

# Implementing Great Ideas



## Developing Social Innovations - Cameroon



Children in Woteva Village – Pic. by Jesco W.

Woteva and neighbouring villagers are hospitable. They cultivate their local farms for food and depend on the few available natural resources. Hunting of wildlife for meat is no longer allowed by the government. Many precious resources on the mountain are fast disappearing due to uncontrolled and illegal exploitation. There's the need to develop efficient and effective mechanisms to regenerate and sustain available resources.

The chief of Woteva Village, Bernard Lieti, and his people succeeded in creating the Woteva Community Forest

& Management for the preservation of wildlife and repopulation of threatened natural resources. The wild mountain elephant, monkeys, chimpanzees and hundreds of species of animals and plants are currently repopulating. The chief has also managed the planting of several endangered species of trees in the Woteva Community forest with the help of the Environment and Rural Development Foundation (ERuDeF), a local NGO.



2015 tree planting

Woteva and neighboring villagers survive on less than three dollars per day. Acute

deforestation is an enormous concern in this region. In the nineteen-eighties, the government exploited timber on this section of the mountain. The government cut most of the best and mature varieties of timber species without replacement. This exercise gave way to illegal exploitation of wood and animal products by local inhabitants, which has continued to this day.



Villagers cut thousands of immature trees for personal interests. This led to the extirpation of some species. 21,580 hectares lost between 1987 and 2002 and 22,600 hectares, between 2002 and 2010, representing an annual loss of about 2,825 hectares on the lowland regions of the mountain (MINFOF, 2014). Malin Rivers and his colleagues said, "The black and cream striped timber of the African Zebrawood (*Microberlinia bisulcata*, CR) fetches high prices from the international market and is subsequently a target for selective logging. This has led to the local extinction of the species from the foothills of Mount Cameroon" (Malin Rivers, Kirsty Shaw, Emily Beech and Meirion Jones, 2015).

In recent years, we saw a reduction in crop yields caused by climate change. The poor condition of the road doesn't help villagers transport their produce to markets. Many migrate to congested cities without proper education. Others aspire to travel abroad in search of a better life. Villagers struggle to set up a solid organ with strategic objectives and goals that can help everyone. A concrete vision doesn't support individual initiatives villagers undertake. And villagers can't do a fair redistribution of resources.

## Treff-End's Activities

### The Cedrela Project

Treff-End launched the Cedrela Tree Planting Project in 2014. This ongoing seasonal project targets 12,500 Cedrela trees in Woteva. We also plan to extend the project to neighboring villages. Originally from Latin America, Cedrela has several advantages including:



- *Moderately soft but durable wood species, very good for timber (all sorts of construction projects).*
- *Very good for interior and exterior furniture (can resist rust and water for many years).*
- *Natural repellent of parasites such as termites and other wood-boring insects.*
- *Good for heating and charcoal.*
- *Grows very fast, tall and matures between 15 to 20 years.*
- *Does not require too much rainfall to grow.*

It is "premier timber for furniture, decorative veneer, musical instruments, wooden novelties and doors. It is best used for cigar boxes, but also for light construction, mouldings, cabinets, panelling, boxes, exterior joinery, weather boards, louvered doors, boat building (especially racing boats), canoes, turnery, matchboxes, household implements, plywood and firewood. It is also suitable for crates, fencing and animal pens. The repellent smell of the wood to insects makes it particularly suitable for the manufacture of clothing chests and wardrobe[s]" (Orwa C, A Mutua, Kindt R, Jamnadass R, S Anthony, 2009).





cutting down some tree species that aren't economically viable. In order not to destroy the ecosystem, we fell only in those areas where we plant Cedrela and other trees.

- **Crosscutting:** After felling trees, we cut them into small pieces and transport them to storage places where they would dry up and serve for cooking, heating and other purposes.
- **Soil preparation:** We till the soil to render it soft. This helps roots to penetrate easily into the ground during early growth stages of the trees. Because of the cost involved in tilling the soil, we till a small area where we plant the tree.
- **Planting:** After preparing the soil, we plant trees.
- **Maintenance:** During the first two years of growth, we maintain the trees. Cedrela trees are soft and fragile when young. Strong winds can bend them. They also need sufficient light to grow. So we reduce shades from other tree species.



*Cedrela trees planted in 2014 -1015 planting season in Woteva Village.  
Most of the trees are above 5m in height after two years.*

Treff-End Sponsored the planting of 2500 Cedrela trees in 2014 to 2015. Because of poor maintenance, only about 700 of them survived.

typical planting season involves a series of activities including:

- **Clearing:** This involves cutting down the grass and shrubs to allow access to the planting areas. We do this after we plant trees to reduce growth competition. Clearing is unnecessary when the trees are above 10m.

- **Felling:** Involves

## Challenges of the Project

- **Lack of seedlings:** We don't have a nursery to generate seedlings. We cannot meet the costs of building one at the moment. So we travel a long distance of about 40km to get seedlings from trees owned by Wewuley Consultancy, a forest management organization.



*Mathias transporting harvested seedlings for transplanting*

- **Planting time constraints:** The best period to plant the seedlings is between March and April, after the first rains. But we can't plant during this period because we must allow the seedlings from the mature trees to germinate—about 2 to 3 weeks. And another one to two months to grow to a stage we can securely transplant them. So we plant during the high rainy period from June to August. Cedrela trees don't need too much water in their early growth stages. In 2015, we replace hundreds of trees that died due to lack of sunlight and too much water.



- **Effective means of transportation:** We don't have a 4WD car to transport seedlings from harvested location to our farms. We use bikes at the moment. This stresses the trees and weakens their growth abilities during the early growth stages.

- **Waiting periods:** The ideal scenario is to transplant seedlings immediately. Unfortunately, the distance to and from the

original location is far. Moreover, we need to mobilize the people to transplant them. So we plant trees 72 hours to few days after we harvest them.

- **Finances:** This project needs finances to achieve satisfactory results. Treff-End stands as the sole financier of the project. We want villagers to take part in expanding the project.
- **Equipment:** Treff-End relies mostly on human labor. This helps villagers have temporary jobs. But we need equipment—a 4WD car, tractor, security items and planting tools.

## Ecotourism

With a wide diversity of eco-touristic sites, ecotourism is a future project in Woteva and neighboring Villages. Sites include the 1959 lava flow, regenerating equatorial forest, plant and animal species—monkeys, baboons, chimpanzees, bats, birds, etc. An amazing topology—caves, mountainous hills, valleys, craters, rocky slopes and savannah. During our research trip in 2014 - 2015, we spotted many sites villagers can develop to attract visitors. This project can enhance the lives of villagers. Enjoy a few sites in the pictures.



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## Finances

### Operating Income

- From our Salaries – 489,930 fcfa (CHF 873)

### Expenses

- Tree Planting Project – 489, 930 fcfa (CHF 794)
- Other Activities – (CHF 79)

### Contact us

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