



Creating an agricultural training center on the northern periphery of the Dja, natural reserve, southeast Cameroon, Central – West Africa.



Intro

In this rainforest area the only source of income for the people is the cocoa culture, agriculture and fishing. Some also go hunting or poaching of wildlife coming from the natural reserve that also enters the forest at the periphery (protected animals not allowed, and small game is allowed). People try to survive from day to day.

Children have no future then working after their primary school on the family plantation. They go to school until the age of 14 to 15j and the girls at that age often have their first child. Most are malnourished, infant mortality is high and medical care totally absent. In the periphery are a dozen small village schools with 60 to 100 pupils. Population consists Badjoues and Baka pygmies who live in the reserve and in the periphery. The collaborating villages for this project, are six and in this three schools.

People use forest areas for agriculture. Every year before the start of the rainy season there are a lot of acres of burned forest (slash and burn method) because of a decreasing harvest after a few years of land use, they change for a new piece of forest. The people know nothing about sustainable agriculture, crop rotation, green manure. Large areas of forest are lost this way each year. Apas started in 2010 a program for agroforestry in the context of poverty reduction and conservation of the rainforest. To reforest fallow land with trees, oil palms (for local use in the diet) and fruit trees local species that also are useful for the enrichment of the cocoa plantations and the shade they provide for the cocoa.

Objective

APAS supports since five years a local village school which has evolved from a cabin with canopy into a full school in brick with all facilities to follow a normal cycle of primary education. There was much to catch up, but gradually they went ahead and now the results show students who move on to high school in the nearest town Messamena.

A first group of six villages will become the first part of a drive chain by working closely together. Other and more schools will be given the opportunity to be included in this program later on. The aim is to integrate a sustainable agriculture program in these schools. Agro-forestry, fruit trees in order to enrich the cocoa plantations, to reforest fallow land, small livestock breeding, oil palm nursery, beekeeping, farming, a total package for the education of technical assistant in agriculture, with certificate recognized by the government. Small Livestock can meet the need for proteins and help to reduce the hunting pressure.

An agricultural training center (ATC) where students partly stay on boarding and partly in their own village to combine theory and practice.

A location is already existing, because the wooden chalets who previously served as classrooms and were replaced by a brick school building, are empty. Close cooperation will be set up with six villages and their schools. By creating this department with school plantation, students can practice this education in their own village. The whole is co-managed by the two existing village committees for local development (Comité de Gestion et de Développement Local - CGDL) to which all parents belong.

It is a test for three years as a model for multiple identical installations throughout the periphery later on. Products(cocoyam, cassava, plantain, etc.) will be used for nutrition of the pupils. This project allows young people to learn the importance of sustainable agriculture and teach that knowledge to others. Like use of useful plants that can serve as green manure and animal feed for

example. The bee pollination can increase harvest. They can learn how the combination of cocoa and fruit trees (agroforestry) can supply people an additional harvest with a better diet as a result. Cocoa cannot stand sunlight and other trees need to provide shade. Combined with the right choice fruit trees (avocado - papaja's, safou (plum type), grapefruit and mandarin) they will dominate the cocoa and the trees will filter the sunlight. They will work with their blossoms to attract bees. The pollination will increase both fruit and cocoa harvest and also give them at other times of the year a harvest that will mean an extra addition in the unbalanced diet of the people with extra vitamins and minerals.

Honey production will be a very appreciated addition into nutrition and is used as medicine by the local people. Apas has already a beekeeping project in the same villages since 2007.

Also, the sale of the cocoa can make the schools partially self-reliant. Because the funds made available by the parents are mostly inadequate for operation of the school. Mostly only the director is paid by the government and parents are obligated to contribute for teachers and functioning. Schools who want to participate will receive a school plantation that will be managed with the help of the local parents association. This way parents are closely involved with the management of the school and give their contribution in another way then paying money. They can contribute in other way too, by being host parent for a student of the ATC who will do practical training on the school plantation.

Students may also make an own project of their choice to be executed in their own village. They will be monitored and assessed throughout the whole period. The ATC supervises the projects and their parents are enabled to participate during training periods as host and facilitator to act.

A project for the people and executed by the people who will motivate each other in ensuring food security for their own communities, ensuring the continuity of education and finally ensuring sustainable management of the rainforest to protect the environment. The ATC will have model gardens and a small cattle farm. It will produce its own food and the excess will give a revenue to the CFA. It will be fully managed by the village committee for local development. APAS Cameroon from 2013 will continue to be accessible for guidance and service to local farmers.

APAS is a member of the Technology for Agriculture group (TECA) of FAO, the World Food Organization and their Agricultural department in Rome. Apas is also member of Beekeeping and Exchange Group of FAO since it's launched.

The choice of plants will be made under the supervision of ICRAF – IRAD – and SAILD
<http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/> - http://www.irad-cameroon.org/contact_fr.php and
<http://www.saild.org/> Advice and guidance in collaboration with FAO Cameroon.

Contacts :

Vice- Presidente : Ganses – Bogaerts Raymonde
De Roest d'Alkemadelaan 13/48
2600 Berchem - Antwerp
tel: 0475 22 14 57
email: apecassistance@gmail.com

Ape-assistance.npo
Organisation registration number : 880.675.767