

## Case study 8

# Cameroon – Campo Ma'an

The extent of Bagyeli Pygmy involvement  
in the development and Management Plan  
of the Campo Ma'an UTO

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## **1 Introduction**

For the project *Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas in Africa*, a case study was conducted in the Campo area of south-west Cameroon to assess its impact on Bagyeli Pygmies living in the area. The aim was to identify the extent of their involvement in the Development and Management Plan of the Campo Ma'an National Park (PNCM) based upon their stories of daily life in and around the park as well as to obtain their views on the management of the park that is such an integral part of their lives.

The study also gathered the views of those involved in the day-to-day running of the park (the extension field workers [*animateurs*], the 'ecoguards', the forest wardens, etc.) in order to gain a better understanding of the way they approached their work. This report provides an analysis of the different interviews conducted as well as of the documents consulted by the author, a representative of the non-governmental organisation (NGO), Planet Survey.

## **2 Methods and Approach**

The Campo study required the use of two different research techniques: interviews and literature research.

### **Interviews**

The interviews were conducted at three levels:

#### **People in villages**

These were based upon discussions carried out separately with Bagyeli and Bantu, conducted in groups of twos and threes, where each person was encouraged to give their point of view. A series of small meetings were held for this purpose.

#### **Fieldworkers**

This level involved interviews with those involved in the daily work of the park, including those responsible for extension or enforcement of the rules: the hunting guards, extension field workers, and the head of the local forest post. A meeting was organised with park managers and other data collections were carried out in Egboje with a researcher from Tropenbos International.

#### **Project Managers and other environmental actors**

This involved various exchanges with SNV (the Netherlands Development Organisation), the Ministry of Environment and Forests, and Tropenbos

International. Others involved in environmental issues were also consulted, notably the Centre for Environment and Development, and the project managers for the Metchewo Reserve in *le Haut Nkam* (west Cameroon).

It should be underlined that Bagyeli were the majority of those interviewed for this research. The interviews with the other actors were used to verify the information already generated at the local level and to understand the views of those involved in the conservation project.

### **Literature Research**

Texts, reports and studies, relating to either the Bagyeli people or the environment, were reviewed, as well as the texts of laws and conventions relating to the conservation and management of biodiversity.

## **3 The Campo Ma'an Operational Technical Unit (UTO)**

### **Background and legal status**

The area covered by the Campo Ma'an project forms part of the permanent forest estate, defined by Article 20, paragraph 2 of Law 94/01 of 20/01/1994 with respect to forests. It has an area of 7,098 km<sup>2</sup>, incorporating an Integral Protection Zone of 2,902 km<sup>2</sup>, and four Essential Protection Zones: Dipikar Island, a montane forest (*les monts Mamelles*) of 1,398 km<sup>2</sup>, an integral ecological reserve of 815 km<sup>2</sup> and a so-called buffer zone.

The Campo Reserve (2°09'–2°53' N, 9°48'–10°25' E), created in 1932, was the subject of an agreement between the Cameroon Government and the Campo Forestry Company, in which 1,582 km<sup>2</sup> was granted as a forestry concession. A second, 25-year agreement, was signed in 1938, and in 1978 the concession area was increased to 2,490 km<sup>2</sup>. A large section of the area originally allocated to forestry is located within the Campo Reserve, in contravention of the Decree and Laws 83/4017 and 81/13, which regulate the wildlife and forest use.

The Ma'an forest plantation (990 km<sup>2</sup>) was created under Decree 80/417 of 10/10/80 for conservation of *Aucoumea klanea*, a logging species with a very high economic value.

The Campo Ma'an GEF/Biodiversity Project priority site was created under Decree 91/A/MINEF/DAJ for the preservation and management of the biodiversity in Campo Ma'an and was signed on 12/03/99. This date marked the beginning of a new era for the resident population, in particular the Pygmies. Decree 95/466 which regulates the reserves stipulates impact assessments should have been carried out. This should have been good news because the population's wishes



Photo: John Nelson

**The Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline being laid through the forest adjacent to Bagyeli communities in south-west Cameroon**

would have been taken into account at this stage. Previously, life within the Wildlife Reserve had been regulated, but with the creation of the park and the new funding which enabled the imposition of rules prohibiting access to the protected area and the use of any of the natural resources, the lives of the resident populations, especially the hunter-gathering Bagyeli Pygmies, have worsened. This is all the more paradoxical because the park was created as part of the environmental compensation for the Chad-Cameroon pipeline which, according to the World Bank, would help alleviate poverty. However, the establishment of the PNCM will instead worsen the already precarious living conditions of the local hunter-gathering population. This raises the following question: what were the conservationists' motives in setting up this park?

### **The various parties and their motivations**

There are a number of different parties to the Campo Ma'an Project but for this section of the case study, we focus only on the different project managers of the Campo Ma'an GEF/Biodiversity Project and their roles and motivations.

There are three main components of the Campo Ma'an Conservation Project: the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MINEF), the Central African Regional Governing Body representative of the World Bank's Global Environment Facility, and two Dutch NGOs: Tropenbos and SNV. MINEF's role covers monitoring and

surveillance, carried out by three forest wardens and 15 'ecoguards'.

Tropenbos's main priority was to conduct research as part of the Campo Ma'an Management and Biodiversity Conservation Project. For these researchers, according to Thomas and Thomas (1993):

*the Campo Wildlife Reserve is an interesting site to protect, because it is a long way from Korup National Park (to the north-west), and is situated to the south of Sanaga, and is under a four season equatorial climate. (Extract from a preliminary report of the management plan of PNCM)*

It seems clear, then, that Tropenbos's sole concern has been to advance science, with no other considerations. This is, no doubt, a noble objective, but the people who are now paying the price (particularly the indigenous populations) are not the beneficiaries of this 'grandiose' work.

SNV's goals are to generate awareness in the resident populations about the project and implement ecodevelopment activities. However, on which documentation was the work of their 14 extension agents founded? Particularly when the agents affirm (and they are not the only ones) that no preliminary studies were undertaken, and that no prior consultation of the local people was carried out, for a project that would affect the way of life of several generations of hunter-gatherers. Furthermore, the agents all state that they are unaware of the 'new conservation model' embodied in the WWF guidelines, and know of no convention pertaining to indigenous peoples, or even what indigenous peoples are, as defined in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169.

Regarding these multiple motivations and the inadequacies already identified, one may well ask who is financing this project and why? So far the funding comes from two sources. Seventy-five per cent is from DGIS (the Directorate-General for International Cooperation), the Dutch development agency. According to Tropenbos at Kribi, the Dutch government wants to protect the ozone layer (the existence of which the Bagyeli are not even aware), and to do this, forest ecosystems must therefore be protected. Once again, it is the most vulnerable who are paying the price. The remaining 25% of the funds come from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which, according to a COTCO (Cameroon Oil Transportation Company) manager, was the only (pro-environment) structure not to have fought the Chad-Cameroon pipeline and whose, '*prime purpose is to grant additional subsidies and apportion the funds allocated to cover the extra costs incurred by a developing country, to enable it to work towards achievement of the acknowledged global environmental benefits*' (GEF, 1992b, c). The money comes via MINEF, but the global fund is managed by the World Bank's GEF, who regard this project as part of the environmental compensation for the Chad-Cameroon pipeline project.

In summary, the World Bank, through the mechanism of the GEF and the Dutch government, have financed and supported a project that gravely undermines the right of Bagyeli self-determination and their right to use their natural resources. From now on these people will have no option but to settle in one area and become fishermen, all because Law 78/23 and Decrees 95/531 and 95/466, which govern protected forests and national parks, forbid all collection of natural resources, even for subsistence, from the park area. In fact, according to Article 28 (3) of Decree 95/531 of 23 August 1995, usage rights are upheld only in the national forests. In protected areas (such as the PNCM), only guided walks are permitted. However, WWF's (World Wide Fund for Nature) Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation, under points 6 and 7 recognises indigenous peoples as partners in ecosystem management, and as architects of the conservation and development strategies that affect their territories.

### **The affected community**

The Campo Ma'an Reserve is situated in the Southern Province of Cameroon, in a region of moist equatorial forest in the centre of the forestry belt that extends from Cross River (Nigeria) to the Mayombe Region (Congo and Gabon). It borders the Atlantic Ocean to the west and covers a part of the frontier zone between Cameroon and south-west Equatorial Guinea. The population of almost 300,000 is made up of two main ethnic groups, Pygmies (Bagyeli), who are the first occupants of the area – according to history, they have been here for 4,000 years (Mveng, 1984) – and Bantu (Bulu, Batanga, Yassa, Mvae, Ntumu and Mabea), and to these one must add other non-indigenous groups, notably the Bebilis who come from east Cameroon.

#### **a The Pygmies (Bagyeli)**

Bagyeli, although the oldest occupants of the area but a minority group (there are fewer than 10,000), are hunter-gatherers with a nomadic way of life. They have hunting camps throughout the UTO. In the UFAs (Forest Management Units) around Campo they have over ten camps, where they stay from two months to four years, as is the case with Bibabimvoto, Nyamalande, Nazareth Mabiogo, Bovini, Nkoelon, Nyamabande, Nsbito, near Oveng Otong Adjap and even at Ayamiken in Equatorial Guinea. For these Bagyeli a round-trip can cover over 30 km in the course of their forest-based activities. These Pygmies live almost exclusively from hunting and gathering. They go subsistence hunting with snares made from fibres from the trees known as 'Essale' or else from synthetic fibres, and with dogs and spears. They generally hunt two or three times a week in groups of five to ten people. Their catch rarely exceeds five game animals and sometimes they come back with nothing at all. The community shares the fruits of the hunt and if there is a surplus, it is sold to neighbouring Bantu in order to buy matches, salt and other essentials. Housing is still very insubstantial, mainly consisting of

huts made from strips of bark and leaves, apart from a few exceptional houses made from mud.

## **b The Bantu**

The Bagyeli's neighbours are the Bantu, defined by the elder, Nkonglende from Boussiwilaga, as fishermen by tradition because, as he put it '*God gave them fishing just as he gave us Pygmies hunting*'. In fact, the Bantu population is very large, and subdivided into several groups. Those from the coastal areas, the true fishermen, include the Batanga, the Mabea, and the Yassa, and a little further from the coast are the Ntumu, the Mvae and the Bulu who generally practise subsistence agriculture.

In addition to these two ethnic groups are the Bebilis, a tribe that originated in the east of the country. They live in hunting camps like the Pygmies, and hunt commercially with guns as well as traps, of which one individual may have hundreds, thereby in one session snaring as many as 50 animals that they sell in neighbouring towns.

## **4 The situation before the park and its impact on the Bagyeli**

It should be pointed out that the Campo Reserve has existed since 1932, but has developed over time, first through the creation of the Ma'an production forest in 1980, by Decree 80/417, which extended the reserve by 990 km<sup>2</sup>. Access was controlled, but not as severely as under the 1995 Decree 95/466, which regulates access and the gathering of natural resources in protected areas. The Bagyeli maintain that before the 1995 Decree they were able to go where they wanted, one proof of this being traces of their routes throughout the UTO, and the existence of communities like those living in Lolabé 3, who have relatives in Bibabimvoto and Nyamalande. Furthermore, there were no forest wardens nor ecoguards at that time. The Pygmy peoples, because of their nomadic way of life, had access to the 7,098 km<sup>2</sup> now covered by the park. In fact, in the past part of the reserve had been permanently occupied. On Dipikar Island buildings and old plantations dating from the German colonial era can be found. The Pygmies from Bibabimvoto recall often staying there in hunting camps, as Binyole Binanga David confirms:

*I do not know what the reserve is (. . .) We are now forbidden to hunt on the Dipikar side; before the road was built we often hunted there with dogs. We were at Nyamalande when we were told not to go to Dipikar any more; I often used to go there with my father.*

It was the same for the *monts Mamelles*, where you can still find Pygmy camps. Furthermore, history tells us that '*the Gabon Pygmies, who are part of the same*

group as those from Cameroon' have lived in this part of central Africa for over 4,000 years. (Mveng, 1984). It is obvious that this applies to all the Pygmies populating the west to the south of Cameroon, from Ambam to Campo.

With resolution No. 372/D/MINEF/DAJ of 12/03/99 bringing protected status to the zone and turning the former Campo Reserve into a national park, major changes took place. According to the Park Management Advisor, the difference between the park and the reserve hinges upon which activities are permitted in the different zones. Today the local people find themselves forbidden access to the 2,901 km<sup>2</sup> of the Integral Protection Zone and at the same time are barred access to and use of the natural resources within the 4,196 km<sup>2</sup> area regulated under Decree 95/531 Article 2, Point 6 pertaining to production forests. The effect is more dramatic for the Pygmy populations, essentially nomadic hunter-gatherers, who have since had to limit the extent of their movement, as well as cope with the increased scarcity of game, because the zones in which they are still allowed to hunt are also used for forestry exploitation, and the noise of the machinery scares away the wildlife. Others have taken on a more sedentary lifestyle, with the attendant distress of involuntary resettlement as in the case of the Nsbito family near Oveng:

*The reserve makes life difficult for us because hunting in a restricted area means that the animals can scent us and they run away, so game is scarce (. . .) certain (medicinal) plants can be found at Dipikar, but we do not have access there. (Binyole Binanga David)*

Dipikar Island, for example, is now guarded by the Cameroon army, allegedly to protect against poaching, and no one is allowed access. This situation represents a serious violation of the rights and interests of indigenous peoples, as defined in the WWF Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation (points 8 and 9), which recognise the rights of indigenous peoples to the lands, territories and resources they have traditionally occupied and protected. At the same time, Articles 26 and 27 of Law No 94/01 of 10/01/94 governing forests, wildlife and fishing stipulate that indigenous peoples retain their standard rights of usage, and these rights can only be abrogated in return for compensation both for investment and lost usage rights. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Campo as, up to now, the Pygmies maintain that they have received no compensation. Others who are now waiting to be displaced are still waiting for their compensation, as underlined by Menye Jacques:

*The World Bank forbids us to hunt; we have been asked to leave [the reserve], but we do not want to because we must first be compensated.*

In fact, the Campo Ma'an UTO Project will produce very few – if any – benefits for people in the short term. For the Pygmies, this will inevitably persist into the long term because they will have to change their lifestyle in order to fit in with the new

system; they will thereby lose their cultural heritage, which runs counter to international standards which recognise their right to their own culture and to self-determination. But the question is: what is going to become of the hunter-gatherers? Hence the cry of alarm from Henri Nleme:

*We do not work [for a living], we live from the hunt. Now that we are forbidden to hunt, we are going to suffer a lot; we have no qualifications to do anything else.*

Today, the collecting of natural resources in this area by Pygmies generates a wide range of conflicts:

### **Conflict with hunting guards**

Where conflict with hunting guards is concerned, it is the most vulnerable who suffer. In the case of big hunters commissioned by important people, the guards turn a blind eye, but when it is subsistence hunters they display incomparable zeal. In fact, the study of village hunting practices carried out on behalf of the Campo Ma'an project cites 'abusive' repression on the part of the hunting guards.

**Henri Nleme (far right) with family and friends near Campo Ma'an National Park**



Photo: John Nelson

## **Conflicts between populations over hunting areas**

By virtue of their great mobility, combined with the reduction in accessible areas, the Pygmies more often than not get into trouble with the Bebilis tribe. The Bebilis are commercial hunters who reject the legitimacy of Pygmy customary rights to lands temporarily abandoned by them. Although there have not been any major incidents, inopportune quarrels between a Pygmy family and a Bebilis family in Otong Adjap camp led to the burning of the disputed camp by ecoguards in May 2000 in order to drive them away from the reserve.

## **Conflicts linked to the Bantu using the Bagyeli for hunting**

The majority of Pygmies know the forest tracks and are able to locate game easily. Because of this, the Bantu use them as hunting guides, or provide them with arms so they can do the hunting for them. As a result many fall victim to the game wardens. There have been a number of cases similar to one at Nyamalande, in which a Bagyeli pirogue used for crossing over to Dipikar Island was destroyed in April 2001 by the forest warden at Ebianemeyong, to which he admits.

The Pygmies find themselves in this situation because of the inequalities that exist between them and their Bantu neighbours.

At present, management of the UTO is guided by a zoning plan which came into effect on 6 January 2000, the date on which the old Campo Reserve became a national park. The different zones are presented below.

## **5 The different zones of the UTO: their use, and how they correspond to the new model of conservation**

From 1932 the old Campo Reserve, now the UTO, consisted of one single bloc, but today the Campo Ma'an UTO is subdivided into three different usage areas:

- 1 The national park, where access to resources, even for subsistence purposes, is strictly forbidden.
- 2 Forest Management Units where access to resources is controlled and regulated according to Decree 95/531, which governs the Cameroon forestry system.
- 3 The industrial zone, exploited by SOCAPALM (Société camerounaise de palmeraies) and HEVECAM (Société des Hévées du Cameroun).

According to the Ebianemeyong forest warden, each family has the right to five square kilometres within the UFAs, but this is not shown in the zoning plan. It

should, however, be pointed out that the only text which mentions peoples' property rights is Article 27 of Decree 95/531/PM of 23 August 1995, which relates to community forests. However, this law does not specify whether this right can also be applied in protected areas like the PNCM. In fact, these areas have not been allocated to the relevant groups, even though the new model of conservation supports the use of the technique of community-created maps, which could enable relevant areas to be identified. For example, in Indonesia, WWF has found that this method is a very efficient way to facilitate organisation of territories both inside and outside protected areas, and has thus helped to resolve a variety of problems, in particular those related to community participation in the conservation programme.

The Campo Ma'an GEF Biodiversity Project is thus underway without any impact assessments having been done, even though such studies are a prerequisite for any conservation project. These assessments at least allow for the views of the affected local populations to be gathered. In the case of Campo the required procedures were not carried out prior to its establishment as a national park. Preliminary studies guided by strict respect for the new model of conservation could have helped with the design of the management plan for the area.

By comparing and contrasting the Campo situation with the new models of conservation, some important points arise:

### **Indigenous peoples' participation in conservation projects**

Indigenous peoples, as defined by ILO Convention 169, refers in the case of Campo to the Bagyeli Pygmies. Both the IUCN (The World Conservation Union) and the WWF recognise these peoples' conservation skills because of their having lived with nature for so long. However, the Bagyeli in Campo had no idea of what was happening when the park was established; they were simply told that hunting was now forbidden and that the animals must be protected, without any of their participation in the development of the plans or explanation of the reasons and motivations for this sudden withdrawal of their freedoms. Indeed, the Bagyeli have not participated in the development of any of the different protected area management plans, a grave violation of Article 7 of ILO 169, which recognises the rights of indigenous peoples to make decisions on questions such as the technologies and management systems to be used on their lands. In summary, whether at Nyamalande or Bibabimvoto, the Bagyeli have not given their views on the setting up of the UTO.

*We do not know what a reserve is, we weren't told; we weren't asked for our views. (Loungue Joseph from Lolabé 3.)*

As far as the co-management of the protected areas is concerned, MINEF, with the forest wardens and ecoguards should be carrying out the work. As for the Bagyeli,

they are often persecuted by MINEF, as happened in December 1998 when a Bagyeli from Nyamalande who was living at Lolabé 3, had a wild boar taken by game wardens. When the Bagyeli made a complaint to the village chief, the accused took him to a bar and gave him a few coins and some alcohol so that he would forget his troubles. The WWF and the IUCN recognise that indigenous peoples have often contributed to and participated effectively in the protection of complex ecosystems. But the Campo park managers do not recognise these indigenous peoples' skills in the protection and sustainable management of natural resources, and as a result, are not integrating the Bagyeli in the decision-making process of a project that will affect their lives and those of future generations of their communities.

### **The laws and their application**

Law 78/23 and Decrees 95/466 PM of 20 July 1995 (specifying the application of the forest regulations), and 95/531 PM of 23 August 1995 which defines integrated ecological reserves, wildlife reserves, national parks, and production forests, stipulates the different rules prohibiting or regulating settlements and the collection of natural resources in forests, even for subsistence. But articles 14 and 15(1) of ILO Convention 169 recognise indigenous peoples' rights of possession of the lands and territories they have traditionally used and occupied, as well as the right to manage and exploit the resources within them. The case of Dipikar Island, now under guard by the Cameroon army, is a typical violation of this Convention and indeed, of human rights. In short, this project will change the culture of the Bagyeli, who from now on will be forced to into sedentary lifestyles and will face meat shortages – something they are all aware of – because of the restrictions on where they are able to hunt. These restrictions do not take into account the fact that it has been shown that when Pygmies have large and well defined hunting territories they do not move beyond these boundaries. (Biesbrouck, 1999)

Article 23 of the law governing the Legal Regulations on Forestry and Wildlife, specifies that permanent forests should include '*establishment, based on objectives and a previously agreed plan . . . without generating undesirable effects on the physical or social environment*'. However, in Campo the indigenous peoples were deprived of their rights before any impact assessments were carried out. This has led to the creation of undesirable social effects such as the numerous conflicts between the Bebilis and the Bagyeli over the sharing of hunting zones.

### **The rights to community resources**

As mentioned above, the Ebianemeyong forest warden has confirmed that each family has the right to five square kilometres of land, but that up to the present, no official paper provides evidence of such a provision. The 1994 law and the 1995 enforcement decree, however, set out the methods for allocating community forests. Article 28(3) stipulates that the legal entities able to submit a case for

creation of a community forest are: associations, cooperatives, joint initiative associations, and economic interest groups, and that each entity cannot claim more than 5,000 ha. The procedure for establishing community forests is very cumbersome and, furthermore, cannot be used for land falling within a protected area. (Personal communication, Lontchui Pierre, MINEF). Instead of securing continuing access to the resources upon which they rely, the Bagyeli have been forced to move out of the park, such as at Nsbito where a Bagyeli family 'were asked' to leave their village as it fell within the park. This is in direct contravention of ILO 169 which recognises the right of indigenous peoples not to be evicted from the land they occupy. Furthermore, according to Cameroonian law, the existence of settlements are permitted in national parks.

### **Article 10(c)**

Article 10(c) of the Convention on Biological Diversity requires States, where possible and appropriate, to protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in line with traditional cultural practices which are compatible with conservation or sustainable use. Pygmy hunting methods are perfectly compatible with all of these conditions but there is no denying that the authorities actually discriminate against them, instead offering forestry concessions to logging companies without regard for accepted norms for managing protected areas, which forbid industrial exploitation. The Bagyeli now find that their basic rights, in particular the right to self-determination, are not taken into consideration. They maintain that they were not consulted about the implementation of the Campo Ma'an UTO Project, and the majority do not even know why they are forbidden to hunt. An example is the Tropenbos International/Campo Ma'an Biodiversity Conservation Project report 'Presentation to the populations of the results of the study into village hunting practices' (*Presentation aux populations des resultats de l'etude de la chasse villageoise*) carried out between 22 and 26 January 2001. Although the villages in question were, in the main, inhabited by Pygmies, their specific situation, as an indigenous people with a different culture and traditions, and even more different ways of thinking, were not mentioned. The study did not seek to gather the different populations' views of the project, but rather considered them as subjects of research.

## **6 Bagyeli aspirations with regard to the project**

The Bagyeli wish to hunt throughout the reserve because, according to them, hunting in one area alone will lead to a decline in game populations, and the collection of medicinal plants will be difficult when access to certain areas is forbidden.

- In addition, the Bagyeli request the systematic withdrawal of firearms from the conservation areas because they believe there are too many guns in



Photo: John Nelson

#### Abandoned camp on the edge of Campo Ma'an National Park

circulation. As they say, *'It is the firearms that kill every kind of game'* and *'When you're asking for no more animals to be killed, why make more guns and snares? We Bagyeli have not been making firearms'*. (Mana Jean, from Nyamalande) In fact, the Pygmies do not hunt with firearms – they do not even have the means to acquire them – so do not represent a major threat to the wildlife.

- The Bagyeli would like to see a division of work between communities, with the result that they retain all hunting rights: *'Tradition demands that it is the Pygmies who should provide meat to the villagers. But now the villagers hunt more than we do. . . . The government should tell the villagers not to go into the forests any more.'* (Nkonlende from Bissiwiliga) In other words: agriculture for the sedentary Bantu and hunting for the nomadic Pygmies.
- Another aspect concerns the repression of the big hunters: *'The Bebilis kill more game than we Pygmies do – one of the them can kill as many as 40 porcupines.'* (Mana Jean from Nyamalande). All of the Pygmies interviewed acknowledge this fact and wish that the administration would examine this situation, rather than persecute the Bagyeli who only hunt for subsistence. Some of them, on the other hand, seek compensation and work for future

generations because, if they are going to have to give up hunting, they will have to find some other means of survival and of obtaining meat. (Nsbito)

In fact, what the Bagyeli would like is greater freedom of movement because, as they and WWF recognise, their actions do not, generally speaking, harm the environment, the balance of nature or the maintenance of biodiversity. Bagyeli wish to have their say in the management of this reserve located on their territory.

## **7 Projected long-term impacts of the project**

At the current stage of the project, major changes to the structure of the UTO are not yet visible, but the written version of the plan has modifications and in the long term the impacts of the project on the Bagyeli could include:

- The loss of freedom. The Bagyeli will not be able to move around as they would like.
- The loss of cultural identity. The Bagyeli will be forced to become sedentary farmers instead of remaining hunter-gathers – but not through choice.
- The loss of knowledge. The knowledge they have about the forest, which has been passed down from generation to generation, will be lost.
- The loss of cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is a key element of the new models of conservation being promoted by WWF and IUCN.
- The loss of the region's 'wilderness'. The establishment of the national park and the construction of hotels as set out in the draft management plan and the activities involved therein will have unknown effects upon the region.
- Land tenure conflicts. In the long term there are bound to be numerous problems over land tenure, illustrated by the case of Nazareth where in 1996 Bagyeli left their territory for Ayamiken in Equatorial Guinea.
- Other conflicts. The risk of conflict between hunters from outside the area and the Bagyeli, and also between Bagyeli and game wardens, suggest that existing, latent conflicts will be intensified as a result of the park.

## **8 The lessons from this case study**

In terms of this study, it would appear that conservation projects are, for the most part, subject to intense deliberation and, as underlined by Jeffrey Sayer of the IUCN:

*Legal protection is rarely sufficient to guarantee the continued integrity of conservation areas. The local population, often for good reasons, frequently see parks as restrictions to their rights imposed by government. Guard patrols, boundary lines and tourist amenities will not therefore convince them not to encroach upon their food producing lands. Illegal hunting and gathering are difficult to control, especially when the laws are not respected. In some cases, protected areas lose popular support, credibility, and their condition rapidly deteriorates.'* (Sayer, 1991:1)

In the case of Campo, the Bagyeli regard the setting up of the park as a loss of liberty, as they still claim the right to hunt throughout the area that formerly was theirs. Their current desire to participate in conservation activities is linked to their desire to remain in possession of their environment (Bikulbia, television interview, April 2001). The Pygmies know the forest very well and can move around easily, and their current lack of commitment to this conservation project is tied to the fact that there is no link between this project, in which they do not participate, and their problems. This is the type of factor that led Adams and McShane of WWF to conclude that:

*Parks and other protected areas will eventually be overrun by people's need for land unless the parks serve, or at least are not completely inimical to, the needs of the local population. (Colchester, 1994)*

In fact, the difficult equation for the PNCM will be to reconcile the Pygmies' hunting requirements with the conservation of species for tourism and research. The ideal solution, perhaps, would be for the Bagyeli themselves to be responsible for conservation in their own way. After all, their participation in conservation would be able to help resolve the everyday problems faced by these penniless hunters who live alongside wild animals; without this the animals will die out.

It seems evident, then, that the future of projects like Campo Ma'an depend very much on the degree of involvement of the different parties concerned, particularly the people who have a long history in the area where the park is being set up. To take an example, the Metchewo Forest Reserve in *le Haut Nkam* in the west of Cameroon has now practically disappeared because of demographic pressure through the need for land for subsistence. This is all because, when creating this reserve, the colonial administration did not take the interests of the resident peoples into account.

The desire to impose one's world vision on others has always provoked lengthy discussions and, occasionally, the use of violence. It was in this context that Jacques Ngoun, a Bagyeli Pygmy from Bipindi, told Thérèse Harthaway in an interview (2001):

*We have to change because the world is changing.*

So far these changes are sought, desired and conceived of by Westerners, with the likes of Jacques having no say in the process. The Pygmies can only suffer the changes, and have to adapt to them, thereby losing a substantial part of their cultural heritage, as underlined by Jutta Schmidt in her preliminary report entitled 'The influence on the Baka of external actors in the Lake Lobéké region' (*Influence des acteurs externes sur les Baka dans la région de Lobéké*):

*The loss of forest knowledge is inevitable, because it is tied to progressive sedentarization.*

A case in point are the young Bagyeli of Boussiwilaga who say that none of them knows the traditional techniques for making hunting snares from *Essale* or even where the hunting territories are. This is the situation in Campo, today.

Nevertheless, the local peoples' expression of their wishes is necessary when implementing conservation projects, whose success depends in part on the local population's respect for the rules. Very strict rules drive people to adopt devious means of avoiding them, which was why Mana Jean from Nyamalande asked;

*Why make firearms when you say you no longer want animals to die?*

The difficulty of hunting and the scarcity of animals are what will drive the Pygmies to use firearms for killing game.

The other lesson that can be drawn from the Campo case is the superiority of international over national interests. In reality, the reasons and motivations for the creation of the PNCM stem from international priorities, and have nothing to do with local communities' worlds, who, nonetheless, themselves have a great deal to contribute to tomorrow's world. The Bagyeli are also thinking of their descendants' future, and that of their entire community, which now faces constraints not always shared by the rest of world. *'They are Pygmies and will remain Pygmies'*, as the song goes. Unfortunately, achieving this ambition is not within their own power – and that is where the tragedy lies.

In terms of this report, it would appear that at the current stage of the Campo UTO's implementation, and particularly the PNCM, participation of the people needs to be thought through, particularly for the Bagyeli who live principally by hunting, because to date their role has been restricted to being the subject of studies of hunting behaviour or in their use as guides during the park's establishment. During this process, more and more conservationists and even the international community through organisations such as the ILO, UNESCO and even the United Nations have come to recognise the existence of certain inalienable rights for indigenous peoples, notably the right to self-determination. It is therefore

regrettable that at this stage of the project, prerequisites such as consideration of the interests and wishes of these peoples is not on the agenda.

This project aside, the whole value system needs to be reconsidered. The fact is that hunter-gatherers suffer discrimination both at the national and international level, that their mode of production is not recognised as valid, and that attaching more importance to farming populations is unsupportable. For instance, article 27 of Law 94/01 specifies that: *'Classification of a forest cannot take place until those individuals who have invested in the land concerned have been compensated . . .'* Most often, only agricultural lands are compensated, as seen with the Compensation Plan of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, and even then the hunter-gatherers were more often than not thwarted in exercising their right to compensation, despite having 'invested' their time and energy in the forest lands upon which they rely.

In terms of this analysis, it would appear that at its current stage of development the Campo Ma'an UTO Project has failed noticeably to fulfil its requirements. It has:

- Failed to take into account the desires, interests and rights of resident populations, notably the Bagyeli;
- Failed to apply the proper procedures for the creation of permanent forests of which the PNCM forms a part; and
- Failed ethically, in that the project is part of the compensation for the pipeline – which in itself is meant to help alleviate poverty in Cameroon.

However, the fact that the management plan is still provisional provides a glimmer of hope for the Bagyeli, who can now hope that their rights and interests will be taken into account in the final management plan for the Campo Ma'an UTO Project.

## Acronyms

|       |                                      |
|-------|--------------------------------------|
| COTCO | Cameroon Oil Transportation Company  |
| ILO   | International Labour Organisation    |
| IPZ   | Integral protection zone             |
| IUCN  | The World Conservation Union         |
| MINEF | Ministry of Environment and Forests  |
| PNCM  | Campo Ma'an National Park            |
| SNV   | Netherlands Development Organisation |
| UFA   | Forest Management Unit               |
| WWF   | World Wide Fund for Nature           |

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## Conference discussions

### Commentary on case study by community representative

**Henri Nleme**, Bagyeli community representative, spoke of how the changes had affected his life: 'I was born in Lolabé 3, Campo. I left this place when I was young, and went to Campo where I grew up. That's where I learned to hunt. . . . We started by feeding ourselves with fruits we had gathered; we had not learned how to cultivate crops. Now we are learning this as we are displaced from the forest. We are now farming cassava, bananas and macabo. We are also hunting without making a lot of noise about it. We kill animals sometimes; we do this as we have small children to feed. But now, these wild animals are hard to get. During my father's time we hunted with dogs and traditional weapons. I love the forest where I hunt; I know it perfectly, inside and out.

'I don't know how I can feed my children – I am used to living from hunting. I go hunting, I leave my canoe, and when I come back I find my canoe has been destroyed. I had a small camping place for hunting, and now it has been burned down. I left my mother to make another hut. People destroyed this hut again. I crossed to go to the other side to hunt, although it is forbidden, I have to do it.

'When the park was created we were not informed, they never asked us anything. We only saw tracks in the forest and were told never to go back there. So how will we survive now? It is this hunting that enabled me to buy clothes and send my children to school. If we are prevented from hunting, they should tell us what we should do to carry on living with the forest.

'Do you know why there are no more animals in the forest? If you know, tell me. I know that what makes animals run from the forest, is the people who are cutting the fruit trees on which these animals feed. There used to be only one road up to Campo. Even I could not reach that place, there was only forest. There were all types of animals, elephants, gorillas and so many others. Now that forest exploitation has started, all the trees have been destroyed – a lot of noise, hunting with firearms and the animals have fled. Now it is just an open area. These are the people who brought guns which destroyed the animals in large numbers. We only hunt with nets, dogs and spears. It is only near Nyabisen where there are still animals. On the other side of the Ntem we are stopped from hunting. If we have to hunt around our houses what can you catch? I don't understand why we are told to stop hunting; how will we survive?'

## Panel discussion

|             |                  |  |
|-------------|------------------|--|
| Panellists: | Jean Bourgeois   | – Principal Technical Advisor for the Gamba Project/Gabon, WWF CARPO |
|             | John Rubaramira  | – Batwa Project Officer, MBIFCT                                      |
|             | Kalimba Zephyrin | – Director, CAURWA   |

**Jean Bourgeois** identified flaws in the park's planning processes but was optimistic that remedies did exist: 'In the text it says that the park is an offset to the pipeline project. The protected area was created too fast. Those guilty are not only the donor – GEF funded this – but also the people on the ground who set up a conservation project with a lot of shortcomings. Two NGOs are involved: Tropenbos, who are only interested in research; and SNV who are there to develop awareness of the environmental issues. SNV has shied away from its responsibilities. There was no dialogue with the indigenous peoples, who were asked to move away, and hunting was prevented without consultation. The situation is contradictory, on the one hand allowing logging, (where indigenous peoples may get jobs) but on the other denying the Bagyeli access. Conservation policy has clear aims: some money should have been given to the people as compensation or in the form of land; there should be an eco-tourism project, and agricultural training.

'People have traditions and these can't be changed so quickly. As a conservation worker, I don't see a problem in allowing the Bagyeli to enter parks for subsistence hunting, providing it is well planned. Henri told us how the Pygmies are paid by other ethnic groups to go and hunt – this situation creates a lack of trust. It is possible for the indigenous peoples to talk to the government and the conservationists in order to change laws. Even though hunting is prevented now, it could be authorised in future providing it is well supervised and organised so that it can achieve positive results.

'One solution is dialogue and discussions. Indigenous peoples should make people aware of their rights and continue to struggle for their rights. They require a certain autonomy. They have no representatives from within the communities.'

**John Rubaramira** knew of a similar situation: 'There was another GEF biodiversity project, after which the indigenous peoples were denied access without compensation.' He felt the central issues in the Cameroonian case were both the lack of involvement of the indigenous population, and an awareness of what they could contribute. 'The indigenous peoples' crucial role in conservation of this protected area is not recognised, yet instead they are being forced to lose their cultural identity as they are forced towards the sedentary model.'

Agreeing that either hunting areas or alternative food sources ought to be made available, he also questioned the underlying issues: 'Is it conservation *per se* that we are looking at? Or are we looking at revenues at the expense of human rights? If there is to be revenue from this protected area, it must benefit the most affected people, who are in this case the

Bagyeli. The local community, including the Bagyeli, should participate in any future management plans.'

**Kalimba Zephyrin** identified common themes on the political level: 'Our brothers from Cameroon have said much that is similar to Rwanda and Uganda. This makes me wonder how many people are being disregarded altogether. Our governments are said to be made for the people – do they not consider these Batwa, Bagyeli, Baka as part of the population? It is almost as if these Bagyeli communities are used as tools, not as people who should have a say in their country's development.' He also asked how human rights and environmental NGOs identified who they should consult: '. . . do they first analyse the situation to ensure they work in complementarity with all social groups, or do they only collaborate with the government, which may be dominated by one social group?' He drew a parallel between Africa's colonial past and the post-independence governments in their treatment of the Bagyeli: 'Living in the forests, the Bagyeli did not know what was going on. The educated people in power left them behind, did not educate them in democratic rights and used them as tools . . . The Bagyeli have conflicts with their Bantu neighbours; this is a serious problem and solutions must be found.'

On the question of environmental impact, he was concerned that the Bagyeli now hunt with guns instead of traditional weapons, significantly increasing the numbers of animals killed. However, he developed Jean Bourgeais' point that they 'do not cut trees, do not destroy the environment. But the government is moving them out so that they, the government, can exploit the forest and sell the timber. In Rwanda lack of rain caused trees to die, goats and cows and crops all suffered. These countries which still have forests should stop cutting them.'

He also raised the issue of inadequate diet, exacerbated by the lack of meat. He recommended that 'Special programmes should be set up to heighten awareness on all sides so that governments understand the indigenous peoples' problems.'

## **Participant discussion**

Debate focused on:

- 1 The responsibilities of funding bodies and conservation organisations
- 2 Methods available to oblige funders to meet their obligations
- 3 Identifying solutions to forest access.

### **1 The responsibilities of funding bodies and conservation organisations**

Germain Ngandjui, Park Management Advisor, Tropenbos International/Campo Ma'an Biodiversity Conservation Project, clarified the Park management structure and the role of the organisations involved: 'Campo is part of a management unit, covering 8,000 km<sup>2</sup>, of which the National Park covers only 2,000 km<sup>2</sup>. All the forest exploitation areas are potential hunting areas for the Bantu and Bagyeli.'

He explained that Tropenbos, which had been operating for about three years, mainly conducted applied research on land use. 'We are trying to see if the pressure on natural resources, especially fauna, is sustainable. There is not a big threat to flora.' He confirmed that 'The project intends to permit sustainable exploitation within the forest'.

In reply to Kalimba Zephyrin's query, he explained that 'MINEF is responsible for biodiversity management. They did consult with neighbouring populations. Due to the Bagyeli's mobility perhaps they were missed. The dialogue did not go well between the two.

'Campo was officially created in January 2000, so is about one-and-a-half years old.' Responding to demands for Bagyeli collaboration, he acknowledged that 'The management plan is in the process of being developed; this can only be sustainable with the involvement of all the population: the Bantu and Bagyeli. We have approached organisations about analysing these issues, including the indigenous peoples issues. We feel that conservation includes sustainable use; the people are part of the ecosystem, and you therefore have to involve them.'

Jackson Mutebi, Project Manager, CARE Uganda: Development through Conservation Project, raised the issue of whether the environmental NGOs' input had been sought in compiling the case study. He also felt the problems were operational rather than strategic: 'Environmental NGOs go to an area because there are conservation and development concerns. In Uganda, and probably in Cameroon, we have had operational problems because we could not reach some sections of the communities either because we lacked the expertise to reach them, or because the communities were unable to approach the NGO.' He sought the conference's 'guidance on this operational problem'.

He also noted that 'There has been a lot of emphasis on the traditional practices of the indigenous peoples in Cameroon. . . . Are we saying that the Baka are not accessing modern technology, that they will not use guns which are more efficient? What measures do we need to allow the Baka to hunt, but sustainably? It will not be what they did in the past.'

## **2 Methods available to oblige funders to meet their obligations**

Prompted by Jean Bourgeois' comments, Marcus Colchester, Director, FPP, spoke of 'the responsibilities of the external agencies. As [Jean Bourgeois] mentioned, this protected area has been established in connection with the World Bank-sponsored pipeline, which will also impact on the Bagyeli. The World Bank policy on indigenous peoples requires effective participation, sorting out land tenure, and capacity building to develop the government's ability to work with indigenous peoples. All of these need to be part of an indigenous peoples' plan. Many of us were opposed to the pipeline being approved without this plan being done. The World Bank were well aware of the need to look at Bagyeli interests. Now we learn that another part of the Bank, the GEF, has again ignored the same policy and implemented a project which ignores the rights of indigenous

peoples. We cannot say this is an oversight – it seems there is a structural problem within the Bank.’ He recommended that the Bagyeli start planning how to take their complaint to the Bank.

Margareth Kaisoe, Maasai community representative/Co-facilitator, Ngorongoro, welcomed this analysis. She also endorsed Kalimba Zephyrin’s comments, ‘I feel that national laws should be for all citizens, and enable us to fight for our rights according to these laws.’ Furthermore, ‘We should force the government to give us all equal rights.’

### **3 Discussion of alternatives to forest access**

Jackson Mutebi identified another issue to address when seeking a solution: ‘Henri said the animals have decreased. The farmers are also saying they have too little land. So there are two groups in conflict over land. In practice what do we recommend to do to resolve this conflict?’

Benjamin Mugabuku Meye, Chef de volet sensibilisation, Parc National des Volcans, replied to Kalimba Zephyrin’s concerns about changes in feeding habits. ‘. . . if they don’t have enough food, the government and NGOs should see how they can get enough food, and so don’t have to acquire new feeding habits. If Pygmies are used to eating fruits, why not help them plant fruit trees: domestication of wild resources. In Nyungwe, people planted trees that were normally wild. For example, in the Parc des volcans, it is not only the indigenous peoples who have this problem. Bamboo was cut for baskets; if we stop them cutting bamboo they have no other source of income, but we can help them plant bamboo in villages.’

Margareth Kaisoe disagreed on a fundamental level: ‘I do not believe that my brother understands what we need. We need our original homeland. Life in a foreign land is hard, it makes you suffer. As a Tanzanian, if I am forced to go to Rwanda and given everything I need, I still will not be as happy as in Tanzania with my brothers and sisters, because every day you will be called an immigrant. That’s why all indigenous peoples are trying to go back to the land of their ancestors.’

Close of session.