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**Mr Simon Unji Ungum,**  
President Community Nursery,  
Benakuma – Esimbi  
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In February, members of the CVP NWP coordination committee (Tamufor, Asah & Kinyimi at Ngoh, below) visited the tree planting groups in Menchum Valley. Our priority in 2008, is to build local capacity, and to that end, Kinyimi, who lives locally, is now providing regular supervision, technical support and training on the ground. He will organise collection of tree seeds and propagation material in the area, and share these between groups – he will also teach techniques for vegetative propagation so that trees of known quality, that mature rapidly can be produced.



Last year, many villages chose to plant trees on school grounds, we were excited to see these, particularly at Bamba Beba and Ngoh Kesu. The head master at Ngoh Kesu primary school has involved his senior pupils in the nursery (below), and the teachers asked us to help them organise Conservation Values activities for next Youth Day, to encourage the children to get involved even more.



During the recent tour, groups introduced their committee members, and nursery sites, seeds were given out, training given on how to nurse them, and discussions held on the concerns, priorities, opportunities and way forward for each site. The number of villages actively involved has more than doubled.



*Befang, above; Mukuru, left; Mbamba Beba, bottom left and bottom right.*

Many of the forest remnants remaining on the Menchum hills are in river valleys (right). Valleys that are water catchments. Bush fires in the adjacent grassland are year by year reducing the tree cover. People have observed that as the trees reduce so does the water, it is water that as they find means will be piped to supply their villages. In 2008 the intention is to protect and start restoring these water catchments, by cutting fire breaks and start planting trees.



## THANK YOU TO UNAFAS CVP CAMEROON

Saturday, the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2008 will be remembered in the history of creating Tree Planting Nurseries in Menchum Valley, as more than twenty-five groups represented by their Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers assembled in Benakuma to welcome CVP.

This first meeting in Benakuma is unique in that what we used to hear of as a distant call over the radio, was really at our doorsteps. We knew trees grow on their own in the wilds but never in Nurseries to be transplanted later. This idea of growing trees in Nurseries is new to us, and we are eager to see how: - the mahogany, cashew, deep red camwood, njangsa, bush mango, azobe, etc, etc, would be nursed for transplanting.

We told the director, Hon. Asah Barnabas and Papa Tamufor that our land was once covered by dense forest but now is almost without, due to unsustainable exploitation. The result of this exploitation, mostly by foreigners, has rendered us poor and miserable.

The point of interest and climax of discussion was when we were told that we were to manage the nurseries to be created, the trees planted, and the socio-economic resources from the trees when they mature. This means our forest which was once confiscated will gradually return to us, so that we will no more be strangers in our own land. Poverty will be a thing of the past. We will be taught methods of tree propagation eg grafting. We will use the resources obtained from the trees to pay school fees for our children, build better homes and pay for any other social and economic needs. In short our socio-economic lives will be improved. Our children will learn from us that the forest around can be exploited in a sustainable manner by planting trees.

At the end of the educative talks, mostly given by Hon. Asah Barnabas, a practical demonstration of sowing tree seeds in the Benakuma Nursery was carried out by Mr. Kanyimi Frederick (right). This was under the watchful eyes of the groups represented, and to whom seeds were given to carry out similar exercises in their group nurseries, as demonstrated.

These groups are happy to belong to UNAFAS CVP Cameroon in tree planting and any other programmes that will be initiated. We

hope we have been initiated as Ngoh-Kesu, Befang, Modelle, Mukuru, Okormanjang, Bamba-Beba, and if this is the case, it will be joy in our hearts. This means that tree planting has come to stay as a project in ESIMBI. Once more we say thank you, and welcome.



**Mr Unji Simon Ungum**  
President, Community Nursery  
Benakuma – Esimbi, March 2008