



CERCO-NEWS

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Beeb, Beeb! Incoming grant!	1
From the Director	2
Time out for students	2
Talking 'bout my generator	2
Centre of excellence	3
No time to lose	4
Growing the business	4
Transfer season	5
Improved market conditions	5
Want to be a part of it?	6

Beeb, Beeb! Incoming grant!

Nature programmes on the BBC have inspired viewers for over 50 years, and you'd be hard-pressed to find a wildlife conservationist in the field who did not acknowledge a formative influence from these programmes in their youth. Many more individuals have been able to give back to nature instead through donations to the BBC Wildlife Fund which raises awareness and funds to help save threatened wildlife and places.

In the 2010/11 Grant cycle, the BBC Wildlife Fund raised and disbursed £1.2 Million to 12 UK and 25 International projects, and CERCOPAN is absolutely delighted to announce that we are one of those 25 special recipients. The BBC's funding will underwrite our field-based operation in Iko Esai's Rhoko forest for a year, which together with grants that support efforts in the neighbouring villages will

allow us to:

- Sustain existing incentives that have successfully promoted environmental conservation by Iko Esai to date.
 - Strengthen the conservation by-laws in Iko Esai and extend these to 3 neighbouring communities.
 - Expand forest patrol activities to further enforce the by-laws.
 - Restore degraded forested areas through a tree-planting programme.
 - Gain support for the Iko Esai forest conservation model in 3 neighbouring communities.
 - Facilitate international REDD+ engagement with the region.
- Extension of the Rhoko conservation model to neighbouring communities is hoped to give the critical mass to attract REDD+ funding for a multi-community conservation programme in the longer-term.

The tree planting programme is a new activity for us. In preparation for this venture, our Administration and Operations Mgr, Amy Baxter, visited the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), a world renowned research centre in Ibadan in the southwest of Nigeria. They are one year into a tree planting programme of their own, and with access to a wealth of botanical



Amy with advisors (right) and seedlings (left) at IITA

information and forestry expertise, IITA members were the ideal advisors for the beginning of our own project.

The trip gave us the opportunity to follow all of the processes undertaken, from initial seed collection, through germination and re-potting, to final restoration planting.

Information was recorded on the ideal species to begin with: those native to our region which are fast growing and light tolerant. These provide shade for other seedlings of varieties that are less tolerant to high light levels. Lists of the most successful species to germinate at IITA will also be used as a guide when choosing those to grow in Iko Esai.

Techniques used to speed up the germination process, and to ensure minimal stress during re-potting will help CERCOPAN achieve our goal: 3,000 seedlings grown and planted in the forest in a year.

Find out more at www.bbc.co.uk/wild/





Claire Coulson
CERCOPAN

From the Director

In January, the omen of a yellow butterfly apparently promised me a happy 2011. At the mid-year point, it's a good time to assess my mood.

Well, as I write, the final coat of paint is drying on the Iko Esai Community Centre (see next page) as we complete the construction phase. Bringing in the building supplies and skilled resources to such a remote location, while keeping to budget, taxed me remorselessly for over two years. With the walls and roof completed, I then carefully chose a project manager for the utilities

and finishings phase, and I'm more than happy with the results this year!

Back in Calabar, our electricity mains supply can be unavailable for 3-4 days, sometimes weeks, at a time. Just in the past 12 months, we've had three of our back-up generators fail terminally from over-use, leaving us with no options left. It's wearing on our effectiveness, and eventually our morale, when even the basics of charged phones and light to read by are down for days or even weeks at a time for want of power.

Am I happy with the recent arrival of the

ultimate generator in terms of reliability and power output for our needs - the one pictured below?!

And the BBC Wildlife Fund grant featured as our lead article is a strong candidate for my highlight of the year. I love BBC wildlife programmes, I love their pro-active conservation initiative, and I love the fact that our programme competes on the global stage.

Happy? Yes - and apparently there are six months more to come!

Claire

"...we rarely turn down a chance to educate the next generation of professionals in the practices of environmental conservation"

Our newest source of electricity

Time out for students

This month we hosted two groups of students from the University of Ibadan studying Wildlife Management.

Although it means taking time away from important operational needs, we rarely turn down a chance to educate the next generation of professionals in the practices of environmental conservation.

Our Education Officer provided field lectures on a variety of topics related to primate conservation and tropical forest ecology, while visiting researchers Sagan and Carrie acted as guest lecturers. Sagan gave talks on primate re-introduction, parasite communities, and meta-population dynamics. Carrie lectured on

conservation biology, reserve design, and social theories related to human conservation behaviours.

The undergraduates also had a chance to visit our host village of Iko Esai. We were thrilled to have these students visit Rhoko and see first hand the environmental conservation work that CERCOPAN is doing in Cross River State.

Talking 'bout my generator

Superficially it may look like an espresso machine with its own desktop lighting, but the photograph does not do the justice that this bad boy deserves.

This is in fact a 13.5kVA Perkins Generator which provides sufficient power for the needs of both the office and our

accommodation building in Calabar, plus cycles to spare to run even a welding machine at the same time. It took the strength of 6 full-grown men to land it in place!

We have never before been in the position where we have had sufficient power to run our total Calabar operation in the

absence of mains electricity (the norm for more than 20 hours every day). And while running, this one charges up the inverters in both buildings that save the excess power for later use.

So, thanks to our donor, for the first time we now have 24x7 cost-effective energy available for all vital operational services.



Centre of excellence

The Community Centre village, Abi LGA). Project that we have been constructing in Iko Esai is now at last within just days of completion. It's an important time, therefore, to build momentum within the village towards making the most effective use of the building once it is ready. There are many social and economic opportunities that such an asset can bring to the community, but these have to be prioritised and organised.

To this end we held a sensitisation workshop at the site to remind the village of the Community Centre's purpose and the benefits it brings to the village. All members of the community were invited to attend, with the Chiefs' Council and representatives from the leading village interest groups especially encouraged.

We were fortunate to be able to bring in guest speakers with experience on the subject. In particular we welcomed Leslie Eni Eleme who is the Manager of the Community Centre in the village of Liyel Imoke, Governor of Cross River State (Itigidi from groups such as the

Supervisor, Cross Umoh, who has been assisting CERCOPAN with the construction of the project also spoke.

Using a large fabric poster of the centre's floor plan, CERCOPAN representatives and guest speakers highlighted each separate room within the community centre and explained their functions, available resources, and community benefits. This also gave the opportunity for an in-depth question and answer session. Leslie explained how his village utilised their centre and how it generated income for the village, as well as provided essential facilities to promote education, training, and community unity.

The workshop ended on a high note, with a tour of the building, ending in the kitchen where refreshments were served. All members of the community who attended were excited about the possibilities that came with the opening of the centre.

There was much talk from groups such as the



The meeting hall will be used for education and training

CCDC (Community Conservation and Development Committee) on using the Centre as a base for NGO's working within the community, and also as a base to collaborate with neighbouring Community Based Organisations on projects of common interest. Additionally discussions centred on the opportunity to raise funds for maintenance of the centre by hiring out the hall for social functions, and the accommodation to tourists.

Esso Exploration & Production Nigeria Ltd. provided the main grant to build the centre



Front and side view of the Community Centre as it receives the finishing touches to the building stage



No time to lose



In June we submitted our final report on the Building Nigeria's Response to Climate Change (BNRCC) project. Aiming to develop and assess adaptation strategies to Climate Change through pilot projects, CERCOPAN was selected from candidates in the rainforest zone of Nigeria. Six other pilot projects across the full diversity of Nigeria's biogeographical regions ran in parallel with our own.

At the close of the project, a symposium was called in Abuja for all the partners. Each representative had an

opportunity to make a 30-minute presentation. Government reps from various ministries, including Education, and Health, were in attendance to field questions from the groups. It was a wonderful opportunity for the pilot project groups to voice their concerns directly, and for government representatives to understand the critical issues effecting Nigeria.

It was also instructive to hear from other pilot project partners as we shared the successful and challenging aspects of our projects. CERCOPAN's strategy in this project was

to use alternative livelihoods options as a climate change adaptation strategy (in Iko Esai and Ago). Many of the projects implemented similar types of programmes, such as beekeeping and fuel-efficient stoves.

We now wait to see if there will be a scaled-up response from Government or International agencies (or both) to implement the successes of the pilots, since there is no question that both Adaptation and Mitigation strategies to address Climate Change are the highest of priorities in the immediate-term.

Growing the business

The forest that we help protect in partnership with Iko Esai is part of a very large and globally important forested area. We have long desired to work with the neighbouring communities to Iko Esai in order to expand the total forest area under protection.

Amongst these

communities is Owai. One of the smaller villages, Owai is located three hours south on foot by road, though if you are feeling adventurous you can walk through the forest and reach

Owai in a similar amount of time.

Reports of illegal

logging and primate hunting there have motivated CERCOPAN to take our environmental educational workshops and alternative livelihoods projects to Owai.

Community Conservation Manager BenJee Cascio and Community Liaison and Education Officer Mike Ekpe recently began their work in Owai with a needs assessment workshop. The two were well received by the village Chiefs and community members. Representatives from the Hunters' Group, Cocoa Farmers' group, Youth Group and Chiefs' Council were all in attendance and actively involved in the mapping, and seasonal calendar exercises.

Participants were asked to map their communities,

making note of important assets and resources. They were then asked to map their surrounding forest area providing key information about primary forest, secondary forest, hunting sheds and farmland expansion. A seasonal calendar was formed to help CERCOPAN understand yearly social, economic and natural resource cycles.

We plan to continue needs assessment workshops as well as educational campaigns for the Chiefs' Council, Hunters' Groups and general population. If the success of the first workshop was any indication to go by, work with Owai looks to be an important and effective step in increasing the likelihood of conservation of the area's forests.



BenJee guiding the mapping exercises

Transfer season

One of our successes in 2010 was to map the boundary between forest and farmland across Iko Esai's land for the first time. From that exercise the Surveillance Team, gained the ability to monitor and enforce a Land Use Management Plan (LUMP) that was agreed on back in 2003 and which zones farming to particular areas.

We have continued our practical training and mentoring of the Surveillance Team members with two separate 5-hour hands-on sessions with the GPS units. The goal of the excursions was to complete mapping of the new farming areas that were opened up in the 2011 clearing season, and accordingly update the LUMP and confirm

conformance of the new farms to the stipulated zones. So the skill transfer is not only in respect of the technology being used, but also in respect of bringing the village up to speed in managing its forest by itself, for itself.

Technology transfer has continued with our Research Assistants receiving computer and data-entry training. Sylvain, CERCOPAN's Mona Research Coordinator, taught three of the assistants how to properly process pictures of the fruits and flowers sampled every month during phenology data acquisition.

Knowledge on data entry was also provided. They seemed to enjoy the Photoshop lecture the most, learning how to import, re-size, label, and store the phenology pictures. Sagan, our visiting Red-Capped



The Surveillance Team honing their GPS skills

Managbey researcher, also had multiple sessions with her assistant on entering the behavioural data into Excel spreadsheets. And finally our other visiting researcher, Carrie, trained two more staff members on interview and survey techniques, bringing the total up to nine staff that can independently collect survey/interview data in support of her project.

“So the skill transfer is not only in respect of the technology being used, but also in respect of bringing the village up to speed in managing its forest by itself, for itself.”

Improved market conditions

The Community Conservation and Development Committee (CCDC) has completed the renovation of the market square in Iko Esai, with financial assistance from CERCOPAN. Regular readers will recall that the CCDC is a democratically-elected body that works to develop the village for the benefit of its inhabitants. The CCDC also promotes and enforces environmental conservation, and in return CERCOPAN provides a quarterly grant to the committee.

This long-overdue renovation has replaced the leaky roof and cracked pavement with new corrugated zinc and a fresh

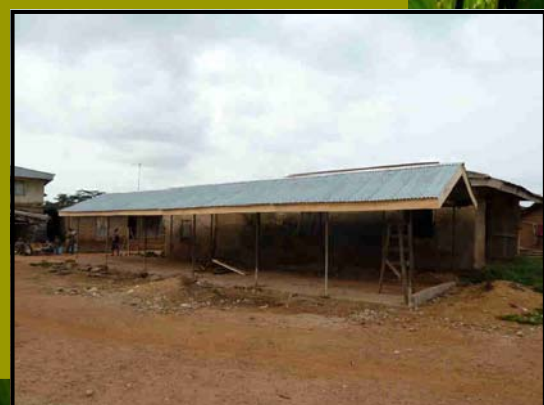
foundation.

The improved market square will provide daily use for those wishing to sell a variety of goods from their farms. At the moment, maize and pear (a smaller version of avocado) are plentiful. The usual foods are also available such as dried fish, rice, beans and bananas.

On Friday, the main market day, this area is bustling with activity attracting sellers far and wide bringing such goods as clothes, decorative posters, cloth, pots and pans, etc. that aren't regularly available in the village. Although a larger market square is planned, this initial development will assist in attracting sellers and helping provide a stable

location for local sellers on non-market days.

The central location helps expose sellers to buyers, reducing the amount of door-to-door sales, and also keeps everyone out of the hot sun. So next time you find yourself in Iko Esai, feel free to stop by the beautiful new market square and pick up a dozen bananas, a couple of ears of corn and your authentic Nigerian cloth!



The new market ready for trade

WANT TO BE A PART OF IT?

- Stay in touch with our on-going programme by bookmarking our home page <http://www.cercopan.org/> and our Blog site <http://cercopan.wildlifedirect.org/> and joining our Facebook fan page <http://www.facebook.com/cercopan/>
- Volunteer for CERCOPAN in either Nigeria or the UK. We offer a range of different programmes so there is something for everyone! Visit our website volunteer section for further details.
- Help CERCOPAN attain corporate funding. If you work for a corporate sponsor who may be interested in funding CERCOPAN please contact claire.coulson@cercopan.org
- Undertake a sponsored event to raise funds for CERCOPAN. Use the Fundraising Pack on our web site to help you.
- Make a cash donation to CERCOPAN via our website...every little helps!
- Buy a gift for friends or family from the Good Gifts Catalogue (www.goodgifts.org). You can buy a month's supply of fruit for growing CERCOPAN orphan monkeys - called in the catalogue 'A-peeling Monkeys' for only £20! The price of the gift is passed on to CERCOPAN. So, it is an excellent way of solving your gift problems, and supporting our work! Alternatively visit the CERCOPAN gift shop on our website today.
- Donate useful goods and equipment such as building and fencing materials, veterinary medicines, old laptop computers etc. or services such as printing, blood testing and architectural design.

www.cercopan.org

<http://cercopan.wildlifedirect.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/cercopan/>



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