

**BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION, ECOTOURISM AND RURAL
LIVELIHOODS IN PROTECTED AREAS**

CASE STUDY: THE MOUNT CAMEROON NATIONAL PARK

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BY

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Natural Resource Management.**

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the family of **EINAR & LIV ENGØY.**

Your love, encouragement and immense support gave me the strength to accomplish this project and finish my studies. May God continue to bless you abundantly.

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I am indebted to a number of people who contributed in one way or the other to the success of this thesis.

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Thanks to everyone who in some way have contributed to the fulfillment of this thesis.

ABSTRACT

This study was carried out in the South West Province of Cameroon, specifically in the Mount Cameroon Region which encompasses the Mount Cameroon National park and its surrounding villages. The aim of the study was to assess how ecotourism is used as a tool to conserve the rich biodiversity of this area while improving the livelihoods of the local people and fostering development in the local communities. Focus was on the activities of the Mount Cameroon Inter-communal Ecotourism Board (Mt. CEO), which is the main NGO operating in the area and responsible for all ecotourism activities in the area.

A two-month fieldwork was carried out in five villages (Woteva, Bakingili, Bova 1, Bokwango and Bonakanda) around the Mount Cameroon protected area. The main stakeholders identified were the Government, Mt. CEO, the local people, and tourists. Household questionnaires and different semi structured interviews were administered to 119 households, the 5 local chiefs of the different villages, the 5 Village Ecotourism Committee (VEC) members in the different villages and to the management and staff of Mt. CEO.

The livelihood framework was used to explain the socio-economic characteristics of the local people. Findings revealed that land, Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP), wildlife and water resources were the main assets of villagers. In addition, access to the above assets was limited and varied in the different villages. The creation of the protected area was identified amongst others by villagers as the main constrain to livelihoods. The coping strategy adopted to this constrain by most households was by agricultural diversification or by getting involved in multiple livelihood activities amongst which are hunting, collection of NTFP, fishing, provision of hired labour and petty trading.

Field findings also revealed that, Mt. CEO is using the fortress approach of conservation and depriving local people of their user rights. This in contrast to the participatory approach to conservation encouraged by the Cameroon legislation in protected areas within community forests.

Furthermore, in order to understand the role, benefits and perceptions of the different stakeholders towards conservation and ecotourism as well as conflicts between the stakeholders, the stakeholders analysis framework was used to analyse the rights, responsibilities, returns and relationship of the different stakeholders. Findings revealed that most of the local people perceived ecotourism and conservation as a positive venture but have a negative relationship with Mt. CEO and the park because they are not involved and do not benefit from these activities. This has thus, led to conflicts between local people and Mt. CEO. The main causes of conflict that threaten the biodiversity in this region are the lack of access to park resources, lack of community involvement in conservation and ecotourism management, the lack of trust, poaching, limited opportunities and poverty. The main solutions to these problems as proposed by the local people are to involve them in conservation and ecotourism activities, aid in cash and kind, as well as give them some access to resources in the park. The absence of government monitoring the activities of Mt. CEO as well as poor law enforcement is also potential threat to the biodiversity in the region.

At the moment, there are no available statistics on the changes in biodiversity since ecotourism was introduced in the area in 1998. However, information gathered from the informal interviews suggests that there has been an increase in species abundance due to increase in crop destruction by animals from the park and the frequent encounters with animals formerly rarely seen. Nevertheless, this supposed success is at the expense of local peoples livelihoods.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
DED	German Development Service
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IYE	International Year of Ecotourism
MCP	Mount Cameroon Project
MINEF	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
MINFOF	Ministry of Forest and Fauna
MINTOUR	Ministry of Tourism
Mt.	Mount
Mt. CEO	Mount Cameroon inter-communal Ecotourism Board
NGO(s)	Non Governmental Organisation(s)
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
SA	Stakeholder Analysis
VEC	Village Ecotourism Committee
WB	World Bank
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

According to The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005:2), there have been growing concerns on the issue of biodiversity loss in the tropics and efforts at sustainable management. Tropical forests are recognized as a reservoir of biodiversity and support life by supplying materials and energy, and absorb waste products (Daily, 1997). Although tropical forest represent an important reservoir of biodiversity, the rate of biodiversity loss over the past two decades has been very alarming (GFRA, 2010). Human activities such as agriculture, extraction of natural resources and infrastructural development as a result of population increase has been attributed as primary causes of biodiversity loss (EU, 2009). Apart from human activities, other underlying causes such as weak institutions, poor governance and inadequate law enforcement also contribute substantially to biodiversity loss (EU, 2009). However, some governments, international and national NGOs across the globe have identified some measures to regulate the loss biodiversity because of the great links between biodiversity protection and poverty alleviation. Ecotourism is now being used as one of the measures of conserving biodiversity and reducing poverty in most tropical countries. Ecotourism has been very instrumental in the protection of biodiversity and income generation to the local communities around the protected areas in East and Southern Africa (Reid, 2000).

Ecotourism as a potential tool for biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation has not been very successful in Cameroon. Although the country is very rich in biodiversity, there has been a great loss of biodiversity especially in the Mt. Cameroon region which has been identified as one of the main biodiversity hotspots in the country. Some of the valuable species in the area include the African cherry (*Prunus africana*) which is used for treatment of prostate cancer by pharmaceutical industries, the Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), bushbaby (*Galago demidovi*), Elephant (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*) and lots of endemic bird species like the Mount Cameroon Francoline (*Francolinus camerunensis*) and Cameroon Montane Greenbul (*Andropadus tephrolaemus*). These species are constantly being exploited

unsustainably by the local communities due to poverty coupled with poor governance and weak state institutions.

This thesis is aimed at examining ecotourism activities implemented by the Mount Cameroon Inter-Communal Ecotourism Board (Mt. CEO) as a tool for biodiversity conservation in the Mt. Cameroon region of Cameroon. This research focuses on the livelihood activities of the local population around the mount Cameroon region, their participation in ecotourism activities and access and benefit sharing mechanism. The study also emphasise the relationship and interaction between the major stakeholders involved in ecotourism activities.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Unsustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity loss has of the last decade been given great attention by policy-makers, international institutions and scholars. In most of the tropical nation's states, the trend of biodiversity loss is above all other factors, more or less influenced by institutional weakness or failure. That is the public sector's inability to efficiently and effectively conserve and protect biological resources (Southgate *et al.*, 1989; Ostrom, 1998). A variety of biodiversity conservation strategies have been applied to address the rate of biodiversity loss in tropical countries (Agrawal and Lemos, 2006; Oestreicher *et al.*, 2009). The experience gathered in Africa from these different strategies have been highly varied and context dependent. In most of these countries, a lot more is known about what to be conserved than about how to conserve it (Bawa et al, 2004). This tendency has more or less encouraged local people to prey on natural resources, which have affected biodiversity and forest ecosystems in general.

Institutional failure or weakness has been very common in the management of natural resources especially Protected Areas (PA) in Africa (Nelson and Hossack, 2003). Institutional failure occurs in protected area because of the inability of protected area management systems to simultaneously enhance sustainable livelihoods, biodiversity conservation and control deforestation. It does not also adequately integrate in its management framework the existing traditional natural resource management systems of Africa (Nelson and Hossack, 2003). The inability of PA to deliver effective conservation and equal socio-economic outcomes has been highly contested over the last decade in most Africa countries (Humble and Murhpre, 2001; Adams and Infield, 2003). By excluding local peoples from natural resources, it formally prohibit them from dialoguing with the environment which is the spiritual and religious locus

of some indigenous people hence leaving them deprived and bound to bear the cost of conservation (Vedeld, 2002).

The critique of the PA approach gave rise to discourses on sustainable development, environmental governance, just and rights advocate for the inclusion of local people, their livelihoods systems and other stakeholders in natural resource management (Humble and Murhpre, 2001). The main governance alternative has been the decentralized and collaborative approaches focusing on the appropriate institutional scale of governance (Abbott et al, 2007; Hutton et al, 2005 Agrawal, and Ostrom, 2001; Ribot, 2002; Andersson and Ostrom, 2008). These approaches to biodiversity conservation are predicted on assets local communities have in conserving nature (cheap man power, traditional ecological knowledge, low transaction costs and resilient institutions) which can reduce the financial costs and conflicts inherent in the central government protected area approach to biodiversity conservation.

These novel approaches that have been advocated by most international NGOs and donor agencies has been very influential and widely accepted approaches as the most profitable way to achieve effective and socially sound biodiversity conservation (Child, 2004; Bond and Frost, 2008). The success of community based conservation approach depend among other factors, on the balance of power between stakeholders, the process of designing institutions and implementing their objectives, the social and political environment, and the resilience of local actors and institutions to changes in biodiversity conservation and most important the potential to provide benefits to the local people in exchange for the cost of conservation (Ribot, 2008).

Despite the enactment of Law No. 94\01 of 20 January 1994 of biodiversity conservation in Cameroon, there is still a great loss of biodiversity in the mount Cameroon region. The major issues of biodiversity loss in this region are poverty, inadequate law enforcement, illegal activities and ineffective engagement of the local population in biodiversity decision making process. Ecotourism was introduced by GTZ about 10 years ago in the mount Cameroon region as a tool for biodiversity conservation and a means of improving the livelihood of the local communities. This study therefore, focus on the ecotourism activities in the mount Cameroon region, local participation and the relationship and interaction between the stakeholders involved in the ecotourism activities. Biodiversity is a very broad topic. In this

light, the study is focused entirely on forest and wildlife resources in the mount Cameroon region as part of biodiversity conservation.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The above issues will be addressed by answering the following questions:

- What are the livelihood activities of the local people in the Mt. Cameroon region?
- How do the activities of key stakeholders involved in ecotourism improve biodiversity conservation in the Mt. Cameroon region?
- How are the local communities engaged in ecotourism activities in the Mount Cameroon region and how do they benefit?
- How do the relationship and interaction between the stakeholders involved in ecotourism activities affect biodiversity conservation in the Mt. Cameroon region?
- What are the effects of ecotourism and the PA on rural livelihoods?

1.4. JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH

This study was carried out in the Mount Cameroon region of the Republic of Cameroon which is considered internationally as a biodiversity hotspot. It is one of the most diverse ecosystems in Cameroon and is considered as the 10th most conservable place in the world (Burnham, 2000). The area harbours, among many other threatened species, the last near isolated and threatened population of the forest elephant in the region. According to the Cameroon government, despite numerous efforts to implement conservation and livelihoods improvements measures in this fragile ecological zone, the biodiversity of the area remains threatened due to over exploitation amongst others (Government of Cameroon (GoC), 2005).

Thus in 1994 the Cameroon government passed a law to reform the forestry, wildlife and fisheries sector and by 1998, the government of Cameroon in collaboration with GTZ (German Development Organisation) introduced ecotourism as a means of conservation with Mt. CEO, an NGO now operating in the area, as the body in charge of its management. In this light, Mt. CEO, in an attempt to save the biodiversity and attract more tourists, has enforced the fortress approach to nature conservation. This for the most part has resulted in conflicts between the local people and the protected area as well as Mt. CEO because they have been deprived of their livelihood without adequate compensation or alternative. In addition, their role in management and decision making has been greatly undermined. It seems the problem

might be with the implementation of the current law regulating management and use of forest resources. Some illegal activities are still reported in this area and this might be a sign of the negative attitude of local people towards conservation. So far nothing has been done by the government to address this situation. With wide spread poverty and expanding population in this area it means there are increasingly more people dependent on the forest for survival and if nothing is done, the trend of biodiversity loss is only going to worsen. A lot of research has been done on the relationship between people and protected areas in Cameroon, but little has been done to assess the effectiveness of NGOs who claim to use ecotourism as a tool for conservation. As such, it is therefore important to check how effective these bodies are in terms of their conservation strategies and how much they contribute to local development and the standard of living of local people. The management strategy of protected areas is fairly similar throughout the country and findings from this study may be applied to other protected areas in the country.

1.5. CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE BIODIVERSITY RESOURCE USE AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USERS

The following model presents the main users of biodiversity resources (Fig. 1). They are the Village Ecotourism Committee members (VEC) and former hunters who also work as forest guards, porters and guides, park officials (Mt. CEO) and local people living around the protected area. In Cameroon all protected areas are state property and the totality of biodiversity in the area is managed and controlled by the state. The state sets appropriate policies (Policy maker) on what to do with resources, how to do it and who should do it. Wildlife and forests are the resources of interest in this case. All measures for policy empowerment are also decided and executed by the state. These different users are involved in different activities and have different interests and use biodiversity resources accordingly. While local people are interested in improving their livelihood, former hunters, guides and porters seek to supplement their income with revenues from ecotourism activities that ensure conservation. On the other hand, conservation is a priority to the park officials who use ecotourism as a tool for conservation and generation of revenue. All the different users interact with the common pool capital (forest and wildlife) and also among each other. Because they have different interests, this might sometimes lead to disagreements. For instance, while animals from the protected area might cause damage and injury to surrounding communities, they might in turn threaten wildlife by poaching and habitat destruction. Local

people may not agree with park authorities on the control of park activities on the one hand and guides, porter, and local people may or may not agree with authorities on how to share proceeds from ecotourism. The framework below illustrates the interests and activities between the different users of forest and wildlife resources in the Mount Cameroon region and how they relate to each other.

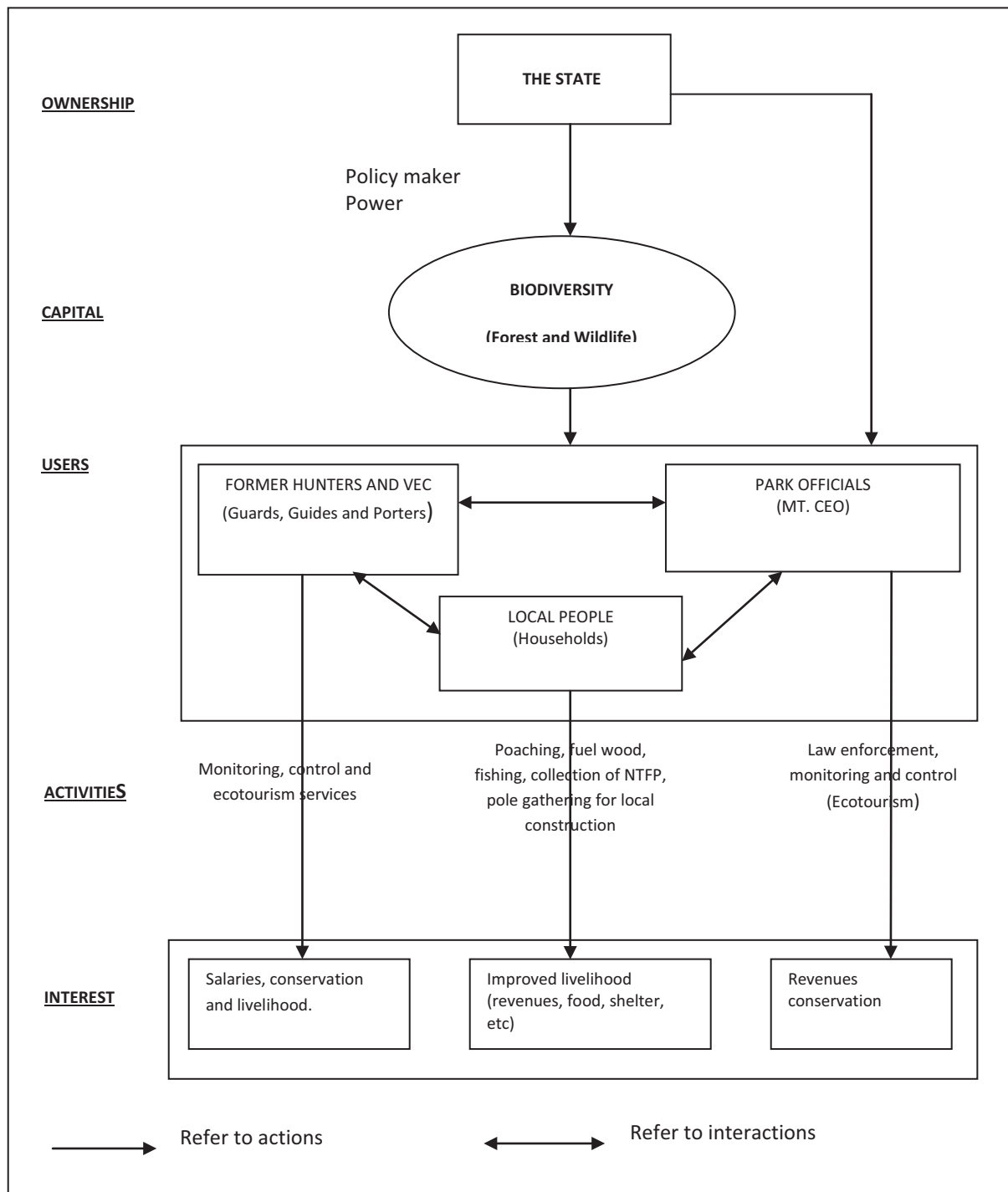


Fig 1: Conceptual model of the forest resource use and relationship between users. Adapted and modified from Samndong (2009).

CHAPTER TWO

THE TREND OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT IN CAMEROON AND THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE THESIS

2.1. ECOTOURISM AND BIODIVERSITY

Generally, species richness increase with decreasing latitude. Due to this biogeographical phenomenon, most species are found in developing countries (WCMC, 1992). These provide services which are very essential to humanity. However, problems like rapid population growth, workforce-pressure, logging and agricultural expansion has often to led to over-exploitation of these resources and consequent biodiversity loss (Burgess, 1993) see Fig 2. On the other hand, industrialized countries are characterized by high and increasing demand for nature-based vacations, with protected areas representing first-rate attractions. As these services are encoded in biodiversity, the importance of maintaining nature's variety in general is clearly rendered prominent (Chapin *et al.*, 1997). Tourism could therefore be a means of redistributing economic resources, mitigating the socio-economic situation both at local and national scale and contributing to biodiversity conservation (Budowski, 1976). This however, will depend on the type of tourism. Most countries including Cameroon have identified ecotourism as a tool that can be used to manage its biodiversity, enhance the development of local communities, empower local people and generate revenue for the state.

2.1.1. What is Ecotourism?

The term ecotourism has multiple definitions depending on the context it is used. It is often used to describe a type of tourism that focus on nature or nature-based tourism activities. According to WWF (2002), ecotourism is regarded as a proactive approach to conservation that seeks to protect the environment and increase the positive effects of local communities depending on the environment. TIES (1990), define ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people. The definition of ecotourism by Honey (1999), is the most widely accepted used in the literature. She states that:

“Ecotourism is travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strive to be low impact and (usually) is small scale. It helps educate the traveler; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities; and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights (Honey 1999)”.

This definition suggests that there should be a positive support for the conservation of natural resources by both suppliers and consumers and the social dimension of ecotourism should not be overlooked. However, Duffy (2002), argues that environmental conservation should be the main focus of ecotourism as this is the foundation of all ecotourism activities. Ecotourism is a potentially positive contributor to conservation of the natural environment because it is conscious of the sustainable use of resources. What separates ecotourism from other types of tourism is its emphasis on the local community and its people and that all affected people should benefit from it. This however, is slightly different from community based ecotourism.

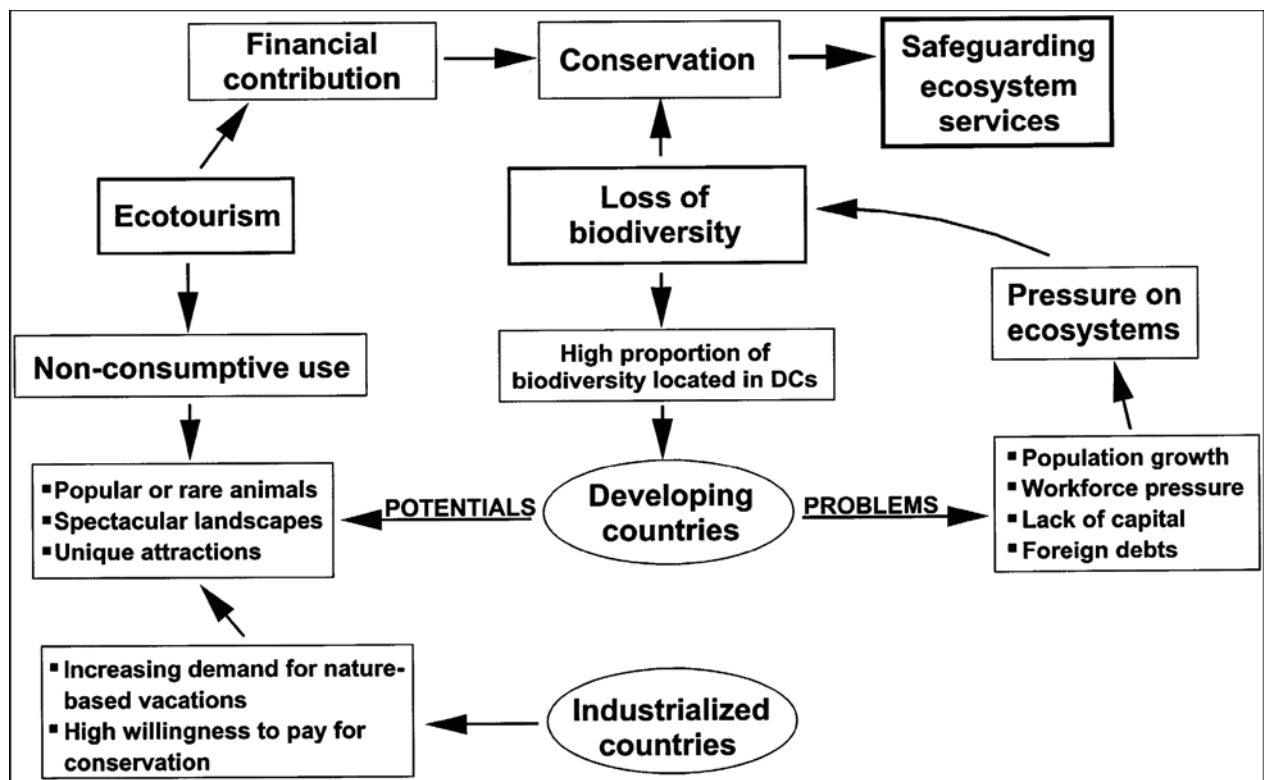


Fig: 2 Biodiversity loss and ecotourism.

Source: Gössling (1999).

2.2.2. Community based ecotourism

This is a form of ecotourism where the management, development, preservation and protection of the culture and environment of a local community is largely in the hands of the community members (Dunn, 2007). It is a higher social dimension than that of regular ecotourism, meaning that the local or indigenous people have more responsibility for the development and a higher proportion of the benefits remain within the community (WWF, 2001). It is assumed that community-based ecotourism contributes to environmental conservation and positive development for local livelihoods, since the local people are directly involved and motivated because it has to do with their land, natural assets and culture (WWF, 2001). The involvement of local people is very instrumental as it gives room for the local people to use their knowledge of the area and skills for conservation.

Changes in important components of biological diversity were more rapid in the past 50 years than at any time in human history. Projections and scenarios indicate that these rates will continue, or accelerate, in the future. Tentative estimates put the rate of biodiversity loss at one thousand times higher than the background and historical rate of extinction (GBO3 2010). Understanding the causes of biodiversity loss is therefore very instrumental in determining what conservation strategy might have the most positive impact on man and the environment. This section therefore discusses the effects of conservation strategies in Cameroon and the Mount Cameroon region in particular.

2.2. CAUSES OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS IN CAMEROON

The causes of biodiversity loss in Cameroon are many and diversified. According to Hudson, 1991, farming systems are often cited as the proximate causes of ecosystem changes in tropical Africa that lead to biodiversity loss. Faure (1989), states that thousands of hectares of rich ecosystems with lots of different species are being lost to agriculture each year in Cameroon alone. This is because agriculture constitutes the main livelihood activity of the country's growing population. Apart from agriculture as a direct cause of biodiversity loss in Cameroon, a number of studies have also attributed the loss of biodiversity to shifting cultivation and lumbering. These contribute to about 75-95% and 10% respectively of all losses (Gbetnkon, 2005). Other direct causes include fire, land for settlement due to population growth, demand for fuel wood, mining and cattle ranching (Cleaver, 1992), contributing enormously to habitat destruction. The indirect causes of biodiversity loss

include the economic crisis which plagued the nation because of the fall of export crop prices in the world market followed by the devaluation of the Francs CFA in 1993 (Bewket, 2003). Underlying causes of biodiversity loss in Cameroon are mainly poor governance, weak state institutions, and lack of law enforcement. This coupled with excessive wildlife exploitation and poaching has almost made the forests of Cameroon empty. All in all, poverty is the ultimate cause of biodiversity loss in Cameroon.

2.2.1. Main drivers of biodiversity loss in the mount Cameroon region

The main drivers of biodiversity loss in this region are excessive agriculture, logging, unsustainable exploitation of NTFP (Non-Timber Forest Products) and poaching. The CDC (Cameroon Development Cooperation), a para-statal agro industry with vast banana, rubber and tea plantations, is in this region keeps extending its farm into the protected areas causing substantial loss to biodiversity. In addition the slash and burn farming/shifting cultivation system of farming practiced by the local people of this area is very destructive to nature. Other causes of biodiversity loss include illegal logging and the unsustainable harvesting of NTFP. Habitat loss, which leads to forest fragmentation, is an important cause of reduction in species populations and increased species extinction rates (Wilcoe *et al.*, 1986, Hudson, 1991). Of the different tree species found in the Mount Cameroon region, the African Cherry (*Prunus africana*) is the most endangered. This is an evergreen hardwood tree with dark-brown longitudinal fissured bark and simple thick leathery, oval, leaves with pointed ends and of the Rosaceae family (Ingram, 2007; Cunningham and Mbenkum, 1993). The intrinsic value of this species is the driving force behind the indiscriminate exploitation for local and international trade. According to Jeanrenaud (1991), *Prunus africana* represents the fourth most popularly used medicinal plant species that is collected by 80% of households surveyed in the Mt. Cameroon region. Locally, it is a huge source of income (livelihood) to many families and it is also used by traditional healers for the treatment of chest pain, malaria, headache, chest pain, allergies, and kidney diseases. The bark is not only used by traditional healers, but also by local people collecting their own medicinal plants, including for use as a purgative for cattle (Kalkman, 1965). Internationally, interest in the tree is on its bark, which contains active biochemicals used for the treatment of prostate gland disorders. Presently, the bark extract is used internationally for the manufacture of drugs to cure prostrate hyperplasia, prostate gland hypertrophy and male pattern baldness. These diseases commonly affect older men in Europe and North America (Dawson and Rabevohitra, 1996). High demand for this

species has led to over-exploitation for its medicinal properties and to a lesser degree for its timber. The wood is hard and durable. Hence, it is excellent for use as construction material and in the manufacture of furniture. It is also used to manufacture handles for farm tools and house hold utensils. Worth mentioning also is the stock that is cut down for fuel wood by farmers. *Prunus* has become so important that many people in the Mount Cameroon region and even beyond are involved in its exploitation or marketing. This has made the species scarce not only for international trade but also for use by the local communities. There is no doubt that it is because of the lucrative nature of the international market that *Prunus africana* is being over-exploited and traded on a larger scale than any other African medicinal tree species with the resultant devastation of wild stock. This species has been listed as endangered by the Cameroon government and listed as vulnerable in the world's list of threatened trees, owing to its rapid population decline (Schippmann, 2001). The decline in *Prunus africana* stock is alarming and has great impact on fauna and flora, whether dependent on the species or not.

Hunting and poaching is also a threat to the regions biodiversity. Hunting has always been a major source of livelihood for the local villagers in the Mt. Cameroon region. In the past, traditional hunting for domestic purposes posed very little threat to animal populations. Prior to 1960, elephants and other large game dominated the slopes of Mt. Cameroon. However by the 70s and 80s, poaching for ivory and hide coupled with the deliberate action of the Cameroon development Cooperation (CDC) to kill elephants in an attempt to save their palm plantations greatly diminished the elephant population to less than a hundred (Pouakouyou, 1996). This activity was also encouraged by politicians, military personnel, traditional rulers and wealthy businessmen who needed the ivory for prestige and sale in international markets. In addition, the use of sophisticated weapons today for hunting is increasingly posing a serious threat to animal species due to the significant increase in the catch leading to a sharp decline in the wildlife population. The wildlife resource commonly called bushmeat in Cameroon is very important in the livelihoods of forest dwelling communities across the national territory and a delicacy to urban dwellers. As such, despite the laws regulating wildlife exploitation, many hunters are still operating illegally (without permits, using unregistered guns and unconventional trapping equipment) to meet up the demand for bushmeat. At checkpoints in Cameroon, guards often find massive amounts of bushmeat

hidden underneath lumber in trucks. However, this bushmeat is not always confiscated since some of the checkpoint workers are also involved in the poaching business themselves.

Habitat loss through deforestation, illegal hunting/poaching, and lack of a realistic workable management model that could set, respect and enforce quotas is undoubtedly a major threat to biodiversity in the Mt. Cameroon region.

2.3. ACTORS IN BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

In order to examine the legal framework for conservation and management in Cameroon, it is important to identify the major stakeholders or actors involved in the exploitation. The way the resources are used, which groups and individuals have access, what is extracted from and the way it is extracted all have bearings in defining the management regime (Ostrom, 2005; Vatn, 2005). According to (Neba *et al*, 2002) these include:

- a) Dispersed, disorganized and powerless local dwellers who are heavily dependent on the environment and the resources which it provides, but whose security of tenure and national voices are often minimal.
- b) Timber companies which have invested heavily in logging and timber transformation, have close links to the national political establishment and have much to lose from the exercise of public control and more to gain from the lack of it.
- c) Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), most of which have taken keen interest in biodiversity and environmental protection, through participatory management and other options like integrated rural development.
- d) The government through the Ministry of Forest and Fauna (MINEF), responsible for making laws and enforcing them.
- e) Increasing vocal and stringent international environmental bodies to whom, looking at the long term value of biodiversity not immediate direct use is of first importance (GFW, 2002).

In this mix, the local communities who by nature are suppose to be the owners of natural resources, are usually the most deprived while the government and logging companies benefit the most.

2.4. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY IN CAMEROON

Management regimes are mechanisms that determine the future of the forest in question. How well the regime is conceived and how well it is implemented will determine how secure the future of natural resources can be. The management regimes vary from state ownership to communal ownership and control, private forest to open access (de facto) (Vatn, 2005). In Cameroon, measures have been taken by the government as well as individuals and NGOs to reduce biodiversity loss. This section discusses the measures adapted in Cameroon by law for protected areas and reforms made through the years. For the purpose of this study focus is on the forestry and wildlife policy.

The Ministry of Forestry in Cameroon has done a number of reforms to address the devastating disappearance of the forest starting way back during the pre-colonial to post-colonial era (Diaw et al, 1997; Bigombe, 1996). During these periods, the policy reforms were characterized by a legal absolute hegemony of the state over the country's forest lands (Samndong, 2009). The local communities living within these forest lands were in a way excluded by an ownership system and property regime that only recognized their rights of extraction (Diaw, 2005; Oyono, 2005; Samndong, 2009). After independence (1960-1985), forest management was revised, as the government introduced successive laws regulating forest and land (Forest Order No. 73/18 of May 25, 1973, Land Tenure and State Lands Order No. 74-1 and 74-2 of July 6, 1974 and Forestry law No.81/13 of December 27, 1981). These legal frameworks respected the colonial strategy of state hegemony over the forest lands until the promulgation of the current law which takes into consideration the Cameroon government's goal of achieving sustainable management of its forests.

In the early 1990s the country was in a political turmoil stirred by the demand for democracy, freedom and better standards of living due to the economic crises that hit the country at this time caused by the fall in prices of Cameroons major export crops (Karsenty, 1999; Brunner and Ekoko, 2000). Among these demands the communities living within the forest zones also wanted secure livelihoods from the public management of forests 'their forest' as well (Oyono, 2004). There was does the need to reform Cameroons forest policies and the government did just that. However, it was not until the 20th of January, 1994 that The Legal Regulations on Forestry and Wildlife Law No 94/01 was passed by presidential decree No.

94/436/PM. The basis for the reforms was based on the fact that the forest was recognised as a unique natural resource that has been exploited in a non-sustainable way in the past and needs to be meaningfully protected. Thus the policy recognizes the richness and importance of Cameroons biodiversity, and assigns a high priority to protection of its heritage. The New Forestry Law and the National Forestry Action Program, form an integral part of the government strategy to ensure sustainable conservation and use of its forestry, wildlife and fisheries resources, and of the various ecosystems. Its implementing instruments are made of three specific regulatory (Decrees N° 95-531-PM, 95-678-PM and 95-678-PM) and three common (Decrees N° 86-230, 96-237-PM and 96-238-PM) instruments (Foahom, 2001).

2.4.1. The national zoning plan

There are many different types of forests according to the Cameroon law enacted in 1994 with specific conditions. Such include:

- Permanent Forests also known as classified forest which are set aside for long term use and constitute at least 30% (14 million ha) of the total forest area in the country. This include
 - State Forests which constitute protected areas such as national parks, forest reserves and sanctuaries with preservation or conservation as the main objective;
 - Production forest reserves which allow for sustainable timber production. A forest concession can be granted for up to 200,000ha for exploitation to licensed timber operators within the area. Management plan is required for such operations;
 - Council Forest which could be planted or natural forest managed by municipalities in their areas. Logging and afforestation is allowed in these areas.
- Non-permanent Forest (6 million ha) which include all unclassified forests that can be temporarily or permanently converted to purposes other than forestry. Those that fall under this group include:
 - Private Forest own by individual, and logging and afforestation activities are allowed under a management plan;
 - Communal Forest which is a residual class of forests including all forests not included in the permanent or private estates:

-Community Forest which are forest within the communal estate but with an agreement between the community and the state. Such areas need a management plan and cannot exceed 25,000ha and the contract is for 25 years renewable.

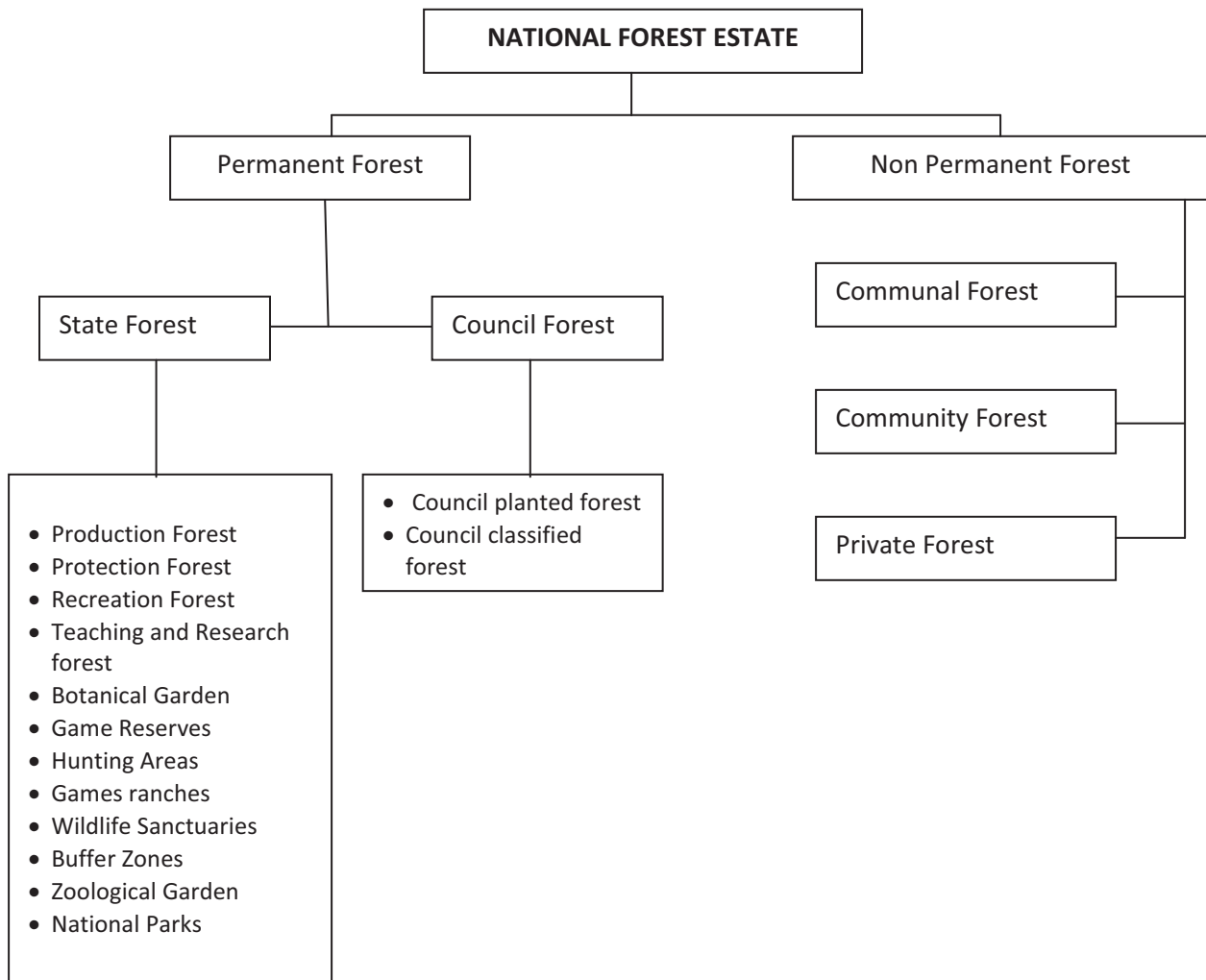


Fig 3: Summary of National Forest Estate Classification in Cameroon

The National Zoning Plan is a framework for land use in Cameroon. It helps in development planning, orientation and exploitation of natural resources in the country. According to the new forestry law, guidelines for the Drawing up of Forest Management Plan for Permanent forests shall be managed in order to sustain their production capacity. According to its Section 29,

"A management plan shall be drawn up for State forests defining, in accordance with the conditions laid down by decree, the management objectives and the rules for each forest, the means needed to achieve the said objectives, as well as the conditions under which the local population may exercise their logging rights, in accordance with the provisions of the classification instruments (GoC, 1994)".

According to the Cameroon law, *"the development of a management plan is a prerogative of the state"* (Cerutti *et al.* 2008). Therefore, MINEF is responsible for the development and enforcement of forest policy as well as management. The main forestry policy objectives designed to govern the management of state forests are clearly stated by MINEF and include:

- ❖ To clearly define forest areas in to multiple purposes, production areas and completely protected areas.
- ❖ To guarantee the effective protection of ecosystems which are representative for Cameroon's biodiversity.
- ❖ To guarantee the elaboration and implementation of forest management plans that ensure at the same time sustainable forest management and sustained supply of forest industries and local markets.
- ❖ To involve the local people in the management of their forest resources and its conservation so that forestry can contribute to their livelihoods.
- ❖ To promote the industrialization and development of professional capacity of the local people.
- ❖ To simplify taxation and increase the contribution of the forestry sector to GNP ensuring transparency and strengthening good governance.
- ❖ To ensure the implementation of international commitments of the country with regards to management and conservation (MINEF, 2004).

With respect to wildlife, the 1994 forestry and wildlife law and the 1995 wildlife decree recognized the local communities as traditional custodians of wildlife resources and as partners in the resource management process. Traditional hunting is authorized throughout the

national territory except in State forests protected for wildlife conservation or on the property of third parties where it is regulated following the management plan (GoC, 1994; 1995). Under the management plan of the law, wildlife is classified into three categories, which are class A, B and C. Animals of class A are totally protected. (Gorilla, Chimpanzee and Elephant). Animals of class B are hunted with a permit. Animal of class C are free and allowed to be hunted traditionally for subsistence (Koulagna Koutou, 2001). The 1994 law recognized two categories of hunting: subsistence (traditional) hunting which deals with the exclusive user right of the local people to the source of animal protein and Sports hunting, which takes place in hunting areas that are also leased to professional hunters.

Traditional hunting is legally defined as hunting using material made of plant origin, and can only be undertaken for subsistence consumption –never commercial transactions. Section5(2) of the 1995 Wildlife Decree provides that a protected area can only be established after indentifying individuals whose rights have been infringed. In addition, Cameroon’s law require local populations to be compensated for the temporary or permanent suspension of their rights by the creation or extension of a protected area. The most important aspect of the law is the advocation of participatory wildlife management and the designation of community hunting zones, equitable sharing of benefit from wildlife exploitation, the possibility of local councils managing hunting areas and buffers zones (Van der Wal, 2001).

In general, the main goal of the 1994 forestry and wildlife law was to encourage the sustainable use of natural resources and promote ecologically sound development around protected areas by giving local communities the possibility to have control over forests and wildlife and to involve local people in the management and protection of forest and wildlife resources. How far the government has gone in implementing these policies will be examined in chapter four.

2.5. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Knowledge of perceptions and valuation of biodiversity by various stakeholders can provide vital information for assessing conservation and ecotourism. Natural resources have various stakeholders and frequently, these are operating with different objectives (Brown et al. 2001). As competing interests characterize conservation issues, the system must be viewed holistically, with an understanding of the gains and losses of all stakeholders (Grimble et al.,

1996). The relationship between different stakeholders, as well as the relationship between humans and the environment has been explored. In order to assess these linkages, a combination of a stakeholder analysis, livelihood analysis, participatory and fortress approaches to conservation has been utilized. The question of the ecotourism's performance is analysed from perspectives of efficiency, empowerment and livelihoods security.

2.5.1. The livelihood approach

The livelihood approach to conservation has been widely used to study rural livelihoods. It seeks to understand the strategies, objectives and associated opportunities and constraints people encounter in their pursuit for sustainable livelihoods (Scoones, 1998; Ellis, 2000). This approach was first promulgated by Gordon Conway and Robert Chambers in 1992. They defined livelihood as “a means of gaining a living, including livelihood capabilities, tangible assets, such as stores and resources and intangible assets such as claims and access” (Chamber and Conway, 1992). Since then, several authors have developed and used the approach. According to Ellis (2000) ‘a livelihood comprises the assets, the activities and the access to these (which are mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individuals or household’ and according to Scoones (1998), ‘a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base’. Yet according to Davies *et al.*, (1998), livelihood is essentially the activities that people do to “get by” to survive and to meet their everyday needs as well as those more entrepreneurial and profit-focused activities that are best summarized as “getting on”- striving towards better conditions of material well-being. Even though there are minor differences between these definitions, the frameworks are more or less the same (Cahn, 2002). They approach the livelihood and development process by focusing on people's available assets and capabilities, what they lack and what they have and the various formal and informal institutions involved in the use and management, access and control over resources. These issues are fundamental to understand what options are available for them, the strategies they adopt for survival, and their vulnerability to adverse trends and events. Elli's framework concerning rural livelihoods and diversification (Fig. 4) is an integral part of studying development and conservation interventions in developing countries. It has the advantage that it is possible to understand and consider the sustainable basis in particularly what assets and activities the projects should be emphasizing and improving in order to be successful.

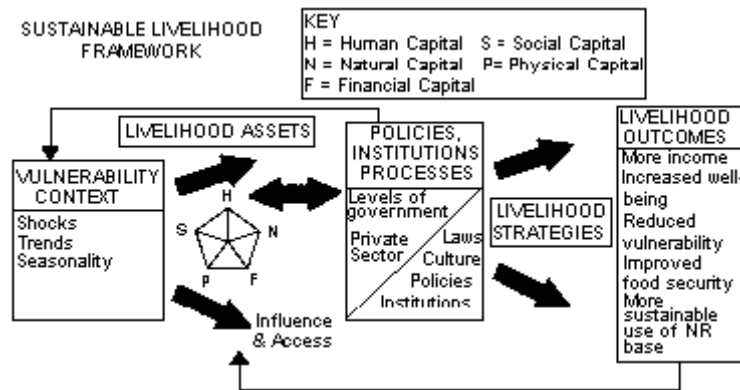


Fig 4: A Sustainable livelihoods framework

Source: British Department of International Development, *Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets*

The main assumption of the framework is that people pursue a range of livelihood outcomes such as health, income, reduce vulnerability, and improve food security etc. by drawing on a range of assets to pursue a variety of activities. Their activities and their investment in assets building are influenced by their own preference and priorities. These activities are the livelihood strategies, which include agriculture, collection of NTFP, hunting, fishing, livelihood diversification and migration. As shown in the diagram above there are three main elements to be considered when evaluating the success of the livelihood approach. These are sustainability, access to assets and diversification.

Sustainability

The term ‘Sustainability’ emerged as a result of significant concerns about the unintended social, environmental, and economic consequences of rapid population growth, economic growth and consumption of our natural resources (Brown, 2002). Although it is widely used in discussions on conservation, human livelihood and development, it is a problematic term to define in practice, as it has been seen to have several different meanings and understandings from different actors (James, 2007). According to Ellis (2000), sustainability attempts to communicate stability in the long term of system’s capacity to reproduce itself or expand over time. For an ecosystem, this will mean the biomass and species diversity, while for human livelihoods and needs, it means sustaining outputs available for human consumption and therefore the capacity of a system or a resource to keep the same or increase its contribution to human welfare and well-being (Engh, 2011). Man and the environment are intricately linked

and man can change the environment either positively or negatively. In a case where man transforms the environment in a way that the ecosystems are no longer able to provide their original services, this will again create repercussions for people's livelihoods, their vulnerability and security, with such negative changes leading to loss of resilience to the entire ecosystem. A sustainable approach to conservation, development and improved livelihood should therefore be able to generate and preserve rich social, economic and ecological systems (Folke *et al.*, 2002).

Assets and Access

The livelihoods framework defined resources as 'assets' or 'capitals'. These assets or capital are grouped into five categories: human capital (skills, education, health), physical capital (produced investment goods), financial capital (money, savings, loan access), natural capital (land, water, trees etc.), and social capital (networks and associations). However, not all resources that people depend on for their livelihoods fit well within the above categories. Nevertheless, they are very important in distinguishing asset types that tend to have differing connections to the policy environment. For example, human capital is linked to social policies (education and health), while natural capital is linked to land use, agricultural and environmental policies.

The livelihoods framework serves as an important tool for understanding the asset status of poor individuals or households and which options are opened to them. One of its basic premises, therefore, is that policies to reduced poverty should be concerned with raising the asset status of the poor. The framework looks positively at what is possible in reducing poverty rather than negatively at how desperate things are. Moser (1998) pointed out that, the livelihood framework seeks

“to identify what the poor have rather than what they do not have” and strengthen people's own inventive solutions, rather than substitute for, block or undermine them”.

Implicitly, it means identifying possible institutions that hamper and block people's ability to improve their livelihoods. Such institutions may include traditional (e.g. customary land tenure), modern (e.g. centralized state rules and regulations), or in some sense 'post-modern' (e.g. recent CBNRM policies and institutions). Looking at institutions in this context, it is important to recall the observation of North (1990), that just because institutions have been

around a long time it does not mean that they work well or that they are equitable. This therefore implies that institutions often persist long after the reasons that called them into being have disappeared. Such an observation can be noticed in ‘traditional’ institutions that were constructed to serve the interests of hierarchical and patriarchal authority rather than to contribute to the empowerment and voice of ordinary citizens (Ellis, 2000).

The outcome of the livelihood framework should be better or improved access to assets. The ultimate rationale of this framework is to improve long-term livelihood security and the quality of life more generally for rural communities. On the whole, the more assets a household has the less vulnerable the household is to the different shocks and trends outlined in the framework. Shocks can wipe out assets very suddenly if they are not protected and adverse trends can result in them being gradually eroded if livelihoods are not able to adapt to change. The effectiveness of the household asset in providing security will depend on some contextual factors, such as a functioning market, social relations, and others. These factors influence not only what can be achieved with assets, but the access people have to them (Ellis, 2000).

Diversification

Due to shocks such as drought, pest, war etc, farmers might experience a situation of risk and uncertainty. In order to cope with such broad uncertainties, farmers diversify as a way of hedging against both natural and market risks (Clayton, 1983). Livelihood diversification can be exercised through the direct use of land and other natural resources, as well as indirect use such as trading. In practice, diversification covers a wide spectrum since most rural population makes full use of all the opportunities available. Other diversification options include subsistence production or production for sale, participation in labor supply and migration. Land use pattern is very important in diversification in rural communities as the land may be used for single or multiple crops in which low value crops can be replaced by high value ones. Collective action in the use of different common property resources depends on other components of the livelihood system such as livestock keeping as well as on coping strategies in times of crisis (Ellis, 2000; Scoones, 1998).

Table 1: Livelihood indicators on the household and community level

Asset group	Indicator at household level	Indicator at community level
Natural	- Physical access to forest resources - Legal access to forest resources - Control over forest resource/ability to exclude others - Equitable access to forest resources among household members	- Total flow of forest resources - Equitable access to forest resources among households
Physical	- Shelter and household possessions - Ownership/access to means of transportation - Ownership/access to production and processing equipment - Equitable access to physical assets among household members	- Local infrastructure - Communication facilities - Equitable access to community owned physical assets among households
Human	- Health and nutritional status - Endogenous skills - Exogenous skills - Access to information - Empowerment of women - Equitable access to social assets among household members	- Effective community organization - Equitable access to education among household
Financial	- Household income level - Regularizing income - Household savings - Equitable access within household - Safety net value	- Community financial resources - Equitable access to community owned financial resources among household - Access to income and employment opportunities outside of raw material production
Social	- Endogenous social resources - Exogenous social resources - Political power	- Socio-cultural cohesion among households - Leverage with outside agents

Adapted from Samndong (2009)

2.5.2. The Stakeholder Analysis

The development of Stakeholder Analysis (SA) emerged in the 90s as a result of many projects not meeting their stated objectives because of conflict between major stakeholders (Grimble 1998). SA is an analytical framework for understanding environmental and development problems and interactions through analysis of the different perspectives and sets of interest of stakeholders at various levels (Grimble and Wellard 1997; Mushove and Vogel 2005). SA provides a tool that can examine how stakeholders benefit or lose from an ecotourism project, and it has an advantage for understanding conflicts of interests and trade-

offs for key stakeholders that may threaten the success (Grimble 1998). A stakeholder analysis can help an ecotourism project identify:

- The interests of all stakeholders who may affect or be affected by the project;
- Potential conflicts or risks that could jeopardise the initiative;
- Opportunities and relationships that can be built on during implementation;
- Groups that should be encouraged to participate in different stages of the project;
- Appropriate strategies and approaches for stakeholder engagement; and
- Ways to reduce negative impacts on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (WWF, 2005).

According to Grimble and Wellard (1997), the most fundamental division between stakeholders is between those who affect a policy, decision, or action (active stakeholders), and those affected by this (passive stakeholders). Primary stakeholders are those who will be directly or eventually affected by an intervention, either positively or negatively. Secondary stakeholders are intermediaries involved in interventions (Mikkelsen 2005). Distributional, social and economic impacts of ecotourism projects can be assessed by looking into the interests and impacts of intervention on different stakeholders (Grimble and Wellard 1997). SA also looks at how stakeholders relate to one another. The most powerful have advantages in terms of better access to knowledge/education and political power. In order to further own interests, these may use this knowledge and power to manipulate the less powerful. A stakeholder analysis' has been used in this study, and is a tool for understanding power issues between stakeholders (Salam and Noguchi 2005). This instrument analyses stakeholders' rights, responsibilities, returns and relationships, to demonstrate the interdependence and interactions between them. According to Vedeld (2005),

- A right is a recognized institution by which one stakeholder has a disposition right over a resource. 'Rights' are access to CHICOP and to employment deriving from ecotourism, as well as rights to exclude and enforce regulations.
- Responsibility relates to duties for different actors. 'Responsibilities' are management tasks, implementing decisions on rules and following these.
- Returns are associated with the different stakeholders' abilities to realize their interests in the face of other actors and their interests. 'Returns' are accrued from employment, taxation of ecotourism earnings and ownership of the venture, as well as benefits of conservation, such as improved fish stocks.

- The relationship between actors relates to issues of rights and responsibilities. The ‘relationships’ dimension includes stakeholders in conflict and cooperation, and their history with one another. It also includes the intangible of any conflict situation, such as trust, respect and legitimacy.

Stakeholder analysis is also an appropriate to explore whether or not gender will be a factor in the elaboration and implementation of future efforts. It is well documented that discrimination by gender is likely to diminish the impact and effectiveness of projects and policies. Furthermore, the inclusion of women as stakeholders has the potential to achieve both better management of the resource base and improved community welfare. Gender analysis involves the assessment of:

- The distribution of tasks, activities, and rewards associated with the division of labour at a particular locality or across a region;
- The relative positions of women and men in terms of representation and influence; and
- The benefits and disincentives associated with the allocation of tasks to women and men (WWF, 2005).

It is important to do SA throughout all stages of a project cycle, particularly at the outset of a project in order to involve and consider the needs and interest of all those involved. The full participation of stakeholders in both project design and implementation is a key to – but not a guarantee of – success.

2.5.3. The fortress approach

The “Fortress Conservation Approach” dominated up to the 1980s and is still a frequently used practice in Africa today where people and land are physically separated. The idea behind this approach is that man was seen as the main threat to biodiversity and could not live compatibly with nature. It was aimed at preventing people from “destroying” the resource, by their consumptive and non-consumptive uses. At the London Convention of 1933, the creation of national parks in Africa was seen as major way to protect the depleting natural resources. Agencies put in place to protect the areas developed a “fine and fence” or ‘exclusion and punishment’ policy style. They took away local people’s usufruct rights and prevented their traditional use of the areas and its resources. Grazing, wood collection and the acquisition of wild meat for the pot etc. were banned for local people (Vedeld, 2002). These

policies were strongly supported by agencies such as IUCN, UNESCO, WB, Frankfurt Zoological Society etc for a long time.

However, throughout the 60'ies and the 70'ies, one saw that the policies did not work well and it started to lose popularity because;

- ❖ Local and other people did not respect the conservation approach and encroached on vulnerable biodiversity resources to secure livelihood, reduce costs of prey animals and increase incomes for themselves because they economically would benefit from it. The biodiversity resource became threatened.
- ❖ Local people had been deprived of what they saw as their intrinsic or traditional usufruct rights in the areas – traditional authorities and rights were taken away by states with rather low levels of legitimacy. Many local and national conflicts.
- ❖ The conflicts levels were also enhanced by increasing population densities and with expansions of protected areas, leaving less land for more people.
- ❖ Externally; advocacy groups mounted pressures on behalf of local people; NGOs, national and international donors, etc (Vedeld, 2002).

A good example that explains the short comings of this approach was in Tanzania where the first president Julius Nyerere strongly supported the conservation of wildlife and forest in order to preserve the watersheds in the Usambara Mountains (Conte, 2004). This led to the continuing and increasing the expropriation of land for the purpose of establishing forest reserves and by 1942, it had doubled (Vihemäki, 2009). Because local people were prevented from using resources in this forest for their livelihood as they had always done customarily, this led to conflicts both locally and nationally (Conte, 2004). Because of the above weaknesses of the fortress approach, there was need for policy reform leading to the birth of the participatory approach.

2.5.4. The participatory approach

Since the Brundtland Commission forwarded the concept of 'Sustainable Development' in the 1980s, emphasis has been put both on the reduction of environmental degradation and on the improvement of peoples living condition through participation. The term participation is very important in natural resource management and has been used in the literature in different ways. It is widely accept that successful natural resource management requires active participation of direct resource users. Participation in this sense could be defined as

“empowering people to mobilize the capacities, be social actors rather than passive subjects, manage the resources, make decisions and control the activities that affects their lives” (IIED, 1994). The introduction of the participatory approach to conservation was based on the assumption that the involvement of local people would make it easier to achieve conservation goals if they have an incentive to support protected areas (Hutton & Leader-Williams, 2003). Other scholars hold that the participatory approach to conservation would be more effective because it would make use of the local people’s knowledge in forest management since they have been around for a long time (Blaikie, 2006) and motivate them to protect natural resources since they live close to and off the resources (Brosius *et al*, 1998). Pretty (1997) suggest that the term ‘participation’ has been used to justify the extension of control of the state as well as to build local capacity and self-reliance; it has been used to justify the external decisions as well as to devolve power and decision-making away from external agencies, it has been used for data collection s well as for interactive analysis. He distinguishes different types of participation (Table: 2) ranging from the manipulative and passive participation where people are told what is to happen and act out predetermined roles to self-mobilisation, where people take initiatives largely independent of the external institutions. The classification suggests that where the term ‘participation’ is used, the context should be clearly defined. According to Vedeld (2002), local participation should be seen as “strategy of devolution of authority and power, resources, distribution of right and duties from state to local level of governance and from public to civil society”. Put simply, effective participation might occur if people are involved in decision-making at all stages of any conservation project, from inception and design to maintenance. The best known example of a successful participatory approach is the CAMPFIRE¹ program in Zimbabwe where the communities are directly involved (have user rights, participate in decision making and benefit sharing) and work hand in hand with government agencies in all aspects of the program (Child, 2006).

¹ Community Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources

Table 2: A typology of participation

TYPOLGY	CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH TYPE
1. Manipulative Participation	Participation is simply a pretence
2. Passive Participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. Information being shared belongs only to external professionals
3. Participation by Consultation	People participate by being consulted or answering questions. Process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views
4. Participation for material incentives	People participate in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Local people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end
5. Functional Participation	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project
6. Interactive Participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local groups or institutions. Learning methodologies used to seek multiple perspectives, and groups determine how available resources are used
7. Self- mobilization participation	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used

Source: Pretty, 1997

CHAPTER THREE

MATERIAL AND METHODS

3. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a description of the study area, the methods and materials used in the collection of data in order to achieve the outlined objectives of the study. The sampling procedure, criteria used in selecting villages interviewed and organization visited will be examined. The limitations of the study and possible solutions will also be examined.

3.1. STUDY AREA

3.1.1. Cameroon: An overview

The Republic of Cameroon is located in the central African region between latitude 2° and 13° North of the equator and longitude 8°30' and 16°10' East of the Greenwich meridian (Neba, 1987). It is bordered by Lake Chad in the north, Nigeria to the west, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Congo to the south and Central African Republic to the east. Cameroon also has a 402km coastline that is washed by the Atlantic Ocean. It occupies a total land area of 475,000kmsq of which 225,000kmsq is covered by the humid equatorial forest (Burnham, 2000). This triangular shape land mass with a North-South length of 1,400km and East-West width of 800km (Neba, 1987), is also known as Africa in miniature because of its diverse human, physical, cultural, political and social attributes.

The country has a humid tropical climate with two marked seasons (the wet and dry seasons). The rate of precipitation reduces as one moves from South to North with the most severe dry seasons marked in the North. The varying climatic patterns have partly influenced the development of different ecological habitats, vegetation types and major rivers like the Sanaga, Wouri, Nyong, Mungo, Manyu, Mbam and Dja amongst others which greatly support the country's luxuriant biodiversity.

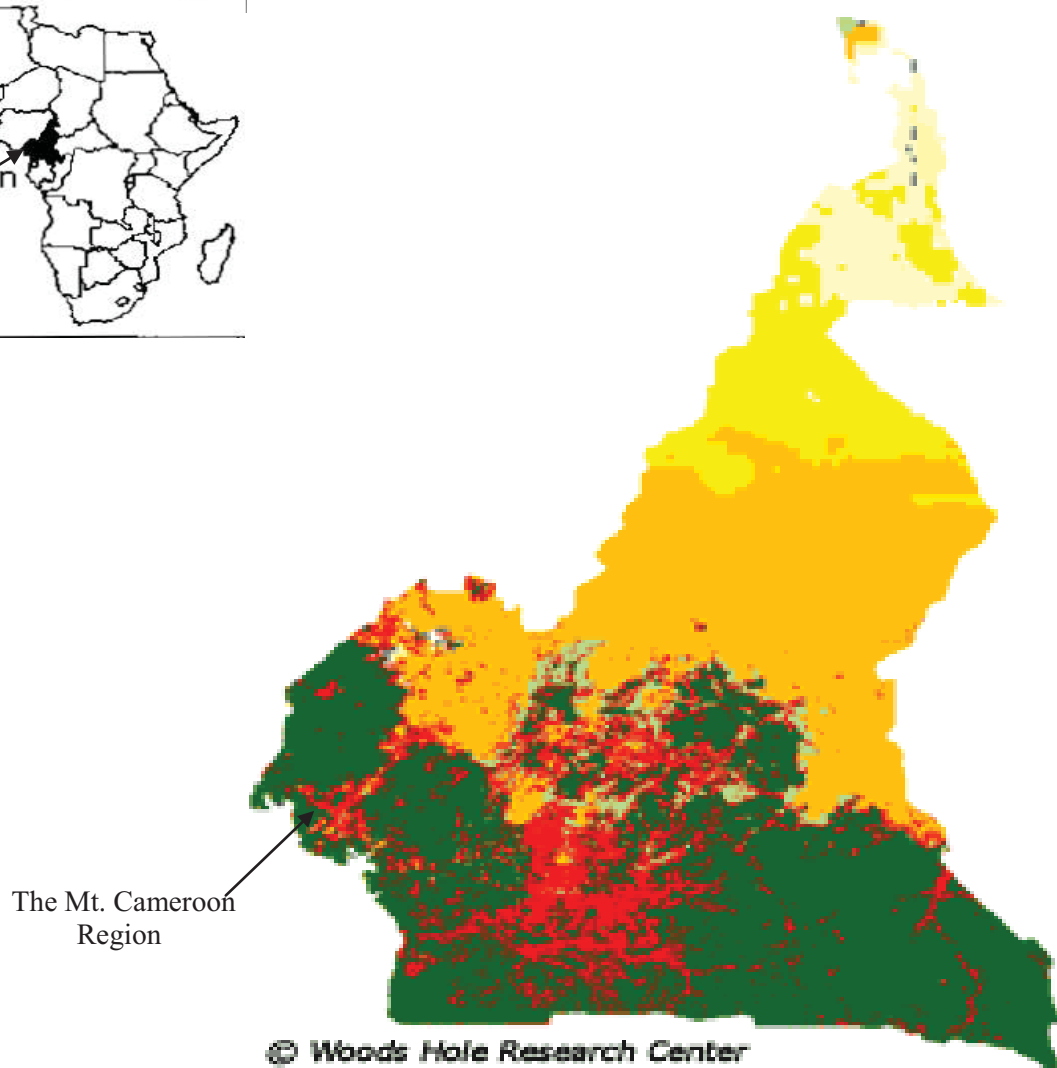
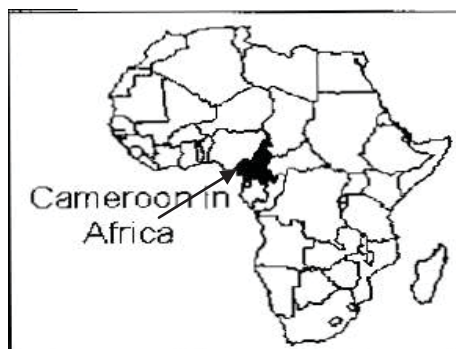
The population of Cameroon is currently estimated at 18 million and consists of 250 tribes. Of this number, nearly 4 million (excluding big cities) live in and around the humid forest, which provides a living and many basic assets for local communities (Ndoye *et al*, 1997). The economy of communities around the forest is based on agriculture. The common form of

agriculture in these areas are shifting cultivation and bush fallowing and crops produced are mainly for subsistence and any surpluses may be sold (Oyono, 1998).

The study area referred to as Anglophone Cameroon however; consist of two of the ten provinces that make up the country. These are the North West and South West provinces. Both provinces cover a total area of 42,710kmsq representing 9.1% of the total land surface of Cameroon. (MINEFI, 1999). Although the North West province is mainly savannah, and forms part of the western highlands, it does have large stretches of thick gallery forests, montane forest now threatened by population growth and with a very wide range of biodiversity uncommon to most parts of the African continent. For example, there are two species of the 40 endemic plant species of the Cameroon highlands which are restricted to the province, 5 species of mammals and 11 species of reptiles and amphibian found only in this area (MINEF, 1999). The South West Province (SWP) on the other hand, forms an extension of the coastal lowland region of Cameroon. The outstanding physical feature in this area is the Mt. Fako or Mount Cameroon which is also in the highest in the country and also an active volcanic mountain. This area also constitutes part of the Cameroon rain forest that stretches across 4 other provinces, that is the Center, East, Littoral and South. Though the North West and south west province have distinct physiography, they are nevertheless bonded together by a common history and culture as British Trust territories of the League of Nations and United Nations respectively. Furthermore, both provinces have a common characteristic montane forest of great importance (Neba *et al*, 2002).

3.1.2. The Mount Cameroon (Mt. Cameroon) region

This study was carried out in Anglophone Cameroon. However, the examined communities (Woteva, Bakingili, Bokwango, Bova1 and Bonakanda) are from the Mt. Cameroon region in the South West Province of Cameroon located between 3°54' - 4°27' N and longitude 8°58' - 9°24' E (Ekane, 2000). The entire mountain region covers 2500km² and host to the 58,178 hectare Mount Cameroon National Park, which includes the 4,095-metre high Mount Cameroon – the highest mountain in West and Central Africa with a height of 4,095m above sea level. Mt. Cameroon is an active volcanic mountain located in a volcanic chain that extends northeast along the border between Cameroon and Nigeria.



KEY

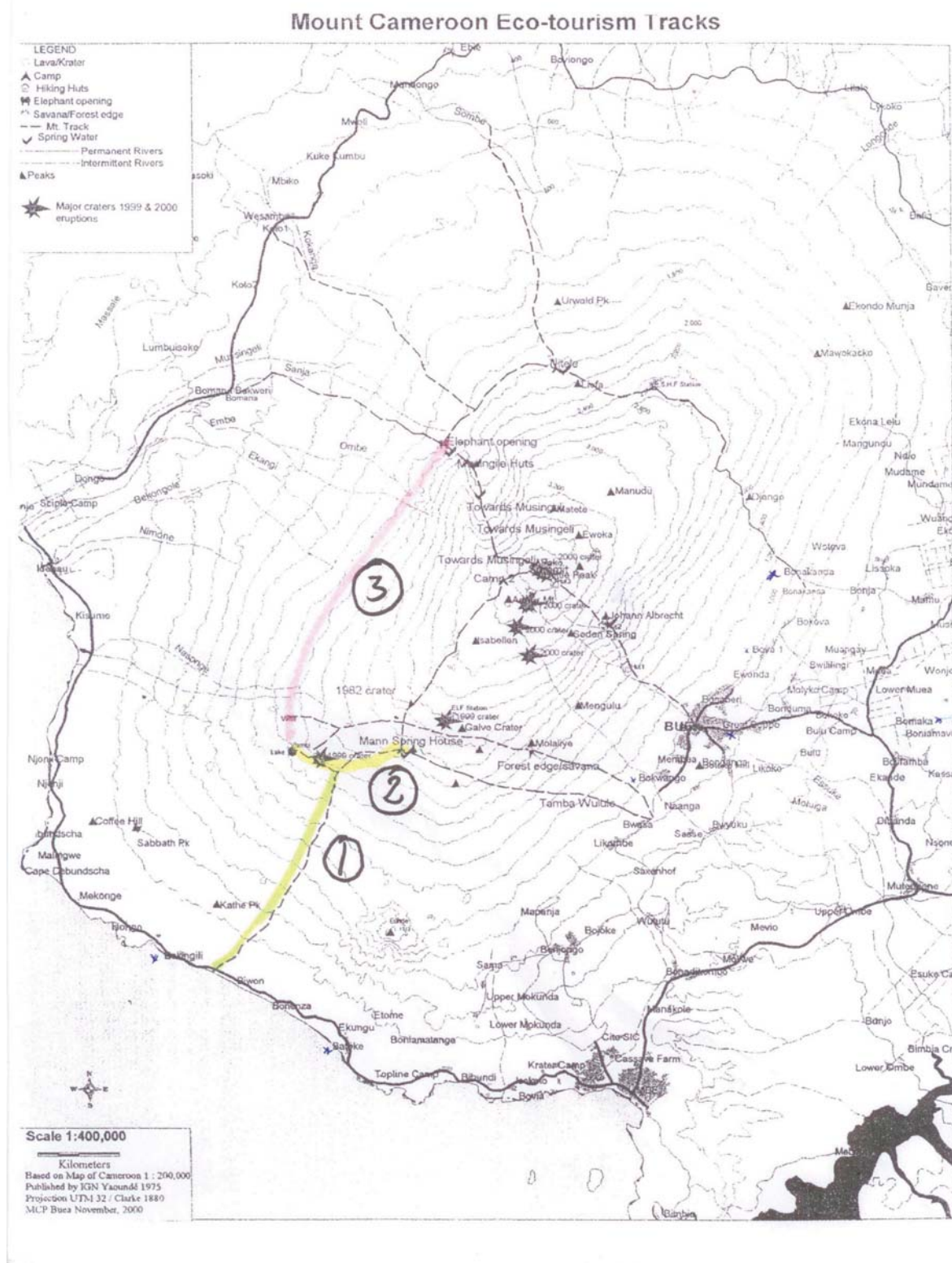
Green - forest cover

Red- Degraded forest

Fig 5: Map of Cameroon showing location of the mount Cameroon region and the distribution of tropical rainforest

Adapted from Woods Hole Research Centre 2010²

² <http://www.whrc.org/mapping/informs/cameroon.html> Accessed 03/02/2010



NB. Ignore the numbers 1, 2 and 3 on the map.

Source: Mt. CEO.

Fig 6: Map of the Mt. Cameroon region, showing ecotourism tracks and villages

3.1.2.1. Climate

This area has two distinct seasons, the very wet season (between June and October) and dry seasons (between November and May). This region is known to be the second wettest place in the world. The south western sides of Mt. Cameroon have a continuous wet rainy season reaching 10,000mm a year (Cape Debundscha) and a tropical climate at lower altitudes. On the other hand, the north and eastern sides of the mountain lie in a relative rain shadow receiving just about 2,000mm per year. In general, the region receives about 3,500mm of rainfall per annum. Temperature in the area varies from an average of 25.5 to 27°C at the base of the mountain to about 32 to 35°C during the hottest months (March and April). However, at the peak, temperatures can be as low as 4°C. Payton (1993), states that the decrease in temperature for each 100m increase in altitude is 0.60°C and that humidity remains at 75-85% due to the marine influence and the incidence of mist and orographic cloud formation. According to Tanyi (1998), the mean annual soil temperature is greater than 22°C, below 1200m due to the descending cold air masses and incidence of cloud around the mountain. The great climatic variation of this region, coupled with factors such as aspect and relief has made it favorable for a diversity of plant and animal types that earns the region its internationally recognized status as a biodiversity 'hot spot' in Cameroon (MINEF, 2002).

3.1.2.2. Soils

The mount Cameroon region has predominantly rich volcanic soils of recent origin (Neba, 1997). These, soils of recent origin are mostly on young volcanic rocks and are fertile. In other parts like the surrounding foothills on the south and south west flanks, it is mostly older Tertiary lava, which is different in composition to the underlying Holocene basalt of Mt. Cameroon (Payton, 1993). Along the coast soils are composed of a mean texture of sandy clay dominated by sand. The north-eastern flank of the mountain is characterized by metamorphic volcanic formations and deep soils, favourable for growth of gregarious flowering plants.

The rich volcanic soils in the area explain the presence of the Agro-Industrial company The Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) in the area. The CDC has taken advantage of the fertile soils and has established vast banana, tea, rubber and palm plantations in the region.

3.1.2.3. Biodiversity

Mt. Cameroon contains high species diversity and endemism in its flora and fauna. Thomas and Cheek, 1992 states that it is one of the hot spots identified in Africa. The region also has an unbroken sequence of vegetation from lowland evergreen and montane forest, highland savannah, mangroves and swamps to sub alpine prairies near its summit. At least 2,300 species of plants in more than 800 genera and 210 families have been recorded. Out of these, 49 species are strictly endemic and 50 near endemic plant species. Of the 49 strictly endemic species, 4 are at the montane grassland, 5 between montane grassland and forest ecotone, 11 at sub-montane and montane forest and 29 at lowland forest of which 17 are newly discovered during the last decade of forest inventory (Cable and Cheek, 1998). *Prunus africana*, which occurs in the montane and sub-montane vegetation type, is the only plant species considered threatened as a result of overexploitation.

The region is also very diverse in fauna with over 370 species recorded. The sub-montane and montane habitats are part of the Cameroon Mountain Endemic Bird Area (EBA). So far, 210 species of birds have been record out of which 8 are threatened and 2 strictly endemic (Mt. Cameroon Francolin (*Francolinus camerunensis*) and the Mt. Cameroon Speirops (*Speirops melanocephalus*)). Large mammals include the Forest Elephant (*Laxodonta africana*). Survey carried out in 2003 indicates a population of 176 individuals (Atanga, 2003). A total of 70 species of butterfly (3 endemic) has already been recorded. The population of Drills (*Mandrillus leucoplaeus*) and Chimps (*Cucopetyeus preussi* and *Cercopithecus erythrotis*) is fast dwindling due to hunting pressure and habitat loss (Tanyi, 1998).

3.1.2.4. Demography

The population is estimated at about 300,000 people of whom two-thirds live in urban and semi-urban areas, while the rest in villages. The settlement pattern forms a closed ring around the foot of the mountain with no permanent settlements on altitudes above 1500m. The people indigenous people in the area are the Bakweri, Bomboko, Balondo and Bakolle (Ekane, 2000). In all the villages, the population is expanding from both natural increase and immigration. These people are predominantly farmers, hunters, pit sawyers, fishermen and traders (Ekane, 2000).

3.1.2.5. Socio-economic activities

Food crop farming is the most important source of livelihood of the population around Mt. Cameroon. The forest as a direct source of income and subsistence through hunting and gathering is of secondary importance to the overall population. Some of the subsistence agricultural products grown in the area are plantains, cocoyam and cassava and contribute more than twice as much as cocoa and coffee to the daily livelihood. However, cocoa remains the main bulk income earner of the area. The CDC (Cameroon Development cooperation) is the only company doing commercial agriculture in the region and has employed many of the indigenes to provide cheap manual labour. Other sources of livelihood and income for rural people in this region include hunting, livestock rearing, petty trading, tapping, timber and fuel wood harvesting, gifts, beekeeping, tourist guiding/porting as well as traditional healing.

3.1.2.6. Culture

The main religion in the area is Christianity. Apart from this, different secret societies do exist. The main ones are the Nganya and the Malle strictly for men. These are recognized by the entire Bakweri custom as a cultural body to unite the villages in the area, prevent and fight witchcraft, discipline and punish defaulters. They also act as an instance to pass judgment over difficult cases and conflicts within the village and between villages (Ekane, 2000). Another secret society exists for women and it is believed that women in this secret society use their powers for peace making and moral upbringing of men and women in the village. Customarily, the main god of the area is called Efasa Moto meaning god of the mountain. He is believed to be the main guide of everyone visiting the mountain and forbids people from harvesting resources in excess when they visit the mountain.

3.1.2.7. Administrative set- up of villages

Each village is headed by a Chief who is highly respected by the people and strongly supported by the traditional council. The Chiefs come to power either by succession or chosen by the people. In the absence of the Chief, the Quarter Head act as interim until a new chief is enthroned. The Chief is also the middle man between his subjects and the state or any organization working in the village as well as an active collaborator of the administration during presidential, legislative and municipal elections.

3.1.2.8. Touristic attractions

Apart from the exceptional fauna and flora, it is the volcano itself, the craters and lava flows of recent eruptions, caves, crater lakes and waterfalls that attract nature loving tourists and mountaineers to the region. The beautiful coastline with black sand beaches and river estuaries offer many possibilities for swimming and boating. This can be combined with the exploration of the rainforest and hiking, wildlife watching, bird watching and a tour of the villages. The Botanical Garden and the Wildlife Center in Limbe are also worthwhile visiting. The town of Buea at with its historical sites and colonial architecture is also very beautiful. The Bakweri people who inhabit this region are also very hospital and have a rich culture which can be very entertaining to visitors. Other attractions in the region include the Bonana Waterfall, Old German lighthouses in Cape Nachtigal and Debundscha, palm oil, tea, banana and rubber plantations³.

3.2. METHODOLOGY

3.2.1. Data collection procedure

Upon arrival in Cameroon, the first week was used in conducting a pilot survey in the villages around the mount Cameroon area. This was to get a general picture of the geography of the area in order to determine which sampling method will be best. The first week was also used to arrange for accommodation, mode of transportation between and around villages and the services of research assistants. Natives of Fako division which is the region in which the mountain is located were chosen as assistants because they knew the area very well and also to facilitate the work because locals could trust and receive them better. GTZ (German development Organisation) and the Mount Cameroon Inter-communal Ecotourism Board (Mt.CEO) were visited to get an overview of what has been done and what was going on in the area. The websites⁴ of these organizations (Mt. CEO and GTZ) were used to get information about their activities.

³ www.mount-cameroon.org

⁴ www.mount-cameroon.org

www.gtz.de accessed 20\11\ 2010

3.2.2. Choosing the different villages

It was difficult to choose which villages to work in but after meeting the manager of GTZ he made me to understand that it was difficult for me to visit all the villages around the Mt. Cameroon area. As he explained, it would be very time consuming given that I had limited time to be in the field. Secondly, the cost would be very high because some of the villages are quite far away with very bad roads and thirdly, not all the villages were involved with ecotourism activities. Thus, I then visited Mt. CEO which is the body currently working with ecotourism in the area to get the list of villages currently involved in ecotourism. There were 15 villages in all. Four of them were eliminated on the basis of distance, cost and the absence of ecotourism activities. I then did random sampling by drawing 5 cards from a box of 11 cards representing each of the remaining villages. The villages selected were Woteva, Bokwango, Bova 1, Bakingili and Bonakanda.

3.2.3. Sources of data

In this work, both primary and secondary sources of data were used because the two generally complement each other and give a better understanding of the subjects of discussion.

3.2.3.1. Primary data

This was collected mainly by the use of structured questionnaires. These questionnaires were administered to different groups of people in 5 villages amongst which were household representatives, NGO administrators, local chiefs, heads of village ecotourism committees and hotel managers. Both open and close ended questions were asked with the room for any additional comments at the end of the interview. Questions were structured to answer issues concerning nature conservation, ecotourism and the benefits locals get from these activities and the consequences for their livelihood. These questionnaires were written in English but administered in Pidgin English commonly used in the villages. A total of 119 questionnaires were administered. Informal discussions with the chiefs, locals and local ecotourism committee representatives were also a valuable source of information.

3.2.3.2. The stratified random sampling technique

In administering questionnaires, the simple random sampling technique was used. In this case there was no map showing the layout of the villages so I tried using Google earth which however, was of little help because the houses were invisible on it for this area. I resorted to

interviewing the household representative in every third house in the village. This was done by simply counting pass two houses from the last house interviewed and then interviewing the household representative in the third. The household representative could be the father, the mother or eldest child in the house. To avoid bias, we made sure that those interviewed were from a particular household by meeting them in their houses. This ensured that all segments of the population were represented-both men and women above 18 years old.

Basic background information of respondents were collected in order to have a better idea of the population characteristics of the different villages. These are as shown below.

Table 3: Distribution of household respondents by village

Village	Number	Percentage of population
Woteva	18	15
Bakingili	21	18
Bokwango	25	21
Bova 1	30	25
Bonakanda	25	21
Total	119	100

Table 4: Sex distribution for each village

Village	Male	Female	Total
Woteva	15	3	18
Bakingili	16	5	21
Bokwango	15	10	25
Bova 1	21	9	30
Bonakanda	20	5	25
Total	87	32	119

The above table shows that there are more male headed households than female headed households.

3.2.3.3. Pretest of questionnaires

Before the questionnaires were administered, I had to make sure that my research assistants were competent enough and could interpret and translate the questionnaires perfectly to those to be interviewed and that the questions conveyed a similar meaning to both research assistants and respondents. So in order to achieve this, I selected two Master Degree students from the University of Buea to assist me. They have had some experience in research during their Bachelor degree and will soon be going out for their own research. The three of us had to administer the first six questionnaires together taking turns. After briefing them on what

message each question is meant to convey, I moved on to administer the first two questionnaires while they watched and listened. Then the next two questionnaires were administered by one of the assistants while I watched and listened, and then the second assistant was given the same opportunity to administer the next. This was satisfactory and successful so we then moved on to administer the questionnaires splitting each village into three distinct zones and each person was in charge of one zone.

3.2.3.4. Direct field observation

My visits to Mt. CEO gave me an insight to the way their activities are run for example with lodging and organization of tours. This also gave me the opportunity to meet one tourist with whom I had an informal discussion. Existing projects in the different villages were also visited to assess the impact of Mt. CEO and GTZ in the villages. I also went round the villages to observe the state of development and how people go about their daily activities and in the process; I had informal talks with the villagers on the different subjects discussed in this work.

3.2.4. Secondary data

Secondary data was based on literature and previous studies done in the study area. The websites of GTZ and Mt. CEO, books, reports and articles written by other researchers in the area were used to get some background information before visiting the field. The libraries of the University of Buea and UMB as well as online databases were also consulted for books, reports and articles relating to biodiversity, conservation, ecotourism and livelihoods.

3.2.5. Problems encountered and solutions

It was a challenge to be accepted to work in the village. These villages, like most rural villages in Cameroon, are very skeptic of strangers. This has been worsened by the fact that other researchers have been to the area, gathered information from them with the promise of better days ahead which they have not seen. Because of this, some respondents either asked for immediate compensation before answering any questions or chased us out of their houses. However, this problem was solved by first meeting the chief of each village, presenting ourselves and our objectives in a way that won their confidence. This was made easier by my research assistants who were natives of two of the villages. In some cases, the chief helped us

to announce to the entire village that some strangers were coming and that we should be well received. This greatly facilitated the research.

Even so, meeting with respondents was a challenge as most of them are farmers and petty traders. Interviews could only be conducted on 'country Sundays' when they do not go to farms or late in the afternoon when they are back from their farms and markets. This presented us with further challenges as it is impolite for a stranger to knock on someone's door late in the evening for interviews. This problem was solved by us being accompanied by the chairman of village ecotourism committee or by a guard sent by the chief.

Another major challenge was to tell if the respondents were telling the whole truth or trying to give me the answers they assume I would like to hear in order to protect the little benefits they are reaping from Mt. CEO. This was challenging also because most often than not, villagers rather hide the truth of their experiences and observations because they want to protect the meager benefits they are reaping from NGO activities and tend to think that giving negative reports although true about the NGO, might cause the NGO to take from them what they are already getting. In order to solve this problem, the purpose of the research was emphasized during the beginning of interviews and follow up questions were asked in the course of interviews to make sure the respondents do not contradict themselves.

Last but not the least, it was difficult to get current information regarding the funding and sources of revenue and income of Mt. CEO which is the main body in charge of ecotourism in the area. This problem was solved by making some educated estimates of potential gross revenues based on the number of tourists who visit the area each year. A short coming of this approach seems to be that the figures provided may be less real than what the true funding, income and sources of revenue was. This will therefore be analysed with caution and impersonation will be used to get more details.

3.2.6. Data analysis

Focus was on the activities of Mt. CEO which is responsible for ecotourism activities in the area and their activities top of which the most important is supposed to be conservation of the forest and wildlife and improvement in the living conditions of the local people. Because of the social dimension of the topic, mostly qualitative analysis was used to present the results because more explanations in word will give better understanding. However, some

quantitative analysis was also done by using frequency distribution tables to present some results.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4. IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS AND LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES IN THE STUDIED COMMUNITIES

This chapter presents the results and discussion from the field. It focuses on how the Mount Cameroon Inter-communal Ecotourism Board (Mt. CEO) is using ecotourism as a tool for biodiversity conservation in the Mt. Cameroon region. The chapter starts by discussing some important characteristics and socio-economic condition of the people in the study area. The chapter also seeks to answer the research questions by discussing how Mt. CEO is working alongside villagers in the different communities to achieve its ultimate goal of protecting the forest and wildlife while meeting the needs of the local people and evaluate their conservation activities. This chapter further discusses how the different stakeholders do perceive ecotourism as a tool for biodiversity conservation and the outcome these have on the environment and the local people as well as conflicts between the different stakeholders.

4.1. HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE LOCAL PEOPLE

4.1.2. Population characteristics

Table 5: Summary distribution of sampled population by age and sex

Age and Sex	18-25yrs	26-40yrs	41-60yrs	61+	Total
Male	19	20	33	15	87
Female	4	8	14	6	32
Total	23	28	47	21	119

The table above shows that there were more males than females represented in every age group of the household survey. Only adults were considered in the survey.

Table 6: Summary of level of education in all 5 villages

Level of education	Primary	Secondary	High school	University	Total
Woteva	15	3	0	0	18
Bakingili	14	3	4	0	21
Bokwango	2	19	1	3	25
Bova 1	20	4	4	2	30
Bonakanda	18	6	0	1	25
Total	69	35	9	6	119

The people in Woteva, Bakingili, Bova1 and Bonakanda have acquired mainly primary school education and only 6 individuals in the total sample have attained university education. Bokwango however has the highest number of secondary school and university graduates. The low level of education in the villages shows that most of the people can only offer unskilled labour.

4.2. SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

4.2.1. Assets of households

Assets in this study comprise family land, labour, NTFP, wildlife, fisheries, capital and rearing of small stock as indicated in the livelihood framework. Type of asset was the same in all the villages except for Bakingili which is the only village with fisheries as an additional asset.

Table 7: Access to assets by households

Assets	Total Number of observation	Total Percentage
Access to land	119	100
Access to NTFP	119	100
Access to capital	23	19
Access to wildlife	13	11
Access to water resources	9	8

*Access to labour is determined by the age structure of the sampled population

As shown in the table above, access to assets vary according to the different types of assets. All the households surveyed, had access to land. Comparable accessibility to land was reported in Kenya and Tanzania (Bahero, 1997). Discussions with the household heads revealed that although they all had land to cultivate, the size of the plots were too small and so they still had difficulties providing for their families. The lands owned were either gotten by cutting down the forest and claiming the land or through inheritance from ancestors.

One hundred percent of the surveyed household depended on the forest for survival. The types of resources harvested were the same for all the surveyed villages. This was mainly NTFP except for a few who are involved in lumbering for commercial purposes and for the construction of houses.

Only 19% of the sampled population indicated that they had access to capital. To build capital, people need cash income that can be accessed. This can be acquired either through loans, credits, or salaries. There are some Common Initiative Groups (CIG) and NGOs in the study area which encourage the local people with suitable agricultural projects by providing them with capital and farm implements in the form of loans. Information gathered from the interviews indicated that few local people have benefited from these projects although most are reluctant to take such loans for fear of the unknown.

Field observation showed that most household consumed bushmeat but only few admitted to having direct access to it. Access to wildlife was comparatively low with just 11% of the sample indicating that they hunt. Most of those who admitted having access to bushmeat said they buy it from hunters with permits to hunt in the community forest and sometimes from poachers.

Access to water resources was recorded only in Bakingili because it lies along the coast. The part of the sea that runs along this village is not protected so the people are allowed to fish. 9 individuals indicated that they fish and the few who did not complained of not having fishing gears.

Access to labour is determined by the size of households and the age of family members. A large household with more members between the ages of 18 and 60 will have a higher labour force than a similar household with most of its member's bellow 18 and over 60. The age group distribution in the sampled population shows that 82% of the respondents were the working age while only 18% formed the elderly and dependent population. Although

members of households bellow 18yrs were not included in this survey, field observations showed that a good number of kids bellow 18yrs contributed substantially to the families' labour force.

Summary

There are many assets in the study area which can produce beneficial outcomes to the local communities. The main assets in the area are land for agriculture and NTFP. Water resources are unique to the Bakingili community. All these resources are important and contribute significantly to the livelihood of local communities but access to some of these resources are limited.

4.2.2. Livelihood strategies in the studied communities

This section discusses the different activities local people undertake to meet up their day to day needs. This will help determine how dependent the people are on the environment for their livelihood and an overview of how the PA can affect their livelihood. According to Scoones (1998), livelihood is the term used to categorize the range and combination of activities and choices that people make in order to achieve their livelihood goals. The resource use, constrains and coping strategy (diversification) are also discussed.

Table 8: Livelihood activities of local people

Activity/ Village	Woteva N=18	Bakingili N=21	Bokwango N=25	Bova 1 N=30	Bonakanda N=25	Total percentage
Agriculture	18	21	25	30	25	100
Collection of NTFP	18	21	25	30	25	100
Hunting	4	3	2	1	1	9
Fishing	0	12	0	0	0	10
Civil servant	1	2	3	0	1	6
Employment in PA/Ecotourism	5	15	11	8	6	38
Off-farm	6	7	4	0	2	16
Others	9	5	5	2	3	24

The table above shows that the top three livelihood activities in all the villages are agriculture (100), collection of NTFP (100), employment in the protected area/ecotourism business (38%). These three activities are the main sources of food and cash. Every household in the study depends on agriculture and the collection of NTFP like Bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*), Eru (*Ricinidendron leudelotii*), Bush pepper (*Piper guineensis*) and the African cherry (*Prunus africana*) for their livelihood. This shows that the local people are very much dependent on their natural resources for survival. Fishing activities takes place only in Bakingili because of its proximity to the coastline and the absence of fishing waters in the other villages. Sixteenth percent of the sampled population are engaged in off-farm activities.. Most of who work as laborers in the CDC plantations. Only 9% of the local people identified themselves as hunters. This is probably due to the restriction on bush meat hunting by Mt. CEO in the PA. Out of the 9% of the local people engaged in hunting only 2 individuals admitted hunting in the PA the others said they only hunt in the community forests. Other livelihood activities include the rearing of animals like pigs, goats and chicken, petty trading and logging. Only 6% of the sample population work as civil servants.

4.2.3. Livelihood constrains and coping strategies

This section looks at the constraints on livelihood activities. According to the livelihood framework, peoples livelihoods are primarily affected by trends and shocks over which they have limited or no control. In this study, questions were asked to know what challenges the people face in providing for their families, how they manage the difficulties and what could be done to improve on their income and consequently their livelihood.

4.2.3.1. Constrains on agriculture and coping strategies

Table 9: Factors limiting agricultural production

Responses	Number of observation	Total percentage
Fertilizer	119	100
Protected area	97	82
Improved seeds	92	77
Insects and pests	52	44
Wildlife damage	48	40
Lack of capital	16	14

As shown in the table above, the main limiting factors to agriculture are the lack of fertilizer, the creation of the protected area, lack of improved seeds, wildlife damage and the lack of capital. All the respondents indicated the lack of fertilizer was the main limiting factor to agricultural production. They explained that it is because fertilizers are too costly and they cannot afford. Most people solved this problem by using home generated manure usually from fowl and pig waste. 82% of respondents said the creation of the PA deprived them of their land or reduced their plot sizes leaving them with very little lands on which they can farm. 77% of the respondents named the lack of improved seeds as a limiting factor. They explained that they know they are good seeds in the market that produce faster and better but they cannot afford because of lack of money. They have no means of obtaining the seeds and are so grateful when NGOs come around once in a while and provide these for them. Otherwise they keep using the old seeds they have and output gets lower and lower every year. Insects and pests was another profound challenge to the farmers. They explained that they have this problem during farming and after harvesting. According to them most of their crops are damaged from pests and diseases even before they start growing due to the lack of pesticides and herbicides. Even after they harvest the little that survived, a good portion of the harvest is still lost to pests and diseases due to the lack of adequate storage facilities. 44% of the sampled population faced this challenge. They only try to mitigate this problem by planting at the right time and harvesting at the right time. The most common way of preserving food crop in this area is by drying under the sun or in bands on roof tops inside the kitchen. Wildlife damage was also a factor limiting agricultural activities in the study area. 40% of farmers complained about animals from the park damaging their crops. These were mostly those who had plots close to the PA and community forests. Their coping strategy is by setting traps around their farms and the setting up of caricatures to scare away animals. The lack of capital was indicated by 14% of the respondents as a limiting factor to agriculture. This is mostly because low agricultural output leaves them with very little to sell in order to build capital. According to respondents, this problem is managed by a local form of banking which is an age old tradition in Cameroon called '*njangi*'. Here, people help each other by contributing equal sums of money within a chosen period (monthly or weekly) to give to one person to invest in one way or the other. Each time money is collected it is given to a different person until everyone benefits. Coping strategies were the same for all villages but varied amongst households.

Table 10: Household responses on possible solutions to agricultural limitation

Responses	Number of observations	Total percentage
Aid from government and NGOs	119	100
Compensation from Mt. CEO	73	61
Education	48	40

As shown in the table above, all the people interviewed did say aid from the government in cash and kind is what they need. 61% indicated that they need compensation from Mt. CEO for the loss of their property because of the national park and 40% said education on modern agricultural techniques and practices is what can solve their problems.

4.2.3.2. Constrains on the collection of NTFP and hunting and coping strategies

Table 11: Factors limiting access to NTFP and hunting

Responses	Number of observations	Total percentage
Protected area	119	100
Population	81	68
Law	22	19

As shown in the table above, all respondents said the main constrain to collecting NTFP and hunting was the PA. This is because they are totally prohibited by the park authorities to harvest from within the PA. Another factor limiting the collection of NTFP and hunting is over population. Although the people are allowed to collect and hunt in the community forests, the growing population in the area means they are more people using the community forests and hunting zones hence some species are hard to fine. The coping strategy used by most households was to buy or borrow when they lack access or can't find what they need. 19% of respondents blamed the law for their plight. This is because certain NTFP like *Prunus africana* and big game are protected by law. Licenses are needed to harvest them and the cost of acquiring these licenses is too expensive for the villagers. Informal discussions revealed

that a few people still go into the protected area to harvest resources while others supplement hunting bushmeat by rearing pigs, fowls and goats for home consumption and for sale.

Table 12: Household responses on possible solution to factors limiting access to NTFP and hunting

Responses	Number of observations	Total percentage
More Community forest	81	68
Employment	72	61
compensation	61	51
Education and Training	17	14

As seen in the table above, 68% of respondents did say the creation of more community process will give them more access, 61% indicated that if they are employed, they can have money to buy in the markets, 51% indicated that compensation because of the creation of the PA is the solution while 14% indicated that education and training is what they think is the solution.

Working in the PA/Ecotourism is also another activity undertaken by people in the mount Cameroon region. How this contributes to their livelihood and they constrains they have will be discussed in detail later on in this chapter.

4.3. LIVELIHOOD DIVERSIFICATION

Most rural households in rural communities do practice diversification. According to Ellis (2006), this depends on risk and seasonality. Most of the households in the study area have different sources of income. All the households are involved in agriculture and the collection of NTFP as the main sources of food and cash but are also involved in other activities such as hunting, fishing, petty trading and the provision of hired labour. Most of these activities vary with season and the essence of diversifying according to people in the study area was to guarantee that they had food/cash during the different seasons. On average, each household performed at least two different activities. Farmers diversified by doing multiple crop farming so that in case of a particular crop failure they at least have some guarantee.

4.4. ECOTOURISM AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN THE MOUNT CAMEROON NATIONAL PARK

4.4.1. Stakeholders in ecotourism and biodiversity conservation

Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.* (2000) define institutional actors or stakeholders as a community, public entity, a group or an individual who organizes itself, takes action to gain social recognition of its own interests and concerns and is willing to assume some tasks and responsibilities for a given natural resource management unit. In this study, depending on the interest groups forest and wildlife were seen as inputs of production, sources of income, areas for recreation, reservoirs of known and unknown genetic resources, or as a means of subsistence. The key stakeholders involved in the conservation of the Mt. Cameroon National park were individuals, groups and institutions that significantly influenced or were important to the success of the project. In this report, influence is defined as the authority that stakeholders have over the project; to control what decisions are made, facilitate its implementation or exert power that affects the management. According to Salam and Noguchi (2005), importance refers to those stakeholders whose problems, needs and interests are priorities of project implementers. However, in this study, even though some of the stakeholders' problems, needs and interests have not been prioritized, they have still been considered important. This applies to the local people who have been affected by the establishment of the PA, but have not received much attention. From the interviews, and informal interviews, the primary stakeholders were identified as the local communities represented by Village Ecotourism Committee (VEC) members and Chiefs, tourists, Mt. CEO and the government through the Ministry of Forest and Fauna (MINFOF) and the Ministry of Tourism (MINTOUR) as well as tour operators. Information gathered on the different stakeholders showed their interest, effect of the project on their interest, how important they were in relation to the project and degree of influence in ecotourism and conservation. Questions were asked to know how the different stakeholders in the local community were selected. The process by which they are selected will give an idea of how transparent and accountable the representatives can be. This is as shown below:

Chief of Bonakanda: Inherited the throne.

Chief of Bova: Selected by the people

Chief of Bakingili: Appointed by the brother who was Prime minister at the time.

Chief of Bokwango: Inherited the throne

Chief of Woteva: Inherited the throne.

Other persons representing the villagers are the Village Ecotourism Committee (VEC) representatives. These are villagers mainly hunters who have been involved with conservation of biodiversity in the Mount Cameroon region when it was still under the control of GTZ. They were then appointed by Mount CEO to represent their villages-one for each village. They also work as guides and porters and participate in meetings organized by Mt. CEO.

4.4.2. The interests, importance and influence of the different stakeholders

A good ecotourism project is one that embodies the local communities and all stakeholders are involved in every aspect of the project. The social and economic considerations of stakeholders, particularly the local communities who rely on these resources for their livelihood are integral in sustaining conservation efforts in every ecotourism destination (Weaver & Halpenny, 2001). This is because these locals have the most to lose if not considered. Hence considering their plight will go a long way to reduce conflicts with conservators. The stakeholders' interest, importance, influence rights and responsibilities have been assessed in order to explore how they contribute to biodiversity conservation.

In Cameroon, forest and wildlife resources are managed by MINFOF while the government participates and regulates tourism activities through MINTOUR represented by a Provincial Delegation of Tourism in every region. In the Mount Cameroon region, all tourism activities use to be regulated by the Fako Tourism Board which unfortunately is now defunct. At the local level, ecotourism activities in the communities are regulated by Chiefs, Village Ecotourism Committee Representatives and Mt. CEO.

Table 13: Stakeholders, their interest, importance and influence in relation to the Mt. Cameroon National park

Stakeholder	Interest	Effect of project on interest	Importance of stakeholder (1=highest, 5=lowest)	Degree of influence over project (1=highest, 5=lowest)
Government	-Conservation -Revenue from ecotourism -Promotion of ecotourism -Increase awareness	+	1	1
	-Local participation	-		
Mt. CEO	-Conservation -Revenue from ecotourism -Employment -increase awareness	+	1	1
	-Rural development -Poverty alleviation	-		
Local community	-Revenue from ecotourism -Rural development -Access to forest and wildlife resources	-	4	5
	-Employment	+		
Tourists	-Attractive destination	+	1	5
Tour operators	Revenue from transportation and lodging	+	5	5

As shown in the table above, not all stakeholders have been equally prioritized by the project implementer (Mt. CEO) and have different degrees of influence in the decision-making process. The stakeholders having high influence in decision-making and high importance regarding prioritization are the government and Mt. CEO. In practice, Mt. CEO is the sole authority to take decisions, but the government departments are to be consulted for approval and they cooperate in terms of having occasional meetings. Tourists are highly prioritized as they influence the financial sustainability of the ecotourism project, but they have low level of influence on decision-making except being able to make suggestions for improvements and

complain if unsatisfied with services rendered. It is important to satisfy the tourists' expectations in order to guarantee business since they have several options. The interests of local people have not been prioritized, and they do not participate in decision making and are therefore less influential. Their participation can therefore be described as passive. The decision-making process is top-down, where the government and Mt. CEO make decisions and impose these on the local people.

4.4.3. Stakeholders, rights, responsibilities and returns

Table 14: The rights, responsibilities and benefits of stakeholders in relation to the PA

Stakeholder	Rights	Responsibility	Returns
Government	-Approval of project -Ownership	-Design policies -Monitor ecotourism activities and PA -Enforce the law -Research -Promote destination -Sanction defaulters	-Revenue from ecotourism -Multiplier effects of ecotourism -Foreign exchange -Rich ecosystem
Mt. CEO	-Management authority. -Exclusion rights -Revenue collection	-Overall leadership -Meet the objectives of conservation -Train staff -Train guards, guides and porters -Organize tours -Community development -Enforce the law -Provide livelihood alternatives -Sensitization -Clear tracks -Collect revenue -Share benefits -Satisfy tourists -Promote destination	-Control -Revenues from ecotourism and donors -Increase in biodiversity.
Local community	-Employment. -Education.	-Stay out of PA -Teach others about conservation -Representatives relay information from Mt. CEO to villagers and Suggest development projects. -Chiefs Settle disputes	-Employment. -Improved environmental education -Recreational benefits. -Gifts from tourists

As seen in the table above, different stakeholders have different rights and responsibilities.

Rights

The government is the owner of the PA and has the right to terminate the activities of Mt. CEO if she thinks the goals of the project are not being realized. The Mt. CEO management has the right to collect revenue from the ecotourism enterprise, and although illegal, has

excluded local people from access and management. Enforcement rights, that Mt. CEO has is essentially to promote local participation and conservation but field finding clearly show that this is being abused. Local people have been deprived of their traditional property and usufruct rights in the area and many oppose the rules implemented by Mt. CEO. Local people have the right to access the PA, only for environmental education or if they are employment to work. Tourists and tour operators have no significant legal rights corresponding to the Mt. Cameroon PA.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Mt. CEO management are to fulfill the initial objectives of the project which are: conservation, ecotourism and community development. It also has the responsibility to provide training for the staff and local people, train guards, guides and porters, organize tours, enforce the law, provide livelihood alternatives, sensitize the public on conservation and the importance of ecotourism, clear tracks in the PA, collect revenue, share benefits from ecotourism, and satisfy tourists' expectations. Both Mt. CEO and the government are responsible for the protection of biodiversity in the park. The Government is responsible for announcements and for providing information on education and extension measures with user groups who have an interest in the park. Tour operators are private entrepreneurs and offer transportation and lodging facilities. The responsibility of the local people is to sensitize each other on conservation and abstain from using resources inside the park. Local people who are employed as guards have the responsibility of going after illegal users and dissuade them from poaching or encroachment while those employed as guides and porters assist and accompany tourists on tours. The local chiefs attend all annual meetings organised by Mt. CEO and are involved in decision making meetings but have limited say. They have no real positions in the park management or ecotourism sector other than that they are chiefs. They are charged with the responsibility of conveying all decisions arrived at in meetings to their people. They decide what development project their village may need but cannot influence the execution of the project. Chiefs also have the right to settle disputes between villagers in their respective villages. Other persons representing the villagers are the Village Ecotourism Committee (VEC) representatives. Like the chiefs, they may make suggesting but their voices are very limited. Mt. CEO is the main bodies in charge of all ecotourism activities in the park to make sure all goals are met. She is responsible to MINFOF and MINTOUR who are responsible for designing laws, enforcing them and monitoring of the

activities of Mt. CEO. It is important to note that, local people have no major role. This is explained in the management strategy applied by mount CEO in the PA discussed below.

Returns

Mt. CEO and the government gain the most from ecotourism activities while very few local people benefit directly through gained employment. Benefits from ecotourism will be explained in detail later in this chapter.

4.5. STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION IN ECOTOURISM AND PA MANAGEMENT

Success in ecotourism can only be guaranteed if the local population are fully involved and committed to the management process. As put by Sayer (2004), community participation is an important ingredient in sustainable management of ecotourism. The participation of communities has therefore been argued as one of the main elements to ensure a successful ecotourism activity meaning that communities are to be involved in the decision making and planning process of using their resources for local development. As described by Cernea (1991), this ensures giving rural people more opportunity to participate effectively in community development. In the participatory process, various stakeholders do not merely play a role as data suppliers or incentives inheritance but contribute incredibly by putting into practice all kinds of actions during the process (Colfer, 2004). This section will therefore discuss how the local people are engaged in the management of ecotourism and the PA. In order to fully understand the management operations of Mt. CEO it is imperative to understand the administrative set up of the board.

4.5.1. Participation in ecotourism management

4.5.1.1. The structure of Mt. CEO

According to the website of Mt. CEO, the structure of the organisation is as follows:

General assembly:

Convened once a year. More than 50 members representing the councils on the slope of Mt. Cameroon, representatives of associations like those of hunters, guides, women groups of tourism guides, representatives of the tourism industry and traditional rulers have as main mission to elect the members of the steering committee, to adopt statutes or reports of activities.

a) Steering committee:

This constantly supervises the activities of the Board. The steering committee defines, orientates its functioning and evaluates its management. Members of this committee are the manager of Mt. CEO, the 6 councils of the involved area, represented by their Mayors, two chiefs in the area and chaired by the Mayor of the Buea Rural Council in whose jurisdiction the park is. Members of the steering committee are also the board of directors charged with designing policies and benefit sharing.

b) Village Ecotourism Committee (VEC):

Mount CEO has created twelve VECs in the mount Cameroon region. At the regional level, the Board of directors determines policy and at local level the VEC are coordinating their own activities like choosing the porters and guides in their respective communities, selecting projects to be developed and representing their people.

At first glance, it might seem like the general assembly composed of representatives of the local people being at the head of the ecotourism board gives local people an important position in decision making. However, this is not the case because the real decision making power lies in the hands of the board of directors who are also mayors. It should be noted that in Cameroon, mayors are politicians voted by the entire municipality covered by their council. As such not just communities involved in ecotourism are responsible for choosing the major, but the entire municipality including major towns in that jurisdiction. In most cases, the rural people form the minority meaning that who becomes major is determined mainly by those out of ecotourism communities. In addition, the present manager of Mt. CEO was not selected by the villagers. Discussion with the staff revealed that he was appointed by GTZ when Mt. CEO was created because he has worked with the project for a long time and is a son of the soil. To make matters worse, the village traditional council, which is an institution set up and recognized in every village has no place in the board. The only true representation of the local people is through the VEC and chiefs and they have very limited powers. Mainly to earmark projects they would like in their communities, organize porters and guides and convey decisions arrived at during meetings to their people. The structure of Mt. CEO clearly shows that local people have very limited voice and little or no participation in decision making when it comes to ecotourism activities in their communities leaving them disgruntled. It is therefore important to assess if the local people are interested in being part of the ecotourism management team and what can be done to enhance their role.

Field results showed that as many as 99 respondents were willing to take part in all kinds of activities in the ecotourism industry. These people were ready to take on any role assigned to them by the managers of ecotourism. Only 20 persons were unwilling to participate in the business. These people were of the opinion that if they could, they will ask Mt. CEO to leave their forest for them to manage. These people feel that their rights are being violated and they are suffering for no reason.

The study also revealed that local people do not know how much the ecotourism office is generating and do not have direct access to revenues generated by the ecotourism industry. All information pertaining to finances are managed by the board of directors and the local people are only informed through their chiefs and VEC representatives. When there is no transparency, there is bound to be conflict and the villagers revenge by illegally exploiting resources in hiding preferably at night to supplement their meager income. In general, the respondents felt that they lack power to own their lands and have no legitimate rights to their own natural resources. A group of young guys I met at Woteva were so mad as to how the forest is being managed. They expressed anger at the fact that the communities do not benefit and that the chiefs represent them poorly. They said chiefs are being corrupted with meager gifts from Mt. CEO and tend not to defend the interest of the community. They also said young people are not involved in the decision making process – mostly the old are those representing the communities at meetings.

Each village has two representatives in the ecotourism board irrespective of the number of inhabitants in each village. In addition, former hunters who now belong to the hunters union also attend general assembly meetings and participate in the management as porters and guides. Statistics on the number of hunters for each village was not available. The hunters I spoke to however, made me to understand that the number of hunters in the hunters union is declining because many of them have not realized any benefits from belonging to the union.

In general, field survey revealed that the community was mainly represented by the chiefs and VECs. These are the people who represent their communities during meetings but have no influence and have the responsibility of conveying decisions arrived at to their people. This therefore local people do not participate in management and decision making.

4.5.1.2. Workers and staff

Mount CEO has a permanent staff of 4; the manager at the top, a Technical adviser, a store accountant/receptionist and an office assistant. Others include about 100 porters and 30 guides/guards that are considered as temporary workers. All the workers are Cameroonians from the local community.

Table 15: Jobs held by villagers in the ecotourism sector

Type of job	Number of observations
Guide	14
Porter	29
Service staff	2
None	58
other	3

As seen in the table above, the type of jobs held by villagers show that they are not in a position to make decisions on the running and use of the park.

4.5.2. Participation in the management of the park

The participatory approach to conservation is known to be one of the most successful ways of managing natural resources. Under the participatory approach, the assumption is that the local community would have more motivation for and knowledge on managing the forest or wildlife, because they live close to it (Brosius *et al.* 1998). It was also believed that it would be easier to achieve conservation goals if local people have an incentive to support protected areas (Hutton & Leader-Williams, 2003). Brockington (2008) while stating that some form of community participation is necessary in natural resource management also argues that establishing grass-root democracies is not sufficient as long as accountability is absent. He further argues that new power structures that the villagers themselves have actively fought for are likely to be stronger and more durable than Western democratic structures imposed on the villagers by well-meaning conservation-and development workers. One particular influential and fairly successful scheme in this regard came to be the CAMPFIRE program in Zimbabwe which began in the late 1980s and has been copied in Eastern and Southern Africa (Osborne, 2000; Bond, 2001).

CAMPFIRE is special in that local communities were effectively handed the responsibility for managing land under communal tenure, and particularly the wildlife resources (Engh, 2011). Government agencies worked hand in hand with the local people and local communities were given the right to make money by selling hunting rights to safari operators, provide ecotourism services and work as guides controlling poaching of wildlife. Local people were also very much involved in decision making, choosing their leaders by themselves in a transparent and democratic manner, participated when matters such as the allocation of land for raising cattle, crop production, wildlife, and other conflicts were discussed. In addition, revenue generated by the project was not sent to the central government but ploughed back into the communities in the form of development projects such as building of schools, supplying water, health care and more. As Child (2006) puts it, this was an effective way of alleviating poverty not only measured in monetary terms, but also by giving people a voice and sense of participation.

The case of the Mt. Cameroon National park however, is much different from the above. The CAMPFIRE example shows that cooperation with the government, guards/guides and community leaders and locals is inevitable to attain success. The staff at Mt. CEO did indicate that they work hand in hand with the state, guards/guides as well as the community leaders to ensure effective conservation and share of benefits. Field findings however revealed that, the local people are not involved in decision making but are rather there to execute what they are told to do. This explains why most of those involved in conservation activities work mainly as guards. The guards are responsible for patrolling the protected area to make sure no one is poaching or logging. If any culprits are caught, they are brought to Mt. CEO and later handed over to the government for punishment. Punishment is usually in form of fines paid to the treasury (of up to 5 million FCFA), imprisonment (3months to 5years) depending on the gravity of the crime and seizing of the good in accordance with the Cameroon law. Capacity building workshops are usually held several times a year to educate the guards on new findings in the field and to improve their skills and also to inform them about changes in the board. These are all efforts by Mt. CEO to involve villagers in PA management.

Table 16: Participation of villagers in the management of the park

Participation	Number of observations
YES	27
NO	92

Table 16 indicates that 27 persons in the sampled population are involved in the management of the park. Those who were involved in the management mostly did so in the capacity of park employees mainly as guides\guards or porters. Well paid positions such as monitoring, control, mapping, inventory etc are not given to villagers partly due to their lack of skills as a result of the low levels of education in the villages. Such jobs are rather given to qualified individuals from other parts of the country or from abroad. These expatriates are not members of the board but are hired when ever their services are needed.

The reason given by men not involved in management or park activities was that they were old and women stressed the fact that park activities was for the men. In addition, most youths said they were not involved because there are many people available to work as porters but the number of tourists are too few, so they have never gotten the chance to be employed while yet others said they is corruption in the process of selecting those to work as porters and guides. They said mostly those who are highly favored by the staff of Mt. CEO and VEC were called up to work when need be.

4.6. MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

4.6.1. Sustainability and funding

The main management challenges according to the manager are lack of adequate funding and logistics. Without adequate funding, the project cannot be sustainable. GTZ has been the main donor to Mt. CEO. Now the organisation has to figure out how to generate its own revenue to cover its running costs and realize small scale projects in the local communities. For the project to be successful, it has to be able to meet its goals without relying on foreign donors.

4.6.2. Waste management

Inadequate handling of waste by different users endangers the biodiversity of the mountain region. Mount CEO manages its waste by asking tourists and porters to collect all solid or non-organic waste generated in the course of a trip and bring to the office. This is then assembled and handed over to the Buea rural council to manage it. The hotels equally collect their waste and it is being picked up by the Buea rural council as well for disposal. The problem here is that some tourists and porters do not take the collection of solid waste seriously and pollute the park in the course of their trip. This is very dangerous to the entire ecosystem and cost Mt. CEO a lot of money to clean up the mess.

4.6.3. Developing new tour tracks

As the number of visiting tourists is increasing yearly, and the actual infrastructure of the mountain is in a poor condition, more and improved facilities for the hiking and camping become necessary such as permanent huts, drinkable water and alternative energy sources and more trails have to be developed.

4.6.4. Bush fires

More still needs to be done to sensitize the local people on the damaging effects of bush fires which are as a result of non sustainable farming practices like slash and burn. Most often fires started on farms close the PA enters the park and causes a lot of damage to biodiversity.

4.7. STAKEHOLDERS AWARENESS, VIEWS AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS PA AND ECOTOURISM

In order to achieve the goals of conservation and ecotourism, it is important that all stakeholders understand the objectives of ecotourism and work within the framework of the project. This section discusses the local peoples understanding of ecotourism and conservation.

4.7.1. Awareness

Community based ecotourism according to Mowforth and Munt (2003) has the primary objective of creating an environment where people can appreciate nature and culture, whilst promoting conservation objectives. This according to them brings stakeholders together to

support sustainable development and reduce the negative impact of eco-tourists. This ensure active role for the community involved to maximize benefit and local involvement. This can only be achieved based on the views of the communities, the knowledge they have and their commitment to the project. The question now is how this relates to the study area.

Knowing how many of the respondents are aware of the existence of the park, its activities and visit the park to see how it operates will give us a better understanding of the people's views and perception of ecotourism and the PA. To get this information respondents were asked if they know the park existed, had knowledge of ecotourism activities, if they visit the park and why they visit the park.

Table 17: Awareness of the existence of the protected area, ecotourism activities and visits to the site

Response	Aware of park existence	Number visiting the park
Yes	111	18
No	8	101

Table 17 shows that most of the villagers are aware of the presence of a protected area and its boundaries. 111 respondents could tell that there is the existence of the park and know where the boundaries are. This includes all the chiefs, village ecotourism committee members, tour operators, NGO manager and staffs, while just 8 respondents in the sampled population are unaware. On the other hand only 18 respondents indicated that they have visited the park at least once compared to 101 respondents who said they do not.

Table 18: Reasons for visiting the park by villagers

Reason	Number of observations
Logging	0
Hunting	2
Farming	0
Clear tracks	5
Harvest NTFP	4
Bee farming	3
Fuel	7
Others	6

Table 18 shows that the quest for fuel wood is the main reason why people go to the park followed by clearing of tracks and the need to harvest non timber products and then bee farming. This means that there are still people dependent on park resources although. It should be noted however, that logging and agriculture is completely absent within the park. 6 respondents indicated that they had other reasons to visit the park amongst which was site seeing and for spiritual rituals during special occasions and pole collection.

It should be recalled that 111 people indicated that they knew about the presence of a national park in their community. However, only 18 indicated that they do visit the park yet the above table indicates that 27 people visit the park for various reasons. This irregularity in the answers of respondents indicates that some degree of forest exploitation is still taking place in the forest but the people do not want to own up to it. The poor number of visitors to the park from the villages was a common phenomenon in all five villages visited. From field observation and interviews, I realized that only those employed either in the park or ecotourism business openly admitted to visiting the park and usually when they are on duty. Others visit the park only when they are desperate and need to harvest some of the resources illegally that is why we have more people indicating they use resources from the forest than those who admit to visiting the park. On the other hand, a majority of the villagers have never visited the park since its creation because they say, they have no role to play and that they have nothing to gain by visiting the park.

4.7.2. Views and perceptions towards the park

According to the Mt. CEO website, the main reason why the park was created was for fauna and flora conservation, ecotourism and community development. Mt. CEO argues that many plant and animal species are almost extinct, many endemic and more are endangered. Without conservation, these will eventually go extinct and this could spell disaster for the entire ecosystem hence the need for conservation. Mt. CEO therefore advocates the livelihood and participatory approaches to conservation which holds that there is need to protect the natural environment and improve the lives of local people. Field research also showed that the local people do understand the concept of conservation and benefits that come with it but a few still do not (see table 19). Following my discussion with the staff of Mt. CEO, their main focus is on plant and wildlife protection in general. The main plant of interest amongst others is the African Cherry (*Prunus africana*) which is fast depleting. This is a very valuable medicinal plant that for the past 35 years has been used in the treatment of prostatic hyperplasia and other disorders (Stewart, 2003).

Table 19: Local peoples view and perception on designating the park/protected

Village/Reason	Conservation	Money to government	Community development	Improve standard of living	Don't know	Others
Woteva N=18	11	2	8	7	1	2
Bakingili N=21	14	2	12	8	2	1
Bokwango N=25	15	1	13	9	1	3
Bova 1 N=30	21	4	19	12	3	2
Bonakanda N=25	16	2	11	10	1	1
Total N=119	77	11	63	46	8	9

Table 19 shows that according to the respondents, the top three reasons why the park was created are for conservation, community development and improved standards of living respectively and this is in line with Mt. CEO's objectives of designating the protected area as indicated on their website. In total, 77 respondents said conservation was the reason for designating the park, 63 respondents gave community development as reasons for designating the park and 46 respondents indicated that improving their standards of living was the reason for conservation, 11 respondents said it is to generate government revenue, and 8 respondents

gave other reasons such as politics, tradition and more as reasons why the park was created. The high numbers for conservation, livelihood and community development means that the locals are quite aware of the reasons why the park was created. However, it should be noted that there are still some people in the villages who have no clue as to why the park was created. The figures are 1, 2, 1, 3 and 1 for Woteva, Bakingili, Bokwango, Bova 1 and Bonakanda respectively.

4.7.3. Views and perceptions of ecotourism

4.7.3.1. Views of ecotourism

In order to understand the tourism operations of Mt. CEO, it is vital to understand its concept of ecotourism and assess if the local people really get it. In order to evaluate this, Mt. CEO was simply asked to define ecotourism and the locals were also asked to define what they think ecotourism is and both views were compared.

According to the manager of Mt. CEO, sustainable ecotourism is based on three principles:

1. Environmental and socio-cultural compatibility. Respecting and protecting the environment and the culture of the host communities as well as meeting the tourist's needs
2. Creation of financial/economic benefits. Raising benefits for local communities and ensuring reinvestment in infrastructure and wildlife management, contribute to poverty alleviation by offering additional income to the population.
3. Creation of environmental and cultural awareness by exchanging cultural experiences and promoting biodiversity conservation.

The above principles underlying Mt. CEO's definition of ecotourism are credible as it takes into consideration all the major factors underlying true ecotourism. But is this what the villagers also perceive of ecotourism?

Table 20: Definition of Ecotourism by villagers

Key phrase	Number of observations
An organisation managing tourists	6
Visits to the mountain by foreigners and nationals	62
Protecting plants and animals	19
Enjoying nature	18
Others	7
Dont Know	7

Table 20 indicates that the villagers do not have a comprehensive notion of what ecotourism is all about. 62 respondents think that ecotourism is about visits to the mountain by people who can afford to; while another 18 think it is all about enjoying nature. However, a meager 19 do think that it is about protecting plants and animals. It should be noted also that, 7 persons had no clue as to what ecotourism is all about. Although the villagers did not fully understand the concept of ecotourism, the questionnaires revealed that they are all aware that at the end of the day, ecotourism is suppose to improve their lives not make them miserable. It is therefore necessary for Mt. CEO to do more in the area of sensitization and educate the local people to fully understand the concept of ecotourism and Mt. CEO also needs to live up to its creed. Whether or not Mt. CEO is practicing what it advocates will be discussed later in this chapter.

In general, the most used definition of ecotourism used today is perhaps that of Martha Honey:

“Ecotourism is travel to fragile, pristine and usually protected areas that strive to be low impact and (usually) small scale. It helps educate the traveler; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities; and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights (Honey, 1999)”.

4.7.3.2. Perceptions of ecotourism

The objective of ecotourism according to Mt. CEO is to develop and promote ecotourism as an instrument for biodiversity conservation in the Mount Cameroon Region and the improvement of the livelihood of the local population. Cameroon is Africa miniature and ecotourism is a way of selling this to the world and plough back the profits into the community. In principle this is true but the reality as seen in the field is different. Most of the villagers are rather disgruntled because they are not getting the expected benefits from the tourism business. They complain of not having enough from tourism activities to sustain their families.

Comparing the perception of ecotourism between the villages shows that there is not so much difference in the views of the people in the different villages. However, the opinions of individuals are different on the purpose of the ecotourism industry. The respondents believe that ecotourism was introduced into the area for a combination of different reasons and not just one. For individuals who are benefitting both directly by gained employment and indirectly by setting up small businesses benefitting from ecotourism operations, they truly believe that the purpose of the ecotourism operation is to generate money for individuals and the community while those who do not benefit from ecotourism activities think they have been manipulated and the government and Mt. CEO is using their land to enrich themselves. Compared to the CAMPFIRE project, the indigenes of the Mt. Cameroon region can be understandably angry at the government for depriving them of their resources. Unlike in the CAMPFIRE case where no money was sent to the central government but used locally, in the Mt. Cameroon region, the communities and indigenes only get 15% of all revenue generated. This is not enough to make up for the sacrifices the local people have made in favour of conservation and ecotourism. As such indigenes rather see ecotourism as a threat to their livelihood. On the other hand some still think ecotourism is generating money for real but it is only enjoyed by a few because of corruption that plagues the benefit sharing system of Mount CEO. The villagers lack confidence in the benefit sharing scheme of Mt. CEO because they are not adequately represented in the board. Apart from the chiefs, most of those representing the villagers are handpicked by Mt. CEO. Selection of leaders is not always done democratically like in the case of the CAMPFIRE. Nevertheless, in all the villages, the respondents do believe that ecotourism would be beneficial if individuals in all the villages are treated equally that is, given equal opportunities in the ecotourism industry. This however, is unrealistic as the ecotourism industry is not the means to end the poverty that is in this

region. It can only help to reduce the problem because the entire community cannot be employed in the ecotourism industry. The industry can only hire very limited number of staff. Other alternative forms of livelihood need to be developed and financed for ecotourism benefits to trickle down to all.

This means therefore that, the goals of ecotourism need to be addressed in the different communities so that the villagers can get a better understanding. People have different views about the purpose of ecotourism basically expecting immediate and enormous benefits. This might be because of under sensitization or wrong information from advocates. According to Butcher (2007), reasons behind ecotourism operations and projects must be explained the local communities and those involved must make sure they understand. Local people must be educated on the importance of protecting the natural environment as this will help protect the environment and increase respect for nature. However, the livelihood of local people needs to be top on the agenda for any ecotourism or conservation venture to be successful. The absence of clear objectives and poor sensitization of the people will only fuel conflict and less participation of the villagers.

4.8. INCOME FROM ECOTOURISM AND THE BENEFIT SHARING MECHANISM

The main source of income for Mt. CEO is from ecotourism and international donors like DED (German Development Service) and the former GTZ. Other sources of income for the organisation consist of the sale of information material/articles and the hiring of camping equipment and rents it gets from a guest house it owns. Mt. CEO, offers one to three days tours and tourists are charged as follows:

NB (1USD = 500FCFA Approximately)

A one day tour cost 15.000FCFA

A two day tour cost 36.500FCFA

A three day tour cost 58.500FCFA

Rent per night at the guest house cost 5.000FCFA

Both foreigners and nationals have the same rates.

Financial records of Mt. CEO were not available. However, according to the benefit sharing scheme of Mt. CEO, of all the money ecotourism generates, the Ministry of Tourism gets 3%, the Buea Rural Council gets 5%, 15% is allocated and shared to all the 15 villages working with Mt. CEO (salary of porters, guides and the rest goes to the stakeholders fund - the stakeholders fund in this case refers to the development fund), and Mt. CEO gets 77% to cover its running cost (management and monitoring, office stationary, salary of staff, electricity and water bill and more. It should be noted that nothing has been allocated for direct investment into the PA e.g. research funds.

Table 21: Tourist statistics and benefit to villages in the Mount Cameroon region

Year	Number of tourists	Stakeholders fund (FCFA)	Guides and porters (FCFA)	Total (FCFA)
1998-1999	72	414.000	1.006.000	1.420.000
1999-2000	205	994.000	2.634.000	3.628.000
2000-2001	322	2.068.000	4.125.000	6.193.000
2001-2002	338	1.517.500	4.056.000	5.573.500
2002-2003	692	4.148.675	7.951.500	12.100.175
2003-2004	760	4.398.000	9.603.000	14.001.000
2004-2005	885	5.130.000	10.709.000	15.839.000
2005-2006	856	5.176.000	11.643.000	16.819.000
2006-2007	1.286	6.685.000	15.498.000	22.183.000
2007-2008	1.046	6.177.000	14.638.000	20.815.000
Total	6.462	36.708.175	81.863.500	118.571.675

Source: Mount CEO

Table 21 shows that the number of tourists visiting Mount Cameroon is fairly stable and on the increase. The number of tourists as well as income generated rose steadily from 1999-2005 then dropped in 2006, rose in 2007 then dropped again in 2008. The fluctuation in prices is probably caused by poor marketing.

It should be noted that in the above table, total sum generated by Mt. CEO for each year is not shown, the running cost of the office, amount paid to the ministry and council are equally not shown. Only the amounts that went into the stakeholders fund and amount used in paying guides and porters are shown. The question then is why? I was simply told the data is not

available. However, I was made to understand that Mt. CEO is operating at a loss as most often staffs go without pay for several months and the office lack necessary office equipments. The manager said despite meagre amount generated they do their best to share proceeds fairly amongst stakeholders. The lack of up to date financial records of course shows the lack of transparency in the activities of Mt. CEO because it is easy to conclude that they are hiding something.

The staff of Mt. CEO indicated that, because of the little income generated by ecotourism, it is not possible to carry out projects in all the villages at the same time; such villages benefit in turns. This means that a project is designed and carried out in one village and only when this project is completed do they start a project in another village. Field survey showed that some projects have been realised in different villages with money from the stakeholder's fund. These include the Mepanja village pipe born water, benches to the technical college in Bova, village community halls in Woteva estimated at 500.000FCFA, and subvention given to Wonganjo and Bokwango for electricity and pipe born water respectively estimated at a 1.000.000FCFA. In total only 5 out of 15 villages in the region have had some kind of community over the past 12 years although statistics show that a lot of money is being saved in the stakeholders fund each year? If according to the Mt. CEO statistics, up to 36.708.175FCfA have been realised in the stakeholders fund but feasible projects in villages are estimated at approximately 2.000.000FCFA, it is therefore obvious that there is some form of mismanagement or embezzlement taking place as these funds cannot be accounted for. At this pace, it will take forever for some communities to ever realise any benefits.

In order to have an approximate amount of what Mt. CEO might be generating in a given year, a guided calculation will be discussed below based on:

- The number of tourists received each year,
- The cost of visiting the park as provided by Mt. CEO and
- Given that the tourists stay for an average of 3days as it is the case in most countries. -Mt. CEO does not own hotels and has no partnership with hotels so income generated in the form of hotel bills will not be included.

Table 22: Estimates of revenue generated by Mt. CEO

Year	Number of tourists	Estimated revenue generated (FCFA)
1998-1999	72	4.212.000
1999-2000	205	11.992.500
2000-2001	322	18.837.000
2001-2002	338	19.773.000
2002-2003	692	40.482.000
2003-2004	760	44.460.000
2004-2005	885	51.772.500
2005-2006	856	50.076.000
2006-2007	1.286	75.231.000
2007-2008	1.046	61.191.000
Total	6.462	378.027.000

The table above shows an estimate of what Mt. CEO is receiving strictly as park fees. Estimates of what she receives from foreign donors, the little guest house, and sale of articles and hiring of equipments is not known. If we take the year 1998/1999 for example we see that Mt. CEO generates an estimated 4.212.000FCFA (table 22). Given that 15% of its revenue is spent on community development and payment of guides and porters that will be 631.800FCFA which is less than 1.420.000FCFA indicated on table 21 for the same purpose. This applies to every other year. This amount is assumed to be completed by money from donors and shows that Mt. CEO is still heavily dependent on donors. The rate of dependence cannot be calculated because records on donations or support made by foreign donors and partners are not available. What is evident however is that 77% of all revenue is a lot to be used as running cost compared to 15% that is allocated for salaries to porters and guides as well as development of the community? Because the communities are not getting enough for subsistence and development of their community, the government should refrain from getting money from ecotourism in this region so that a lot more can be put into the development of the communities.

4.9. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL PEOPLE AND PROTECTED AREAS

4.9.1. Effect of protected area on households

Given that the local people do have a good understanding of why the park was designated, this section seeks to explain the effects the park has had on the lives of the people. As seen on the website of Mt. CEO⁵, one of the main reasons why the park was created was to improve the lives of the villagers. This section will assess the achievements and challenges in meeting this goal. I will also discuss the rights of local people in using forest resources according to the Cameroon forestry law and the types of benefits the people actually get.

Table 23: Effect of protected area on households by village and gender

Village	Sex	Positive	Negative	No impact
Woteva N=18	Male	3	12	0
	Female	0	3	0
Bakingili N=21	Male	2	12	2
	Female	0	4	1
Bokwango N=25	Male	4	6	5
	Female	1	8	1
Bova 1 N=30	Male	6	12	3
	Female	2	5	2
Bonakanda N=25	Male	7	11	2
	Female	1	3	1
Total N=119		26	76	17

Table 23 shows that in every village a majority of the population is not benefiting from the creation of the national park. It can be seen that a significant portion of the population in each village is experiencing a negative impact in their lives as a result of the creation of the park and a substantial 17 respondents said they have experienced no impact at all. In total 26 persons in the sample said they have been impacted in a positive way compared to 73 persons who said they have been impacted negatively. The above results therefore contradict the rosy

⁵ www.mount-cameroon.org accessed 18\02\2011

picture Mt. CEO is painting as supposed impact of conservation in the villages. The table also shows that in every village, the men are hit the hardest except for Bokwango where we have more females than male experiencing a negative impact. Of the 27 women interviewed, only 4 of them indicated that the PA has impacted them positively.

More men were registered in this sample because typically, men are household heads in the villages, thus there were more men interviewed than women. Men in this villages suffer because prior to protecting the area, they use to hunt, farm, harvest both timber and non-timber forest products for home consumption and for sale to cater for their families. The few men who claim positive impacts are those who have got temporal or seasonal jobs in the park or whose kids or husband have been employed a porter or guide. The problem mostly faced by women in this area is the lack of fuel wood, access to NTFP and farm land which prior to the creation of the park, was very easy to get. The situation of women in Bokwango is made worse because they are quite a distance from the forest making it more difficult to illegally harvest firewood from the forest and walk all the way home without being discovered and very close to the city of Buea where the cost of living is very high and urban development has made it difficult and expensive to acquire farm land. Not providing alternative fuel options for these women is taking a toll on their lives as they now have to use the meager income they earn to finance more expensive fuel options. The overall impact of the PA households is negative as most household can barely provide for their families. The following paragraph will discuss what Mt. CEO might be doing wrong and the reason for the poor remarks from the villagers.

4.9.2. Reason for the negative effect of protected area on household

The existence of pluralism is very common in most countries in sub Saharan-Africa where what is actually practiced is different from what is stipulated in the law (Benjaminsen, 1997; Berge *et al.*, 2005; Diaw, 2005). Article 8 of the 1994 Cameroon forestry law recognises customary rights to the local people to exploit forest resources only for household consumption (CED *et al.*, 2003). The article states that:

- i. Every inhabitant of the forestry zone is entitled to usage rights
- ii. Protected species alone are in principle excluded from the application of usage rights.

- iii. Products taken in accordance with usage rights, must be destined for personal use, all commercial use is therefore prohibited.

The above article in the law is in line with the IUCN objectives of creating a national park. However, contrary to this law, answers from respondents revealed that Mt. CEO practices a fortress approach to conservation where no one is allowed to use any resource within the park. Even though such an approach dominated the colonial periods and up to about the 1980s with limited results; it has remained a frequently used practice in Africa also today (Veldeld 2002; Hutton *et al.* 2005). Hutton *et al.* (2005) refers to recent studies and reports that argue that strictly protected areas are the only option to preserve African forest primates, and that human presence in tropical forests are not compatible with conserving biological diversity. In the case of Cameroon this may have improved conservation as both the staff of Mt. CEO and villagers testify that the populations of most threatened species have increased. This claim however, cannot be verified as there are no up to date statistics on the populations of species. What is evident however is that the impact of this approach on the local people whose livelihood is tied to the forest has been greatly compromised.

The question then is how does Mt. CEO an NGO manage to break the law and make life miserable for so many people get away with it? The reason is because the government and policy makers in Cameroons tourism sector do not seem to follow the law either. There are no field workers on the ground directly representing the government to monitor the activities of Mt. CEO and report to the state. This is evident as the Fako tourism board which is the government body responsible for regulating all tourism activities in the region is now closed. Field observations and discussions revealed that in this region, the only information on which ecotourism and conservation policies are build on is from Mt. CEO. Because the government only relies on information provided by Mt. CEO, they tend to buy the rosy picture painted by Mt. CEO about its activities which are not totally true and seem to be far from what is actually happening in the field. The local people have very little or no say in decision making and their voice do not seem to be heard.

Mt. CEO in its defence to the above description states that hunting in the park is restricted not prohibited and that the sustainable harvesting of *Prunus africana* and wildlife is allowed. They further explained that at the moment, the park is still considered to be too fragile to allow for unrestricted exploitation but some domestic hunting is taking place as provided by law and only those who belong to the hunters union are allowed to hunt in the hunting zones.

Giving hunting rights only to hunters in a rule put in place by Mt. CEO in violation of the Cameroon law where traditional hunting is allowed. Every villager ought to have access and use forest resources for domestic purposes. It should be noted that the hunters union referred to in this study are actually former hunters who have been ‘converted’ to give up hunting and rather work as guides and porters to earn a living. Nevertheless, because only very few people (about 100 porters and 30 guides in all 15 villages in the study area) largely men belong to the hunters union, many are left out especially the women with no access to forests resources. According to Mt. CEO this problem has been addressed by the creation of a community forest where all villagers are allowed to harvest resources for domestic use. However, most of the villagers have no idea about the existence of such a forest or part of the forest which is allowed for use and the few who are aware of its existence did say access and use of resources in the community forest is still very tight, controlled by Mt. CEO and with very few people benefiting from it - mainly the hunters still. Mt. CEO further explained that they are the ones in the field and know the reality better than the law makers who only sit in their offices and write down what they think should be done. Thus, it is their belief that the park is at present, being managed in the best possible way for the benefit of the environment and the people. At the moment, it seems the government has allowed Mt. CEO to carry on with its activities because they believe the people are not to complain because they have been given community forests where they can exploit resources sustainably for subsistence. In addition, the state believes conserving the park area will only generate money to better the lives of the local people and so Mt. CEO is working for the good of the communities. Whether or not Mt. CEO is actually working for the good of the communities as perceived by the state will be discussed later in this chapter.

It should be noted that those who said the park has impacted them positively, rather reap indirect benefits from the park. These are people who have been lucky to get jobs as guards, clearing foot paths in the park, working as guides or porters. This means that the positive impacts experienced by this group of people is not permanent but seasonal and not guaranteed since they are called upon to work only when their services are needed predominantly during the tourism season. Another group of people who said the park has impacted them positively are those who are members of the Mount Cameroon *Prunus* Management Common Initiative Group (MOCAP-CIG). This is a group of *Prunus* harvesters recognised by PLANTECAM which is the company in charge of *Prunus* harvesting in Cameroon. Discussion with Chiefs

revealed PLANTECAM has created jobs and pays the workers good money and have also contributed greatly in community development such as the construction of community halls and provision of pipe born water.

4.9.3. Effect of protected area on the communities

According to the manager of Mt. CEO, there was no displacement of settlement when the park was created. However, many farmers lost their livelihood as farming is the main income generating activity in the area. Nevertheless, ecotourism has offered alternative forms of livelihood and the communities have adapted to the change. Illegal hunting has been drastically reduced by training the hunters and employing them as guides in the ecotourism sector and guards in the protected areas. In general the communities have benefitted from employment as most of the youths are hired as porters and guides too. He also added that many petit businesses like small restaurants, hotels the sale of handicrafts and more have also generated income for a lot of people in the communities. Discussion with villagers did reveal however that for the most part the community as well as individuals do not benefit much directly from the park but through ecotourism activities where some alternative forms of livelihood are available but still insufficient.

4.9.4. Effect of local people on protected area

Local people are not just victims of biodiversity loss but also have negative effects on protected areas. At the local level, people are constantly in quest for better standards of living. They would like to have access to forests and wildlife resources especially fuel wood and bush meat. Nevertheless, with the creation of PA and fortress approach to conservation, local people feel that everything has been taken away from them. They therefore have no choice rather than to practice illegal activities when they are in need. Such an attitude is not tolerated by the conservationists and strains the relationship between the park managers and local people. Local people threaten the park by various uncontrolled means like poaching, fuel wood, thatch and pole collection (See table 18). Although these unauthorised exploitations were practiced by relatively few individuals, there is the possibility that the number would rise if the issue is not addressed.

4.10. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL PEOPLE AND ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES

According to Mt. CEO, there has been a positive relationship with the local people so far. It has created jobs for many villagers. For example they claim to have many porters and guides making a lot of money from tourists or ecotourism activities. Other income generating activities linked to tourism is the selling of craft, cultural display and the selling of local food. This assertion however, differs from the information gathered from the household survey where responses indicated that very few do benefit and even then, the benefits are insufficient to sustain their families. This section therefore takes a look at both the positive and negative effects of the ecotourism business in the villages under the management of Mt. CEO since 1999. I will look at the effects on the environment, economy, social and cultural spheres of the community. The main goal of this section will be to highlight the positive and negative impact of ecotourism in the communities and the environment since this is one of the main goals of Mt. CEO.

The core benefit of ecotourism is how it provides resource access and sustains these resources to meet the fundamental goals of ecotourism (Butcher, 2007). According to Dowling (2001), assessing the positive effects of ecotourism should not be estimated and restricted to costs and benefits for specific destinations, but rather entering into a complex view with local people about their own perception and view need to be considered. Around the Mount Cameroon area, benefits from ecotourism are felt at two levels. That is at the individual levels through direct and indirect employment and at the community level through the creation of projects that can benefit the entire community. In assessing the effects of ecotourism, the number of people benefiting and how these benefits are distributed across gender and communities as well as the percentage of income raised by ecotourism activities need to be considered.

At the moment the negative effects of ecotourism on households is enormous as shown in the table below.

Table 24: Effect of ecotourism on households

Impact	Woteva N=18	Bakingili N=21	Bokwango N=25	Bova1 N=30	Bonakanda N=25	Total N=119
Possitive	2	4	3	4	5	18
Negative	11	12	7	13	9	52
None	5	5	15	13	11	49

Table 24 indicates that ecotourism is not beneficial to the above villages. In Woteva and Bakingili, 11 and 12 respondents respectively indicated that they are having a negative impact of ecotourism in their lives while in Bokwango 7 respondents indicated having negative impact of ecotourism in their lives. In general, just 18 respondents in the sampled population is benefiting from ecotourism activities, 52 respondents, suffering from the introduction of ecotourism in the area and 49 respondents are having no impact of ecotourism on their lives.

Although the above statistics show that about 85% of the population sampled are at the disadvantage when it comes to ecotourism practices in the area, further questioning deeply contrast the above figures. This is because when the respondents were asked what benefits they get from the practice of ecotourism in their communities, a total of 69 (58%) respondents indicated that they were getting some kind of benefit as a result of the introduction of ecotourism in the area (See table 26 below). The reason however, why they said they were not benefitting was because the benefit according to them was minimal or insignificant and could not be considered because of its limited effects on their standards of living. For example one respondent said, ‘I do not get anything but at least, my son has a holiday job’.

Informal discussion with interviewees revealed that they expected ecotourism to take care of all their problems. They thought it was going to bring them 100% employment literally, and they will be able to make money enough to cater for all their problems. Unfortunately, their expectations were beyond the means of the project.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that there is a huge discrepancy between what the villagers think they have benefitted and what Mount Cameroon claims they have benefitted. Following my interview with the staff of Mount CEO, they explained that the locals have benefitted enormously by being employed in the industry and many more indirectly through petit trading such as the sale of crafts, display of culture to tourists in the form of entertainment for pay,

restaurants, improved agriculture and more. They further explained that some communities have benefitted from the building of a community hall, pipe born water and bee farms and that the locals were very pleased with the operations of Mt. CEO. This is not true as a gross 85% of respondents said they have not benefitted or are not satisfied with what they get.

Table 25: Effect of ecotourism by sex

Impact	Sex	Woteva N=18	Bakingili N=21	Bokwango N=25	Bova1 N=30	Bonakanda N=25	Total N=119
Positive	Male	2	3	2	4	5	16
	Female	0	1	1	0	0	2
Negative	Male	11	10	5	11	7	44
	Female	0	2	2	2	2	8
None	Male	2	3	8	6	8	27
	Female	3	2	7	7	3	22

From the above figure, it can be seen that ecotourism is not beneficial to the communities involved and that in total, men suffer the most from ecotourism activities with 16 persons profiting while 44 are experiencing a negative impact. On the other hand, just 2 of the women are profiting while 8 females are experiencing a negative impact. 27 males and 22 females did also indicate that ecotourism has not affected them in any way.

4.10.1. Local people's benefits from ecotourism

The positive effects of ecotourism in many regards have been the kind of benefits it provides to locals, communities and the rest of the world (Dowling, 2001). Whether people benefit from ecotourism or not actually depend on what they consider and value as benefit. Household benefits can be classified into direct and indirect benefits. These amongst others will include money from employment, the use of resources for subsistence and more. From my findings, most people considered money as the only form of benefit from ecotourism and as such did not appreciate other kinds of benefits derived. It was however obvious from interviews and informal discussions that if the local people are allowed to use park resources

to complement the little income they get, benefits from ecotourism would be much more appreciated.

The table below shows that about 42% of the population indicated that they have not benefited either directly or indirectly from ecotourism activities meaning about 58% of the population has enjoyed some kind of benefit from ecotourism activities. Out of this number, about 6% indicated that the benefit has been in the form of community development for example a community hall or employment to youths. Another 34.5% acknowledged benefits in the form of direct employment by Mount CEO. Despite the zero tolerance policy of Mount CEO, 5% of the respondents indicated that they have benefited by using resources from the park. These include the collecting of fire wood mainly by women, harvesting of fruits, medicinal plants, wood for carving and construction and hunting. 13% of respondents however indicated that they have benefited in other ways like having their kids and or husband employed, illegal harvesting of non-timber products and self employment through the creation of a private business. It should be noted that, it is likely that many more people may be using resources from the park but will not admit for fear that they could be reported and subsequently punished.

Table 26: Kinds of household benefits from ecotourism

Type	Number of observation	Percentage
Community development	7	5.9
Employment	41	34.5
Use of resources	6	5
None	50	42
Others	15	12.6

From the answers of respondents and my interview with the staff of Mount CEO, it was clear that the people's right to the use of resources is clearly being abused. It was evident that no one is allowed to harvest anything in the park. This greatly displeased the locals as meat has been their main source of protein for years. As such some people still smuggled themselves into the park and hunt. In addition, locals in communities around the mount Cameroon region have for a long time used traditional medicine for treatment. Most people do not have access to modern medicine or may not be able to afford it. So they rely on herbs, roots, barks and

leaves for their healing. Most of these plants are found in the forest and not allowing the people access to such vital products for their livelihood is bound to bring conflict. Though the local accept that conservation has protected these species, they also argue that if they are not to be used, then it's useless protecting them. One respondents explained that those plant are protected to be used when need be but they are prohibiting them from using the plants when need arises that when they die of starvation, who then is going to benefit from them. Although illegal hunting and harvesting of products is not beneficial to ecotourism, those who practice these acts consider it beneficial and vow to continue if their needs are not addressed. Some of the guards accepted that denying local people access to resources sometimes bring conflict and although those caught are punished severely, a few people still take the risk out of desperation.

Table 27: Income from ecotourism per month

Income	1-10 USD	11-50 USD	51+ USD
Number of persons	13	22	6

Table 27 shows that only 41 out of 119 respondents said they made money from ecotourism and of this total 35 make between 1-50 USD while only 6 make more. This indicates that monthly returns from ecotourism are very minimal and only a few benefit from it. This is because apart from the office staff of Mount CEO all the other employees are temporal workers who are paid only for the services rendered. According to the manager of Mount CEO, permanent porters and guides cannot be hired because they want to use workers in all villagers. So workers in different villages take turns to serve and in seasons with very low number of tourists, some may not work for an entire season. As such even those employed in the ecotourism sector still need to take on additional work either as farmers or entrepreneurs in order to make ends meet.

Table 28: Comparing benefits from ecotourism by village

Village	Community development	Employment	Use of resources from the park	None	Other
Woteva N=18	5 (27.8%)	10 (55.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (16.7%)
Bakingili N=21	0 (0%)	5 (24%)	4 (16%)	11 (44%)	1 (4%)
Bokwango N=25	14 (56%)	7 (28%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	3 (12%)
Bova 1 N=30	0 (0%)	12 (40%)	2 (6.7%)	14 (46.7%)	2 (6.7%)
Bonakanda N=25	0 (0%)	6 (24%)	3 (12%)	11 (44%)	5 (20%)
Total N=119	19 (16%)	40 (33.6%)	10 (8.4%)	36 (30.2%)	14 (11.8%)

The table above shows that communities benefit differently from ecotourism activities. It reveals that the percentage of employment is highest in Woteva (55.6%) and lowest in Bakingili (24%). The table further reveals a direct relationship between employment and use of resources in the village where in Woteva with the highest percentage of employment, the use of resources stand at zero while in Bakingili with the lowest rate of employment, the use of resources is highest (16%). The figure also shows that ecotourism does provide employment to people in every village but at the same time apart from Woteva and Bokwango over 40% of the population in the other villages do not benefit at all from ecotourism activities. It further reveals that the use of resources in the park probably is little and completely absent in Woteva.

The direct relationship between employment and the use of resources suggest that the more people are employed, the less pressure they pose to the natural resources. This means that when people get alternative forms of livelihood that can sustain them; they stay away from the forest since they can use the moneys they earn to sustain themselves. On the contrary, keeping people away from the forest with no alternative means of sustaining themselves is a waste of time as illegal activities are bound to take place, hence threatening all efforts at conservation. The low rates of employment in the ecotourism registered in Bakingili is also because people are discouraged by the fact that, ecotourism is seasonal job and so most people tend to fishing since the village is along the coast line.

4.10.2. Effects of ecotourism on culture

Honey (1999), states that any ecotourism project must ensure mutual relationship between conservation and local community. He explains that ensuring mutualism means respect for local traditions and culture, involves travel to natural destinations, reducing negative impact on environment, creates environmental awareness, provides and support financial benefits for conservation, offers indirect and direct benefits and empowerment of local communities and promotes human rights and democratization. This section therefore seeks to explain how this applies to the mount Cameroon region.

It was interesting to note that most of the respondents as well as the five chiefs interviewed when asked if they had any comments at the end of interviews pointed out that keeping their traditional beliefs was one of the reasons motivating them to keep the forest from depleting. The people in the Mt. Cameroon region like many other communities across Africa have customs and traditions which must be respected. In the case of the 'Bakweries' (inhabitants of the communities studied) believe in a god of the mountain called *efasa moto* (half human and half stone). According to the Bakweries, the god allows for the consumption of resources in the mountain but forbids people from taking resources away from the mountain. Their customs and traditions somehow favour conservation and promote the sustainable use of resources as even traditionally, exploitation is seen as a taboo. Traditional religion and rural culture are often regarded as conservative and backward. Many see it as a fortress against progress (Butcher, 2007). However, the chiefs especially, expressed that cultural values and traditional religion has been the tools that have protected forest in the study area. They raise concerns that when visitors undermine these values, it raises the concern how long these protected areas would be sustained. This is because they have had reports from porters and guides that some tourists do harvest plants from the forest without permission.

Mt. CEO understands the importance of the Bakweri culture and its role in enhancing conservation and has thus organized cultural tours and dances in the villages to display the rich culture of the people. One very important traditional dance in the study area is the elephant dance performed by the *Malay and Nganya* sacred societies. The essence of this dance is to remind locals about the importance of the elephant and the need for conservation. The message given to the locals is that all the elephants in the forest are owned by spiritual men in the village and that the killing of an elephant is forbidden because it automatically implies killing someone. Such traditional displays are important because while it generates

income for the locals as tourists pay to be entertained the villagers are at the same time being given a lesson on conservation. These myths and beliefs presents a very interesting link between culture, tourism and sustainable management of natural resources.

Ecotourism has also revived the Bakweri culture in a way. In Cameroon it is widely believed that the historical contact between the people of the coastal region of Cameroon and the colonizers during the colonial period, contributed in modifying their rich culture. However, they still have very rich cultural features which are very appealing to tourists like their dances and artifacts as well as food. The sale of crafts has provided jobs to many. The most noticeable craft business in the area was PRESCRAFT owned and managed by the Presbyterian church in Cameroon. The sales person at the shop did admit it was good business and bringing revenue to the church. He also indicated that sales usually peak between the months of November and February which is also the time of the year with the most number of tourists. Sales statistics however, were refused to be released because as he said he does not know me and I may be a taxation agent.

On the downside, ecotourism has greatly modified the culture of the Bakweries. Traditional dances like the elephant dance which use to be seen only on special occasions to appease the gods for example when there are signs of an eruption is about to occur or during the mount Cameroon race of Hope⁶ to make sure the god is with the athletes are now performed for money and to entertain visitors who have no value for the peoples tradition. This according to Neba (1997) was destruction of a living culture of the people. He further identified the alteration of artifacts in terms of size, colour and shape to suit the taste of tourists as destructive practices mainly because those artifacts in their original designs depict certain values that relates to the history and welfare of the people. Modifying these items to make it portable for tourists takes away the inherent value and destroys the people's culture.

We must understand that respecting local values and local customs is a key factor in achieving the goals of ecotourism. As Wood (2002) explained, the process of ecotourism cannot proceed successfully unless the rural folks have legal rights over activities and their cultures are respected.

⁶ A running competition to the summit of the mountain organised yearly

4.10.3. Social effects of ecotourism

On the other hand, ecotourism also has a downside on the culture of the host country. According to Fennell, 2003 and Acott *et al.* 1998, expressions of cultural values evoke a simpler way of life from the distant past, a way of life which modern societies have to embrace and learn. Unfortunately, many aspects of the modest and responsible way of life of the people of mount Cameroon have been altered instead of being copied. The most noticeable problem around the mount Cameroon region is a change in dressing habits especially among the youths. It is obvious that temperate regions have a cooler climate compared to the hot tropical climate of Cameroon. As such when tourists from these temperate regions visit Cameroon they tend to dress with very revealing attires because they can't stand the heat. This method of dressing has been copied by the youths who now dress provocatively as one parent puts it. The community is totally against immodest ways of dressing and the traditional councils for example have put strict laws against such types of dressing. However, this has only slowed the habit as visitors still dress for convenience and cannot be sanctioned. Other social ills respondents complained of are high crime wave and prostitution.

4.10.4. Effects of ecotourism on biodiversity

Protection of biodiversity is key for any conservation project. As natural areas are protected, the goal is to maintain a balance in the ecosystem. In the case of the mount Cameroon national park, the respondents in the surrounding communities held a general view that conservation and ecotourism has gone a long way to protect the area and that there has been a significant increase in the number of plants and animals in the area. This in part is because through sensitization, many locals especially the hunters have dropped their weapons and indiscriminate hunting has been greatly mitigated. Some of the hunters were offered alternative sources of livelihood by being employed as guides and potters so that they could substitute their hunting activities for conservation oriented jobs. Some of these former hunters have also been given management roles in order to give them a sense of control and ownership. According to Tako (1999) the change in behaviour and collaborative management points to the fact that there will be a positive impact on the resources, mainly increase in wildlife population. Due to the fact that a baseline inventory has not been drawn yet to actually determine the impact on the resource, local indicators have been developed. According to Akumsi (2003), an inventory of elephant on the foot of Mount Cameroon and

analysis of wildlife monitoring data show that there actually has been an increase in wildlife population. Other local indicators of an increase in the wildlife population are the report of sightings of animals that were rare near settlement, the frequent destruction of farmers crops close to the park area as well as the now easy to find plants that were rare before. Mt. CEO has a system by which it classifies its endangered species. The species that were near extinction but which have been successfully conserved and completely protected are elephants (*Loxodonta Africana cyclotis*), chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), Drill (*Papio leucophaeus*) and bush baby (*Galago demidovii*), boss man potto (*Perodicticus potto*) and the preuss guenon (*Cercopithecus preussi*). These fall under class 'A'. Those that are partially protected fall under class 'B' and include the bush dog (*Viverra civetta*), long tail pangolin (*Manis tetradactyla*), cero (*Cephalophus ogilbyi*), bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*), red eared monkey (*Cercopithecus erythrotis*) and sleeping deer (*Cephalophus ogilbyi*). Permits in the form of licences are required for exploitation. Those that could be hunted for domestic purposes fall under class 'C' and include amongst others Cain rat(*Thryonomys swinderianus*), porcupine (*Atherurus africanus*) and blue duiker (*Cephalophus monticola*)(Egbe, 2001; Koulagna, 2001). The most important plant that has been successfully protected is the African cherry (*Prunus africana*). In order to get exact figures, detail and careful monitoring has to be done and according to the staff of Mt. CEO, this will be done soon.

According to the manager of Mount CEO, environmental education and nature study has been introduced in schools from primary level as a way of sensitizing the future generation on environmental protection. Parents at home are also encouraged to educate their kids on the importance of conservation. According to him, this will provide a solid foundation for sustainable management of natural resources in the future. Ecotourism has therefore played a very important role in creating conservation awareness in the region. On the other hand, ecotourism also comes along with possible environmental cost. From my discussions with the guides, porters and staff of Mt. CEO, I gathered that sometimes, local people also get jobs like the clearing of tracks, building barriers, renovating the huts on the mountain, and the creation\protection of water sources. According to Buckley (2004) tempering with the natural environment by developing infrastructure may cause habitat fragmentation and create barriers with consequent negative effects on species such as lack of food and behavioral changes. Statistics show that the number of tourists visiting the park is on the increase. The number of tourists has increased from 72 in 1998 to 1,046 in 2008. This can mean well for the income it

generates however, there is a risk of getting too many visitors to the park. At the moment, there are no records or reports that suggest the number of tourists are compromising conservation efforts in anyway. However, the increasing number of visitors over the years means that if care is not taken, the more ecotourism ventures get successful, more people will come and this may eventually lead to environmental degradation. Mass tourism in protected areas can damage the very areas ecotourism seeks to conserve if the economic benefits become the main interest and tourists' numbers are not regulated. According to Kruger (2005), most ecotourism activities are not eco-friendly as the natural environment has to be altered by the building of tracks, accommodation, roads etc to accommodate tourists.

An evaluation of a tourist destination's carrying capacity is essential in evaluating the effects of ecotourism on the environment (Butcher, 2003). In 1980, Butler introduced the concept of carrying capacity, by creating a lifecycle concept (Fennell, 2008).

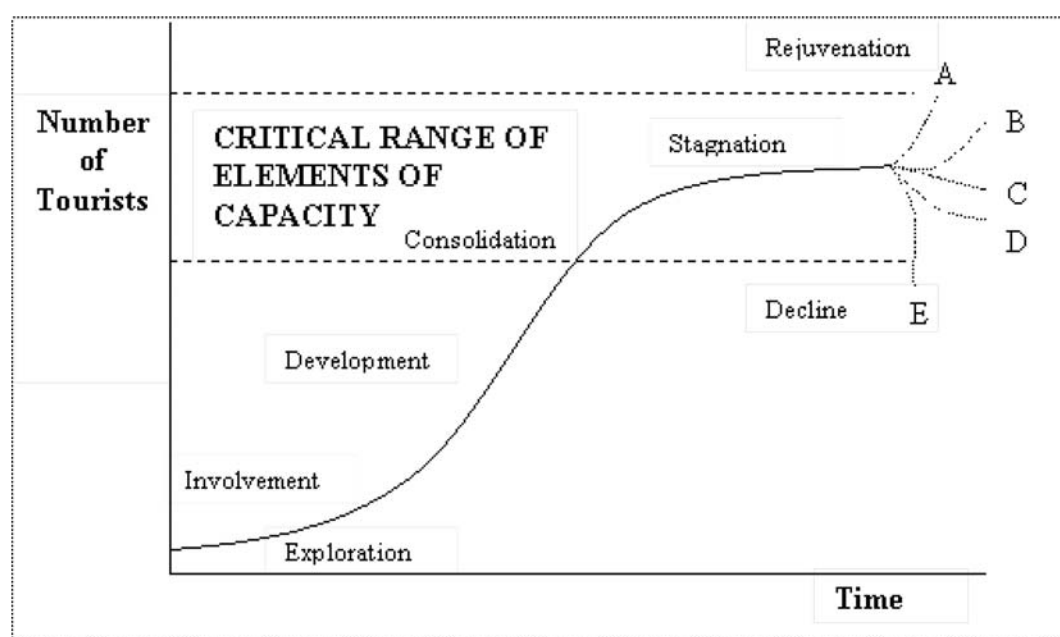


Fig 7: Tourist area life cycle

Source: Fennell, 2008 adapted from Butler, 1980

This model illustrates that in many cases the number of tourists visiting a particular destination is substantially high in the beginning, and then drops rapidly. This rapid rise and fall in tourist numbers show how mass tourism ends up overexploiting the destination, making

it less attractive or desirable by tourists over time. Regulating tourists' numbers in the area of destination is therefore crucial for long term sustainability.

As explained earlier, the tourists' number in the Mt. Cameroon region are on the increase but with no significant damage to the environment. The current comparatively few number of tourists in the region can be attributed to the fact that ecotourism is still a relatively new venture in the region and that the region is poorly marketed and infrastructure is lacking. At the moment, the small number of tourists is easy to manage and within the areas carrying capacity. However, if the project does not generate enough funds, distribute it fairly and fails to prevent other illegal activities affecting conservation, it risk being a disaster (Kruger, 2005). Mt. CEO should therefore learn from history.

4.11. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

4.11.1. Relationship between Mt. CEO and local communities

Proponents of community based ecotourism argue that the business must be seen as a cooperative effort between rural people and the various stakeholders. Butcher (2007) states that this brings transparency and collaboration between rural people and the various stakeholders. The success of ecotourism therefore, does not only depend on the kind of benefits the people get, but the relationship between local people and workers in the ecotourism business. This section therefore presents and analyses how local people perceive the activities of Mt. CEO in the area in relation to conservation and their livelihood.

Even though results from my interview with the staff of Mt. CEO show that there is a lot of collaboration between the local community and Mt. CEO the local people held a different view. The results reveal that the local people are not totally satisfied with the way and manner in which things are managed.

Table 29: Relationship between Mt. CEO and local community

Relationship	Number of villagers	Percentage
Positive	99	83
Negative	14	12
Indifferent	6	5
Total	119	100

The table shows that 83% of the villagers had a positive relationship with Mt. CEO, meaning that they are in support of their activities and ok with the benefits they are getting while 12% of the respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with what Mt. CEO represents in their communities. Another 5% did say they were indifferent and did not care if Mt. CEO exist or not. These were mostly those who have successfully set up private businesses that are rewarding and not dependent on the forest anymore. They however, expressed concern for those who have not been successful to find alternative means of livelihood.

Earlier discussions with the local people showed that they are not satisfied with the benefits they are getting from ecotourism activities managed by Mt. CEO, yet when they were asked about their relationship with Mt. CEO, a majority of them said they were ok with it. The question then is why do they remain happy with a body that is robbing them of their livelihood and making life difficult for them? One reason given by respondents for not having a poor relationship with Mt. CEO was that although they are not happy with the fact that they are underrepresented and little say in the decision making process, they are at least represented and sometimes their suggestions are taken into account. They also added that although the benefits are very small, they are at least happy they are getting something from ecotourism and hope that with time things will get better.

Another reason for limited conflict in the area is because of the poor enforcement of the law. A lot of poachers who would have been caught and punished are let go even without the knowledge of Mt. CEO. According to the staff of Mt. CEO, the people totally understand that they are not allowed into the forest and that if caught they will be punished severely. They attest that this policy is working because it's been a very long time since anyone was caught because of any illegal activity in the park. However, those who work as guards in the park are from the rural communities and Mt. CEO rely on them to report violators. These guards

however revealed to me that people still hunt illegally but when they for example finds someone from their community poaching, he allows the person to go free because he understands that the offender needs the food. As such possible conflicts with the law are eliminated.

Some also said they had nothing against Mt. CEO because she is doing what the government ask her to do. They believe that it is the law of the government that is asking them not to use the forest and that there is really nothing they can do about it. This however is not true as previous analysis show that Mt. CEO is violating the law. It therefore, shows that contrary to what mount Cameroon is saying about educating the locals on what the forestry laws are and building their capacity in forest management, the locals are misguided and their rights are being abuses. Discussion with the villagers revealed that they do not know what the Cameroon forestry law stipulates and what their rights are. They just believe that Mt. CEO is implementing the law and they have to abide by it. The villagers even saw the creation of a community forest as a privilege given them by Mt. CEO and not a legal right.

4.11.2. Relationship between Mt. CEO, porters and guides

Discussion with the porters and guides revealed that they were not satisfied with the benefits they get from Mt. CEO. Formal and informal discussions with them revealed that their main role is to assist the tourists in carrying essentials like water, food and sleeping equipments and to cook. Each porter is entitled to a maximum of 15kg per trip lasting 2-5days for a single tourist. The porters do not have fixed salaries and earn 6000FCFA (about 12 USD) per night when they accompany a tourists. In a good month an individual can make 2 to 3 trips. This amount they said is very minimal given the tedious nature of the job. They said they were not content with the payment but had no choice. To make matters worse, the job does not provide them with any social welfare benefits like pensions and unemployment benefits. VEC members expressed worries about the lack of transparency in the way funds are managed. They also said the recruitment of porters and guides is not fair as some villages had more porter and guides than others and as such their participation in training and in ecotourism activities is reduced. For these reasons, their relationship with Mt.CEO was not very good.

Summary

Informal discussions with the villagers suggested that there is a possibility that conflict and hatred exist between the stakeholders but respondents were unwilling to acknowledge this. The main area of conflict as observed was depriving the local people of their livelihoods without sustainable alternatives. The incapability of Mt. CEO to reconcile its conservation objectives and improve the living conditions of the people in a meaningful and sustainable way through ecotourism is a serious challenge. This is because most of the local people rely on their natural resources for survival. Limiting access to these resources in the name of conservation without providing them with alternatives that are sustainable has only resulted in conflict and although some alternative sources of income have been introduced to the villagers, these are still not sufficient. The outcome of the ecotourism project in the Mount Cameroon region can only be termed successful if both the conservation and livelihood objects are in a positive balance.

4.11.3. Suggested solutions to conflicts by different stakeholders

It was realized that despite the zero tolerance policy towards the use of resources in the park, some activity was still going on because the people feel that they are being deprived of their livelihood without alternative. Hence, it was thoughtful to ask the locals what they think could help them overcome this problem. Questions were also asked to know what could be done to improve their participation and management of the park and ecotourism activities.

First, most respondents indicated that they needed some form of motivation. It is obvious that human beings tend to be very dedicated if they get enough motivation for any venture. The process of ensuring a successful conservation will be therefore greatly enhanced if local people are actively involved and highly motivated by other stakeholders. Motivation does not necessarily have to be in cash or kind but can also be by giving the people legitimate rights to express their views and concerns. Rewarding the locals for letting go of their livelihood for conservation and involving them in decision making and planning leads to empowerment of rural communities. As Cernea, 1991 puts it, economic and political control of these resources must be known to the whole indigenous communities and benefits fairly distributed for ecotourism to achieve success.

Table 30: Priorities of the villagers

Need	Number
Education/ Schools	19
Water supply	97
Roads	56
Improved seeds/ Fertilizer	78
Jobs	83
Others	12

From the field findings I realized that in all five villages combined, most people (83) felt that if they are given jobs both within the park and out of the park, they will be able to have funds to provide for their families. The people showed readiness to work but lacked the offer of employment. A considerable 78 persons indicated that improved seeds and fertilizer would improve their yields and subsequently their income and stop them from illegal park activities. Top on the list was 97 persons who indicated that water supply is what they need. Field observation showed that pipe born water was almost absent in the villages. Bokwango for example had only one pipe born water source for the entire village and which does not flow constantly. The respondents explain that a lot of time is spent covering long distances just to get drinkable water and most of the time their kids get sick because of the contaminated water they drink when the tap is not running. 19 respondents thought education is what they need. The low number advocating for education is because villagers think this will take a long time for results to be achieved but they needed immediate solutions. 12 respondents suggested other solutions like monetary compensation and regulated use of resources from within the park.

Guides and porters suggested an increase in wages. They said what they earn at the moment is way below what they use to get from hunting and harvesting other resources from the forest. This is made worse by the fact that their services are only needed seasonally and they are left with no income in the rainy season when they are no tourists. All this has made living conditions more difficult for them. It is for this reason that some respondents indicated that they cannot participate fully in park activities as they have to look for other means to support

their families. In their opinion and increase in wages and the provision of alternative jobs during the rainy season when very few tourists visit the park will be the solution to limiting park activities. They also suggested all the people willing to work as guides and porters should be given equal opportunities to work.

The management of Mt. CEO did accept that not all the villagers are happy with the way the park is being managed but hope things will improve with time as more tourists come in. They suggested that more funding will lead to the sponsoring of more projects in the villages and improve relationship between all stakeholders.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSSION

In general, conservation of the Mt. Cameroon National park and the introduction of ecotourism have not been beneficial to the rural communities. Local people have been deprived of their livelihood by Mt. CEO with no adequate compensation.

Local people in the study area are highly dependent on the environment for their livelihood. The main assets of the local people are land, forest resources, capital, water resources and labour. Accesses to these assets vary between villages with every household having access to and depending on land for agriculture and the collection of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP). The main activities they involve in are hunting, agriculture, collection of NTFP and off farm activities. The only fishing community is Bakingili. As such, practices that will deprive them use of their natural environment are met with resistance. However, in meeting their livelihood, they are faced with constrains such as lack of capital, agricultural inputs and destruction from pests. The main coping strategy local people have adopted is agricultural and livelihood diversification.

Mt. CEO is legally the only institution directly in charge of conservation and ecotourism activities in the area. It serves as the middleman between the state and the local people and the main source of information to the government about what is going on in the area. As such, even though their fortress approach to conservation is contrary to the participatory and livelihood approaches advocated by law, the government tends to buy the rosy picture presented to them by Mt. CEO because of the absence of direct state representatives on the ground to monitor the activities of Mt. CEO in the area. The lack of direct relationship between the state and local people is rather helping Mt. CEO to exploit rather than protect the interest of the very people they are to aid.

The stated objective of Mt. CEO was to improve the livelihood of the local population and conserve biodiversity through ecotourism in cooperation with the local communities. However, in practice this has not been the case as Mt. CEO solely oversees and manages all ecotourism and conservation activities in the region. Local people only participate as guides, guards and porter with very meager seasonal wages. The interests of local people have not

been prioritized, and they do not participate in decision making and are therefore less influential. The decision making process is top-down, where the government and Mt. CEO make decisions and impose these on the local people. Their participation can be described as passive or as a means to achieve the objectives of Mt. CEO.

Mt. CEO is using its monopoly power in the region to save biodiversity at the expense of the livelihood of local people who depend directly on the forest. This has thus strained the relationship between Mt. CEO and the villagers even though Mt. CEO has done a good job of sensitizing the villagers until they now consider ecotourism and conservation as good ideas. The main areas of conflict between the local people and Mt. CEO are the abuse of local people's user rights by Mt. CEO, limited benefits and opportunities and poverty. The fact that Mt. CEO is completely denying villagers access to resources in the park has for the most part only fueled anger and animosity towards Mt. CEO and its efforts at conservation in the area. Because of this, illegal exploitation is the only way the locals can supplement the meager income they make from alternative sources of livelihood. Other grievances local communities hold against Mt. CEO is their non-inclusion in park/ecotourism management and in decision making. Because of these, local people see biodiversity conservation as a threat to their survival rather than a means to an end. This has led to poaching by some individuals as a means to supplement their income and hence, conflicts between the local people and Mt. CEO. In addition to this, Mt. CEO takes 77% of the National Park fees as revenue and only delivers 8% to the government of Cameroon (3% to the Ministry of Tourism and 5% to the Buea Rural council). Thus the benefit for the state is dubious as well. Just 15% is used to pay guards, porters and guides and on village projects.

According to field findings, villagers believe free access to resources coupled with the provision of alternative sources of livelihood as well as their involvement in management and decision making will improve their relationship with Mt. CEO and better their attitudes towards biodiversity conservation.

Finally, it is obvious that any effort at conservation that does not involve the full participation of local people and the prioritization of their livelihoods is bound to fail. Local people's participation in conservation as a right is the best way to go.

5.2. ACHIEVABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

After identifying the actors in biodiversity conservation in the Mt. Cameroon region and analyzing how the mechanisms put in place to regulate their activities and protect biodiversity are twisted to rather marginalize locals instead of protecting them as seen in the previous chapter, it is therefore thoughtful to propose some possible solutions on how to address this issue. This amongst others will include the protection of the people's livelihood and the involvement of local people at every level in attempts at sustainable biodiversity management.

Poor commitment on the part of government representative to enforce the law is a big challenge to biodiversity conservation in the region. There is therefore need to evaluate existing policies and legislation and enforce the defined roles and rights of the different stakeholder. This is because contrary to what the Cameroon Forestry law stipulates, Mt. CEO is practicing more or less the fortress approach to conservation, where local people's user rights are being abused. Although limited use of forest resources is open to members of the hunters union and *Prunus africana* harvesters union, a large portion of the population is still left out and as a consequence of this, a lot of illegal practices are still going on in the park even without the knowledge of Mt. CEO thereby posing a serious threat to the very resources they seek to protect. It is thus recommended that the user rights of the local people should be respected as stipulated by the law and their livelihoods be of priority for any conservation efforts to be successful. Local communities should be given the chance to exercise the powers given to them by the law to control their forests this means the putting in place of a decentralized power structure where equitable sharing of profits generated from the forests is ensured. This can be made possible if the government has agents working directly with villagers and checking the activities of middlemen.

In order to gain more support and approval from the local communities, villagers must be well represented in the decision making process. The selection of representatives should be by democratic election procedure. The role of chiefs, VECs, traditional council and locals in management should be improved. This means incorporating all the above by designing and implementing a communicative approach where everyone is able to have a say in decision making, participate in management and also benefit from ecotourism and conservation activities.

To ensure a sustainable and socially just environmental conservation scheme, local communities have to also benefit from the resource. As long as the local communities gained significantly from their locally protected areas, they would have an incentive to refrain from illegal resource extraction. Resource access and incentive should be shared equally to all communities involved and this should be done in such a way that will motivate locals to participate in conservation and management. The fact that some communities in the Mt. Cameroon region are yet to benefit after 10 years of exploiting their resources by Mt. CEO might explain why most people are not satisfied with her activities.

Because many farmers blame illegal harvesting of forest resources on low yields, improved agricultural practices will go a long way to reduce land shortages and low yields hence, minimal or no dependence on forest resources. This can be done by introducing conservation agriculture which is based on no plowing, protection of the top soil to reduce soil erosion, the use of mineral fertilizer, integrated pest management, crop rotation and agro-forestry (Shetto and Owenya 2007). Educating and training villagers on environmentally friendly modern agricultural techniques like agro-forestry and providing them with the tools and funds necessary will improve yields and drastically reduce household dependence on the forest for subsistence. Aids to farmers can be in the form improved seeds, modern farm equipments, vaccines to animals, improved farm to market routes and ready markets for their products.

The government of Cameroon needs to revamp its tourism sector. The Mount Cameroon region is blessed with one of the major touristic attractions in Africa but because of political reasons, the tourism sector in this region is not receiving the attention it deserves from the government. At the moment the tourism sector of Cameroon is an eye sore. Evidence of this is the closure of the Fako tourism board without reason. Instead, it is the foreign funded NGO (Mount-CEO), which promotes ‘sustainable’ tourism activities in the region and employs some youths as tourist guides and porters. The government needs to develop its touristic sites and attractions, invest in proper marketing and advertisement in order to attract visitors. Up to date information needs to be made available to tourists especially on the internet which is now the easiest way to access information. Improving the infrastructure and organization of the tourism sector in this region will certainly create many more opportunities for the inhabitants of the region. Thus, the government should work closely with the local communities and Mount-CEO to promote sustainable tourism activities. The government should also provide

resources for the improvement of already existing infrastructure and the development of new infrastructure needed to boost the tourism sector in the entire region.

Mt. CEO at the moment seems not to be generating a lot of money compared to what is being generated by ecotourism activities in other countries. Instead of paying part of her proceeds to government, the government should rather fund the activities of Mt. CEO to enable her achieve more in terms of conservation and development in the area. This organization has very limited staff and as such there is not enough monitoring of the park. There is an absolute shortage of logistics to enable smooth functioning of the organization. In addition to government revenue and support from current international donors, Mt. CEO can also reach out and seek support from other organizations involved in nature protection like the IUCN.

Mt. CEO needs to be more transparent in its dealings. Records are to be made available to the public and to researchers to better access their activities and propose recommendations. As the sole organization in charge of conservation and ecotourism in the area, up to date records of their activities, projects, and finances should be made available for transparency. Even more importantly, classified records of species, update on how conservation is affecting these species should be of priority. In fact, Mt. CEO should have a library where it documents all its activities and achievements for proper follow ups.

Because of the limited capital owned by Mt. CEO, it is apparent that it is losing a lot of money since it does not have its own hotels, car services and restaurants. Thus in an effort to increase income generated from ecotourism, she can get into partnership with hotels and transportation agencies in the area and agree on how to share what these businesses gain from offering their services to tourists. On the other hand, the government can invest in hotels and travel agencies in order to maximize income from ecotourism.

Environmental education should also be introduced in schools at all levels to ensure greater environmental awareness for the future. In addition, nationals should have a lower rate to pay for visiting the park and not the same as foreigners. This will serve as an incentive for citizens to explore and appreciate nature.

In order to reduce corruption amongst park officials, guides and porters their salaries and working conditions should be improved. They should be offered incentives like pensions, insurance and other social security services like unemployment benefits when tourism is at

bay. Although *prunus africana* harvesters say they are now better paid for their products, they still complain that it is not enough given the amount of time and effort they put in and considering that they still struggle to provide for their families. It would be fair therefore, to pay them more for the products given the price at which *prunus Africana* is being sold abroad.

The role and impact of conservation and ecotourism on women should be considered. They should be included in decision making and given alternative options for heating such as biogas or solar panel to reduce their dependence on fuel wood.

In order to facilitate the diversification of livelihood petty businesses should be boosted through the provision of micro-credit to individuals at low interest rates. Instead of depending solely on the income from hunting and *Prunus africana* exploitation and sales of cash crops, farmers and hunters could turn to poultry, rearing rabbits, cane rat domestication, improved rearing of goats and sheep, pig farming, mushroom farming (alternative source of protein) and fish farming. These are all potential sources of income. Since most high schools in the region and even the University of Buea sometimes use rabbits for biology practicals, farmers and hunters could rear rabbits in a large scale for sale to these institutions.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Research on how to represent the distribution and abundance of plant and animal species in the entire Mount Cameroon region with a modern GIS system is needed. This could facilitate future conservation efforts as well as the allocation of sustainable quota to communities in the Mount Cameroon region as precise data on the abundance and distribution of species in the entire region will be made available.

Whenever ecotourism activities take place in protected areas, a certain level of degradation is expected. Research on assessing the ecological impacts of ecotourism in the Mt. Cameroon region is therefore necessary. The objective of such studies may be to determine the impact of ecotourism in terms of vegetation species diversity, soil bulk density, erosion and litter disposal. The results of such studies will serve as basis for future comparism on how successful ecotourism really is, as a tool for conservation.

In order to foster sustainable use of resources, studies should also be carried out on the rate of forest regeneration and species productivity to help determine sustainable amount of take off each year.

More research should also be done on increasing agricultural productivity and other sustainable and lucrative alternative sources of income in order to reduce over dependence on forest resources.

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Appendix 1

QUESTIONNAIRE 1: Household representatives

Background information

- 1) Gender. Male ☐ Female ☐
- 2) Level of education. -----
- 3) Age-----
- 4) Name of village-----

Socio-economic conditions

- 5) What are your livelihood activities?-----
- 6) Do you have any difficulties providing for your family? Yes ☐ No ☐
- 7) If yes what kind of difficulties?-----
- 8) How do you solve the problems?-----
- 9) What can be done to help you out? -----

Nature conservation

- 1) Are you aware of the park/ protected area around you? YES or NO
- 2) If yes, why do you think it was designated? -----

- 3) Are you allowed to use park resources? Yes or No
- 4) If yes, what products do you collect from the forests? -----

- 5) Do you participate in management of the park/ protected area? YES or NO
- 6) If yes, how? -----

- 7) Do you visit the park/ protected area? YES or NO
- 8) If yes, why do you visit the area? -----

- 9) How has the park/ protected area impacted your life? -----

- 10) What can be done to meet your livelihood needs while maintaining conservation? -----

Ecotourism

- 11) Do you know what ecotourism is? YES or NO
- 12) If yes, how would you define ecotourism -----

- 13) Are there any ecotourism projects in your area? YES or NO

14) If yes, who is running the ecotourism projects? -----

Benefits and livelihood

15) Is ecotourism beneficial to you? YES or NO

16) If yes, how? -----

17) Do you have a job in the ecotourism industry? YES or NO

18) If yes, Guide ☐ Service staff ☐
None ☐ Other ☐

19) If other, describe -----

20) How much of your income comes from the ecotourism industry?

21) Do you want more ecotourism in your area? YES or NO

22) If no, why? -----

23) If yes, how? -----

24) What is your opinion about the guards of this park? Positive ☐ Negative ☐ Don't know ☐

25) If negative, describe -----

26) Have you had conflicts with managers/ guards of the protected area? YES or NO

27) If yes, which conflicts? -----

28) How was it resolved? -----

29) Do you think you were treated fairly? YES or NO

30) Have you had conflict with any other player(s) in the ecotourism industry? YES or NO

31) If yes, who? -----

32) What was the cause?-----

33) How was it resolved? -----

34) What was the consequence? -----

35) Do you think you were treated fairly? YES or NO

36) If no, why? -----

Comments

Appendix 2

QUESTIONNAIRE 2: Community representatives

- 1) How do you represent your community? -----

- 2) How were you selected? -----

- 3) How many households do you have in your village? -----

Nature conservation:

- 4) Are you aware of the protected area around you? YES or NO
- 5) If yes, why do you think they were designated? -----

- 6) Do you participate in planning and management of the park/ protected area? YES or NO
- 7) If yes, what are your role(s) and duties? -----

- 8) Does your community benefit from the park/ protected area? YES or NO
- 9) If yes, how? -----

- 10) How are benefits from the park/ protected area(s) shared in your community? -----

Ecotourism:

- 11) Do you know what ecotourism is? YES or NO
- 12) If yes, how would you define ecotourism -----

- 13) Are there any ecotourism projects in your area? YES or NO
- 14) If yes, who is running the ecotourism projects? -----

Benefits and livelihood:

- 15) Does your community benefit from conservation and ecotourism? YES or NO
- 16) If yes, how? -----

- 17) Have conservation and/or ecotourism changed your community's use of resources in the area?
YES or NO
- 18) If yes how? -----

19) What can be done to meet your community's needs while maintaining conservation? -----

20) What can be done to improve your roles in management of the park/ protected area and ecotourism activities? -----

Conflicts:

21) What is your opinion about the guards of this area? Positive ☐ Negative ☐ Don't know ☐

22) If negative, describe -----

23) What is your opinion about the tour operators in this area? Positive ☐ Negative ☐ Don't know ☐

24) If negative, describe -----

25) What is your opinion about the NGOs in this area? Positive ☐ Negative ☐ Don't know ☐

26) If negative, describe -----

Comments

Appendix 3

QUESTIONNAIRE 3: Tour operators

Nature conservation:

- 1) Are you aware of the protected area around you? YES or NO
- 2) If yes, why do you think they were designated? -----

- 3) How have they affected your business? -----

- 4) How have they affected the community adjacent to your operations? -----

Ecotourism:

- 5) How would you define ecotourism -----

- 6) Is your business involved in ecotourism? YES or NO
- 7) If yes, how? -----

- 8) What kind of ecotourism services do you provide? -----

- 9) How many ecotourism visitors do you have per month? -----
- 10) Where do they come from? -----

- 11) How many local staff do you have in your business? -----
- 12) What kind of jobs do they have? -----

- 13) Has the number increased or reduced over the years? -----
- 14) Do you think ecotourism should be promoted more? YES or NO
- 15) If yes, why? -----

- 16) How do you manage your waste? -----

Comments

Appendix 4

QUESTIONNAIRE 4: NGO staff and managers

Nature conservation:

- 1) Are you aware of the park/protected area around you? YES or NO
- 2) If yes, why do you think it was designated? -----
- 3) Is your organization working with park/ protected area conservation? YES or NO
- 4) If yes, how? -----
- 5) Do you cooperate with the local people in managing the area? YES or NO
- 6) If yes, how? -----
- 7) How has the park/ protected area affected the community adjacent to where you work? -----

- 8) How many local staff do you have in your organisation? -----
- 9) What kind of jobs do they have? -----
- 10) Has the number increased or reduced over the years? -----

Ecotourism:

- 11) How would you define ecotourism -----

- 12) Are there any ecotourism projects in your area? YES or NO
- 13) If yes, who is running the ecotourism projects? -----

- 14) Has ecotourism affected conservation and management of the park/ protected area? YES or NO
- 15) If yes, how? -----

- 16) Is ecotourism compatible with conservation of the park/ protected area? YES or NO
- 17) If yes, how? -----

- 18) If no, why? -----

- 19) Are local people involved in ecotourism operations? Yes or NO
- 20) If yes, what do they do?-----
- 21) How many of your staff are from the local community? -----
- 22) How many are from abroad? -----

- 23) Are locals permitted to use park resources? YES or NO
- 24) If yes, how? -----

25) Do illegal activities still occur in the park/ protected area? YES or NO

26) If yes, describe -----

27) What are in your view the main management challenges? -----

Comments

Appendix 5

4. Justifications for the creation of the Mt. Cameroon National Park

- Mt. Cameroon is the main water catchment for more than 300,000 people living in the towns of Buea, Limbe, Tiko, Mutengene, Muyuka and the numerous surrounding villages. Most of the bottled water drunk all over Cameroon is derived from Mt. Cameroon. Judging from the rapid loss of forests and the consequently observable water shortage, especially in the town of Buea and surrounding villages, it becomes evidently clear that if the rate of loss of forests is not arrested, rehabilitation measures to restore the ecosystem function will become colossal
- The forest on Mt. Cameroon provides land for farming, wild foods and vegetables, medicinal plants, timber, fuel wood, craft materials, building materials, tools, bush meat, mushrooms, fibres, charcoal and wrapping leaves to the local population. This high dependence has led to increasing denudation of resources and exposure of the population to environmental hazards. The implementation of a landuse plan (Plan de Zonage) that includes and clearly specifies protection areas, community forests areas, farming areas is urgent to stabilise and harmonise the various land uses in the region. The creation of the Mount Cameroon National Park will clearly define the extent of the protection area in the region, which will be safeguarded from denudation of resources
- Farm encroachment into forests reserves is common nationwide, partly due to little emphasis paid on the protection of forest reserves. The creation of the proposed Mount Cameroon National Park will attract considerable national and international focus on the management and protection of this fragile ecosystem, probably more than any other forest protection status would
- The Bakweri and Bomboko tribes rely entirely on the mountain for cultural and traditional manifestations and practises. The mountain is generally considered as a shrine, with sacred places and spirits, which constitutes the backbone of the local culture and tradition. Several local myths of the people are derived and referenced to the mountain. To this regard, the preservation of the mountain ecosystem is largely synonymous to the preservation of the local culture and tradition
- The strip of forest between the savannah and rocky surfaces on higher altitudes and settlements, agricultural fields and industrial production factories on lower altitudes serves as a protective buffer during environmental hazards such as mudflows during heavy rains, lava, cinder and ash flows during volcanic activities. The maintenance of this forest belt round the mountain is extremely important for civil protection purposes
- The mountain also serves as a medium for recreation, research, tourism and education. The preservation of the mountain ecosystem will undoubtedly provide premise to foster ecotourism development measures to be implemented
- Protection of the mountain ecosystem against anthropogenic denudation factors does not necessarily prohibit all forms of human use of the resources of the mountain. The main protection objective is habitat and ecosystem preservation. Activities that do not alter the habitats composition nor impede ecosystem functions such as collection of NTFPs and *Prunus africana* bark by the local population shall be authorised and carefully regulated in the management plan of the proposed National Park

5. Boundary description

The surface area of the proposed Mount Cameroon National Park is estimated at 64,677 ha, covering Fako (Buea and Muyuka Subdivisions) and Meme (Mbonge Subdivision) Divisions in the South West Province of Cameroon. The external boundary of the proposed Mount Cameroon National Park, which in part is contiguous with the external boundary of the Bomboko Forest Reserve as outlined in the Order N° 2 of 1939 and Gazette N° 12 of 1939 of the Southern Cameroons. The boundary is described by points, using UTM geographical coordinates as presented here below:

North

Starting from point **A** (527828, 491068) situated at the north-most tip of the Bomboko Forest Reserve, on the footpath between Kuke-Mbomo and Masone, the boundary follows a straight line in a southerly direction towards the summit of Mount Cameroon, crossing the Munyenge-Bova Bomboko main road to point **B** (524756, 481624) situated 6 km from the main road; thence in an easterly direction for a distance of 3.5 km to point **C** (528224, 481006) situated on 1050 m spot-height; thence to a south-easterly direction for a distance of 2.8 km to point **D** (530032, 478839) situated at 1052 m spot-height; thence to a further south-easterly direction for a distance of 5.2 km to point **E** (532539, 474267), where the boundary hits point D of the proposed Woteva community forest.

East

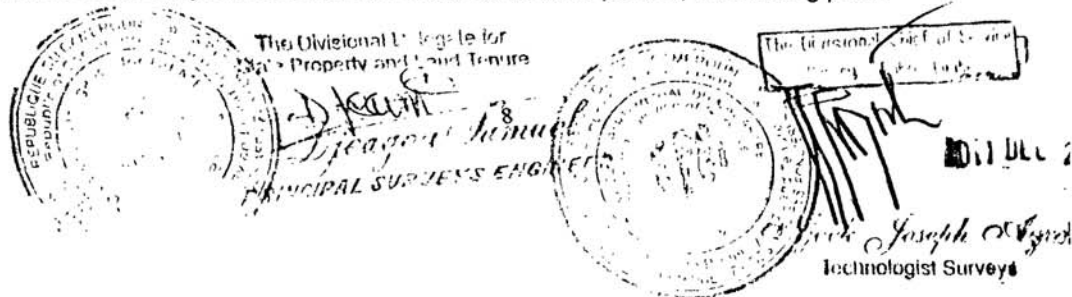
From point **E** it follows the western boundary of the Woteva community Forest to point **F** (528772, 467545) situated on a bridge along the Bonakanda-P&T road; thence in a southerly direction for a distance of 10 km, crossing the Guinness mountain trail at a point 500 m below Hut 1, it continues to point **G** (522250, 460000) situated on point Q of the Etinde Community Forest; thence it follows the western boundary of the Etinde Community Forest to point **H** (510966, 449420) situated on point G of the proposed Etinde Community Forest.

South

From point **H** it continues in a westerly direction for a distance of 2.4 km to point **I** (508707, 450165) located on point 14 of the proposed Bakingili Community Forest, thence it follows the upper boundary of the Community Forest to point **J** (502260, 452003) located on point 2' of the Bakingili Community Forest, thence it continues in a north-westerly direction for a distance of 2.7 km to point **K** (501580, 454586) situated about 3 km above Debundsha CDC camp.

West

From point **K** it continues on a straight line in a northerly direction for a distance of 10 km across the 1922 lava flow to point **L** (503599, 464687) located at the west bank of the lava; thence in a northerly direction for a distance of 3.4 km to point **M** (504567, 467886) situated on a tributary of Sanje River; thence in a north-westerly direction for a distance of 4.1 km to point **N** (502630, 471422) situated on the Idenau-Bomana main road; thence along the road (Bomana Corridor) for a distance of 3.0 km to point **O** (504563, 473201), thence in a south-easterly direction for a distance of 5.5 km to point **P** (508567, 469432), where the boundary meets the southern limit of Bomboko Forest Reserve; thence it follows the west boundary of the Bomboko Forest Reserve till point **A**, the starting point.



THE MOUNT CAMEROON NATIONAL PARK



- Legend**
- Mt Cameroon National Park
 - Onge Community Forest
 - Woteva Community Forest
 - Mokoko Community Forest
 - GIC BACOFMAC Community Forest
 - Etinde Community Forest
 - Mt Cameroon Beacons

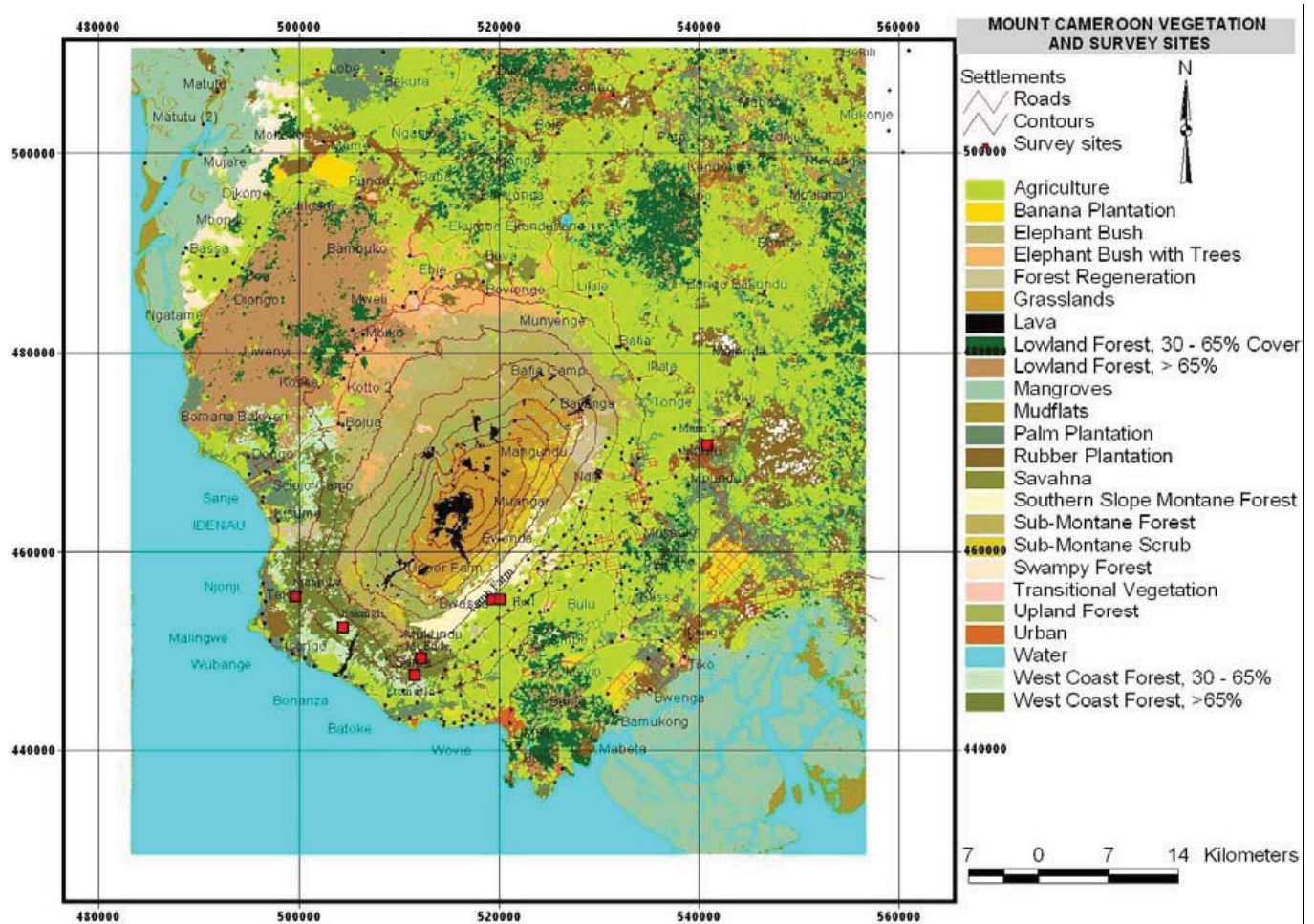
Southwest Conservation Partners
October 2005
The Biodiversity and Land Tenure
Background
Carte du Cameroun (1:200,000)
Bureau de la Carte
MINICOF
GTZ
WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY

0 2 4 8 Kilometers
Projection: UTM 32N
Total surface area: 64,677 ha
Perimeter: 158.119 km



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Appendix 6



Source: BAYLY & MOTOMBE (2004)

