



IUCN SSC West Africa Plant RLA



Conservation Success Stories

Community collaboration for the conservation of threatened trees in Guinea



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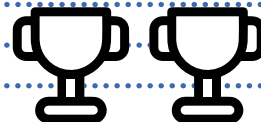
THREAT ADDRESSED

The forest of Guinea is under enormous pressure from the increasing population. By the 1990s, 96% of the original forest had disappeared, and more recently, the Guinée forestière region has seen a further 25% decline. The latter is mostly driven by slash-and-burn agriculture.

TARGET

Six villages on the edge of
Tropical Important Plant Areas in
Guinea involved in species conser-
vation and sustainable use. (T-008)

7
community
groups were
trained in
tree nursery
techniques



SUCCESS LEVEL

Successful

Success category: Local people involvement

Success story:



Since 2021, we have worked with local communities in the buffer zones of three Important Plant Areas in Guinea: Mt Béro, Diéckè, and the Southern Simandou Mountains. Diéckè is the largest remaining moist lowland forest in Guinea, with 29 recorded threatened plant species. Mt Béro features a mosaic of habitats, while the Southern Simandou Mountains host exceptional plant diversity, including over 40 threatened species. Surrounding villages depend on these forests for food, medicine, firewood, and materials. These communities are essential to the forests' survival—both protectors and users. Effective conservation requires their collaboration with local authorities and researchers. Since 2021, we have been raising awareness about

the forests' ecological and social benefits, such as freshwater, food, and a stable climate.

In 2022, communities around Mt Béro and Diéckè requested greater involvement, leading to a project to grow threatened and useful tree species. Four villages initially established community-run nurseries, and later expanded to three villages in the Southern Simandou Mountains. Communities selected ten useful species to grow alongside threatened trees, promoting care for both and pride in restoring rare plants. In 2024, the nurseries began producing trees for sale to regional reforestation projects, with profits reinvested in the nurseries and shared among community groups.

Alongside the nursery projects, which include training on seed collecting and propagation, we are assisting the community groups with market gardening activities and training on installing improved cookstoves to reduce the amount of firewood used for cooking, to support the female group members. All our community groups have gained official registration papers with the local authorities, enabling them to access other benefits, and we are training them in basic economics to be able to run the nurseries for profit into the future. There is a better collaboration between these communities and the local forestry officers now, reducing conflicts and setting an example to other communities. This project has been successful due to the involvement of the communities from the start. These Important Plant Areas are set to become National Parks in the future; therefore, by implicating the communities early on, we are ensuring the best outcome for these forests for future generations. ■ CHARLOTTE COUCH



REASONS FOR SUCCESS

Over 7,000 trees were planted in 2023 with a high survival rate after 12 months, and seven community groups (140 people) were trained in nursery techniques, with some also trained in seed collection and monitoring. Communities are now actively seeking alternatives to slash-and-burn agriculture, which continues to erode the edges of the Important Plant Areas.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

www.herbianguinee.org/gcbc.html; www.herbianguinee.org/collaboration-communautaire-ztips.html



Vulnerable Northern River Shark,
(*Glyphis garricki*)
Photo: Grant Johnson

Interviews about human wildlife
interactions with local inhabitants
Photo: Kiran Thapa Magar

Vicuña management by Cooperativa
Agroganadera de Santa Catalina and Comunidad
Aborigen Atu Shapi de Morritos.
Santa Catalina, Jujuy Province, Argentina
Photo: Yanina Arzamendia

Story photo credits

Seed collection and monitoring
training with communities
Photo: Charlotte Couch

Sharing of plants in nursery
prior to planting out
Photo: Faya Julien Simbiano

Monitoring plants one year on
Photo: Faya Julien Simbiano

Community songbird monitoring and
protection, Indonesia
Photo: Asian Songbird Trade SG archives

Cacti from genera *Copiapoa* and *Eriosyce*
confiscated in Italy and repatriated to Chile in 2021
Photo: Andrea Cattabriga