



Voice of Nature
VON Magazine
Speaking for Nature & the Voiceless

A bi-yearly publication of the VoNat Media Group

Issue N° 003 September 2023

World's Largest Frog in Cameroon:
La plus grande grenouille du monde au Cameroun:

SAVE IT OR LOSE IT
Le protéger ou le perdre

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FIRST BIRDS, AMPHIBIANS SANCTUARY IN CAMEROON, A BIG WIN!



In Kupe-Muanenguba Division of the South West Region and the Mounjo Division of the Littoral Region of Cameroon lie Cameroon's first sanctuary for the conservation of amphibians, reptiles and birds dubbed the Mount Muanenguba Herpeto-ornithological Sanctuary. The sanctuary has a surface area of 696 hectares and is host to about 100 species of amphibians, 89 species of reptiles and 270 bird species with up to 60% of them said to be endemic to the area. Up to 13 species of mammals including drills, duikers and pangolins, have also been recorded in the area.

The Mount Muanenguba Herpeto-ornithological Sanctuary came to life on February 21, 2023, following a decree signed by the Prime Minister of Cameroon, Chief Dr. Joseph Dion Ngute. The Prime Ministerial Decree came at a time when the biodiversity hot spot is threatened by habitat loss for agriculture, grazing and commercial purposes, and hunting of amphibian and reptile species for pet trade, household consumption and cultural purposes. Many conservationists and environmental actors across Cameroon say the creation of the Mount Muanenguba Herpeto-ornithological Sanctuary is a big win to amphibians, reptiles, birds and other biodiversity spe-

cies in the mountain landscape, and the adjacent communities.

"This protection status will enable us to better manage and protect the biodiversity species in the ear-marked area. It will also be easy for us to involve community members and all stakeholders in the area to participate in the conservation and protection of the biodiversity of the Area," Madam Ikome Delphine, South West Regional Delegate of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOP).

"Though one of Cameroon's popular ecotouristic attractions, many people have not known the uniqueness of this landscape especially in terms of amphibians, reptiles and birds endemism. This move by the government will enhance the visibility of the area as a unique habitats for Amphibians, Reptiles and Birds to the benefit of the fringe-forest communities in the area and for conservation," said Tansi Godwill, Executive Director of the Environment and Community Development Association (ECoDAs).

Beside these, the creation of this sanctuary will undoubtedly enhance the protection of local water catchments, cultural and sacred sites, and the Manengouba lakes, while also promoting ecotourism

and the wellbeing of adjacent communities.

What Next?

With the Mount Muanenguba Herpeto-ornithological Sanctuary now a reality, the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife is expected to appoint a conservator to the protected area, and transfer staff who will support the conservator in the management of the biodiversity hot spot. A series of sensitization meetings are expected to be organized involving all the relevant stakeholders concerned with management of this protected area like local authorities, traditional rulers, community members, and local support organization carrying out activities in the area. There is also the urgent need to materialize the limit of the sanctuary to ensure that the community members

do not encroach. For a better management of the new Sanctuary, management and business plans will have to be developed as well.

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DISTRIBUTION

VoNat Media Group

FUNDED BY:

National Geographic Society

Programme to Save Goliath Frog Taken to International Stage



The Executive Director of Voice of Nature (VoNat), Ndimuh Bertrand Shanchou, participated at the National Geographic Society's London Explorers Festival in April 2023, where he presented on the plight of the world's largest frog, the goliath frog (*Conraua goliath*) in the Mount Nlonako Area in Cameroon.

The Festival ran from April 17 to 21, 2023, at the Royal Institution in London. Ndimuh used his presentation to highlight the goliath frog and conservation threats, and actions which his Organization, VoNat, is carrying out to conserve the species in the Mount Nlonako Area, Littoral Region of Cameroon.

He also underscored the need for international support to save the world's largest frog from the brink of extinction. "The goliath is endangered on the IUCN Red, and is found only in Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. With the rate at which they are being harvested, this emblematic species may disappear in the near future if no urgent

conservation actions are taken now," he stated.

Otherwise known as the giant slippery frog, the goliath frog is the largest living frog on earth. It has a length of up to 32cm and weighs about 3.8 kilo, like the weight of a newborn baby. It lives in fast flowing rivers, secondary forests, farmlands, and small pools in streams from where it comes out at night to feed on insects and other amphibians.

Through its feeding habit, the species contribute to limiting the spread of diseases like malaria and yellow fever, which are deadly diseases in Cameroon and other Africa countries. Despite this invaluable role of the species in the ecosystem and its cultural values, about 20,000 are said to be harvested every peak season for food and pet trade. This means that about 5000 of the giant disappear from the wild in Cameroon every month, a situation that makes the future of the species in this area very bleak.



A close-up photograph of a Goliath Frog, showing its dark, textured skin and large, prominent eye. The frog is the central focus of the image, with its body and limbs visible against a blurred background.

World's Largest Frog in Cameroon:

La plus grande grenouille du monde au Cameroun:

Save it
Le protégé

Goliath Frog



or Lose it
er ou le perdre!

(Conraua goliath)

WORLD'S LARGEST FROG IN CAM

The goliath frog (*Conraua goliath*), which is the world's largest frog, is a giant slippery frog located in the Mount Nlonako Area, Littoral Region of Cameroon, and the Equatorial Guinea. Just like the name goliath, the frog is indeed big! A fully grown goliath frog weighs up to 3.3kg and is up to 30cm long. The frog lives in secondary forests and near flowing streams and waterfalls from where they come out at night to feed on insects, fish, and other smaller amphibians. Through its feeding habit, the giant slippery frog contributes to limiting the spread of malaria and yellow fever, which are deadly diseases in Cameroon and other parts of Africa.



On the basis of statistics from researchers, at least 20000 of this emblematic species in Cameroon are harvested and sold every peak season that is from November to February. This means that up to 5000 individuals of this emblematic species in Cameroon disappear from the earth surface every month during its peak season.

Kola is a community in the Littoral Region of Cameroon known for the buying and selling of the goliath frog. On this Friday morning, at about 8 am, Emmanuel Njong, born in Kola some 35 years ago and his friend, who declines to give his name to "strangers", are at the road site with piles of frogs hunted the previous night, for sale. Emmanuel's friend has a pile of five giant frogs on his left hand and another pile of five on his right hand. He lifts them up and runs with them towards any car that slows down hoping to have a sale, while Emmanuel seats in a make shift thatched hut, probably resting after a night of goliath frog hunting.

As my colleague, Sandrine Akeabeh, and I move towards the hut to engage Emmanuel in a chat, we stumble on a bucket with water and large frogs. Without waiting for us to ask, Emmanuel indicates: "we put them in the water so they can stay alive". According to him, live frogs are more expensive than dead ones. "We sell a pile of four live frogs for up to XAF 20000 (circa \$ 40) or even XAF 50000 (\$100) for those with big cars while a pile of four dead ones for just XAF 10000 (about \$ 20)," he adds. Emmanuel hints that unsold frogs are dried for home consumption. He discloses that the frogs are good for pregnant women. "When my wife is pregnant, I prepare some of

the biggest sizes of the frogs for her to eat. It makes the child healthy and strong when put to bed. If you see my last son; he is very strong and healthy because of this," he asserts. In the course of our discussion, I saw a large bag shaking. He noticed the shock in my eyes and immediately clarifies: "those more frogs. I also collect from other hunters and sell for us to share proceeds". For the close to 1 hour of our chat, about 4 piles of the giant slippery frogs that is about 20 frogs were sold.

The Kola denizen who is into hunting the goliath frogs for the past 15 years, hunts twice a week. "We hunt every Thursday and Friday. We usually set out for hunting at night, about 8pm. When we see the frog, we point the torch straight into its eyes to make it confused, move closer and then throw the net to catch it," he recounts. The goliath frog hunter, attests he has been eating the frogs since he was conceived in his mothers womb. He does not believe the frogs can become extinct. The goliath frog is classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List. With the rate at which the giant slippery frog is being harvested, conservationists and researchers are unanimous that it may disappear from the earth surface in the near future if no urgent conservation actions are taken.

VoNat Weighs in!

A Cameroon-based biodiversity conservation and sustainable development non-profit organization, Voice of Nature (VoNat), which I founded in 2019, has since launched a programme to save the goliath frog from extinction. In July 2022, I received a grant from the National Geographic Society, which the Organization has leveraged to educate 100 kids and young adults from five communities within the Mount Nlonako Area on the ecology, be-



haviour, distribution of amphibians around the world, conservation threats/importance, and the actions they can take. "We believe that educating and engaging the children in fighting against the wanton depletion of the goliath frog will ensure sustainability. This is because they are the leaders of tomorrow and will be the ones to take decisions and enact laws regarding the conservation of the species. Also, they will be able to take the conservation message to their parents, who will believe more in them than strangers," Mr. Nkede Henry Nkede, VoNat's Amphibians Conservation Programme Field Coordinator said shortly after a conservation education session about the frogs.



Ecological Study

Apart from the education sessions, the youngsters are engaged in ecological studies of amphibians and other species in their range habitats using mobile apps, both during the day and in the night. Over 62 observations are made with up to 22 species identified including amphibians species, fish, reptiles and insects, during these sessions. These observations include but not limited to direct observation of species in their habitats (dead and alive), feeding signs, dung, threats, vocalization and others.

"I can see feces of the goliath frog, something I have never seen before. I can also see a snake, though it is not alive," Ebude Christabel from Ntolo community says during the study. Marie Therese from Nkongnine and her friends are particularly thrilled seeing the goliath frog in its natural habitat for the first time. "This is my first time seeing the Goliath frog and other species in their natural habitat. I am so happy because not everyone is given this kind of opportunity," Marie Therese said.

CAMEROON: SAVE IT OR LOSE IT

Kids take Action



The education and ecological study sessions organized by VoNat ignite fresh love for goliath frogs and other endangered amphibians in the kids and youths of the Mount Nlonako Area. With the lessons learnt and new found love in goliath frogs and other species in the area, the Organization mentors the youngsters to produce media arts tools like songs, poems, articles, open letters, drawings etc. They are using these media arts tools to raise awareness and enhance the understanding of local communities in the Mount Nlonako Area of Cameroon to save the goliath frog from extinction in an outreach and community-wide education and sensitization campaign. They are able to reach out to over 2000 forest community members in the Mount Nlonako Area and other parts of Cameroon with goliath frog conservation messages and a call to action using micro radio TV and radio programmes, crowd-pulling community events, and public exhibitions.

Media Sensitization



Home TV-Douala in the Littoral Region of Cameroon, and Mount Nlonako FM Radio are the main media used to reach out to communities in the Mount Nlonako Area with goliath frog conservation messages. One of the high points of the outreach and sensitization

campaign is May 20, 2023, being Cameroon's National Day Celebration and Endangered Species Day. The about 100 kids marched past in front of over 1000 community members including traditional authorities, policy makers and local administrators amongst others brandishing posters and drawings of the goliath frog and other endangered amphibians species they want protected. They also brandished unique conservation messages like: "Stop the hunting of the Goliath frog, it is an endangered species", "amphibians are great contributions to our ecosystem, save their habitats" etc. and set up an amphibians conservation exhibition stand in Ebone. The young amphibians conservation ambassadors have a clear message for their parents and friends in the Mount Nlonako Area.

Elapenda Sidonie from Ntolo says "it is our responsibility to conserve the goliath frog for our children and children's children to grow and also see. I call on the population to stop indiscriminate hunting of the frog and make its conservation their priority". Bothcou Marie Therese, from Nkongnine recommends that "denizens of the Mount Nlonako Area shuns water pollution, deforestation, setting of traps and indiscriminate hunting to save the goliath frog at brink of extinction."

These messages are weaved into three songs, which are being played on community radio stations, and poems, drawings, articles and stories for continuous education and sensitization about the frog and other endangered amphibians in the Mount Nlonako Area.

Local Leaders Respond

Local leaders and community members have not remained indifferent to the conservation messages on goliath frog and other endangered species in the Mount Nlonako Area sent out by VoNat and about 100 kids and youths through the community-wide outreach and sensitization campaign. The Divisional Officer of Nlonako Subdivision, Mr Elenga Abina Alphonse, says "These endangered species and their habitats have to be conserved. I received in audience the Executive Director of VoNat and have pledged my support for this initiative".

The traditional ruler of Mangamba, Chief Roland Essengue Mbonda, says "I agree with the children that the goliath frogs are other species in this area are our patrimony, inherited from our ancestors. It is our responsibility to conserve them for our children and the future generation. So, we will take necessary dispositions to ensure that they don't become extinct".

The Nlonako Sub divisional Delegate of the Cameroon Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF), Madam Mokete Stella recommends that "VoNat should support Government's efforts by creating touristic sites for frog watching". According to her, such action will contribute to conserving the frogs and their habitats will contributing to local development.

Hunters Demand Alternatives

Though some hunters are conscious that their wanton hunting activities are driving the goliath frogs gradually towards extinction, they say it remains a key source of protein and livelihoods for them and their families. According to one of the hunters Mr. Lakatouch, "the frog is our own meat. You cannot eat plantains without meat; it cannot go. We also sell some to pay rents and meet the needs of our family". The hunter adds: "if I have another means of survival or a lucrative business, I will not be risking myself at night hunting the frogs. It will provide enough money that I can buy fish or chicken as meat for the house".

Mr. Mbapheh Njoh Richard, is aware that hunting the goliath frogs and other endangered species is against the Cameroon Forestry Law but insists it is brisk business. "We sell the goliath frog for up to XAF 20000 (about \$40) depending on the size. So stopping it is not easy," he quips.

With more conservation consciousness generated in the Mount Nlonako area, there is an urgent need to provide alternative sustainability schemes to frog hunters and farmers to divert their attention from depleting these emblematic species and their habitats. There is also need for more hands-on conservation actions with the community kids and youths to sustain the new-found conservation zeal.



La plus grande grenouille du monde a

La grenouille goliath (*Conraua goliath*), qui est la plus grande grenouille au monde, est une grenouille géante localisée dans la région du mont Nlonako, dans la Région du Littoral Cameroun et en Guinée Equatoriale. Tout comme le nom Goliath l'indique, cette grenouille est gigantesque ! Une grenouille goliath adulte pèse jusqu'à 3,3 kg et mesure jusqu'à 30 cm de long. Elle vit dans les forêts secondaires et à proximité des ruisseaux et des cascades. Elle sort la nuit pour se nourrir d'insectes, de poissons et d'autres amphibiens plus petits. A travers cette alimentation, la grenouille géante contribue à limiter la propagation du paludisme et de la fièvre jaune, qui sont des maladies mortelles au Cameroun et dans d'autres régions d'Afrique.



Selon les statistiques des chercheurs, au moins 20 000 individus de cette espèce emblématique sont capturés et vendues au Cameroun pendant la saison d'abondance, soit de novembre à février. Cela signifie que jusqu'à 5 000 individus disparaissent de la surface de la terre chaque mois au Cameroun pendant la saison d'abondance.

Kola est une communauté de la Région du Littoral Cameroun connue pour la commercialisation flagrante de la grenouille goliath. Ce vendredi matin, vers 8 heures, Emmanuel Njong, né à Kola il y a environ 35 ans et son ami, qui refuse de donner son nom aux « étrangers », se trouvent sur l'axe routier principal avec des tas de grenouilles chassées la nuit précédente, pour effectuer la vente. L'ami d'Emmanuel tient un paquet de cinq grenouilles géantes dans sa main gauche et cinq autres dans sa main droite. Il se dirige précipitamment vers toute voiture qui ralentit dans l'espoir d'avoir de potentiels acheteurs, tandis qu'Emmanuel s'assoit dans un abri de fortune au toit de chaume, se reposant probablement après une nuit de chasse.

Alors que ma collègue Sandrine Akeabeh et moi nous dirigeons vers Emmanuel pour engager une conversation avec lui, nous tombons sur un seau rempli d'eau et de grenouilles géantes. Sans attendre qu'on le lui demande, Emmanuel indique : « on les garde dans l'eau pour qu'ils restent en vie ». Selon lui, les grenouilles vivantes coûtent plus chères que celles mortes. "Nous vendons un tas de quatre grenouilles vivantes jusqu'à 20 000 XAF (environ 40 dollars) ou même à 50 000 XAF (100 dollars) à ceux qui ont les voitures de luxe, tandis qu'un tas de quatre grenouilles mortes se vend seulement à 10 000 XAF (environ 20 dollars)", ajoute-t-il.

Emmanuel laisse entendre que les grenouilles invendues sont séchées pour la consommation domestique. Il révèle que les grenouilles sont bonnes pour les

femmes enceintes. « Lorsque ma femme est enceinte, je lui prépare les plus grosses grenouilles dument sélectionnées. Cela rend l'enfant sain et fort lorsqu'il va naître. Si vous voyez mon dernier fils ; il est très fort et en bonne santé grâce à cela », affirme-t-il.

Au cours de notre discussion, j'ai vu un gros sac trembler. Il a remarqué le choc dans mes yeux et précise immédiatement : « encore des grenouilles. Je collectionne également auprès d'autres chasseurs, je vends et nous partageons les bénéfices ». Pendant près d'une heure de conversation, environ 4 tas de grenouilles géantes, soit environ 20 grenouilles, sont vendues.

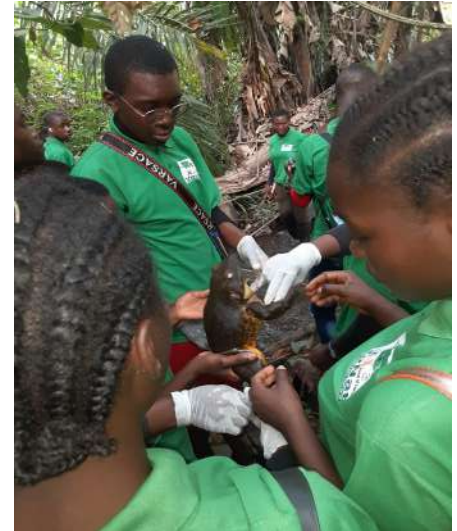
L'habitant de Kola, qui chasse les grenouilles goliath depuis 15 ans, chasse deux fois par semaine. « Nous chassons tous les jeudis et vendredis. Nous partons généralement à la chasse la nuit, vers 20 heures. Quand nous voyons la grenouille, nous pointons la torche directement dans ses yeux pour l'aveugler, nous nous rapprochons puis nous lançons le filet pour l'attraper », raconte-t-il. Le chasseur de grenouilles goliath atteste qu'il mange des grenouilles depuis sa conception dans le ventre de sa mère. Il ne croit pas que les grenouilles puissent disparaître.

La grenouille goliath est classée en voie de disparition sur la Liste rouge de l'UICN. Compte tenu du rythme auquel la grenouille géante est chassée, les défenseurs de l'environnement et les chercheurs sont unanimes sur le fait qu'elle pourrait disparaître de la surface de la Terre dans un avenir proche si aucune mesure urgente de conservation n'est prise.

Protéger les grenouilles Goliath, VoNat intervient !



Voice of Nature (VoNat), est une organisation à but non lucratif basée au Cameroun que j'ai fondée en 2019 avec pour mission principale la conservation de la biodiversité et le développement durable. Elle a dès lors lancé un programme de conservation de la grenouille goliath pour éviter son extinction. En juillet 2022, j'ai



reçu une subvention de la National Geographic Society, dont les fonds étaient destinés à éduquer 100 jeunes enfants de cinq communautés localisées autour du mont Nlonako sur l'écologie, le comportement, la répartition des amphibiens dans le monde, les menaces pour la conservation, l'importance et les actions qu'ils peuvent entreprendre.

« Nous sommes convaincus qu'éduquer et impliquer les petits jeunes enfants dans la lutte contre la surexploitation de la grenouille Goliath garantira la durabilité. En effet, ce sont eux les dirigeants de demain et ce seront eux qui prendront les décisions et promulgueront les lois concernant la conservation de l'espèce. En outre, ils pourront transmettre le message de conservation à leurs parents, qui croiront davantage en eux qu'aux étrangers », a déclaré M. Nkede Henry Nkede, coordinateur sur le terrain du programme de conservation des amphibiens de VoNat, peu après une séance d'éducation à la conservation sur les grenouilles.

Outre la séance éducative, les jeunes participent à des études écologiques sur les amphibiens et d'autres espèces dans leurs habitats à l'aide d'applications mobiles, de jour comme de nuit. Plus de 62 observations sont réalisées et jusqu'à 22 espèces sont identifiées dont des espèces d'amphibiens, de poissons, de reptiles et d'insectes au cours de ces séances. Ces observations comprennent, sans toutefois s'y limiter, l'observation directe des espèces dans leurs habitats (mortes et vivantes), les signes d'alimentation, les excréments goliath, quelque chose que je n'ai jamais vu auparavant. Je peux aussi voir un serpent, même s'il n'est pas vivant », a déclaré Ebude Christabel de la communauté de Ntolo lors de l'étude écologique. Les menaces, les vocalisations et autres.

u Cameroun; Le protéger ou le perdre!

« Je peux voir les excréments de la grenouille

Marie Thérèse de Nkongnine et ses amis sont particulièrement ravis de voir pour la première fois la grenouille goliath dans son habitat naturel. « C'est la première fois que je vois la grenouille Goliath et d'autres espèces dans leur habitat naturel. Je suis tellement heureuse car tout le monde n'a pas ce genre d'opportunité », a déclaré Marie-Thérèse.

Les jeunes enfants mis en première ligne



Les séances d'éducation et d'étude écologique organisées par VoNat suscitent un nouvel amour pour les grenouilles goliath et autres amphibiens en voie de disparition chez les jeunes enfants de la région du mont Nlonako. Grâce aux leçons apprises et au nouvel amour trouvé chez les grenouilles goliath et d'autres espèces de la région, l'organisation encadre les jeunes pour qu'ils produisent des outils médiatiques comme des chansons, des poèmes, des articles, des lettres ouvertes, des dessins, etc. Dans le cadre d'une campagne d'éducation et de sensibilisation à l'échelle communautaire, ils utilisent ces outils d'arts médiatiques pour sensibiliser les communautés locales de la région du mont Nlonako au Cameroun et améliorer leur compréhension sur la préservation de la grenouille goliath de l'extinction.

Leurs actions peuvent de toucher plus de 2 000 membres de la communauté forestière de la région du mont Nlonako et d'autres régions du Cameroun avec des messages sur la conservation de la grenouille goliath et des appels à réagir à travers des microprogrammes dans les stations de radio et de télévision, d'événements communautaires attirant les foules et d'expositions publiques.

Home TV-Douala dans la région du Littoral Cameroun et la radio FM du Mont Nlonako sont les principaux médias de masse utilisés pour atteindre les communautés de la région du Mont Nlonako avec des messages sur la conservation de la grenouille Goliath. L'un des moments forts de la campagne de sensibilisation est le 20 mai 2023, date de la célébration de la fête nationale du Cameroun et de la journée mondiale des espèces menacées. Une centaine de jeunes ont défilé devant plus de 1 000 membres de la communauté, parmi lesquels des autorités traditionnelles, des hommes politiques et des administrateurs locaux, brandissant des affiches et des dessins de la grenouille goliath et d'autres espèces d'amphibiens menacées qu'ils souhaitent

protéger. Ils ont également brandi des messages de conservation poignants comme : « Arrêtez la chasse à la grenouille Goliath, c'est une espèce en voie de disparition », « les amphibiens contribuent grandement à notre écosystème, sauvez leurs habitats », etc. et ont installé un stand d'exposition sur la conservation des amphibiens à Ebone. Les jeunes ambassadeurs de la conservation des amphibiens ont un message clair pour leurs parents et amis de la région du mont Nlonako.

Elapenda Sidonie de Ntolo déclare : « il est de notre responsabilité de conserver la grenouille goliath pour que nos enfants et nos petits-enfants puissent grandir et la voir aussi. J'appelle la population à cesser la chasse abusive de la grenouille et à faire de sa conservation, sa priorité ». Bothcou Marie Thérèse, de Nkongnine, recommande que « les habitants de la région du Mont Nlonako évitent la pollution de l'eau, la déforestation, la pose de pièges et la chasse abusive pour éviter l'extinction la grenouille goliath ».

Ces messages sont intégrés dans trois chansons, qui sont diffusées sur les stations de radio communautaires, ainsi que dans des poèmes, des dessins, des articles et des histoires pour une éducation et une sensibilisation continues sur la grenouille et d'autres amphibiens en voie de disparition dans la région du mont Nlonako.



Les responsables locaux réagissent

Les autorités locales et les membres de la communauté ne sont pas restés indifférents aux messages de conservation sur la grenouille goliath et d'autres espèces menacées dans la région du mont Nlonako envoyés par VoNat et environ 100 jeunes enfants dans le cadre d'une campagne de sensibilisation à l'échelle communautaire. Le sous-préfet de l'Arrondissement de Nlonako, M. Elenga Abina Alphonse, déclare : « Ces espèces menacées et leurs habitats doivent être conservés. J'ai reçu en audience le Directeur Exécutif de VoNat et j'ai réitéré mon soutien à cette initiative ».

Le chef traditionnel de Mangamba, Sa Majesté Roland Essengue Mbonda, déclare : «

Je suis d'accord avec les enfants sur le fait que les grenouilles goliath et d'autres espèces dans cette région, constituent notre patrimoine, hérité de nos ancêtres. Il est de notre responsabilité de les conserver pour nos enfants et les générations futures. Nous prendrons donc les dispositions nécessaires pour garantir qu'ils ne disparaissent pas ».



La Déléguée d'Arrondissement de Nlonako pour le Ministère des Forêts et de la Faune du Cameroun (MINFOF), Madame Mokete Stella recommande que « VoNat soutienne les efforts du Gouvernement en créant des sites touristiques pour l'observation des grenouilles ». Selon elle, une telle action contribuera à la conservation des grenouilles et leurs habitats et par ricochet améliorera le développement local.

Les chasseurs de grenouilles exigent des moyens alternatifs de subsistance

Bien que certains chasseurs soient conscients que leurs activités de chasse conduisent progressivement les grenouilles goliath vers l'extinction, ils affirment qu'elles restent une source clé de protéines et de moyens de subsistance pour eux et leurs familles. Selon l'un des chasseurs M. Lakatouch, « la grenouille est notre propre viande. Vous ne pouvez pas manger du plantain sans viande ; ça ne peut pas aller. Nous en vendons également pour payer les loyers et subvenir aux besoins de notre famille ». Le chasseur ajoute : « si j'ai un autre moyen de survie ou un business lucratif, je ne me risquerai plus la nuit à chasser les grenouilles. Cela me rapportera suffisamment d'argent pour pouvoir acheter du poisson ou du poulet comme viande pour la maison ».

M. Mbapheh Njoh Richard est conscient que la chasse aux grenouilles goliath et à d'autres espèces menacées est contraire à la loi forestière du Cameroun, mais insiste sur le fait que c'est une activité florissante. « Nous vendons la grenouille goliath jusqu'à 20 000 XAF (environ 40 dollars) selon la taille. Donc arrêter cela n'est pas facile », ironise-t-il.

Avec une conscience de plus en plus grande de la conservation au sein des communautés de la région du mont Nlonako, il est urgent d'évaluer et de proposer des moyens de subsistance alternatifs et durables aux chasseurs de grenouilles goliath et aux agriculteurs qui détruisent l'habitat des amphibiens, afin de détourner leur attention de l'exploitation abusive de ces espèces emblématiques et de leurs habitats. Il est également nécessaire de mener des actions de conservation plus concrètes auprès des jeunes enfants de la communauté pour soutenir le nouvel élan de conservation de ces jeunes ambassadeurs pour la protection et la conservation de la grenouille Goliath.



SOME AMPHIBIANS, OTHER SPECIES

Recorded During VoNat's Ecological Studies



Goliath frog (*Conraua goliath*),



Stejneger's Robber Frog (*Craugastor stejnegerianus*)



Golden-backed Frogs



Common Spadefoot (*Pelobates fuscus*)



Egyptian Toad (*Sclerophrys regularis*)



Big-eyed Frogs

BIODIVERSITY SPECIES IN MOUNT NLONAKO AREA

Field Trips with Community Kids & Youths



Giant Slippery Frog (*Conraua robusta*)



African Freshwater Crabs



Coastal Tailed Frog (*Ascaphus truei*)



Ray-finned Fishes



African Freshwater Crabs



Tilapias

Poetry Corner

Goliath Frog

It lives in water and at the verge of extinction
We must do everything to stop this!
Together united for goliath frog conservation
Long live VoNat (conservation NGO)
Together we can; yes we can!

Diwandja Abo Therese Megane

La nature, source de vie

La nature, habitat et source de vie des
amphibiens
Pourtant menacé, tué et détruit par l'homme
Nous enseignerons à nos parents
et à nos communautés
Conservons les amphibiens
Pour un meilleur écosystème;
Pour le bien de l'avenir !

Elianga Ebaa Esther Joelle

Save Endangered Amphibians

We will save you!
Your existence is threatened
By pollution, deforestation & poaching
But you remain very dear & valuable
Without you the world is in danger
Your destruction exposes us to diseases
We will save you for future generations

Akoum Tientcheu Vanel

Grenouille Goliath, notre amie

Grenouille Goliath, tu es un ami pas un ennemi
Vous nous aidez au quotidien ;
Vous réduisez la propagation du paludisme, etc.
Vous préservez et entretenez l'écosystème
C'est notre devoir de vous protéger
Vous êtes notre ami!

Tu as été créé pour vivre et non pour mourir
Nous continuons à te détruire pour vivre
Mais ce n'est pas une raison suffisante
Vous avez besoin de notre aide !

Chers amis, chers membres de la famille
La grenouille Goliath n'est pas contente de nous
Ils ont besoin de notre compagnie,
protégeons-les
Pour le bien-être de nous tous

Mbotcheu Marie Therese

Open Letters

Appel au maire d'Ebonye pour sauver les amphibiens

Bonjours mme le maire, si je bien ou press de votre
haut et bien veillance ces sollicite votre aide sur la
protection des amphibiens dans notre societe. Ainsi
cet espece qui est en voie de disparution dans nos
communaute a cause des pratiques qu'exerce
home dans environnement tel que: la pollution des
eaux qui entraine leur deplacement vers des autre
endroit, souvant entraine leur mort, ce branconage
(soit pour la nutrition quotidien, sort pour la vente).
De ce fait nous solliciton votre aide a fin de sa pro-
tection. J'espere que cette letter parviendrait a
vous et que nous aurait une reponse favorable a
notre problem.

Mongo Ndamé Blanchette

A Call to Stop River Pollution

Amphibians are animals that live in water and on
land. They are threatened by pollution and defor-
estation. It reproduces sexually. We use chemical
products to kill the fish but we also kill the frogs.
Through this, we are involved in the threat in pol-
luting the water and others. We are the cause of
the disappearance of these frogs or these species.
Lets protect these species finally so the future generation can
know about these species.

Diwandja Abo Therese Megane

Conservation Song

Conserve Our Endangered Species

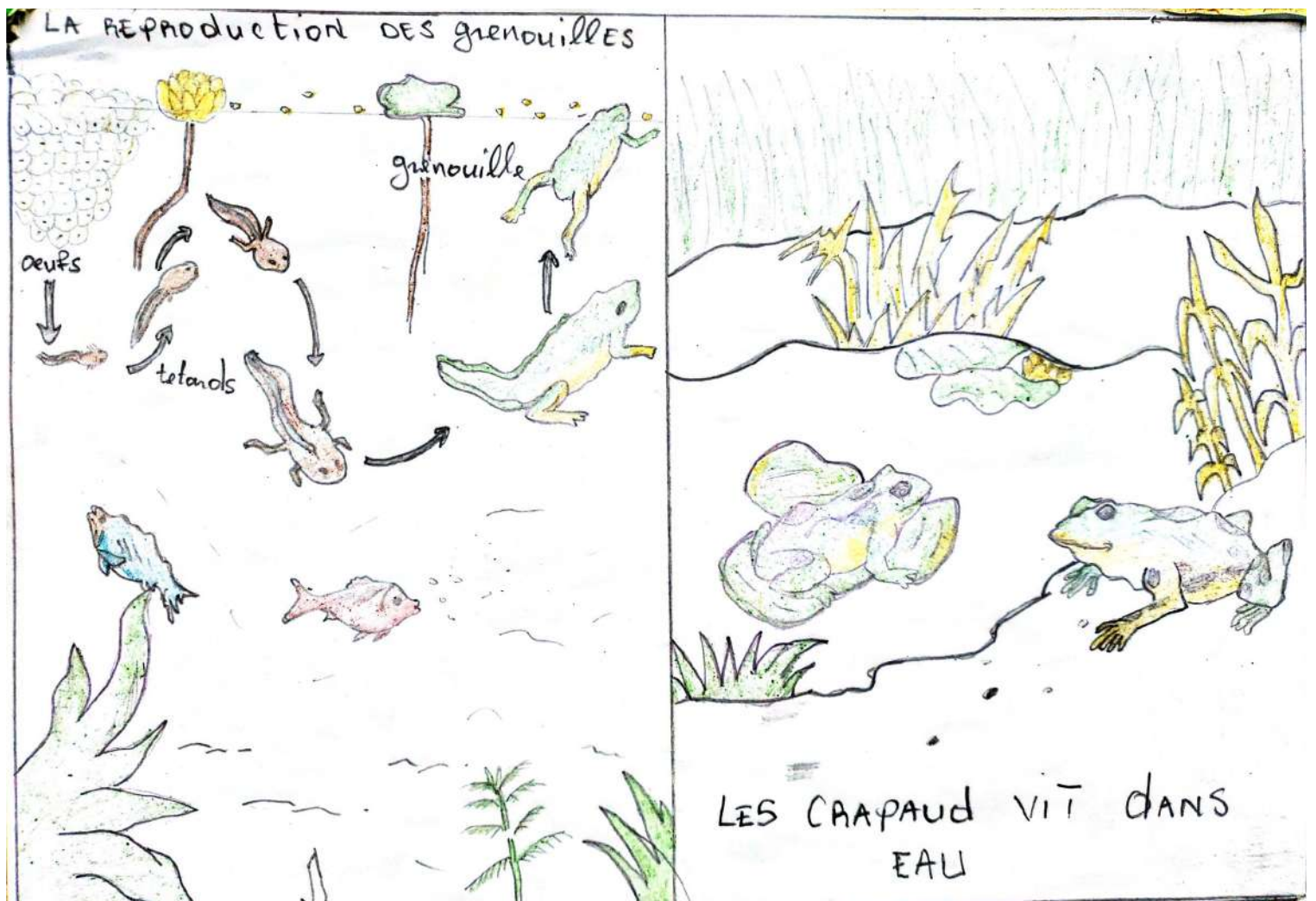
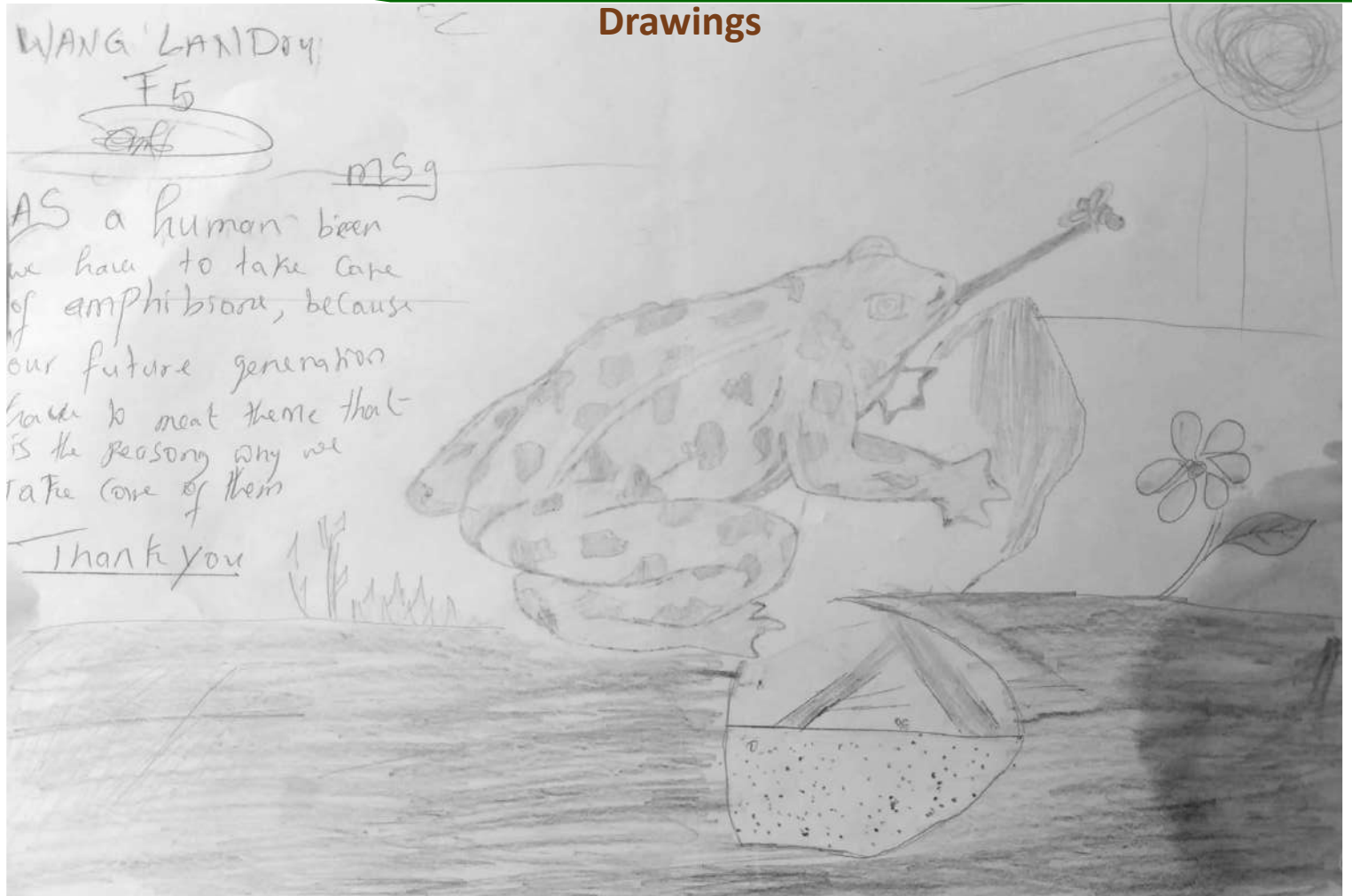
We are here for the same purpose
We are here for the conservation of goliath frog; a
species at the verge of extinction
We are here for conservation.

We believe in this...
We know that hand-in-hand
We will get there.

We have gathered here for the same purpose...
For the conservation of goliath frogs
For the conservation of endangered species
Nature calls to take action today
To stop all actions that threatens its existence

Composed by Etong Divine

Drawings



BATTLE WITH ELEPHANTS OF MOUNT CAMEROON



The world's largest land mammal, Africa forest elephant (*Loxodontacyclotis*), classified as critically endangered on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List is at daggers drawn with communities in the West Coast Cluster Conservation Zone of the Mount Cameroon National Park. The Mount Cameroon National Park is a 58,154-hectare IUCN Category II protected area created by the Cameroon Government in 2009. It lies on the coast in the Gulf of Guinea, with an altitude of about 4,100 meters above sea level, the highest mountain in West and Central Africa, and remains one of the most important and threatened centres of biodiversity and endemism in Cameroon and Africa.

Forest elephant population increased from 170 in 2009 to 300 in 2019, while the population of its 41 adjacent communities has increased exponentially within same period, due to the rich volcanic soils, educational facilities, and most recently, the arm conflict that has rendered other parts of North West and South West Cameroon unsecured. This has induced competition for the same land, with elephants spotted in the communities every now and then.

Farmers, who depend entirely on farming for their livelihoods, work extremely hard all year long growing crops to meet up with the ever-increasing family exigencies and livelihoods needs only to lose all to the elephants. Che Linus, an Internally Displaced Person (IDP), in Bankingili lost all he labored for on August 19, 2023 to the elephants. "I came here as an IDP. I planted 800 plantain suckers, 200 yams and coco-

yam, and 50 meter square of watermelon but elephants have destroyed all. I am frustrated! Let them kill some of these elephants. We are tired," Mr. Che laments.

While this has caused some farmers to abandon their farms in search of alternative livelihood sources, others have no option than to keep "fighting" with the elephants.

"The conflict is still on. Elephants now sleep behind our schools. The whole community is affected as a vast majority of our population depend on farming," said the West Coast Cluster Chairman, Mr. Nche Thomas Njungu Elive.

Government, Conservation Organizations Step In!



According to the South West Regional Delegate of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF-SW), Delphine Ikome, the Cameroon Government has been actively engaged

in resolving the human-elephant conflict in the West Coast Cluster of the Mount Cameroon National Park. "Scary missions have been organized, beehive fencing and chilli pepper fencing established, but this has not stopped the elephants from leaving the park into the communities," the MINFOF-SW boss said.

Madam Ikome explained that her Ministry has been engaged in continuous sensitization and monitoring to avoid farmers from encroaching into the park, and has, through the Programme Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (PSMNR)-South West Region, provided affected communities with alternative sources of livelihood support. "We have assisted the community with the establishment of multipurpose community nurseries to

generate revenue, provided improved Cassava cuttings to farmers for increased yields, provided them with timber and non-timber forest products to plant in their farms and community forests. Some communities have benefited from cassava transfor-

mation units, with plans of a storage facility underway," she added. Beside these, the Ministry has installed 100 beehives along the Park border with the aim of limiting elephant incursion.

Apart from the Government and partners, some conservation non-profit organizations are carrying out different actions to complement Government's actions at mitigating this conflict. One of such organizations is Voice of Nature (VoNat). VoNat recently launched its "Save the Elephants Initiative" that aims to establish an eco-friendly system that will contribute to enhancing the peaceful co-existence of the African forest elephant with adjacent communities of the Mount Cameroon National Park, most especially in the West Coast Cluster. In the first phase of the initiative, implemented with funding support from Lush Charity, the organization collaborated with the Mount Cameroon National Park Service to monitor and evaluate the status of 100 hives earlier installed at the Park border to limit elephant incursion into the community.

VoNat has since leveraged the result of the monitoring and evaluation exercise to rebait over 76 bee hives along the West Coast Cluster of the Park to enhance their colonization rate, as a means of limiting elephant incursion into the community that often lead to conflict. The organization recently produced five new bee hives to reinforce the bee hives earlier installed along the West Coast Cluster as a human-elephant conflict mitigation tool.

Beside evaluating and supporting bee hives installation to resolve the conflict, VoNat is carrying out conservation education in schools to neutralize the ardent hate and negative perception of elephants by Mount Cameroon adjacent communities including kids and youths, who hold the key to the future sustainability of the species in the area. The organization believes that education and sensitization can be successful in changing the negative attitudes of communities of the West Coast Cluster conserva-



tion zone of the Mount Cameroon towards elephants conservation, and getting them engaged in conservation efforts.

West Coast Communities' Grievances

Even as the Cameroon Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife through its Regional Delegation and the Mount Cameroon Park Service, alongside other conservation organizations make efforts to mitigate the human-elephant conflict, some community members are still not satisfied. "Villagers do not want to hear anyone talk to them about elephants. Anything related to conservation, sensitization or coexistence is out of question! They have listened to these for the past 5 years, but nothing has changed," said the West Coast Cluster Chairman, Mr. Nche Thomas Njunga Elive.

"We have tried chilli Pepper, scaring mission and others with the Park but the elephants keep coming. The Park and MINFOF-SW should respect the Prime Ministerial Decision and kill two of these elephants," he added. Denizens of the West Coast Cluster of the Mount Cameroon National Park believe that the only thing that can scare elephants from their communities is the blood of their counterpart.

MINFOF-SW Responds

The South West regional Delegate in the Cameroon Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife, Delphine Ikome says, all attempts for the

implementation of the said Decision have been abortive. "When the decree came, we informed the community about it and had to collaborate with some community members, forces of law and order and an expert to do the killing. We went to the field on several occasions, but couldn't meet the elephants since they do not just stay on one corridor. So, we decided to suspend the implementation and start working towards the 'Safe Approach' for communities to cohabit with the elephants. The result of this will be made public soon," she stated. Elephant are a key architect in the regeneration of the forest which serves as a carbon sink and is very instrumental in fighting climate change, one of the world's most dreadful crises. Beside these, elephants play a crucial role in improving the conditions of other species in the forest. Given the importance, which this species has on the ecosystem, many conservation experts see co-existence as the best way out of the conflict but villagers still wonder how possible this can be.

THE ELEPHANT CRY

You say you hate me yet you don't let me live in peace
 You say I am big and ugly yet you stop my heart for my teeth and flesh
 You say you love your family but I'm not sure how
 For if you did you won't hunt mine every day and deprive me of their comfort.

You say you love nature, yet see me as a threat.
 Am I not part of nature too?
 The farther into the wild I go, the closer to my home you get.
 So where then should I live if not join you in your homes?

I'm sorry for destroying your food
 But that is because you have destroyed mine and I am unfamiliar to yours.
 I hate living like this

So please can we go back to being neighbors, if not friends?
 Yours sincerely, ELEPHANT...

By Chah Gladness



STUDENTS OF ESMT-GERMANY SHARE EXPERIENCE



In April 2023, Cameroon-based biodiversity conservation and sustainable development non-profit organization, Voice of Nature (VoNat) and the top 1 business school of Germany, ESMT Berlin, signed an agreement permitting five students from the school to volunteer at VoNat for one month. Shortly after their stay at VoNat, the postgraduate students jointly put together the following write-up about their volunteering experience at the Organization:

Our team had an enriching experience working with Voice of Nature (VoNat). We were impressed with the level of passion and dedication demonstrated by the organization's founders and their commitment to promoting environmental sustainability and community development. The SIP programme and the collaboration with VoNat presented a great opportunity for us to make use of our knowledge and skill sets to support VoNat to achieve future successes. VoNat showed us an effective and caring way of mitigating the impact brought by climate

change. It was inspiring to work with such a mission-driven organization, and we learned a lot from the experience. One of the most significant learning moments for us was the importance of effective communication and collaboration. We realized that clear communication and collaboration are crucial to achieving project goals and ensuring everyone is on the same page. We also learned how to effectively manage a project with a remote team, which was particularly challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. Another valuable lesson we learned from the project was the importance of understanding the client's needs and goals.

We worked closely with VoNat to ensure that our project deliverables aligned with their vision and objectives. This helped us to develop a comprehensive understanding of their organization, which, in turn, helped us to deliver relevant and valuable results. VoNat also showed us the way of fighting climate change which combined education of the youth and offered solutions to actual problems faced by households. As for the future, we believe that the outcomes of our project can be used to help VoNat achieve their goals and promote their mission. Our crowdfunding campaign guidebook can serve as a useful tool for the organization to secure funds and resources, while our report on environmental datasets can help them analyze and measure their impact.

We are really grateful to VoNat for the great opportunity, which trained and tested our skills of teamwork and problem-solving. With this experience, we believe that we can better perform with these skill sets in the future career. We hope that VoNat can continue to grow and expand their impact, and we are open to collaborating with them in the future.

(More about this programme at: <https://vonat.org/volunteering-and-youth-mentorship/>)

INSIDE VoNat

Voice of Nature (VoNat) is a Cameroon community-based biodiversity conservation and sustainable development non-profit organization created in 2019 by a group of youths with a strong desire to use their skills, knowledge and experience to finding solutions to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development challenges, while engaging other kids, young adults and their communities to do same. The idea was that through this, a sustainable and healthy planet will be created that all will enjoy and also hand to the next generation. On September 30, 2020, VoNat was authorised by the Cameroon Ministry of Territorial Administration following registration No.1125/G.37/C84/VOL.I/SASC to operate as an apolitical, non-denominational and non-profit organization.

Vision

VoNat envisions a planet where every individual intentionally treats nature with love and respect, understanding that their existence and that of generations is dependent on the environment.



Mission

Building a greener, safer and more sustainable planet for wildlife and humanity to thrive.

What We Do

Species Conservation: Bringing back endangered great apes, amphibians, elephants and birds from the brink of extinction

Forest Landscape Restoration

Restoring degraded ecosystems & watersheds in Cameroon

Climate Change Adaptation & Resilience:

Helping communities adapt lives and livelihoods to changing climate

Environmental Reporting & Communication:

Raising awareness on environmental issues, promoting responsible natural resource management

Upcycling & Waste Management:

Transforming waste into other useful products, contributing to sustainable waste management

Volunteering & Youth Mentorship:

Providing conservationists the opportunity to contribute to building a better planet.

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