



GREEN CARE ASSOCIATION

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Introduction

Green Care Association (GCA) has been intensifying her activities over the years in the domains of proper environmental management and sustainable agriculture. Special attention has been paid to promoting tree seed collection, tree nursery, tree planting in community water catchments and forests. Bee farming, mushroom cultivation, ecotourism (bird watching), paper beads production and promotion of rapid yam set multiplication were some of the activities realized by GCA in 2016 by a team of dedicated staff, with local and overseas volunteers.

Seed Bank



As has always been the tradition, GCA this year continued with its indigenous tree seed collection to improve her seed bank. Most of the seeds collected are used for agroforestry, bee farming and medicinal purposes. Therefore, they are of economic value. Some of the seed collected are from endangered indigenous trees that are already near extinction. By the end of year GCA had collected hundreds of kilos of seeds for the seed bank. Some of the seeds were nursed already at GCA permanent tree nursery.

Tree Nursery

One of the main activities of GCA is the tree nursery. This year's tree nursery has many species that are good for agroforestry, bee friendly, water catchment protection, ornamental, medicinal and economic purposes like *Prunus africana*. Over twenty species nursed are in their thousands some of which are ready to be planted, even though we still have to wait for the rains as from April to plant. GCA trees are often planted in schools, community forests, water catchments for protection and by individuals.



Tree planting

Like the previous years, GCA was able to promote the planting of trees at the Heaven's Farm (located at the Berlem Plateau in Nkum Sub-Division), tree sales to many individuals and groups like the Shisong Convent of the Franciscan Sisters and rural farmers and forest at Kov Ndzeen. This was a success thanks to volunteerism by GCA team and the sponsorship of the Rufford Small Grant and Green Ink.

Environmental Field Experience

The GCA team undertook a three-day fieldwork to Kov Ndzeen (south of Kumbo) to appreciate the state of environment. The main aspects under observation during this trip were the occurrence of landslides, incompatible land uses (overgrazing and unsustainable agriculture), deforestation, extreme climate events (drought, severe erosion and floods), invasive plant species as well as the state of water resources. Conversant of the state of the environment, the team took along plant seeds to be sown in the wild in order to mitigate land degradation. About two (2) kg of Acacia (a fast growing shrub, which is also drought tolerant) were sown along the trip track from Mbuluf-Kov Ndzeen-Nkuv-Kingomen. Five (5) kg of Bracaria (a pasture improvement specie) was also donated to a local farmer at Kov Ndzeen to experiment on his farm and spread on some portions.



Disturbed by the degree of land degradation, the GCA team resolved to foster conservation measures to address the environmental trauma. We are also looking for local partners and partners from overseas to join us mitigate land degradation through 'aggressive reforestation', conservation of patches of threatened gallery forests, pasture improvement and resolution of pending farmer-grazier conflicts.

In addition, GCA is also working to set up an eco-village at Kov Ndzeen. The eco-village will aim at setting up a tree nursery and organizing tree planting to replace lost forest; identifying and promoting the farming of neglected vegetables; introducing a food processing plant, including food and vegetable processing machines, dryers, improved seeds, etc.; introducing new species



for improving pastures, to help mitigate farmer–grazer conflicts; promoting the planting of medicinal plants; improving the road to the village, and repairing local bridges; constructing eco-farm houses; establishing a solar system for electricity; introducing donkeys for transportation; a water purification site; a weather station, for farmers and the wider population; dead and live fences to demarcate farm plots and grazing land; encouraging more environmental volunteers (local and overseas).

Partnership

For over 10 years GCA has enjoyed partnership with many local and international organisations. This was the case also in 2016 with partnership growing with Green Ink (United Kingdom), who has kept the interest of sponsoring Carbon Compensation through Green Care for the planting of Trees in community forests and community water catchments. Green Ink is also assisting GCA to build its website, an indication of mature relationship.

Also GCA was able to maintain partnership with GlobalGiving for so much that it was awarded recognition of Vetted Batch. Funds gotten from GlobalGiving also assisted in tree out planting, purchase of tree nursery equipment, equipment for staff and above all construction of Agricultural centre, mushroom cultivation house and community water scheme..

GCA partnership with Internationaler Bund (Germany) was maintained as more volunteers were sent to work from Germany. Another organization from Germany (Missionarin auf Zeit) of the Pallotine Sisters (Germany) sent her first ever volunteer to GCA in 2016.

School Program

GCA staff worked with the administration and volunteers in school beautification in Government High School and Saint Francis High School (both in Shisong). The program still continues till the school premises are beautified by planting environmentally friendly tree species.

Bee Farming

Apart from practicing apiculture in two demonstration farms, GCA created a database of registered and unregistered bee farmers in and around Kumbo. GCA is making efforts to establish a honey cooperative for these farmers. Training of rural farmers has been one of the main activities of organization to promote bee farming. This was the situation in Nseh and Banten (Nkum Sub-Division), Mbokam and Gwarkang (Kumbo Central) Thanks to sponsorship from the Rufford Small Grant. GCA is also promoting small-scale honey production and honey by-products. At the moment, GCA has a large amount of honey wax and candles.

Mushroom Cultivation

GCA is one of the promoters of mushroom farming in the Northwest Region of Cameroon. As such, GCA constructed a new mushroom house and has successfully started mushroom cultivation in its uncompleted structure. As at now GCA is able to have all season mushroom and a mushroom seed bank. She continued with its program of training interested individuals and communities in Mushroom cultivation in Nseh (Nkum Sub-Division) and some American Peace Corps volunteers in 2016.

Rapid Yam set multiplication

After identifying yam farming as a potential sustainability economic activity, GCA has been promoting the activity in her demonstration farm. Training of interested persons and groups on how to multiply yam seeds has been a main activity in 2016. We intend to continue with this activity in the coming years. Many farmers now come to GCA to request their yam seeds during each farming season.

Papers Beads

In efforts to sustain the organization and keep on with better practices, GCA has continued with the making of paper beads out of waste paper. This is also an environmentally friendly practice because the main raw material is waste paper. It is also developing creativity amongst youths and community dwellers at large. The practice is gaining fame and GCA is planning to put in place strategies to improve the practice. It is becoming common place to see community members put on paper beads made in GCA.

Networks

GCA has continued to belong to local networks of organisations like Cameroon Analog Forestry Network (CAFON) for the promotion of analog forestry and Bui Association of Development Organisation (BADO). She also recently belong to the Kumbo based network of organisations called the “Sustainable Land Use and Conservation Network” with 12 members whose aim of promoting soil fertility, organic farming, tree planting, resolving farmer-glazier conflicts and other related land management issues. One of our local partners is the Bongmom Integrated Farming Group Shisong (BIFAG). We have been working together in order to address environmental crises in Kov Ndzeen and its environs. This year GCA joined the Global Eco-Village Network (GEN). while also maintaining relationship with the Rural Transformation and the Riba Agro forestry Centres.

Community Water Schemes

As an organization that promotes community water catchment protection, GCA was contacted this year to continue work with the a team of United States Engineers Without Borders on the realization and protection of the Mbokop water scheme in Ndu sub division of the North West Region of Cameroon. She also continued working with the Tiymenkan, Lun and Tashwer communities water scheme by helping to design catchment area, tree planting and creation of fire breaks. She has also been regular in community water meetings. With regards to Ndzenshwai community water scheme, GCA remains vital in decision making with regards to water issues. She has been helping in meetings, fundraising and work planning for the scheme.

Local Volunteers

Green Care Association (GCA) is making strides to involve more local volunteers in her activities. Some of the new comers in 2016 were Suiven John Paul (Climate Research and Environmental Studies), Nsabinla Macrina Maalin (Environmental Justice and Law), Mbuh Dora (Gender Representation), Ayena Noel Valentine (Environmental Science), Mbuh Maurine (Office Management) and Christabel Burinyuy (Tree Nursery and Mushroom Cultivation Assistant). These new comers join Romaric Fonyuy, who has been at GCA since 2013. With this great team, GCA is making giant strides in environmental conservation using indigenous knowledge.

Volunteers from overseas

This year GCA had the opportunity to work with three overseas volunteers, all of whom were from Germany, that is, two from Internationaler Bund and another from Missionarin auf Zeit of the Pallotine Sisters. She has been in good contact and relation with all former volunteers.

Pending Projects

GCA in 2016 for the first time submitted a project proposal to the Cameroon Government through the Divisional Delegation of Forest to plant trees in community water catchments for protection. Results are still being awaited. In efforts to get assistance from the Cameroon Government in the domain of mushroom cultivation GCA joined ACEFA to see what can be done in that light. In 2017, we are looking forward for working with communities to planting environmentally friendly trees in water catchments. We therefore solicit local and international assistance to achieve this. We are also in partnership with the Bongmom Integrated Farming Group Shisong and other interested groups develop the eco village.

Social Groups

As an integral part of the community, GCA was able to solidify relationships with social groups attached to its activities. This is the case with “*Biykiçhi*” whose literary translation is “Plant a tree” dance group with over 30 members. This group creates environmental awareness on the importance of trees, the need for sustainable water resources management, climate change awareness and much more. GCA has also continued working with another social group “*Bongdzeem*”, which came to being through the handiwork of its former American Volunteer Nataliya after training on processing of soy beans. The group is dominated by women and meets every month for a saving scheme and other activities. Several hiking trips were organized by GCA with local and overseas friends to waterfalls, caves and community forests. The trips were spiced with Bird watching and plant species identification.



Other Issues

GCA in partnership with the American Peace Corps was able to organized “DEAR” day which means Drop Everything And Read for twenty minutes program once a year in efforts to boost reading amongst rural communities of Cameroon.

GCA received many visitors from overseas to its programs and also local friends some of which were very influential to the functioning of the organization like the GlobalGiving Team, the executive from Better World Bafut in Cameroon.



The GCA team, local and volunteers from overseas during the end of year come together