



CONSERVATION EDUCATION QUARTERLY REPORT Afi, MBE AND OKWANGWO: JULY – SEPTEMBER 2017



Louis Nkonyu
Conservation Education Coordinator,
WCS Nigeria
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SUMMARY: *The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has worked to safeguard Africa's great wildlife and wild places for the long-term benefit of the people of Africa, and the world since 1920. Today WCS has the oldest, largest and arguably most effective field conservation program of any NGO in Africa. WCS's mission in Africa is: to save wildlife and wild places by understanding critical issues, crafting science-based solutions and taking conservation actions that benefit nature and humanity. This mission identifies landscapes and species conservation as WCS's core purpose, highlights the role of science in studying threats and designing interventions and recognizes that conservation must benefit people to be effective and sustainable.*

This report covers activities carried out during the period from July to September 2017 in schools and communities around the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, Mbe Mountains, and Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park to raise awareness and change attitudes and behaviours towards Cross River gorillas and their forest habitat. Activities implemented include 20 school visits, 11 field trips with 254 students to the Mbe Mountains, Cross River National Park, the Becheve Nature Reserve on the Obudu Plateau, and Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary. Other are film show in 30 villages with total of 11,106 attendance and 9 exchange visits. Other activities implemented include 16 community meetings, monitoring survey of the My Gorilla My Community Radio Program and World Gorilla Day Celebration held on 24th September 2017.

Field Trips: A total of 11 field trips were organized for students in schools around Afi, Mbe and Okwangwo, as well as Becheve Nature Reserve. A total of 254 students and 22 teachers participated in the field trips which provided opportunity for the students to learn about conservation challenges and efforts to mitigate threats to endangered wildlife such as the Cross River gorilla directly in the field. During these field trips students were encouraged to contribute to biodiversity conservation through advocacy in their communities. During a visit to the botanic garden in the Butatong office of the Cross River National Park, conservation club members on the field trip helped to plant *Prunus africana* seedlings in the garden.

Table 1: Number of students that participated on field trip in the between the month of July to September 2017

Date	Site	School(s)	Site/camp visited	Number of students
12/7/2017	Mbe	Community Secondary School Bamba	Becheve Nature Reserve	23
14/7/2017	Mbe	St. John's Secondary School Wula	Obue's Camp	25
19/7/2017	Afi	Community Secondary School Olum	Cross River National Park	25
11/8/2017	Afi	Government Primary School Okubuchi	Esekwe Camp	25
14/8/2017	Afi	Community Secondary School Irruan (EBONA)	Esekwe Camp	20
16/8/2017	Mbe	Buentsebe Secondary School Wula	Base camp/Afi Mountains	24
19/8/2017	Mbe	Government Secondary School Kanyang	Becheve Nature Reserve	23
15/9/2017	Mbe	Community Secondary School Bokalum	Obue's Camp	23
17/9/2017	Mbe	Government Primary School Bokalum	Obue's Camp	25
21/9/2017	Mbe	Community Secondary School Bamba	Obue's Camp	21
26/9/2017	Mbe	Government Secondary School Butatong	Cross River National Park	20
		Total		254

FILM SHOW: This quarter, great ape films were showed 17 times in 29 villages (Afi 16, Mbe 6 and Okwangwo 7) to raise awareness about the status and conservation needs of great apes in the region. The film shows attracted a total audience of 11,106 and provided opportunity for discussions on how to tackle threats such as hunting and habitat loss and fragmentation caused by unsustainable farming practices, illegal logging, and bush burning.

Table 2: Villages and schools visited in Afi, Mbe and Okwangwo for film show from July to September 2017, and estimated number of viewers

Date	Name of community	Site	Estimated number of viewers
11/7/2017	Community Sec. School Okwabang	Okwangwo	290
11/7/2017	Buentsebe Sec. School Wula	Mbe	500
20/7/2017	Buanchor	Afi	370
22/7/2017	Butatong	Okwangwo	150
23/7/2017	Kakwe Beebo	Okwangwo	400
24/7/2017	Ukampo Beebo	Okwangwo	250
26/7/2017	Asuben Boje	Afi	400
27/7/2017	Kache Boje	Afi	170
28/7/2017	Enyi Boje	Afi	120
29/7/2017	Ebok	Afi	300
10/8/2017	Esekwe	Afi	380
11/8/2017	Okubuchi	Afi	200
12/8/2017	Kakubok	Afi	400
13/8/2017	Bitiah	Afi	600
20/8/2017	Bamba	Mbe	190
21/8/2017	Wula II	Mbe	500
22/8/2017	Olum	Afi	250
23/8/2017	Bokalum	Mbe	400
24/8/2017	Wula I	Mbe	300
2/9/2017	Kakwe Beebo	Okwangwo	500
3/9/2017	Ukampo Beebo	Okwangwo	350
4/9/2017	Abija Beebo	Okwangwo	524
7/9/2017	Kakubok	Afi	290
8/9/2017	Kakwagom Irruan	Afi	400
9/9/2017	Nkanyang	Afi	550
11/9/2017	Butatong	Okwangwo	700
22/9/2017	Bamba	Mbe	415
23/9/2017	Olum	Afi	200
24/9/2017	Buanchor	Afi	317
28/ 9/2017	Buanchor	Afi	210
29/9/2017	Katabang	Afi	480
	Total		11,106

SCHOOL VISIT: During this period, WCS Conservation Education Coordinator visited a total of 20 schools around Afi, Mbe and Okwangwo to facilitate conservation club activities, including lessons and gorilla games. During the visits a total of 230 Cross River

gorilla notebooks were distributed to students. This quarter, lessons focused on gorilla morphology and behaviour, distribution, population, and conservation status. The school visits were also used to make plans for field trips.

Table 3: Schools visited and number of gorilla notebooks distributed – July to September 2017

Date	School visited	Site	Number of notebooks distributed
11/7/2017	Community Sec. School Okwabang	Okwangwo	20
11/7/2017	Buentsebe Sec. School Wula	Mbe	20
12/7/2017	Community Sec. School Bamba	Mbe	20
13/7/2017	Community Sec. School Butatong	Okwangwo	20
14/7/2017	St. John the Baptist Sec School Wula	Mbe	20
18/7/2017	Community Sec. School Olum	Afi	20
19/7/2017	Community Sec. School Buanchor	Afi	20
9/8/2017	Boki Sec School Okundi	Afi	15
10/8/2017	Government Primary School Esekwe	Afi	15
12/8/2017	Government Primary School Kakubok	Afi	15
14/8/2017	Community Secondary School Irruan	Afi	15
15/8/2017	Community Secondary School Olum	Afi	15
16/8/2017	Buentsebe Secondary School Wula	Mbe	15
12/9/2017	Community Sec. School Katabang	Afi	NA
12/9/2017	Government Sec. School Buanchor	Afi	NA
13/9/2017	Sec Comm. School Abo Ogbagante	Mbe	NA
13/9/2017	Government Sec. School Kanayang	Mbe	NA
15/9/2017	Community Sec School Bokalum	Mbe	NA
17/9/2017	Government Primary School Bamba	Mbe	NA
	Total		230

EXCHANGE VISITS: Nine exchange visits involving 18 schools were facilitated by

WCS this quarter for students to share knowledge on biodiversity conservation. Three schools were engaged per site and a total of 933 students participated. Exchange visit enhance exchange of ideas on conservation issues between conservation club members. Activities implemented during exchange visits include Cross River gorilla game, art competition, and nature poems recitation. Others are quiz competition and conservation drama. These activities were carried out in a competitive manner and involved teachers in the host schools.

Table 4: Number of students engaged in exchange visits from July to September 2017

	Site	School(s)	Location	Number of students
13/7/2017	Okwangwo	Buentsebe Sec. School Wula vs Comm. Sec. School Butatong	Butatong	102
17/7/2017	Afi	Community Sec. School Kakubok vs Government Sec. School Kakwagom	Kakwagom	80
18/7/2017	Mbe	Government Sec. School Kanyang vs Comm. Sec. School Olum	Olum	105
7/8/2017	Okwangwo	Community Sec. School Okwabang vs Comm. Sec School Butatong	Okwabang	120
8/8/2017	Mbe	Government Sec. School Kanyang vs Buentsebe Sec School Wula	Kanyang	76
15/8/2017	Afi	Community Sec. School Olum versus Comm. Sec. School Buanchor	Buanchor	104
12/9/2017	Afi	Community Sec School Katabang vs Comm. Sec School Buanchor	Katabang	110
14/9/2017	Okwangwo	Comm. Sec School Butatong vs Comm. Sec School Bamba	Butatong	140
18/9/2017	Mbe	St. John The Baptist Model Sec School Wula vs Sec Comm. School Bateriko	Bateriko	96
		Total		933

TREE NURSERY ESTABLISHMENT & PLANTING: This quarter, 90 ebony (*Diospyros crassiflora*) and African walnut (*Lovoa trichilioides*) seedlings were purchased and

distributed to 3 schools: Community Secondary School Olum (Afi), Buentsebe Secondary School Wula (Mbe) and Community Secondary School Butatong (Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park). The distributed seedlings were planted within the respective school's premises. In addition, a small nursery was raised using "pure water" polythene bags collected from restaurants and other public places. Conservation club members were tasked to collect seeds of bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*), African pearwood (*Baillonella toxisperma*) and ebony for nursery establishment. Conservation club members in Buentsebe Secondary School Wula contributed 20 seeds of bush mango each in addition to African pearwood and ebony seeds collected during field trips to Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary. With these seeds they were able to establish a nursery of 470 seedlings. The conservation club in Comprehensive Secondary School Okwabang established a teak (*Tectona grandis*) nursery with 500 seedlings also using empty "pure water" polythene bags. Buentsebe Secondary School Wula successfully transplanted the African pearwood and ebony seedlings raised. In the month of September, Comprehensive Secondary School Okwabang also successfully transplanted the 500 teak seedlings they raised. The village head of Wula, Chief Okwo Ofre, and the community youth leader, Mr. Harrison Ankwo, commended the efforts of the students and WCS to protect the environment for the good of all.

FORMATION OF LISTENING GROUPS AND EVALUATION OF MGMC RADIO

PROGRAM: Between 21st and 27th of August 2017, WCS conservation education coordinator worked with the "My Gorilla My Community" radio program manager, Hilary Chukwu, to carry out monitoring surveys in local communities to gather listener feedback to guide future program design and implementation. Questionnaires were administered to listeners in communities to gauge their perception of the program. The team was able to meet with listening groups in 8 villages around Afi, Mbe, and Okwangwo. Interviews were also conducted with community members on conservation challenges facing them and possible solutions. The interviews were recorded and will be included in the next series of the radio program.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS: A total of 16 village meetings were held during this period to discuss conservation issues. In the month of August, 4 village meetings were held with villages in Afi (Esekwe, Kakubok, Okubuchi and Kakwagom Irruan) to discuss the increasing threat of farm encroachment into the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary. WCS intern, Charles Emogor, joined and assisted the conservation education coordinator to organize and facilitate these meetings, as part of his internship training. In September, 12 meetings were held with villages in Afi, Mbe and Okwangwo. The meetings ALSO focused on farm encroachment, as well as hunting and bush burning. Plans for great

ape film shows were discussed in each of the communities visited. A meeting of all Irruan villages earlier scheduled to further discuss the issue farm encroachment was postponed. The Clan Head of Irruan however, promised to fix a new date for the meeting that will be communicated to WCS.

WORLD GORILLA DAY: On 24th September 2017 WCS Nigeria joined the rest of the world to mark the maiden edition of World Gorilla Day which creates the opportunity for people all over the world to come together in celebrating gorillas, and more importantly, taking action to protect endangered gorillas in the wild. WCS has work in Nigeria for over 10 years to save the critically endangered Cross River gorilla and took full advantage of the World Gorilla Day to further the campaign for the effective protection of Cross River gorillas in Nigeria. Activities carried out on the day include rally, tree planting, and art competition in schools, and radio talk show on Cross River Broadcasting Corporation (CRBC) radio station, Calabar.