

# NDEF Drummer

A Quarterly Newsletter of the National Development Foundation (NDEF) Cameroon

Issue 006

May 2009

## NDEF continues to strive for the empowerment of rural communities

### What have we been doing?

Readers of the NDEF Drummer cannot have failed to notice that this is the first edition to be published since April 2007. While we apologise for this gap in the update of our activities, we hope you would understand the reasons for this.

You will recall that the last edition announced the beginning of a new direction for NDEF. Following some strategic input, we made some difficult decisions which resulted in the release of some staff members as well as the dropping of several projects. All this was to bring about a new streamlined structure in which we could focus our limited resources and better serve those we are aiming to support. The result of this is that we are now few in number – just 4 permanent staff members – yet our work is equally if not more challenging.

As always, our financial situation is foremost in our minds as budgetary constraints mean that we cannot always execute our work to the level we would like to. Whilst we are grateful to our current sponsors, we are always looking for new partnerships to help us achieve our objectives. In particular, now that the rainy season is upon us, the absence of a vehicle permanently at our disposal constantly hinders our progress.

### Positive news

In spite of the difficulties we face, we are pleased to say that the change of direction we took two years ago has broadly proved to be successful. We are now channelling our energies into one single, though wide reaching, project. This project has as its objective:

***To empower small scale farmers to apply various agroforestry and soil fertility improvement techniques on their farms in order to improve livelihoods, increase income and conserve natural resources in the process***

In practice, this means working with groups of farmers to transform their group nurseries and farms into pioneer models of relevant agroforestry and rapid fruit tree multiplication techniques.



*Wosing Mixed Farming Group CIG nursery*



*Farmers practise the technique of grafting*

### What are we up to now?

We currently have 13 groups of farmers in three divisions of the North West Region of Cameroon; Menchum, Mezam and Momo, who receive monthly visits from our field experts. During these visits, work is carried out with the groups to identify potential problems on the farm such as soil erosion, soil infertility and destruction of crops by animals. We use this information to provide advice on the layout of the group farm and the incorporation of particular agroforestry techniques, such as the construction of contour bonds, to reduce the effects of soil erosion.

In conjunction with work on the group farm, we are also assisting groups in activities of nursery maintenance. As it is now time for field planting, we are currently ensuring that the groups have nursed their tree seedlings correctly to enable them to be planted in the group farms. We are also continuing trainings on how to rapidly multiply fruit trees to reduce the number of years hitherto taken to bear fruits. By acquiring various techniques such as grafting, marcotting and rooting cuttings, our clients will see their trees bearing fruits in just 2 to 3 years, rather than around 25 years in some extreme cases!

## Three new members of staff at NDEF

April saw the arrival of a new volunteer at NDEF. Gemma Holloway joined us from the UK and will be working with us for the next 5 months, focusing on areas of project management, fundraising and marketing. Gemma is the third volunteer to come to us through a UK-based organisation, 2Way Development. Although over a year has passed on since the last 2Way Volunteer left, the work of Jonathan Phillips (2Way volunteer 2006) and Gemma Stanbridge (2Way volunteer 2007) has been highly valuable for the organization. Gemma Holloway has experience in dealing with agricultural producers in Africa through her previous role as a tea buyer with Tetley, a UK-based multinational company. On completion of her assignment with NDEF, Gemma will be returning to university to study for a Masters in Sustainable Development so she is keen to learn from her experiences at NDEF as well as contributing to the organisation through her previous skills and experience.

*From left to right:*

*Gemma, Adamou, Hanne*



Hanne Delbecque from Belgium joined us at the start of May. She has come through our Belgian partner organisation, Broederlijk Delen, and will

be working with us for at least 6 months. Hanne's background is in Social Pedagogy so she will be working on a project to identify ways in which NDEF can better include women and youths in their activities. She will also be working with NDEF staff to increase their capabilities in information technology and communication.

Adamou Ibrahim Maoko has also joined the organisation as a Field Support Staff. He brings with him a great deal of field experience as well as trainings in various aspects of development.

We have great pleasure in welcoming Gemma, Hanne and Adamou into the team.

## Sale of plantlets

NDEF Cameroon has plantlets for sale from its demo nursery at Mile 8, Mankon.

These are not just any plantlets! These are improved plantain and banana suckers as well as seedlings of rapidly multiplied fruit trees. Farmers who would like to have superior plantains and bananas crops with high yielding potentials and fruit trees which bear fruits early should come to NDEF nursery now and get them planted before it's too late!

**Address: NDEF Cameroon, opposite IRAD Gate, Mile 8, Mankon, Bamenda.**

Fruit varieties available: pear, mango, kola nut, guava, orange, lemon, plum, grape, passion fruit

## Want to expand your mind and your horizons...?

NDEF has a well stocked library available for all to use. The library includes the following categories:

- General fiction (including many Classics)
- Children's Literature
- Medical and Health Sciences
- Management and Accounting
- Agriculture and Rural Development
- History and Culture

To make use of the library, come to the above address between 8.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

