

SHARING LIMBE EXPERIENCE

Nouhou NDAM

The workshop on one of Limbe's activities was designed to present an informal education session to a mixed audience (gender+age).

Many institutions have a well set up education programme. At a time, they deal with clearly defined groups of the community such as preschool children, school children, students and adults. In Cameroon, an audience for environmental activity is hardly homogeneous. For such a mixed public, different interpretations have to be given to one image (slide, photograph etc) to be able to interest each major group which composes the audience. It was an experience Limbe Botanic Garden had to share with congress participants.

The "Limbe workshop" was a session on slide projection, using Limbe Project slides. The audience was divided into three groups to match the three major groups that usually make-up an audience in Cameroon. The audience groups are children (6-18 years), Adult males (from 18 years old) and women (from 18 years old). Their major interests and devastating activities to the environment were listed followed by proposals to make their attitudes friendly towards the environment:

GROUP: CHILDREN (6 to 18 YEARS)

This group is usually composed of Primary School children and primary School drop-outs.

Their activities of major interest include various games, tourism and listening to music.

Some of their harmful activities are:

- trapping of small animals,
- collection of fuel wood from the forest (tree felling),
- traditional farming systems (slash and burn, shifting cultivation etc.)
- collection of Forest fruits, nuts and seeds (shooting of fruits or felling of trees)

GROUP: ADULT MALES (>18 YEARS)

Secondary School children, secondary school drop-outs, farmers, workers and business men make-up this group.

Among other things they like craft-work, dances and theatres and drinking beer or palm wine. Some of their activities which may contribute to forest destruction include:

- clearing of the forest for farm land,
- collection of fuel wood,
- logging for timber,
- trapping, and
- burning of grass land for hunting (at altitudes > 2000 m)

GROUP: WOMEN (>18 YEARS)

Primary and secondary school drop-outs, secondary School children, workers and business women constitute this group.

Their activities of major interest are:

- market visits
- farming
- church going
- participation in choral groups
- participation in lending / borrowing unions and
- exchange visits

Some of their activities which may contribute to forest disappearance include:

- ◆ soil cultivation
- ◆ burning in forest farms
- ◆ collection of fuel wood

Participants were separated into three groups each representing a group described earlier. Knowing the

audience's interest and their devastating forest related activities, participants' task was to use their skills as educators to interpret each slide presented to them to be able to educate in an interesting manner the three different groups of their audience. A group should not be left out during the interpretation of two consecutive slides.

Comments on the Limbe slides

Participants came out with useful proposals.

The negative approach of children can be alleviated with environmental friendly processes such as:

- ◆ trapping using forest ropes,
- ◆ collecting dead tree parts (avoiding felling),
- ◆ practice good farming methods,
- ◆ collect only fallen fruits, seeds and nuts, and
- ◆ planting more nut or fruit producing trees to serve more people.

Some proposed means of alleviating men's negative process were:

- ◆ use of good farming methods
- ◆ use of vegetable ropes and not snares
- ◆ obtain permits before hunting

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- ◆ follow rational logging and
 - ◆ practice bee Keeping.

For women, it was proposed that emphasis be put among others on:

- ◆ use of good cultural practices
- ◆ use vegetation (cut) as compost manure
- ◆ collect dead wood, not kill trees for fuel-wood, and
- ◆ use recommended methods for collecting nuts, fruits and seeds.

Outcomes of the "Limbe workshop"

From the evaluation of the workshop it was understood that:

- the audience should be encouraged to participate in the slide presentation as it keeps everyone interested,
- with a mixed audience, a quick preli-

minary discussion is needed to enable an education officer to identify the different groups present in order to select and interpret the slides accordingly,

- a planning of photographs to be taken (slides) is needed to directly address the environment related issues to an audience,
- a member of the education staff should be in the audience to informally record all necessary information such as the uses of a plant, where a particular animal can be found in the forest, who can help to obtain a needed decision or fund.

POSTERS

Photographs with English and French captions were exhibited to illustrate the educational role of Limbe Botanic Garden.