

FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Name: Grand Gedeh Community Servant Association (GECOMSA)

Project Title: Bushmeat Awareness and Sustainable Development in the Southeast Liberia Project (BUMAS)

Date of Report: September 2003

II. OPENING REMARKS

Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.

The West Africa Priority Setting Workshop held from 6-10, December 1999 in Elmina, Ghana considered the Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem extended from Guinea into Sierra Leone and eastward through Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana and western Togo as a biodiversity hotspot. This ecosystem is biologically rich and diverse, considered to be one of the world's priority biodiversity conservation areas because of its high degree of species endemism. The upper Guineas forest was identified as a vital component of West Africa forest biodiversity. Liberia among other countries was considered as highest conservation priority area because it contains 42% of the remaining Upper Guinean Forest in the West African Region.

To address the conservation needs of Liberia's rich biodiversity, the Government of Liberia (GOL) and Conservation International (CI) in January 2002 signed a Memorandum of Understanding that calls for the establishment of six protected areas. The GOL under the MOU has pledged to surrender 30% of the nation's forest as nature reserves. The implementation of the MOU was suspended due to civil unrest in the country.

Additionally, the National Environmental Commission of Liberia (NECOLIB) was developing a National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP) which was aimed at ensuring the sustainable management of the nation's biodiversity. This process was halted abruptly because of the war that has engulfed the nation's capitol city, Monrovia. The government has also passed into law an act creating the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), replacing NECOLIB.

A number of local and international NGOs were actively involved in conservation projects funded by CEPF and the European Union. The Forest Management Geographic Information System (GIS) for Liberia project managed by Flora & Fauna International (FFI) and research for the turtle status of Liberia and forest assessment and human right campaign projects, undertaken by Save My Future Foundation (SAMFU). Other projects were the public awareness campaign on bushmeat and other environmental issues, implemented by Grand Gedeh Community Servant Association (GECOMSA) and Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL). These projects were in fulfillment of CI obligation under the MOU.

Bushmeat, which is harvested for food, medicine and special cultural ceremonies or festivals, is considered as part and parcel of the sociocultural life of the people. Many traditional societies fostered beliefs systems as well as social norms that encouraged or even enforced limits to exploitation of biological resources. This in effect ensured the sustainable utilization of all such natural resources. There has been an unprecedented increase in bushmeat hunting in the West and Central Africa to the extent that animals which were hitherto considered as sacred are now commonly sold in the markets. A sustained regional action plan needs to be developed to combat unsustainable bushmeat hunting.

GECOMSA secured a grant from CEPF to undertake a one-year project, the Bushmeat Awareness and Sustainable Development in Southeast Liberia project (BUMAS) (November 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003). The purpose of the project is to conscientize the communities in Grand Gedeh and River Gee Counties through public awareness and advocacy about the need to preserve the wildlife. The public awareness and community organization generated through the project will help set the stage for community-based monitoring efforts necessary for the protection of the new protected areas in Southeast Liberia, especially proposed Grebo National Park and the extension of Sapo National Park.

Project activities were interrupted in March 2003 when rebels invaded the project area. The project leader was able to flee the country, and eventually arrived in Accra, Ghana. At that time, it was decided that it would be beneficial for the project leader to pursue an internship focusing on various topics related to the CI Ghana Bushmeat Awareness Campaign. The project leader successfully studied for six weeks in Ghana.

There is a need to continue this project in the area by building upon the progress of the BUMAS project and the skills learned during the 6-week internship in Accra, Ghana to develop a more comprehensive bushmeat awareness program.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: *Enter project purpose from the Logical Framework worksheet of the approved project proposal.*

The purpose of the project is to conscientize the communities in Grand Gedeh and River Gee Counties through public awareness and advocacy about the need to preserve the wildlife. The public awareness and community organization generated through the project will help set the stage for community-based monitoring efforts necessary for the protection of new protected areas in southeast Liberia, especially proposed Grebo National Park and the extension of Sapo National Park.

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level:	
To initiate a community-based public awareness and advocacy campaign in the project community about the importance of the wildlife and the conservation needs in seven monthsk	The public awareness and advocacy campaign was successfully initiated, with numerous workshops held and awareness materials produced and distributed.
Conscientized enforcement officers to enforce environmental laws and policies in the project area	Local government authorities are not aware of wildlife laws or even the plans to create Grebo

in seven months	National Park and the Tai-Sapo Corridor. This project, through workshops, has resulted in authorities being more aware of these issues. Plans to follow-up with enforcement officers were not carried out due to civil strife.
Conscientized community leaders, students, hunters, traders and local authorities in the project area in seven months	Stakeholders in Glio/Twabo Sub-district, Putu Sub-district, Gbarzon Statutory District, Tchien District, all within Grand Gedeh County. Sarbo District, Potupo District, Chedepo District and Gbeapo district are all in River Gee County, have been involved in participatory workshops.

Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.

Prior to the launching of the BUMAS project there was massive commercial hunting and trade in bushmeat in the area. The south-eastern region was regarded as the one of the major bushmeat production areas in Liberia. However, at the end of the first quarter (November 1, 2002 – January 2003) of BUMAS implementation, the monitoring and evaluation conducted revealed that the number of hunters and traders in the project area has been reduced by 27 per cent and that 15 per cent of the remaining hunters and traders have opened a new front in the proposed Cestos-Senkwehn Nature Reserve. The project also succeeded in winning the support of the local administrators, thus making the second quarter activities successful.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

The project was halted at the end of March due to insecurity in the project area. There were rebels attacks in the region until the rebels Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) finally captured Zwedru on March 27, 2003 and subsequently took control of the entire Southeastern area. The project leader had to flee the rebel attack to Ghana via Ivory Coast for safety.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project Outputs: Enter the project outputs from the Logical Framework for the project

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Output 1: Reduced rate of bushmeat hunting and trade	
Established strong wildlife conservation groups, councils and enforcement network	Good progress was made on this output but was not completed due to interruption of the project.
Participant communities engaged and wildlife characteristics identified	Communities, through workshops and the recommendations made at these meetings, show that communities are very interested and want to be more engaged in wildlife issues and natural resources management.
Document the outcome of alternative program economic wise	Not completed.
Awareness materials (billboards, posters, etc.) are produced for the campaign by February 2003	The second quarter of the BUMAS project ran from February 1 – March 30, 2003 focusing basically on

	<p>indicators 1.4 and 1.5. The two indicators were successfully implemented before the out break of war in the project area.</p> <p>Under indicator 1.4, nine (9) billboards were planted; additional posters and flyers were also printed and distributed in the project area in the month of February. This exercise was carried out in 12 targeted communities which were mobilized during the first quarter. Three of the billboards were planted at the border entries of Grand Gedeh/Nimba Counties; Grand Gedeh/River Gee Counties and Grand Gedeh/Sinoe Counties. The billboards planted at the border entries of Grand/River Gee and Grand Gedeh/Sinoe were printed on both sides with the inscriptions welcome to Grand Gedeh or Sinoe and River Gee Counties...say no to bushmeat trade</p>
<p>The campaign is launched in 6 communities by March 2003 and conducted for a period of 4 months</p>	<p>Indicator 1.5 was carried out in six communities (three each from Grand Gedeh and River Gee Counties). The campaign launching programs were characterized by speeches, dramas, sports, and culture performance and teaching sessions. Guidelines for the formation of various wildlife groups were issued to the concerned communities. Their selected leaders were to attend the national (general) workshop, which was slated for April 2003 in Fish Town the capitol of River Gee County. The six communities were: Ziah Town, Tarloken and Putu Penoken, all being major towns in Konobo Statutory District, Grand Gedeh County, while launching programs were held in the towns of River Gbeh, Sarbo District.Wregboken and Jatoken in Putopo District, River Gee County.</p> <p>Local authorities and hunters, trades, youths and students from within the host districts and counties attended these ceremonies. The superintendents of Grand Gedeh County, Ruth J. Milton attended the Putu Penoken launching program, while Konobo Statutory District Superintendent attended the Ziah Town occasion and River Gee County Superintendent graced the River Gbeh ceremony. The counties authorities, in separate remarks pledged their support and preparedness to enforce the wildlife laws of Liberia. The launching was held under the theme: "Say No to Commercial bushmeat trade to avoid empty forest."</p> <p>The authorities at the ACFI Zwedru Field Office and the local Forestry Development Authority (FDA) also attended the program and address the audience on the importance of sustainably managing the wild animal to ensure food security. ACFI is engaged in the fish pump farming project area.</p>
<p>Output 2: A survey (including literature review of past projects) of potential alternative methods of food production is conducted</p>	
<p>Discussions are held in 12 communities to learn of food preferences and possible alternatives to bushmeat, by April-May 2003</p>	<p>Not completed due to rebel's invasion in the project area.</p>

Results of the survey are compiled and information used to suggest appropriate alternatives to bushmeat, by June 2003	Not completed due to rebel's invasion in the project area.
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Describe the success of the project in terms of delivering the intended outputs.

The project has achieved a lot because of the success of the awareness campaign and the awareness materials and workshops. Communities and local government know more about the bushmeat trade. But much more needs to be done, because the project was curtailed before outputs could be completed.

Were any outputs unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

All activities ceased at the end of March, leaving many outputs unfinished. The project area remains insecure so it is unknown what is happening with regard to impact of the communication and campaign efforts. Specifically, discussions were not held in 12 communities to learn of food preferences and possible alternatives to bushmeat, by April-May 2003. There is an urgent need to complete the last two sections (1. Discussions are held in 12 communities to learn of food preferences and possible alternatives to bushmeat and 2. Results of the survey are compiled and information used to suggest appropriate alternatives to bushmeat) to assess the overall impact of the project.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

None.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.

Lessons learned which are very viable to implementing a successful awareness campaign include 1) working with relevant stakeholders 2) dedicating responsibilities to stakeholders, 3) holding constant meetings/educational workshops, 4) grouping stakeholders into various target groups, 5) ensuring the utilization of traditional conservation norms and sanctions for the participation of the traditional leaders in the national conservation program. Moreover, we learned that sustained awareness and education on wildlife is an effective tool needed to combat the bushmeat crisis in Liberia, thus ensuring food security through sustainable management of wildlife.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/failure)

Project Execution: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/failure)

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon our return to Liberia, we wish to complete the remaining two sections of BUMAS project. Thereafter, build the capacity of GECOMSA staff through a training workshop in effective bushmeat campaign techniques, using the knowledge acquired at CI-Ghana and the lessons learned. This will lead to sustained awareness and education on wildlife campaign in the southeastern region. The campaign is intended to 1) change the people's attitude about wildlife 2) increase awareness of human-wildlife interdependence 3) build a network of security apparatus 4) ensure food security 5) reduce bushmeat hunting 6) review of the wildlife laws/regulations, etc. In short, the need to continue the BUMAS project and building GECOMSA capacity through training cannot be over emphasized.