



Community Assistance in Development
COMAID
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Board Chair, COMAID

Executive Summary

COMAID is a Non-Governmental Organization based in Bamenda, the regional headquarter of the North West Region of Cameroon. The goal of COMAID is to improve the standards of living of communities in the urban and rural areas of Cameroon. COMAID works in five specific objective areas to attain its goal namely: Land governance; biodiversity conservation; income generation; GIS/GPS in development and institutional development.

COMAID has made major strikes in all her objective areas in 2018 by broadening her strategic interventions and support to local communities even though at a period when the Anglophone crisis had become violent with rising insecurity. COMAID recorded some achievements as a result of change of strategy especially as the rural communities of the region were badly hit by the crisis and became inaccessible. The change in strategy involved the building of capacities of local beneficiaries to carryout project activities themselves and report to COMAID especially in those rural areas where COMAID staff could not reach.

In the area of **land governance**, COMAID in collaboration with CENDEP continued the project to strengthen advocacy towards women empowerment for access and ownership rights over land. Grassroot women from five Divisions of the North West Region took part in scooping meetings to bring out the problems associated with secured access to land for women. These meetings captured the plight of the rural women with respect to different thematic areas that disfavor access and ownership of land by women. Representatives of these women took part in a regional meeting to analyze the problems of women land rights with the participation of some state and non-state actors. A lobbying and advocacy plan was developed for the women and other partners to engage in actions at local, regional and national level to influence for better land policy for women. This meeting was the first ever regional meetings held in the North West Region that particularly focused on the land rights of women. The meeting also provided a unique opportunity for COMAID to fully begin targeted interventions on women land rights at the grassroots with women and for women. The collaboration with CENDEP was further strengthened with the second project on enhancing access and control over land for 110 small holder tea farmers in Ndu and Dikome Balue in the North West and South West regions respectively. The project effectively took off in Ndu with capacity building on land law of Cameroon to tea farmers and the mapping out of the small scale tea farms of the farmers. However the project was disrupted in the both project sites by the Anglophone crisis.

The experiences of COMAID as the lead organization of the North West Land Observatory opened up new horizons for the organization with the project to enhance the capacity of civil society organizations in the South and South West Regions of Cameroon on effective monitoring of large scale land acquisition. Through this project COMAID was able to share experiences of the NWLO with civil societies of the South and South West Regions which resulted to the creation of two regional observatories in the South west and South regions of Cameroon. Today, they are better organized to effectively fight against illicit large scale land acquisitions and redress irresponsible land based investments.

Also, one of the major achievements in the area of land governance by COMAID was the participation in the first ever Community Land Protection project initiated by ILC, NAMATI and IIED. The pilot project strengthened COMAID staff in new approaches to protect community lands with substantial support to implement some of the new approaches in the field. COMAID worked with the communities of Nyurong and Ngom in the Mbaw plain to enhance community land rights through more innovative and participatory approaches.

Still in the area of land governance, COMAID's work enhanced lobby and advocacy to reduce farmer-grazer conflicts and the crop and life damages that use to exist. With support from CED, COMAID was able to identify farmer / grazier hotspots in the North West Region. This action also highlighted successful alternative participatory approaches that are being used by CSOs to reduce occurrences of farmer/grazier conflict with the aim of drawing more CSOs to step up action in mitigating farmer/grazier conflicts in the region

Conservation and biodiversity protection activities continued with ITF and through an ITF-ERUDEF led initiative on the Mt Bamboutos Project. Fifty three women from Nkor and Dom communities benefited from areas of capacity building that valorized trees and support to plant over 16,000 trees in farm using different techniques of adaptive agroforestry. These activities were carried out with support from ITF through the project on women empowerment through agroforestry in the North West Region of Cameroon. COMAID was selected to be the focal point for Santa subdivision in the Mt Bamboutos initiative which it a conception by ITF and ERUDEF. This ambitious project is expected to last for a period of 15 years and is aimed at restoring the ecosystem functions of the Mt Bamboutos. The Mt Bamboutos area cuts through three regions in Cameroon and over the past years has witness deforestation and degradation of land. COMAID was chosen as an implementing partner in the communities of Pinyin, Buchi and Menka.

COMAID made available technical expertise to local communities and decentralized local institutions in the area GIS. COMAID assisted the communities of Ndu, Nyrong and Mbaw in mapping interventions to secure land rights of small scale farmers and local communities. The Council of Mbiame also benefit from the COMAID within the frame work of the development of the Mbiame council development plan. Income generation and livelihood actions in 2018 were associated in other project activities.

The 2018 will go down in the history of COMAID as one of the most significant in terms of new partnership and opportunities that the organization capitalized on. It will also be one of the most challenging in the implementation of field activities because of the Anglophone crisis that practically brought a halt to movement to field. However, the board and staff of COMAID remained steadfast and focused in the face of multiple adversities in 2018.