What is TroPEG and what are its missions?

TroPEG means Tropical Plant Exploration Group, and is a non-governmental organisation. Our mission is to carry out research on plant within the tropics and in the direction of conservation science, systematics, forestry and agriculture (Analog and Agro forestry specifically). We also disseminate our findings to the scientific community and the world at large for the purpose of knowledge sharing.
How old is TroPEG?

TroPEG is a young organisation that saw the light of day in 2010, with registration No. 03/G40/606/AR/BASC/SP and is based in Mundemba, South West Region - Cameroon.

Can you elaborate on why you guys created TroPEG?

TroPEG was created with the intention to fill the gap that exists in the domain of Taxonomy, biodiversity and Conservation in Cameroon. This is partly also due to the huge biodiversity potential found in Cameroon and the Congo Basin.

Secondly to collaborate with the Government, National and International Institutions in research, and to educate people on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development.

Thirdly, Botany students particularly in Cameroon lack the necessary skills required to fulfil their dreams of gaining employment in projects, organisations, or biodiversity institutions thus TroPEG is a good platform for training young Cameroonians/Foreigners that require skills in the field of Conservation Biology, Systematics/Taxonomy, Biodiversity, Bioinformatics and Ecology.

Achievements?

**Capacity Building**
- In 2011 two members were trained on Web 2.0 for development at the University of Buea, Cameroon organised by CTA in collaboration with the University of Buea.
- In 2012, a member was trained on the techniques of Analog forestry to restore degraded areas organised by the International Analog Forestry Network (IAFN) in collaboration with the Center for Nursery Development and Eru Propagation (CENDEP) in Kumbo Cameroon.
- In 2013, a member was trained on biodiversity informatics, data cleaning and data publishing, and Ecological niche modeling organised by the Biodiversity informatics Training Curriculum (BITC) in collaboration with icipe-African Insect Science for Food and Health held in Nairobi, Kenya.

**Consultancy**
- Botanical survey of the Bioko Island of Equatorial Guinea for a PhD thesis at the University of Drexel USA.
- Training students from James Madison University (JMU), USA on Botanical techniques during their study abroad field trips in Korup National Park.
- High Conservation Value (HCV) assessment of the Ngut and Mundemba support zone of Korup Forest area for a PhD thesis at the Georg August University, Gottingen Germany.

**Grant**
- In 2012 we got a grant from the Rufford Small grant foundation and carried out a Botanical survey of the Mbye Forest Reserve in Donga Mantung Division of the North West Region, Cameroon.

**Website Address**
We got a web site address in 2012 known as www.tropeg.org
The report presents the findings of a preliminary vegetation survey carried out at the Mbembe forest Reserve (MFR) in the Northwest Region of Cameroon and to the border of Southeastern Nigeria.

The overall objective of this project was to assess the Biodiversity and Conservation status of plants in the Mbembe, Fungom and Kimbi forest area with emphases on the forest around Dambu, Kwei, Gimbeu and Mayo Binka.

The reconnaissance survey carried out was the first systematics survey on the vegetation and forest structure in the Mbembe Forest Reserve area through forest inventory, and this will in the future help the government in decision-making towards conservation, sustainable development and biodiversity policy.
Field operations during survey in 2012 at Mbembe

Laying of a hectare plot in dry forest around Buku-up

Evaluation of Trees in Plot

Campimg site at Buku-up

Evaluation of Herbs in plot

Working conditions in Savanna in the Mbembe area was a great challenge for the TroPEG team

Tree measurement and plot evaluation
One TroPEG member got the opportunity to be trained on Analog forestry techniques in Kumbo North West Region, Cameroon. This training was organised by the IAFN in collaboration with CENDEP. In brief Analog Forestry is a technique of conserving biodiversity and ensuring livelihood through the harnessing of degraded ecosystem to resemble a near-by ecosystem or what was existing in the past. This idea began in Sri-Lanka by Dr. Rene who first noticed the disappearance of a particular reptile species because of the destruction of its habitat.
Biodiversity informatics, data cleaning, data publishing, and Ecological niche modeling Training, organised by BITC in collaboration with icipe-African Insect Science for Food and Health held in Nairobi, Kenya.

Coffee break during the Kenya training (L-R): Dr. Tanga Chrysantus (Cameroonian), Foba Caroline (Cameroonian), Sainge N. Moses (Cameroonian), Prof. Townsend A. Peterson (American), and a Togolese Participant.
Web 2.0 training at the University of Buea organised by CTA

During this training two members of TroPEG were opportuned to be part of the training as they were selected independently by the selection committee. This was very important for a young organization like TroPEG because the Web 2.0 opportunity is just about learning how to extend or make known your activity to the rest of the world.

Participants were drilled on how to get their own stuff or products posted on the net at no cost. Issues like Blogging and how to create Blogs and micro-Blogs, Facebook page, the used of some professional websites such as Linkin and Wiki spaces were taught.

Training of Young Cameroonianians as one of the objectives of TroPEG

In 2012 two master students (Blaise and Mirreille) from the University of Buea, Cameroon were trained on forest ecology and plant systematics during the Mbembe Forest survey. In 2013 one student from the Faculty of Agronomic Science and Agriculture, University of Dschang was also trained during consultancy survey on the Evaluation of tree species and potential High Conservation Value (HCV) sites.

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Training of Foreign Nationals

Tree measurement by students

Study Abroad students (JMU), USA evaluating tree species with Professor Greg Perrier.

Sainge working with JMU students during trip in Korup

TroPEG Web Address and Logo

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TroPEG is affiliated to CAFON - The Cameroon Analog Forestry network. The Cameroon Analog Forestry network (CAFON) took off after a three days symposium on Analog Forestry in Mbengwi - Cameroon, in September 2012. The international analog network, IAFN, has been sharing information on analog forestry through CAFON. So far three of the members of CAFON have started establishing analog forestry demonstration plots in their areas of work. TroPEG as of now is currently undertaking sensitization on Analog Forestry and is looking forward to develop a hand book of local species that would be promoted in Analog Forestry farms.

**WHAT WE CAN DO**

- Transect sampling
- Small plots sampling
- Establishment of permanent sample plots for biomonitoring
- Identification of different plant life-forms
- Ecological research
- Biodiversity and forest assessment surveys
- Ecological niche modeling
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Studies
- High Conservation Value (HCV) Assessment

**Field**

**Data Analysis**

- Data management and analysis using specialized softwares packages such as SPSS, MINITAB and Microsoft Excel.
- Biodiversity informatics in Data cleaning and data publishing.

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