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UPDATES

# SAWA

## GreenNews

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### A Youth defines his destiny

Signe Gerry Williams, aged 34, is the sole proprietor of Ferme Gerry Williams, a chain of poultry farms located in Manjo, Moungo Division of the Littoral Region, within the Bakossi-Banyang Mbo landscape of Cameroon.

His quest for financial empowerment started at age 10. As a child, all he was interested in was making money of his own.

He hawked along the highway, he sold anything he had the opportunity to, and also sold for traders on small commissions.

Going to school did not interest him much, which is the reason why he dropped out of school so young and started seeking for financial freedom.

At age 14, he took keen interest in poultry farming and with some money he had saved from petty businesses, he was able to purchase 150 one day old chicks.

Without any formal training on how to rear and manage a poultry farm, he used his indigenous knowledge to get it through.



The proprietor, Signe Gerry Williams in his office



Ferme Gerry Williams – view of one of the poultry farms

As the years passed by, he learned directly from his farm, and followed up closely with the behaviour of the birds.

21 years on, young Gerry is now a self-made expert in poultry farming, an occupation which he does with so much passion and dedication.

It is worth noting that Gerry now has 6 poultry farms located in different parts of Manjo town, and each farm has a surface area of about 200 metres square, with each harboring over 2000 chicken.

At the time of this visit, Gerry presented an active record and physical farms with 6476 fowls spread across 4 poultry farms as most of them had been sold out.

A well organised Manager, he has 7 employees under his supervision who are already seeing him as a role model and who have decided to join him, so as to learn and subsequently be inspired to set up their own poultry business.

Aside from the poultry farm, he owns several hectares of maize farm which he uses primarily for composition of feed for his poultry.

Some staff work in the maize farms, others work at the grinding mill, while others work closely with him at the poultry farms.

## What makes his farm Unique

Unlike other poultry farms within and out of his community, Gerry says his poultry farm is unique. “I do not fatten the fowls. I allow them grow naturally within 50 to 60 days. That means I do not hurry to sell. I do not inject them with overdose chemical products which makes the fowls appear big and healthy.”

These are some of the reasons why he has an influx of clients from far and near who prefer his products to those of other farmers.





Aerial view of the Bakossi Banyang-Mbo landscape

The quality of fowls produced by Gerry has attracted buyers of renowned hotels, supermarkets, and fish shops across the big cities in Cameroon. “There are times when I cannot meet the huge demands, especially during festive seasons and special events. But whatever the situation, I give preference to people in my community.”

## Partnership & capacity building

Gerry is proud to have his success with over 80% of personal and traditional knowledge. However, he does not ignore the local veterinary officers’ visit. But there are things he will accept they do and others that he will not.

He does a lot of self-capacity building and research. In his office, well arranged and clean, Gerry has a giant chart which serves as a reference and diagnostic chart to detect chicken ailments.

When detected, he goes online and googles for possible causes and chemical-free treatment.

To avoid administrative bottle-necks and hassles usually experienced with the few veterinary officers in the area, he owns a mini-pharmaceutical section at his office that takes urgent care of his fowls when the need arises.

“Because of my many years of experience and proven success in my activity, my farm is used as an internship centre for students from the National veterinary training centres within the Moungo Division and Littoral Region.”

Gerry owns a grinding mill where the maize and soya beans are milled to compound feed for his poultry. He is also very open and ready to build the capacity of anyone, particularly the youth who wants to learn about his activity.



A worker at the grinding mill, fills bags with chicken feed

The youth in Manjo are engaged mostly in agricultural activities, such as cultivation of coffee, pineapple, banana and plantain. But, gradually, some are developing interest in livestock farming, particularly poultry.

In order to help his community, desist from using chemical fertilizers that will eventually affect soil fertility, the wastes from his poultry are given out for free to community members. He encourages them to use as manure to grow healthy crops. He also uses that on his cassava, soya bean and maize farms.

“Meeting with WWF 20 years after establishing my poultry farm is an added value to me. I am always ready to learn about new things, especially about conservation, nature and the environment”.

I appreciate the financial and capacity building support received from them so far. I was part of a training organised by WWF on youth and green entrepreneurship, business planning, and transformational leadership. It has broadened my knowledge on many aspects.

## An Alternative to Bushmeat

Despite efforts made by the government and organizations to sensitize community members, hunting is still rife within Manjo sub division.

Youths are particularly interested in engaging in poultry farming because, over the years, the animal population has reduced considerably and only strong young men can cover long distances to the Muanenguba forest to carry out hunting. Gerry's activity therefore serves as an alternative to bush meat.

Gerry is married and is a father of two kids. As a young man, Gerry says he does not engage in any activity that does not add value to his farms.

His main challenge is means of transport. It is a huge challenge to transport farm produce from his farms to the milling centre, feed and other materials from the milling centre to his poultry farms, and chicken to buyers, in cases where the buyer has no means of transportation.

“Poultry farming is my life. Nothing else interests me. I carry out my daily routine with passion, love and dedication. That is the sole income that takes care of my parents, my wife and kids. So I do not joke with it,” he says.

## Youth championing organic farming with WWF support

The cackling of about 100 chickens of different species and the grunting of about 50 piglets and over 10 matured pigs is ear-piercing when you step into ferme Melong Bio-Cam.

Ferme Melong Bio-cam is situated in Mantem, a small locality along the Douala-Nkongsamba highway in the Moundou Division, Littoral Region of the Bakossi-Banyang Mbo landscape in Cameroon.

A dynamic youth, Melong Ntougwa Gildas, an agriculture and livestock technician, is managing Director.

His organization is engaged in Agriculture – pineapple, pawpaw, maize, cassava..., livestock – poultry, rabbits and piggyery.

WWF took interest in his activity because of the added value it has to the environment and welfare of the population within that locality and beyond.

After visiting all his farms, Melong Gildas shared his experiences, successes and challenges in this exclusive interview.



A partial view of ferme Melong Bio-Cam

### **This is an exclusively farming community. What makes your farm different from others?**

I do not use any chemicals to grow my crops. I use green manure collected from my poultry and pig farms.

Reasons why my pineapple, for instance, is so sweet, whereas those that grow theirs with chemicals, the fruit is sour. When peeled, the difference is seen inside the pineapple.

Fruits grown naturally do not cause any health issues to consumers, but rather protect them from many illnesses. So these are the peculiarities of my products.

### **What added value does your activity have to the environment**

I use exclusively waste from my livestock farm – chicken, pig and rabbit droppings to grow all my crop farms. That alone ensures a healthy soil and organically produced crops.

I learnt that constant use of chemicals to grow crops has undesirable and long-term effects on the soil, water, and human health. My aim is to ensure that my environment and the people remain healthy.

### **What kind of support have you received so far from WWF?**

Before my encounter with WWF, I was concentrated on just one pig farming and not focused. I got financial support from WWF,

which enabled me to expand and diversify my activities. This has enabled me to raise more income to pay my workers and also to purchase some important farm equipment.

What is even more important for me is the capacity building/training received from WWF. I was part of a training WWF organised on youth and green entrepreneurship, business planning, and transformational leadership.

The training was so beneficial to me and my business. We live in our environment and carry out these activities without knowing that we are contributing to the wellbeing of the entire world.

Learning about conservation, nature protection, and especially the forest resources we have around us, which we have to protect, is something extremely important, an aspect WWF is sensitising and training us on.

**You have different species of livestock and all are raised in one enclosure. How do you ensure they are safe and free from any kind of contamination?**

*(Laughs)* I listened to your first impression when you entered the livestock farm. You were amazed that you did not perceive any odour, and you even asked me if there are any animals here *(laughs louder)*.

Some of the main reasons for livestock ailment are nutrition, medication, and the hygienic condition of the environment.

When farmers feed their animals with a lot of inorganic feed, fattening vitamins and a lot more, it may look good at the beginning, but with time, it can cause the death of all the animals in a day.

I avoid any chemicals, I keep the farm constantly clean and I feed the livestock with 100% organic feed.

**As a young farmer, and carrying out organic farming within your community, do you encounter any challenges?**

Just like in any other sector of activity, there are always challenges. Organic crop and livestock farming entail so much time, focus and passion.

It is a continuous capacity building and research venture. Ensuring you have all the raw materials you need to grow the crops, and feed the livestock, is a huge challenge. This means that, I have to work round the clock to ensure nothing is lacking.

Another key challenge is man-power. In order to get your farms up-to-date, it requires that you have people who work daily in all the farms, especially to do the clearing, weeding, supervision, harvesting, transportation and cleaning up.

With the quality of products, I produce, I need considerable human, material and financial resources.

**Talking about transportation. Your farms are a little far off from the main road. How do you get your farm products to the main road?**

For now, I have a small tricycle, which is used to transport my products to the market and to clients. But most often, I hire youths to transport them to the roadside by head-load for daily pay.

**How does your activity impact the youth within your community?**

At first the youth were not interested. They thought this was too much hard work. So the strategy I used was to employ them to work on my farm.

As they work, I am indirectly building their capacity on what I do. About 20 youths in my community now practice a variety of agro and livestock farming, with capacity gained from my farms. It gives them additional income and I am happy about that.



## Communities participate in first ever demarcation of Banyang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary



Aerial view of the rugged and hilly topography of the Banyang-Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary

For the first time since 25 years of creation of the Banyang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary (BMWS), boundary opening work has begun with the tracing of 14 kilometers in the Ebamut cluster of the sanctuary, in collaboration with all the three communities making up the cluster (Ndiamin, Ebamut and Muagwekan).

WWF and partner, the Program for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the South West Region (PSMNR), supported the exercise technically and financially.

The Banyang-Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary (BMWS) is located between two divisions – Kupe Manenguba and Manyu - in the South West Region.

It was created in March 12, 1996 by Prime Ministerial Decree and covers a surface area of 66,220 ha.

The main objective for its creation is to Conserve the biodiversity of the area and to Develop and promote eco-tourism.

It is a biological hotspot of conservation significance and an important site for primate conservation, and a habitat of flagship species including the forest elephant, Nigerian-Cameroon Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes vellerosus*), Drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*) and seven known Guenons.

The Sanctuary is equally home to over 322 species of avifauna including the endangered Mount Kupe Bush-shrike (*Euphonia kupeensis*); 71 species of reptiles including 2 species of Tortoise, 23 species of Lizards, and 46 species of Snakes!

It has mainly sub-montane vegetation. The landscape is characterized by rugged and hilly topography. A total of 29 local communities border the BMWS. These communities rely mainly on the forest for their livelihood.

The Tracing and demarcation is the first objective in the management of every protected area, as it is intended for effective management and maintenance of the integrity of the protected area.

Boundaries are to be kept clean, materialized on the ground and made visible to the surrounding population and all stakeholders around the protected area.

*“By knowing the boundary, it reduces encroachment thereby helping the local people not to violate the law ignorantly. It also prevents conflicts between the protected area management and the local communities,” says [Theophilus Ngwene](#), Program Executant, WWF Coastal Forests Program.*

More than 80% of the boundaries of the BMWS are natural limits following streams and rivers. The sanctuary boundary has had never been formally traced and opened where the boundaries are not natural.

In the demarcation process, communities were sensitized on the importance of boundary opening, their roles/responsibilities and the benefits of the exercise to the communities.

About ten community members proposed by the three communities constituting the cluster actively participated in the tracing exercise with the full involvement of women.

The community members supported the team to choose the most appropriate tract, led the team to the virtual boundary of the sanctuary and Provided labor in potting, clearing of the boundary tract, painting and logistical support.

*“We never knew we were still left with sufficient land for our development. The opening of the Banyang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary (BMWS) boundary in our cluster has been a well appreciated exercise by all our communities as we participated and followed up the process in collaboration with the sanctuary authorities. With the gross quest and scramble for agricultural land, we will preserve our remaining land as community forest for the future generation,” says the Ebamut Cluster Facilitator, [Mr Eyah Edmond Etape](#).*

The tracing exercise was completed in nine working days. This exercise will be replicated in the other clusters of the sanctuary and extended to the neighbouring Bakossi National Park.

WWF and partner PSMNR, in collaboration with the communities, intend to adapt and adopt a community-based boundary monitoring system to engage a systematic and regular boundary cleaning, surveys and monitoring strategy that will target various users or interest groups at community level to regularly clean, follow up, supervise and monitor protected area boundaries at cluster levels.



Boundary Tracing team at the Banyang-Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary





## WWF-CFP news reel...

14 years after its creation, the boundary opening of the Bakossi National Park has begun in the South East Cluster of the park, with support from WWF and PSMNR.

It is aimed at securing the integrity of the park, prevent encroachment and deforestation and promote the collaborative management approach and sharing of benefits of park management with local communities.

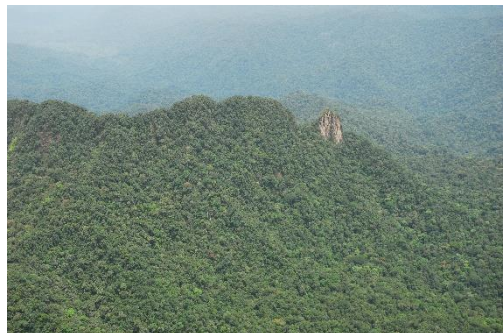


After receiving information about the resumption of studies at Teacher Training College, Bangem, and a request for resumption of ESD activities, WWF carried out an assessment to confirm the possibility of this resumption.

WWF confirmed that studies have effectively started and ESD could recommence as from next academic year.



WWF, in collaboration with the PSMNR, will be demarcating the boundaries of BNP (NE cluster), KNP (Clusters F, C and D) and MCNP (Buea 1, Buea 2 and the West Coast Clusters), in the upcoming months, following boundary opening and management protocol to be signed with local the communities.



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