



Putting some trees back, in Cameroon.

The Menchum Valley in Cameroon is a beautiful area. It is isolated, sparsely populated, and unfortunately, our own backyard example of past uncontrolled forest exploitation. A deforestation, climate change case study!

Thirty years ago these hills were forested, some of the most northern equatorial type rain forest in Cameroon.



Now grassland, they are put to little use. People realise that the timber harvested here was valuable, are aware that profits from the timber exploitation did not benefit the area. They need and are looking for ways to use and invest in their land, to lift the region up, and they

see that trees can contribute to this. To this end, since December 2006 UNAFAS CVP has helped to establish seven village tree nurseries in Menchum Valley – our input is technical, ideas, information, seeds and seedlings, inspiration, we facilitate, train, and will follow up where needed.



Mr Asah Barnabas (*pictured here at Ngoh*), is a native of Menchum. He has spearheaded this initiative in the field, working with local chiefs and community leaders. He selected tree species that were interesting for local people to plant, organised for us to supply them from the UNAFAS CVP nursery, and for committees in each village to construct fenced enclosures, water and weed the seedlings until it was planting season.



In May & June this year the seedlings were then shared out for people to plant on their individual land, left at Bamba Beba and below at Ngoh.



All of the communities involved¹ want to establish their own nurseries, to produce larger numbers of trees, and more species. We've started by running two training days in different sites, for representatives of separate clusters each of three villages. Each day there were presentations, a nursery was created, different species sown, Q & A's. The participants go home with seeds, tasked to replicate the demonstration nursery in their own community.

*Menchum Bridge
training site and
nursery,*

continued below



¹ Befang, Bengwe, Mbamba Beba, Modele, Mukuru, Ngoh, Okor Manjong



What trees are we planting? Almost all are native species, timber trees like mahoganies, azobe, ironwood, the deep red camwood, padouk. The original forest was felled for its valuable timber species. They take a long time to grow, but there is plenty of land here. There are many native trees with socioeconomic value, that are harvested from the wild but not farmed. We are changing that - spices, medicinal products, trees that produce oils and gums. People here are keen to plant cashew nut trees, which we know will grow well, and have multiple home and commercial uses.

The plan is to continue planting on individual lands, and in public places like schools and roadsides for another year, by which time groups can become more informed and organised. Community planting will then be added, by gradually enlarging those remnants of forest that remain on the hillsides. This will involve community labour, making and maintaining firebreaks, agreements on management and use of future harvests, etc. Central to this work has been the UNAFAS CVP nursery (right). It serves as a research site, for training and as a source of seedlings to start field projects (*below are mahogany seeds*).





If you would like to help plant mahogany, cashew, njangsanga, azobe and other trees then contact us at cvpcameroon@unafas.org

Our main expenses are

- Sourcing seeds.
- Field costs of training and extension, supervising work in the villages.
- Small equipment to set up nurseries, plastic pots, watering cans, hoses.
- Printing extension materials.
- Technicians to teach farmers how to collect seed locally.



*A cashew nut tree, 9 months
after planting in August 2006*