

**"ECHOES OF THE RAINFOREST"**  
**EXTENDED PERIOD PROJECT REPORT**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> JULY – 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

**PRE-FESTIVAL PREPARATION:**

This final quarter of the project was dedicated to technical preparations for the various “festivals” to outdoor the four eco-cultural groups in the various communities.

**REHEARSALS:**

In this quarter, the groups had four days of rehearsals each with personnel from AGORO. Out of the four communities, the arrangements worked well with Kruwa, Afeaso and Mosomagor. Rehearsals went according to schedule and there was a lot of enthusiasm displayed. However in the case of Mfuom, the rehearsals were postponed on two occasions because members were not readily available. The following days were scheduled for the various festivals:

Friday September 12, 2003 : Kruwa Festival  
Saturday September 13, 2003 : Mesomagor Festival  
Friday September 19, 2003 : Afeaso Festival  
Saturday September 20, 2003: Mfuomm Festival

**LOGISTICS:**

In consultation with each individual community, programmes were drawn as to how the event should be like. Letters were sent out to the various stakeholders of the Kakum Assin-Atandanso Rainforest including the District Assemblies, Ghana Heritage and Conservation Trust, Conservation International and the Chiefs of the surrounding villages.

Drum sets were bought for three of the communities: ie Afeaso, Kruwa and Mfuom and two sets of costumes for each of these three communities. However in the case of Mosomagor, four sets of costumes were provided as they did not need drums. Props were also purchased for all the groups. In Cape Coast, the AGORO Theatre Company rehearsed in earnest to support each of the groups with a live band presentation at each festival.

**FESTIVAL DAYS:**

**KRUWA:**

The festival was to start at 10:00 a.m. on Friday September 12, 2003. However there was a delay in the arrival of most of the guests who were invited for the occasion. It finally got underway at 12: 15 p.m. and ended at about 5:45 p.m. Among the guests were representatives from Assin Fosu District Assembly, Ghana Wildlife, Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust, Conservation International, and the Paramount Chief of Fantsi Nyankomase Traditional area. and many of the sub-chiefs of the area. It was indeed very well patronised. It was a powerful kick off for the eco-cultural group *Etsi Kusum Kruwa Agromba*. They put up four dance drama pieces on issues relating to forest conservation. The

AGORO Theatre company also took their turn to entertain guests with contemporary hi-life music.

### **MOSOMAGOR:**

The durbar at Mesomagor came on as planned on Saturday September 13, 2003. The programme started rather late due to a major funeral that was taking place in the next town. Eventually, the crowd gathered including chiefs, representatives from the District Assembly, forest guards, and people from Mosomagor and other communities. It took us a little while to organize quite a number of people from the community including the chief and his elders to attend the durbar. The performance from Mosomagor was really energetic and captivating. They put up two dance drama pieces which clearly sent out messages on the value of protecting the forest. After the performance from Kukyekukyeku, the representative from the District Assembly gave a short speech in relation to the preservation of Kakum National Park. He recommended that a district cultural durbar be organized for all the people of the district through which inhabitants will be educated on the role of the forest in the lives of the people.

### **AFEASO:**

The festival at Afeaso was a successful event. It came on on the planned date and started close enough to the scheduled time. The festival ground was the community school park. The group is a mixed group made up of children in school, some of the local youth and a few adults. After the first performance of the group. There was a heavy down pour. Though it marred the programme initially, the community rejoiced that it had rained because they had been expecting the rains to give life to their crops to no avail. After an hour or so, the rains subsided and the rest of the programme went on without any disruptions. The group performed among others three dance sketches bearing on forest conservation. The occasion was climaxed with the unveiling of the group's new costumes and drums in the presence of the chief and elders of the village (Afeaso). The unveiling ceremony was done in the midst of an appeal for funds to further help the group stand on its feet. Many people gave money no matter how small.

### **MFUOM:**

Mfuom festival had to be re-scheduled twice, just like the rehearsals. Eventually it took place on October 14, 2003. As much as the interest was there for the community to be the base of such a cultural group, there has been a friction between the village and the school in relation to this community project. It did not seem possible to have a group which could be jointly owned by the community and the school.

In spite of this development we have been able to groom the cultural group (which is school based) and organize a small durbar to outdoor them. The patronage by the community was very great in spite of the differences. Many people were so pleasantly enthused to see these young children perform so well in brilliant costumes. They came up with two dance drama

pieces with issues related to forest conservation. Interestingly, a lot of interest was drawn from the community to attend the durbar. What has also been a big encouragement to them have been the costumes and the set of drums we provided for them. Currently, their desire has been to be exposed them with their newly acquired knowledge and tool for communication (performing arts), in the surrounding communities.

## **POST FESTIVAL EVENTS**

AGORO has taken it upon itself to visit each of these communities at least once a month to spend a couple of hours participating in its rehearsal and performance activities. One such activity which took place in the second week of November in Kruwa and Mosomakor was attended by the Grant Director of CEPF, Nina Marshall, and personnel from the Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust GHCT.

## **CONCLUSION**

It has been a worthwhile experience working with these four communities. It was particularly useful that in the beginning, we scouted eight communities in order to select the four that would be ideal for the project. As it turned out to be, the interest shown by the communities really determine what can be gained from such a project. In future it will also be important to take into consideration factors like the weather, school vacations etc into consideration before executing such a programme. Our period of implementation had to be extended due to such factors. At least three of the communities showed so much interest in ensuring that the project is not short lived. They have been unanimous in declaring their wish and willingness to truly be the ambassadors of the rainforest and tour various communities with their performances to share with them the values of conserving the rainforest.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that every effort be made to consolidate the gains made and the investments made in these communities. There is no doubt that if given the right push these groups can become powerful resources to educate many Ghanaian communities on the value to keep the forest and the eco-system well protected. Through their activities and linkages they can be brought up to become economically, socially and institutionally self sustaining. To this end it is the clear opinion of AGORO that if CEPF could support a future phase, the dividends could even be greater than what has been experienced so far. Already, The Ghana Wildlife Society have agreed and are indeed enthusiastic about using these groups as they go on tour to send a personnel along to help answer questions and also to help link up school communities visited to the Ghana wildlife society.