

NDEF Drummer

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Staff go an extra mile to reach farmers, despite odds

In the last edition of the Drummer, we mentioned some of the difficulties NDEF encounters in moving around and getting out to the field. In the absence of a car and in particular now that we are well into the rainy season, sometimes we struggle a great deal to reach some of the more cut-off farms and areas we visit. The only transport means we *do* have at our disposal is a motorbike. After some months of being out of service, by the end of May the bike was back in (semi!) working order.

A bike certainly has some advantages over cars – even though this can be hard to remember whilst under pelting rain, climbing a hill and with the engine of the old bike overheating so that before the crest of the hill the bike stops and both rider and passenger have to dismount and push for several meters while the engine cools!

However, bikes could go through some places that cars cannot pass, as Nkeng Pius (Coordinator of NDEF) ventured on a recent trip to Wum. As the bridge at Mile 24, Bafut, was still undergoing maintenance and the temporary bridge having been swept away by heavy rain, cars and buses were usually delayed for several hours and passengers

had to cross the temporary bridge on foot to pick up another vehicle on the other side. Pius, however, anxious to get to his clients on time, took the innovative approach of putting his motorbike in a canoe to cross the Mezam River! Some of our clients would surely not believe the lengths we go to reach out to them in the field!



Crossing River Mezam in a wooden canoe

Planting 10,000 trees at Pinyin Watershed

NDEF has recently been awarded a contract to supply and plant 10,000 trees at the Pinyin Watershed area in Santa Sub Division of Mezam Division, North West Region.

The project falls under the Environmental Component of the Grassfield Participatory and Decentralised Rural Development Project (GP-DERUDEP). NDEF would be supplying and planting a variety of tree species to improve on the level of the water table and to offer opportunities for the exploitation of non-timber forest products, including apicultural activities. Such activities would reduce pressure currently being exerted by encroaching farmers who are combing the valleys in the area in such of arable land for market gardening. NDEF has a maximum period of two months to supply and plant the trees.

NDEF's partner announces departure from Cameroon

NDEF recently received the sad news that Broederlijk Delen, its main funding partner, will be withdrawing from Cameroon. Though the reasons for its withdrawal are primarily strategic, the news came as a blow to the team of NDEF who have been working with the Belgian organisation, BD, for only one and a half years. In June, representatives from BD visited NDEF to explain in more detail the reasons for its withdrawal and to present the plan for the phasing out of funding. BD's sponsorship of the agro forestry project will run until the end of the year, as planned, at which point, BD and NDEF will part ways.

Activities in the field

Transplanting of Trees in fields

Since the last edition of the Drummer, NDEF staff have been busy continuing their work with farmer groups across the North West. We have maintained our programme of working with groups in Mezam, Momo and Menchum, visiting each group once a month to conduct training sessions. Our trainings over the last three months have focussed primarily on tree planting, in line with our agro forestry project. At the beginning of the year, NDEF and one of NDEF's partners, Trees for the Future (TFTF) Cameroon, donated seeds of multipurpose

and fast growing trees to farmer groups. Since then, groups have been nursing these multi-purpose and fast growing trees so that they were ready for



Transplanting trees on a contour bond

planting in May. NDEF field staff, along with representatives from Trees for the Future, demonstrated methods of tree planting which enable the farmers to get the maximum benefit from the trees on their farms. For example,



Constructing an A-frame for contouring

trees with a thick, thorny canopy are planted along a ridge built up around the edge of the farm to create a 'living fence'

which will prevent animals entering crop fields and other trees are planted on ridges or 'contour bonds' in the middle of the farm to provide nitrogen through their roots and 'green manure' or natural fertiliser from the leaves which are high in nutrients.

Record keeping trainings

During the month of July, we have been training sessions on Record Keeping for Farmers in agro forestry. In line with NDEF's goal to help farmers improve livelihoods and increase income, we are working to train groups not only in agricultural techniques but also in farm management and basic accounting. The workshops have been well received by farmers and should help them to improve the efficiency and productivity of both their group farms and individual farms.

Volunteers Leave

Gemma Holloway, who has been working with NDEF since April 2009 has come to the end of her work with NDEF. In the meantime, Hanne Delbecque could not stay to complete her work with NDEF due to many management differences that she chose to move to another NGO in the South West Region of Cameroon.

Staff Reshuffle

In a bid to bring fresh impetus to the activities of NDEF and keep abreast with new advances and in the pious hope of making NDEF much more responsive to clients' needs, there have been some spectacular changes in staff. First, Derick Nyugap was fired and this was closely followed by Grace Awuh Kongla. To make a better replacement, two agricultural technicians joined NDEF at the beginning of July this year.

Roland Mosi Ngwe and Protus Nforghah are both graduates of the Agricultural School in Bambui, North West Region. They have a wealth of experiences in diverse activities since they left school. They are enthusiastic to break new grounds in agro forestry practices of NDEF. We also have the impression that with square pegs being put in square holes, a better service package would be delivered to clients. Furthermore, there would be much relieve on key office staff who have hitherto almost abandoned office work due to pressing fieldwork.