

Better News

Better World is a Non Governmental Organization with offices in Bamenda and Yaounde



Welcome!

Greetings to all our supporters readers and interested parties. Much has happened and is in the works as we say goodbye to 2015. Another successful summer camp incorporating a back to back work camp with a mini EDE (practice run for the Upcoming EDE in 2016), new volunteers with a year long commitment, a whirlwind visit by the Coordinator of World Family UK investigating local food sovereignty and another successful, informative Log Frame staff and board gathering. The staff continues to provide reports and updates on our Facebook page and website for online users. We invite your input and support...Comments, suggestions, donations, volunteer time or items of practical use always welcome.

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DIRECTORS MESSAGE

Konkankoh Joshua

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who attended the Better World Vision log frame workshop, facilitated by Sonita, aimed at the first real implementation of Ndanifor Permaculture Ecovillage. 2016 is a very important year in our long term effort to promote youth entrepreneurship, sustainable food production and climate adaptation in Cameroon. Together with GEN and ICLEI, we at Better World hope that a lasting and binding agreement will be reached at COP 21 in Paris which can support the implementation of our climate adaptation agenda in Cameroon and beyond.

As we prepare for the implementation of the sustainable development goals, such an agreement could build considerable momentum in our effort to support young ecovillages within GEN Africa. This could highlight the current mismatch between young African's dreams and the economic reality on the continent.

As an African ecovillage community project based on farming, we are vulnerable to climate change. As such the issue of adaptation for us is very important. With the ambitious High Value Agriculture Products (HVAP) program, we seek to identify youth and women entrepreneurship projects in order to enable the pursuit of appropriate developmental patterns for African villages and youth unemployment.

On behalf of the Bafut Community, I thank Gaia Trust for selecting the Bafut Ecovillage for the GAIA Trust Excellence Award, of the most inspiring project of GEN Africa, and sponsoring Sonita's trip to the UN. I also thank LUSH for generously supporting the international Youth Camp/Mini EDE of 2015 training sessions of Training

of Trainer (ToTs), and for supporting the development of the Bafut HVAP business plan.



I understand that it is though working in partnerships like this that we have been able to bring forth the co-production of positive learning outcomes to the Bafut community. I believe that 2016 will be a year of consolidation; increasing our capacity

development and collaborating with a number of regional projects and successfully adapting to a new climate of social entrepreneurship projects.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Sonita Mbah

I have traveled far and wide, explored and made partnerships for a Better World, and learned about other cultures while discovering myself. Some pieces during this time have been to just step back to see where I have failed and made sure I picked up something every time that happens. I celebrate those stones that have held me strong all the way.

We have experienced a slow, steady growth process in BWC. With the highest number of staff and volunteers since beginning our team is energized and supporting the vision.

Receiving the Gaia Trust Award at the Global Ecovillage Summit (GEN+20), acknowledging the Bafut Ecovillage project as the most inspiring Ecovillage Project in Africa was a great achievement. These wonderful opportunities have flashed the light at the end of the tunnel. By seeing this light, I also celebrate my own transition in BWC, a journey that started 5 years ago.

It can not be a better time than now to express immense gratitude to some of our partners: Ndanifor Gardens UK Trust, Global Ecovillage Network, World Family, Bafut Council, Cameroon Catalyst, Belo Rural Development Association. And to individuals and institutions that wish to remain anonymous. We invite all those with whom we have identified common ground and those watching happily from afar to co-create this vision with us. Join us as we continue empowering communities in Cameroon and Africa improving local economies.

Our next phase will be developing our ecosocial design model to bring social, economic, spiritual and ecological footprints in Local communities.

If you wish you can choose to support one of our programs:

- Stove Project
- Ecological Building,
- High Value Agricultural Program,
- Summer Camps and Ecovillage Design Workshops,
- Seed bank and BetterCOOP members with education and tools for the next farming season.

-and by simply liking our facebook page, donating through our website site or via SONED.

-You can also get your hands dirty at our Ecovillage Demonstration site in Bafut or invest your expertise to train local farmers.



INTRODUCING OUR NEW VOLUNTEERS

Leona Franka

It was around 8pm when we finally arrived. It was dark in the Ecovillage. No light anywhere.



We had a long journey behind us, an over eight hour drive from Douala to Bafut.

A person led us into a room. Still no light except one candle in the middle of the room. Silence, so many eyes watching us. I felt like I was disturbing some mysterious ceremony.

After some time someone gave us chairs so we could join the circle. A short welcome, it was time for everybody to present themselves.

Maybe I should also present myself to you at this point. My name is Leona, I am 18 years old. And I am from Germany. This summer I finished school. I arrived Cameroon on the 15th August and will be staying in Bamenda for one year to work as a volunteer with Better World Cameroon.

I came to Better World through the project “[weltwärts](#)”, which is a program supported by the German government that enables young people at the age of 18- 28 to spend one year in a foreign country to work as a volunteer in a project related to development policy.

Despite the curious welcome it was going to be a nice evening. We sat around the bonfire, songs were sung and stories told.

We stayed in Bafut for the next four days and took part in the seminar activities. It was a Mini “Ecovillage Design Education” course - seminar for farmers. Although I haven't done any farming before and haven't had any knowledge about such topics, some points were also quite interesting to me.

It was a hard beginning for me. Four days without any electricity or flowing water, that far away from home and almost every person I know.

The people met there, most farmers, were always very nice to me but it was very hard to communicate with them because they often just spoke in Pidgin-English while I even had problems with the normal English.

Nevertheless it was a very precious experience for me. I was able to get to know the ecovillage, I got an insight in the cultural life of the Cameroonians - with much singing and dancing - and I had the possibility to look into the work of Better World Cameroon out of a perspective - the one of the outsider - I'll probably never see it again.

Now I am in Bamenda since almost two months. Five times per week - Monday to Friday - I work in the office, on Saturday at the ecovillage in Bafut.

The work in the office included at the beginning just the evaluation of the seminars. Later we started some new projects. One of them included empowering the farmers of Bafut in an ecological way. For that, we had a three week program where we went into the villages of Bafut to carry out a research with the farmers. Presently, we are analyzing the data for implementation in November.

The other project is about environmental education in schools. In Germany I used to teach gymnastics in a gymnastic club and I love to work with children. While applying for this volunteering program, I applied mostly for projects that provided an opportunity for me to work with children. So, even if it is a completely different subject area than the one I am used to, I am very happy that I get the chance to practice one of my passions with Better World (working with children).

Teaching gymnastics isn't the only thing I miss in Cameroon. I also still have to get used to the Cameroonian weather and food. Apart of that, everything else seems to be falling into place, the drive with taxis and motorbikes, the bad roads, the kids which cheering you when they see you, the noise and the dust everywhere you go, seems pretty normal to me.

By now I already made some great experiences in Cameroon, I gain a new perspective to so many things in life and also the difficulties I have to face here will probably help me grow.



Fru Emeldine Bih

I am a former student of the University of Buea where I studied Accountancy. I later took a computerized accounting course for three months at the Flexcom Institute of Vocational Training.

While still in school I carried out an internship with the Ntarinkon Cooperative Credit Union.

Volunteering with BWC will pave a way for me to receive training and gain experience in accounting, Administration and Project Management. This will also help me to know how NGOs operate, function and are managed. Also to prepare myself for the job market through the training and experiences I'll get.

I am prepared to implement and put into practice my knowledge of financial, cost and management accounting, acquired from school into the organization. Before the end of my training, I hope to

have developed my skills in Administration and Project Management.

My hobbies include: watching football, listening to music, watching movies and reading. I also enjoy team work.

Simon Haage



Hi I'm Simon, 18 years old and from Germany. I'm Better World Cameroon's (Bamenda) new volunteer for the upcoming year. Originally I'm from Freiburg, a city in the far southwest of Germany and by the way hometown of Volker Finke. I finished high school in June and I'm planning to study psychology as soon I'm back in Germany, but for now, the focus is on BWC. I decided to do voluntary service because of three reasons; I wanted to do something else than studying the whole time, to do something that makes sense and maybe a difference and I wanted to live in another society than our European society. The BWC project immediately caught my interest because I'm very interested in ecological and developmental issues.

I arrived in Cameroon in the middle of August. My first contact with BWC and my tutor, Sonita, was at the mini EDE seminar at the Ndanifor Permaculture Ecovillage in Bafut. It was an interesting and intense experience, and in my eyes, the best way to learn more about the Organization. I had the feeling that after the seminar, everyone was exhausted and needed rest, understandable, but quite a bad coincidence. Because I couldn't wait to find my own place in BWC. In fact I did just basic stuff in the beginning, like cutting a movie for the EDE seminar and the international summer work camp. Later on, Leona and I got a new task. We did some preparation for our upcoming Ecological Empowerment project. It is a great feeling, being part of a project right at the beginning. Last week, our Environmental-Education-Project started. We were going to create a student's work-group, and plan a nine weeks program. Theoretical topics include how to fight deforestation and practical parts, like nursing trees. We'll see how it works out.

BWC to me is an organization with great, idealistic, goals to create a better future. I cannot talk about my own experiences in this case, but I'm pretty sure, that there will be change for the local farmers. The atmosphere in the office is always good and friendly, especially the morning check-ins are great and give you a supported feeling. The hard work to fundraise money amazed me. I never imagined that it is that difficult for a NGO to find partners.

Also, I discovered Cameroon as a great country, with very open and friendly people. Sometimes it's almost too real for me, to think that I'm going to stay here for a whole year. And I'm very grateful for the opportunity. If I say that everything here is easy, that will be a lie. Because I'm new, I sometimes have problems socializing. But I believe time will solve this. As a white, the attention is always on me while walking the streets. That can be annoying, but it already became less disturbing for me.

It is quite a cultural shock. But everything becomes easier from day to day. I think the year is going to be awesome!

CAMEROONIAN HOSPITALITY

By Clive Michael Justice

After a 5 month return to our roots, visiting family and friends in Canada and Germany Elke and I returned to Bamenda via Yaounde. Waiting at the bus stand Suh Prisca threw her arms around me after spotting me standing in the dark. Luckily I was wearing my new sun hat, a Mexican grass cowboy hat, so she had no trouble spotting me. Collecting our bags we piled into her car and made a quick stop at the house to pick up dinner that her mother Elizabeth had prepared. Elizabeth was very delighted to see us, welcoming us over and over. Little Fusi ran up and jumped into my arms. Yes he remembered me. Joseph's smile was infectious and with our container of food accompanied us to the hotel where Comfort and Ambe Joseph were waiting to greet and welcome us back into the Better World community. Over the next few days we met a number of acquaintances and friends who were, it seems, completely delighted to welcome us back. The enthusiasm and warmth of these greetings has left me with a deep sense of appreciation for our family here and the generous hospitality of Cameroonians. It is good to be back.

BWC RECEIVES JOCELYN JONES FROM WORLD FAMILY UK

By Crystel Koh



Better World Cameroon wishes to inform you of the visit of Jocelyn Jones, Coordinator of **World Family UK** to Cameroon during the period of November 4th - December 2nd 2015. Founded in 2007, World Family is an organization that creates spaces for dialogue between small scale farmers and people who value the food, environment and communities that underpin our cultures. They work in solidarity with those seeking to defend or recover their Food Sovereignty and Food Security, whether in UK or Africa. According to them, people and the food we eat are too important to be turned into mere

commodities. It is through small acts of solidarity that we can empower small scale farmers to feed themselves and the world.

Both BWC and world family are deeply committed to the development of organic farming and entrepreneurship endeavors for youth and women based permaculture principles.

The purpose of her visit to better World Cameroon Bamenda was:

- To understand the Food Security and Food Sovereignty needs of the Bafut Community and the North West Region of Cameroon.
- To talk with village elders, authorities of the Ministry of Agriculture and the seed/tuber savers about their perspective and their personal /community experience

regarding the disease and near-disappearance of the colocosia species of cocoyam used to make the staple “Achu”.

- To make links with local Universities in the region with a view to collaborative research into the source and causes of the cocoyam diseases from a scientific perspective.
- To prepare the ground for the creation of a seed bank at the Ndanifor Permaculture Ecovillage to preserve and propagate indigenous seeds and tubers for sustainable agriculture and restoring food sovereignty.
- To set up a debate between young graduates and farmers regarding the pros and cons of indigenous, hybrid and Genetically Modified Seeds and the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

She brought along

Information from the Community University Partnership Programme based in Brighton, UK to assist with the collaboration between BWC and the local Universities.

Films and books to provide the young farmers and graduates with a basis for debate on seed alternatives.

Experience in bringing out the perspective of farmer elders, particularly women, regarding both Seed and Food Sovereignty.

IN PURSUIT OF A BETTER WORLD, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

By Aaron Danowski



“...they gave me the name Konkankoh, which means “God, take this one and protect, and make sure he lives... and I lived!”

It is safe to say that Joshua Konkankoh, the founder of Better World Cameroon, has made the most of the life he has lived thus far. A self-described “peasant from Bafut”, Joshua has become one of Africa’s most influential advocates for cultural preservation, youth empowerment, and environmental sustainability. His model, the Ndanifor ecovillage, championed in partnership with the village council of Bafut and the local palace, creates an intentional

community where youth are called upon to research and develop local solutions for ecological sustainability and development in their villages. In this way, youths are drawn back to their cultural roots to develop their communities in a culturally appropriate manner, rather than being lured away by the false promise of high paying white collar

jobs in the big city. “I think it is time for the young people to actually have their own spaces to develop their own pathways to a sustainable future... Actually, my concept of entrepreneurship is for them to harvest from their communities, what they have as indigenous knowledge, and in this enabling environment combine it with the science they have learned in school, and then adapt it to the situation in their communities. This is how I have seen it working and making impact, though at a local level, but it’s also an entrepreneurship where we think locally, and we act globally, because what we are doing has a global impact.”

Despite the promise Joshua’s work represents, serious challenges still limit the effectiveness of his model. “The reason my work hasn’t made [a widespread] impact” he says, “Is because it has not been able to influence policy. I wouldn’t say I really know how I can change this, but I think that if it became policy that youth entrepreneurship should become part of the university programs... it will begin to be a solution.” Over the course of the last decade trying to promote the ecovillage model of development, Joshua has had little success pushing the Cameroonian government to adopt national policies that support his concept of local youth entrepreneurship and ecological development. In spite of this fact, he has found other ways to push for change. He serves an active role in directing multiple international networks for ecovillages and permaculture, including the Global Ecovillage Network and the Global Ecovillage Network Africa, and he and his associate, Sonita Mbah, are working in conjunction with the UN Environment Programme to advance Better World’s work with the Bafut Ndanifor Ecovillage as part of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

Despite the challenges he has faced with affecting policy change in Cameroon, Joshua has unwavering faith in his model. “When I started to look at the ecovillage as a development concept for the world, not just Bafut... [I realized] that permaculture has the solutions for all the problems of the world... I just don’t believe that top-down [development] still works. It is time to spread the bottom of the pyramid. There are enough solutions in the world for all the problems of the world. So long as we allow the systems to interact and cross-fertilize and strengthen each other... the old structures will fall away on their own accord.”

Aaron Danowski is an undergraduate business student at Gonzaga University in the Northwest of the United States. He is spending 4 months in Cameroon studying abroad through a program called SIT Cameroon: Development and Social Pluralism, and as part of a research project he is conducting on social entrepreneurship in Cameroon, he met with Better World Cameroon founder Joshua Konkankoh on November 12th, 2015 to discuss his work promoting ecovillages, permaculture, and youth entrepreneurship in Africa. For updates on his work promoting social entrepreneurship and social innovation, or to contact him with any questions or comments, you can visit his website at www.aarondanowski.com



ECONOMICS OF FOOD SYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY IN BAFUT ECOVILLAGE

Konkankoh Joshua

When we first raised the issue of food sovereignty in the Bafut Ecovillage Vision2020, we had hoped to provide an important starting point for thinking about food policy in Cameroon in a new way and one which does not take nature for granted. We are indebted to World Family's Joycelyn Jones, for her contribution in providing examples of poverty options, case studies and experience from around the world. We can only scratch the surface of what she discovered in her visits to Bafut in a Newsletter article. We hope her report will stimulate others to apply the information to their particular situation in their respective communities.

The Food security seminar in Bafut incorporating traditional knowledge to restore food sovereignty has brought forward new information which could reduce further food risks in Bafut specifically from the colocosia disease using Permaculture and the HVAP programme.

Jocelyn's input has identified new trends in the fair trade business project of Ndanifor Permaculture Ecovillage based on healthy foods and medicinal plants.

BetterCOOP hopes to set a precedence in creating the High Value Agriculture Product HVAP Programme in the NPE demonstration center test fields in Bafut. This model could draw collaborators technicians and students from science, economics, and policy to enable practical actions and opportunities for advancement and innovation. Understanding the value of Permaculture practices is essential for the management of the Bafut ecovillage environment as an obligation to future generations and out of respect for Mother Nature, since Permaculture provides the most sustainable cost effective solutions. The direct benefit of Joycelyn's work at Better World is easily appreciated when used to address the food challenges faced by poor communities and identifying the most relevant ecosystem services that can help solve the food sovereignty problem in Africa, and the policies around it.

BWC together with World Family's integrated approach to Biodiversity, Conservation and Management, will act as a frame work for defining future strategies and supporting action plans at local levels.

Thank you World family and Jocelyn Jones for your generous support and collaboration as we move towards Food Sovereignty in Bafut.

BWC WORKS WITH GBHS BAMENDA ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB IN PREPARATION FOR THE REFORESTATION CAMPAIGN.

By Tamunjoh Beatrice

Better World Cameroon joined the Environmental Club of Government Bilingual High School Bamenda, Ntamulung (GBHS) in an action for climate restoration and soil erosion control last April 30th. This action took place in preparation for the official launching of the National Reforestation Campaign by the Cameroonian Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, which took place on the school's campus on May 7th 2015.

GBHS Bamenda was chosen as the demonstration site for this activity in the North West Region, as an example for the entire locality.

Better world Cameroon, MINEP and students of the Environmental club worked together for the planting of 500 trees. The aim of this activity is to create a forest for shelter around the school campus while empowering the students on the importance of trees to the environment.

2015 WORKCAMP AND MINI EDE

By Crystel Koh

August 23rd marked the end of this year's International summer Workcamp and Mini EDE which took place at the NPE site.

Everyone at BWC including this year's participants were excited about the fact that participation in this year's event was free and wish to acknowledge and thank Lush for this Funded event.

Participants spent 19 days immersed in a lively program of topics such as social entrepreneurship, sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation, with activities like tree planting, composting, focus group discussions and carrying out sensitization through Flash mob and arts and craft.

Camp Participants after environmental sensitization at the Bafut Market



HVAP PROGRAM KICKS OFF

By Tamunjoh Beatrice

The production of High Value Agricultural Products(HVAP) program kicked off with the establishment of a twelve-month action plan running from June 2015 to June 2016. The main activities include the general and permanent maintenance of the NPE, the large scale production of HVAP (ginger, lemon grass, tumeric, moringa) within the demonstration centre at NPE and a network of farmers producing in the area; introduction of mushroom cultivation, putting in place a unit for compost production; supervising planting of 4000 medicinal, fruit and native trees, processing and distribution of HVAP products.

In order to establish an official, clear and professional relationship between Better World Cameroon (BWC) and the Ndanifor Ecovillage Women(NEW) now known as Food For Life(FFL) Bafut, a memorandum of understanding was developed where the two groups agreed to work together to promote Sustainable Development in Cameroon through HVAP, and in the world through learning, teaching and designing natural landscapes. The mission



of this MOU is to promote permaculture in the North West region of Cameroon by contributing to the improvement of youth employment, girl's education and healthy relationships amongst local communities. The goal is to ensure that FFL works hand in hand with BWC to promote and implement Ecological Building, Organic Agriculture and also invest in HVAP to promote green economy in Cameroon and satisfy international needs through Fair Trade.

The first activity of the HVAP Program entailed keeping the site clean and in order by taking away left over pieces of wood and bamboo from previous construction work. The roads leading to the meeting hall and hut were diligently weeded and grass piled up in heaps for compost preparation.

Activities of the first week included, weeding, mulching and maintaining existing flower beds.150 additional new trees and flowers. 50 new plantain suckers were also planted on the HVAP Test plot.



GRAND OPENING OF PERMACULTURE LEARNING CENTER BAFUT

By Crystal Koh

Finally after five months of construction, the Permaculture Learning Center at the Better World Cameroon (BWC) Ndanifor Permaculture Ecovillage was presented to the public, during its grand opening April 10th, 2015.

This facility, funded by the North American branch of cosmetics company LUSH, will serve as an ecological demonstration building, highlighting local materials and craftsmanship. The center design and eco-building construction of the hall was provided by Canadian architect Elke Cole.



During its construction, builders from the area were trained in ecological building and applying traditional craft-skills into a modern design. The circular hall was built with local materials only: earth, stone, raffia/bamboo and a clay tiled roof. It features a kitchen with an improved cook stove and a bread oven. The focus on connecting the building with the surrounding environment is also reflected in the open design.

The first seminar to take place at the Learning Center was organized by NGGE (Next Generation Global Education) in collaboration with BWC. The seminar was an introduction to NGGE (vision, mission, goals and objectives), and its activities.



This double event (grand opening and seminar) was a thrilling one with remarkable guests of honor such as the Fon of Bafut, a representative of the Senior Divisional Officer of Bafut, a representative of the Mayor of Bafut, the Regent of Bawum and a journalist from Germany among others. There was an impressive exhibition from a local dance

group and a musical presentation from the local women builders.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND FOOD SECURITY IN BAFUT

Jocelyn Jones

My time in Cameroon is nearly over and I feel many things: sadness because I have had such a good time; fullness because it has been so rich; and grateful because I have received so much kindness and support in developing the programme we developed for my stay.

Describing the process of getting an idea into actuality in a setting of which I knew very little, exposes a little how Better World works. When I asked Joshua Konkankoh (Director) what troubled people most, his answer was the devastation of the *ibo* cocoyam which is central to the traditional diet of the people of Bafut and had almost completely failed in the last 5 years.

I was given a couple of days to arrive and get to know everyone and begin to understand how the team works. Then a list was made of all the people who I should greet: on the official side were the traditional leaders, the Fon, the Regent of Bawum and the Quarter Head and then the Mayor of Bafut,.

Ma Betarice (head of BWC's farm programme) and I visited those with knowledge of what was happening in the region and locality from an Agricultural point of view: key figures in the Ministry of Agriculture in Bamenda and Bafut, and local colleges. Each of those we met gave us another piece in the jigsaw puzzle of what was happening in agriculture locally and make links to other people with more specialist knowledge both as farmers and professors. This was extremely helpful.

During this period we also had a two-hour meeting with the women of Food for Life, who have been working very closely with BWC on the Ecovillage farm. They revealed the extent of the problem from the sharp end, that it is not just the *ibo* (*achu / colocasia*) cocoyam, it is a system-wide problem affecting most farmers and in different ways most crops and they feel helpless in the face of it. They are told they should change old methods of farming but could not see why, when these same methods had worked for so many hundreds of years, they should now fail and be abandoned. They knew in great detail what was happening but not why.

By asking questions of the women and valuing their responses, bringing them into the enquiry rather than telling them what they should be doing, Better World is being able to come alongside them and honestly share the difficulties and the new discoveries.

When it came to bringing people together to discuss the way forward, the relationships that BWC already had with a few farmers who had an inspiring track record of farming organically using manure and compost, with local women farmers, with men and women from far flung villages (familiar because of BWC's 2015 survey of production), and with the local Ministry of Agriculture and a plant scientist proved invaluable.

In their small groups the farmers decided that to support the soil they needed to find an alternative to slash and burn and *Ankara* (burning the crop remains and grass under the soil). While it did alkalise the acidic soil, it also killed its microbial life and with the shortage of land preventing fallow years, the soil had no chance to recover. Talk has

already begun in BWC about learning the process of Biochar - making good use of the pits on the site (where the clay was taken for the building) to test this on the farm and if good pass it on.

Other ideas for the soil were to plant trees - Neem (fertiliser and insecticide), Acacia and Tephrosia (nitrogen fixing); farm using the contours, terrace with stones, trees and vetiver grass; rotate crops and compost with both green and dry vegetation and manure from pigs and chickens and the use of wood ash.

Many of the ideas to recover the *colocasia* overlapped with the means of the regenerating the soil of course. Beyond that they were talking about the choice of good seeds and replicating them, developing the plants that show most resistance, adapting the planting season, burn affected leaves and much else. And importantly to use the knowledge acquired from the workshop to educate others *so the disease does not leave your neighbours' farm and return to yours.*

Sonita did a superb job as Facilitator, guiding and gently cajoling us, through the many questions, into a sense of completion and a new beginning. The sense was of excitement, happiness and a willingness to try out these ideas that they had heard from other farmers and a positive feeling about the experimental work that BWC would do at the Ecovillage farm, particularly regarding the selection of seeds and the development of the Seed Bank.

This programme was just one fragment in the busy life of the team of BWC

The Power of Grass as Fertilizer

By Tamunjoh Beatrice

At Better World Cameroon, we are the change we want to see. At the Ndanifor Permaculture Ecovillage in Bafut, the permaculture vision of permanent or sustainable agriculture is really evolving. We practice organic agriculture where the native grass serves as an essential natural material to boost agricultural productivity.

Over the past months, the BWC volunteer team and the local women farmers have cleared the grass, leaves and other growing plants a few times and piled it up to compost.



On the 17th March 2015, we prepared the soil for planting, having previously cleared away last season's vegetation. We collected the partially composted grass from the piles and along with last year's cornstalks, bean plants and dead weeds, laid it between the rows. After this action, the composted material was diligently covered with earth in such a way as to prevent erosion, and support the crops we plant.



The buried grass provides some nitrogen that will fertilize the ridges, creating humus and providing a sponge for moisture during the long dry season. This will improve the soil and the quality of crops producing the best they can for our livelihood.

Is it not flabbergasting to see that all around people are still very busy burning away the grass that has been meant by nature to nurture the soil?

Please let us join our hands together and do the right thing for a better world for all in the 21st Century.



A GIFT OF EMPOWERMENT

By Elke Cole

The season of gift giving is coming around as Christmas time approaches. Who do you choose to support with your donations or efforts? Are you hosting a seasonal party that could be a fundraising event? Does the company you work for support charity?

Better World Cameroon is preparing for widespread action in all of Bafut in 2016. Here are a few ideas to consider supporting:

Our **stove project “Africa Kitchen Revolution”** will train women in villages to build rocket cook stoves. In our experience this is a process that groups can learn to supply each member with a stove in subsequent weeks. A rocket stove is energy efficient and uses small amounts of firewood, cooks two or more pots at a time, and has a chimney to remove smoke from the kitchen. What a perfect gift for a family! Or even a village.

Our **Permaculture learning center** in Alegnwi will continue to be developed. This coming season we will build beautiful sleeping spaces for our visitors and volunteers. A solar system will be installed and the spring secured and constructed to deliver fresh, clean drinking water. As part of the center we look for **kitchen equipment**, and our hall and sleeping rooms will need **furniture**. To stay with our ecological building strategy this will be made **by local craftsmen**.

Villagers in more remote parts of Bafut are looking for support with farming issues and transport. Your support may help us find **expertise on crop diseases** to help insure food sovereignty.

We offer a few ways to make donations:

1. **Paypal**: on our website is a paypal button (top of sidebar) that takes you to the account of our Partner Ndanifor Gardens UK trust. Donations that are received this way get extra power, because funds raised by the trust are boosted by the British Government. If you live in Britain, you can also get your tax receipt from them. You can make general donations or name the project or purpose you wish to support
2. Those of you who are residents in **Germany** can make a **bank transfer** to our partner organization SONED Berlin Friedrichshain e.V., account # DE53 4306 0967 8025 3066 01, BIC: GENO DE M1 GLS . Assign to either Better World Cameroon or Stove Project Better World Cameroon. Tax receipts are available upon request to info@soned.de
3. Using **MoneyGram** or **Western Union** is a fast and secure way to send your donation. You will have to name administrator Sonita Mbah or director Joshua Konkankoh for us to be able to receive the funds.

Please write us if you have questions or concerns.

May this season’s blessings bring peace, abundance and good connections to all!