

Towards a sustainable post COVID-19 future for indigenous peoples

The Project towards a sustainable post COVID-19 future for indigenous people is implemented by Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Development Association in Bantoum 1 of the Bangangte area in the West Region of Cameroon. The project targets Indigenous Mbororo Pastoralist Community. The project aims to empower and educate the indigenous Mbororo Pastoralists on impact of climate change and to valorize traditional knowledge in the post COVID recovery process. An Indigenous Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) project working on the transmission of traditional medicinal knowledge of indigenous peoples so as to valorize this knowledge for use by future generations, the project also seeks to empower the indigenous Mbororo people on climate change, biodiversity conservation and renewable energy programs. The project has impacted close to 600 indigenous Mbororo women, men, youth and children.



With the current health crisis marked by the corona virus, about 250 women benefited from sensitization, education on the barrier measures put in place by the government to stem the spread of the virus and the use of traditional knowledge to prevent contaminations. They gained practical on how to produce the basic things they need in order to be protected against the COVID-19. The women and youth can now sew their reusable face masks, produce their hand sanitizers and soap in order to implement the barrier measures. This activity is in line with SDG 4, we are encouraging living in good health for indigenous peoples. These trainings were carried

out in the Fulfulde local language so that the Mbororo peoples can have access to adequate information on what is going on in the world and how they can take action in the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.



Indigenous peoples have used traditional medicinal knowledge over time to treat themselves and their livestock. Being custodians of environment and due to their attachment to nature, they have always used indigenous traditional knowledge in environmental and conservation practices. Due to changing times and modernity, indigenous people's traditional knowledge is gradually eroding. If care is not taken next generation will know nothing about this knowledge. This is dangerous for indigenous communities because, our traditions make up our identity.

An Indigenous Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) project, working on the thematic area of transmission of traditional medicinal knowledge, IPSD Cameroon organized an intergenerational knowledge transfer workshop with about 100 men, elderly persons, women, youth and children. The aim of this intergenerational dialogue was to ensure transfer of indigenous traditional medicinal knowledge from the older generation (Knowledge holders) to the younger generation. There were fruitful exchanges on medicinal plants that can treat human and livestock ailments. An intergenerational knowledge dialogue platform was created so that the youth can continue learning from the older generation while also identifying different medicinal plants, their sustainable harvest and use. A traditional medicinal garden is being created so that domestication of all the medicinal plants can take place. This garden will serve as a learning center for younger generation, ensure the availability of disappearing species of plants while providing medicinal plants for sustainable use by the community.



Clean and affordable energy being one of the Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030, IPSD Cameroon saw the need to install renewable solar energy in the Bantoum 1. Youth

were trained on rooftop solar energy installation, installation of solar gadgets and maintenance of solar equipment. More than 20 household currently have access to electricity through solar energy installations. “We are happy that our village is now shinning, we can now charge our phones at home” said Aminatou Doumbou, the Mbororo women leader of Bantoum 1. Formerly they used kerosine lamps and trekked long distances to towns and paid about 1\$US to charge a phone.



Climate change is a global problem today, adapting and mitigating climate change effects is crucial for the survival of humanity. That is why IPSD Cameroon deemed it necessary to move from climate policies to concrete actions that can help indigenous women in the fight against climate change. Indigenous women use lot of firewood in cooking, this accelerates deforestation since they need to cut trees to use as firewood. The women spend long hours in the bushes looking for firewood. This exposes them to risks such as accidents, violence especially rape for young girls and attacks from animals. IPSD Cameroon trained about 55 women and girls to produce fireless cooking bags. These bags are used to complete cooking of food like rice, plantains, cocoyam, beans etc. and to preserve already cooked food so that it stays warm. These are environmentally friendly cooking strategies as the bags help them reduce the amount of firewood use in daily cooking, reduce the stress of lighting fire several times a day to warm food and give the women time to take care of other household work or businesses.



Still on SDG 13 on climate action, the Mbororo women were trained on how to build improved cooking stoves that uses very little firewood to cook. Afforestation and reforestation are activities that were carried out. A tree planting exercise dubbed “One Family, Five Trees” was carried out where all families in the Bantoum 1 and Carriere communities planted 200 environmentally friendly trees to regulate the climate. The objective is to fight against climate change effects by planting trees that can help in sequestering carbon, ensuring good climate and providing fruits for community member. Water friendly trees were planted around water catchment areas so as to ensure water security especially during dry seasons.