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## BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

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**Sustainable solutions to biodiversity conservation, local livelihoods and climate change: Our Korup rainforest story, southwest region, Cameroon****Orume Robinson and ESeme Neville Ebune**

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Poor communities are often critically dependent on ecosystem services to sustain their livelihoods sometimes posing threats to biodiversity. Though the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other international agreements explicitly connect biodiversity conservation, poverty alleviation and human well-being, there are substantial debates regarding their relationships. There is therefore growing literature at the interface of rural livelihood improvement and biodiversity especially when compounded by impending impacts of climate change. Considering the pitfalls of ICDPs, present-day conservation policies generally aim at a win-win solution that can address all these concerns. Korup is Cameroon's first rainforest national park with rich biodiversity and endemism. Despite previous conservation efforts, recent research reveals annual wildlife off takes of over 37000 animals, far above sustainable limits for tropical rainforest. This amongst other human threats from local communities is driving vulnerable species to local extinction. As law enforcement increasingly becomes less effective as a sole biodiversity protection measure, we have rolled out an innovative co-management approach; sharing responsibilities and benefits between stakeholders. Our special features are Conservation-Development Agreements (CDAs), Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Climate Smart Livelihood Measures (CLISLIM) and a performance based incentive system (Conservation bonuses and credits) aimed at relieving pressure on biodiversity, improving livelihoods and increasing resilience. Our approach is consistent with IUCN and internationally agreed principles of respect for traditional owners' rights and institutions, resolving long standing exclusion, restored rights and cultural identity as well as empowered communities to support and participate in conservation efforts. Nevertheless, there is still need to identify peculiarities in approaches, environmental characteristics, models and the communities in which success is most likely. This workshop is intended to use our Korup example to draw weaknesses, strength, opportunities and potential threats from our model that can guide our team and the conservation community.

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