest by grazers as a means to improve pasture, discourage hunting of chimpanzees for bush meat, and encouraged the population to report any person found with part of live or dead chimpanzee to alert the local chief and other authorities. The Cameroon forestry law of 1994 puts the chimpanzee under **Class A** animals (wholly Protected). The Muslim community pledge in wearing the Awareness Campaign T-shirts in helping educate the public on this issue and also as a pledge in accepting to help in the preservation of these chimpanzees.

Remarks and Recommendations

Hunting is not a culture of the Muslims but instead rearing of cattle and so burning of bush to provoke fast pasture growth is commonly practiced. Bush burning is mostly carried out in late January by grazers and farmers in preparation for new pasture growth and farming (soil tilling) respectively whereby the people expect rainfall during early March. So to this effect open community sensitisation has been slated in early and mid January at a convenient date for the community so as to call for massive participation.

The project has attracted much attention and interests from many groups, individual ranging from researchers; American Peace Corps working on Tubah Watershed catchment's improvement, to the Tubah council administration, the delegation of Forestry and Wildlife, other local NGO's that are MEBONU Foundation, COBEX (Community Based Extension Initiative Group, just to cite a few. The Tubah Council Mayor and his administration in their efforts of carrying a demarcation of the forest with the bid of designating it a community forest has hugely goaded this initiative in protecting the chimpanzee from disappearance and called for it to be continuous and extended to cover the new community (Kedjom Keku) which is posing new and serious threats due the implantation of a shrine in the forest by their new chief.

News from a volunteer Great Apes (Chimpanzees) monitor says one of them has just put to birth a baby chimpanzee.