



CERCO-NEWS

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Our Strategic Plan document encompassing Strategies and Goals for the next 5 years

Begin with the end in mind

On Jan 1st 2011, we will publish CERCOPAN's 2011-2016 Strategic Plan. You will find the document on our web site www.cercopan.org immediately the New Year begins, and it will lay out the programme for all in our organisation (and its support network) on a long-term basis.

The need for a Strategic Plan, while important to any organisation, is even more necessary in our circumstances. While most business in a company gets done on a day-to-day basis dealing with short-term issues, meaning that focus on consistent themes provides efficiency and effectiveness, for us it is especially vital that we know where we are heading, since in the conservation world we are dealing with issues

that take multiple years to come to fruition.

And in our case, we also must address the reality that key members of our organisation, especially our international volunteers, will only be with us for 2-3 years, so we have to provide a ground plan that survives the incumbents of particular positions.

The Strategic Plan not only establishes the Goals we need to achieve for the next 5 years to steer decision-making within the organisation so that it is always pointed in a uniform direction, but it also gives credence to those who provide funds for our work. Often when we make grant applications, we are asked about sustainability for the future. How will the successes from one year of funding play out into the future? Will the work die once the funds are spent?

The answer is that one year of funding will contribute vitally, precisely because the donation is directed at a component of a programme, and not a one-off event. That argument becomes abundantly clear once you have a Strategic Plan in view.

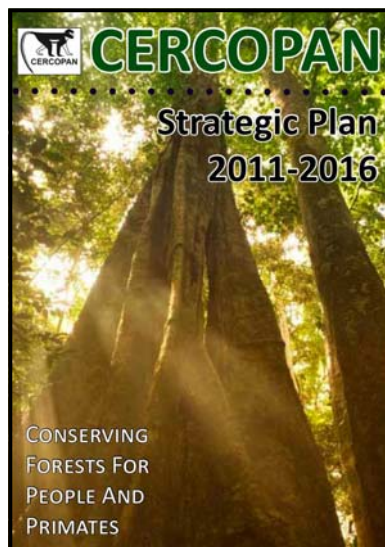
Without giving too much away in advance

of the Plan's release, we can say that a critical strategic element of the Plan involves an alliance with the University of Calabar (UNICAL).

Presently our captive care primates are housed on rented premises, and with our growth over the years we are at full capacity, with no recourse to address future intakes. Furthermore, economic growth in Calabar is putting pressure on the land to be used for alternative purposes, so we face the constant spectre of eviction.

Land donated by UNICAL will readily accommodate our needs, and a planned educational partnership with the University will be the cornerstone of a drive to build capacity within Cross River State to manage its globally significant environmental treasures.

The move, long-planned, will have to be conducted in stages, given the nature of project-based funding that we remain reliant on. The threat of being moved from our present site is very real and acute, and we urgently seek donations, support, contacts, and leads for funding mechanisms to be able to take the first steps of securing the site. Please see the back page for points of contact if you are able to help





Claire Coulson
CERCOPAN
Director

From the Director

For my friends who have never visited Nigeria, my life is a constant source of amusement. Even with three sources of electricity, I am usually without, but when one is on I can get electrocuted by touching fruit! They don't realise that these things are quite normal.

The concept of teaching women in a remote village to farm snails (see below) might seem to fall into the same category if you've only ever eaten snails as 'escargot' in a fine French restaurant. But no, the snails here, like many things, are different.

They are about the size of a small rat and make a very popular dish across the country. They also provide an excellent source of protein in rural communities that can substitute for bush-meat. Once you have the background it all makes sense!

Mysterious tales of 'black magic' Juju can frequently confound and bemuse new visitors to Nigeria. But with careful research and explanation (see our article on the penultimate page), these practices can be a fascinating source of interest, and long chats with my staff here never

cease to charge my imagination.

I'm not sure yet what new story the Christmas season will bring me to keep my friends' spirits up, but in wishing you, our supporters, all the very best at this time of year, I can only hope that some of you have as much fun as I know I will in the coming weeks.

And in celebrating the New Year please take our tip for your resolutions further down on this page!

Claire

Would you like
a groom?



This month saw the arrival of another orphaned monkey. Whisky is an 18 month old female mona monkey. She arrived with rope wounds around her waist and was very thin and dirty. It didn't take long

for her to recover and now she is full of spirit and a little obsessed with grooming herself, being groomed and grooming anything with a pulse.

She is absolutely full of energy and mischief and spends her days bouncing around her enclosure (and the office whenever she gets a chance) but will

often flip suddenly onto her back for a belly rub if any people are around.

The ever growing crèche is now up to seven youngsters. We teamed her up with Casper, Chelsea, Flexi and Bingo, as newbies Cranny and Ekun were finding her persistent grooming a little bit full on!

Appointment 1/1/11

*"The new you
is only a few clicks
away!"*



Thinking ahead to a fresh start in the new year? Will it finally be the time when you kick that habit, or is it that you need to kick yourself so that you get back into shape at last?

Well an excellent way to make your New Year's resolutions easier to keep is to go public on them

with all your friends, and you'll be raising money for charity at the same time.

There are many websites that help you quickly build your fundraising page. Then you just choose your charity, and share your page with your friends. Your friends' donations

and your totals raised are all taken care of by the website.

With your friends committed to your cause, how can you not be?

If you go to both www.justgiving.com and www.everyclick.com you'll find CERCOPAN already registered. The new you is only a few clicks away!

Sowing the seeds of change

CERCOPAN's forest site, Rhoko, has played host again to students from community schools in four villages this year. Visitors from Owai, Iko Esai, Agoi and Iko Ekperem all came at various times to our camp to listen and learn about forest conservation and to visit our monkey inhabitants.

While we also routinely visit the schools themselves to give conservation education talks, the visits to the forest provide a much more formative experience for individuals. The Education Centre, our semi-free Red-capped mangabeys and a nature trail through the forest allow us to bring home the benefits of forest conservation with much greater impact.

Perhaps the most important concept we can get across to these young minds is that of sustainable management of their forests.

All of these school-children understand full well how vital the forest is to their families as a provider of income from Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP), e.g. cane rope, afang, and



Young visitors from the village of Owai at the end of the Nature Trail

medicinal plants. These products will be available for ever, provided they are not over-harvested, and the eco-system is not irreparably damaged.

By comparing Rhoko forest visually to the immediately surrounding degraded neighbourhood, we can point out why community agreements such as a total ban on logging, barring outsiders from gathering NTFP products, and farm zoning will allow sustainable future use of the forest.

Our staff also work with the students to explain how the forest is a totality of diverse inter-dependent species.

With monkey species'

counts well below the level where they could possibly be hunted in any sustainable way, we can stress the critical importance of imposing a ban on hunting monkeys, and working to reintroduce groups back into the wild to restore natural population levels.

These efforts not only guarantee the species' survival, but benefit the general health of the forest as well.

The schools day-out programme is a continuing success story, as young generations learn about the importance of forest conservation and spread the word throughout their communities.

"Perhaps the most important concept we can get across to these young minds is that of sustainable management of their forests"

Iko Esai school-children in front of the Education Centre at Rhoko



Slow food

This month CERCOPAN invited Concern Universal, an NGO based in Calabar, to come to Agoi Ibami to train a group of men and women on how to farm the African Giant snail.

Snail farming can be a

very good source of income that does not require a lot of time or money, and can be done on a group or individual basis.

Nine people attended this first training session and all plan to start their own small snail farm with assistance from CERCOPAN. The training was very interactive and included information on how to breed, manage and sell snail meat for the best profit.

Snails can lay up to 1,200 eggs in a year, and with the proper care all of these eggs can survive to maturity to lay eggs themselves. Snail meat is very healthy and provides a good source of protein for all the family.

The group members plan to build their own small individual snail houses, and breed snails for sale in local markets where they are not commonly available to buy.

Many people enjoy the sweet meat of snails and the group all believe that this small business will help them to support their families and improve their lives.

Classroom training on snail farming



A sweet way to earn a living

In the build up to Christmas, the prices in Iko Esai's market have been rising. Whilst this would usually be cause for complaint, this month there are quite a few people in the village who are pleased by the turn of events because as a result of CERCOPAN's efforts in the community they have goods to sell.

The beekeeping group in the village have just harvested four litres of honey from one of the beehives provided by CERCOPAN, and believe they can make a bumper profit due to the season. Not only is the honey itself useful, beeswax from the honeycombs can be used to treat wood, including the new hives that are being constructed by a local carpenter for the group.

When we organised a workshop to increase the number of people in the community benefiting from beekeeping, over 15 young women indicated interest. They will be provided with group hives once the training is completed. The income from beekeeping can be substantial and it is one of the few means young



More beehives under construction

women have to become more financially independent.

Whilst bee-keeping is relatively inexpensive, there are real costs involved for wood and carpentry work. Nevertheless, the demand for honey in the community far exceeds the available supply, and we expect that with the provision of eight more beehives, the group will be able to build their business to the level that it can fund its own future expansion.

Joy Ekpe with the first harvest



Our man in Havana

When it comes to holidaying in Africa, the numbers show that the preferred destinations are Morocco, Egypt, Kenya and South Africa. So you might expect that cultural influence on the rest of the world from Nigeria, since it is much less visited, would be rather low.

But this is not the case. The Nigerian diaspora caused by the slave trade means that long-standing beliefs and practices west of the Atlantic from Brazil to Cuba can be tied back to deep-rooted Nigerian cultural traditions.

Dr. Ivor Miller from the African Studies Center in Boston University and also working in the Department of History for the University of Calabar, has been in Nigeria now for several

years studying the Cross River Ékpè culture and its influence in the Americas, in particular on the Cuban Abakuá culture. He visited Rhoko recently to further his research.

During his visit to our site, Dr Miller interviewed one of our patrol staff, Osam, about his experiences with Ékpè. The Ékpè society, highly secretive, is very intertwined with the country's belief in Juju – a type of magic and spirit belief.

Osam comes from a family with strong Juju ties and many of his forefathers (and some of his current family) were Juju practitioners. Osam's stories of past events have always been a highlight to volunteers and visitors passing through, and offer excellent insight into the ways of the Ékpè culture.

Osam was surprised to find his interview recorded



Osam revealing the Cuban connection

and filmed by Dr. Miller but he, and the rest of us at CERCOPAN, are pleased that Osam could be such help, and we are looking forward to reading Dr. Miller's study upon completion.

If you are interested in finding out more, check out <http://afrocubaweb.com/ivormiller/ivormiller.htm>

“...long-standing beliefs and practices west of the Atlantic from Brazil to Cuba can be tied back to deep-rooted Nigerian cultural traditions”

Back at the double

Tjark Plat, a short-term volunteer originally from the Netherlands returned to Nigeria this month for the first time in ten years. In 2000 he spent three months working at CERCOPAN building Rhoko Camp, and from there he became the Site Maintenance Manager and later Facilities Manager at Wild Futures, a primate sanctuary in the U.K.

At Wild Futures Tjark is responsible for the design and construction of monkey territory, along with overall site maintenance. A perfect fit for our needs!

We are delighted that he has decided to return for two months to volunteer his skills and expertise for us, and we already have

enough enclosure construction and maintenance jobs to keep him very busy during his time here.

Another second-time volunteer, Joe Brophy, is also back in-country. Joe was here in the early summer offering his amazing tree-climbing skills at our service.

Joe is also no ordinary handyman himself, and we took full advantage of those capabilities last time around.

But on this visit, we are hoping that Joe can spend more time in the canopy on the end of a rope.

There is a lot more to learn about the ecology of the canopy, and now we have a rare chance to gather new data that is normally unavailable to our



Tjark (left) already hands-on after a 10 year gap

researchers.

For example, many butterfly species are confined to living within a few tens of metres of ants nests built high up on tree trunks. And our understanding of the feeding ecology of our monkey species will benefit from gathering samples from the levels where they forage.

WANT TO BE A PART OF IT?

- Stay in touch with our on-going programme by bookmarking our home page <http://www.cercopan.org/> and our Blog site <http://cercopan.wildlifedirect.org/> and joining our Facebook fan page <http://www.facebook.com/cercopan/>
- Volunteer for CERCOPAN in either Nigeria or the UK. We offer a range of different programmes so there is something for everyone! Visit our website volunteer section for further details.
- Help CERCOPAN attain corporate funding. If you work for a corporate sponsor who may be interested in funding CERCOPAN please contact claire.coulson@cercopan.org
- Undertake a sponsored event to raise funds for CERCOPAN. Use the Fundraising Pack on our web site to help you.
- Make a cash donation to CERCOPAN via our website...every little helps!
- Buy a gift for friends or family from the Good Gifts Catalogue (www.goodgifts.org). You can buy a month's supply of fruit for growing CERCOPAN orphan monkeys - called in the catalogue 'A-peeling Monkeys' for only £20! The price of the gift is passed on to CERCOPAN. So, it is an excellent way of solving your gift problems, and supporting our work! Alternatively visit the CERCOPAN gift shop on our website today.
- Donate useful goods and equipment such as building and fencing materials, veterinary medicines, old laptop computers etc. or services such as printing, blood testing and architectural design.

www.cercopan.org
<http://cercopan.wildlifedirect.org>
<http://www.facebook.com/cercopan/>



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