

GUINEA

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Description of Activity:

The activities of PLEC in Guinea since 1994 to 1998 were essentially based on preliminary work which consisted of choosing a pilot site after a sensitization on the impact of the scientists' project, the local and national authorities, the NGOs agents and the host populations. This was followed by a study of the farming systems and environmental change in the sector of Kollagui in the Guetoya basin (Bantignel prefecture), located in the central plateau of the Fouta Djallon massif. The study was carried out by a multidisciplinary team which used a participatory approach. The team identified the causes of environmental change within the study area and reported on the rarity or the disappearance of game animals and some species of the flora, known for their utility for human beings and for the natural ecosystem.

During this period, while the project became more established, additional sites were identified in the same watershed. With financing from GEF they became demonstration sites. In 1999 work extended into upper Guinea, to Moussaya in the prefecture of Kouroussa in the semi-arid zone.

Important results have been achieved during the four years field work both in Pita and in Kouroussa, (Moussaya). Among the more remarkable results we have:

- sensitized leaders and other principals among the populations who are the project beneficiaries, from beginning to end in order to ensure sustainability of the experience;
- trained, and assisted with small grants, working groups in the agriculture sector as well as in the para-agriculture sector;
- selected and trained expert farmers to take charge of the management of natural resources and the rural human resources;
- combatted illiteracy among adults and especially among women who form the largest part of the rural workforce;
- set up of models of natural resource management that also improve family incomes and operate with respect for the environment;

- trained farmers in agro-biodiversity inventory techniques, in order for them to be able to identify erosion of biological diversity themselves and look for appropriate corrective measures;
- acquired traditional knowledge in natural resource management;
- integrated traditional and modern knowledge;
- formulated recommendations, techniques and policies for farmers, stakeholders and decision-makers.

Agro-biodiversity inventory establishes the status of cultivated species (notably endangered species and species introduced because of their adaptation to climatic and economic conditions). In terms of biodiversity, this helped to identify rare species, endangered species, endemic species, introduced species, local species suitable to replace introduced ones for land cover restoration, and useful species such as medicinal plants, dyeing plants, food plants, fodder plants, timber trees and nitrogen fixing species.

In terms of fauna, similar results have been realized within both sites (Pita and Kouroussa). At Moussaya production of honey has been promoted as added value in the dry-zone forest. At Pita the status of livestock has been stabilized by building cow sheds, which permit more effective collection of animal manure and increased production of compost (a fertilizer easily affordable by farmers).

A total of 165 farmers were trained in compost preparation techniques, 75 in various agricultural techniques (yam, tomato, onion, potato production), 27 in dyeing of cloth, 12 in nursery techniques, transplantation, and care of young plants, 30 in basic literacy, and 10 in bee culture. Two graduate students have been trained, and four scientists have taken courses in English.