

**Liberia**  
**East Nimba Nature Reserve Forest Conservation Project**  
**News from the Field (July 2019–June 2020)**

**August 2020**  
**Conservation International**



**Renewal of Conservation Agreements**

Conservation agreements (CA) with Gbobayee and Yolowee communities were renewed. The signatories of the CAs included the Town Chiefs of Gbobayee and Yolowee, the District leadership, county authorities, Forest Development Authority, ENNR Co-Management Committee, and CI-Liberia.



Signing ceremony in Gbobayee

### **Livelihood Improvement Activities (Pig Farming)**

Pig farming was introduced in the two communities of Gbobayee and Yoloweeno as an alternative means of livelihood. In these communities, people had depended on bush meat as their main source of protein. Pig farming is expected to reduce wildlife being captured as well as increase people's cash income.

Last year, the number of pigs raised increased from 12 to 34, with 26 pig farmers (12 in Gbobayee and 14 in Yolowee) undergoing training to improve pig management practices including feeding, hygiene and sanitation of the pig pen, identification of diseases, treatment and vaccinations, and individual health management, etc.



A Sow with her piglets in Gbobayee

Additionally, 5.5 acres (2.5 acres in Yolowee and 3 acres in Gbobayee) were prepared and planted with cassava, potato greens and other vegetables to ensure availability of pig feed.



Potato field in Yolowee



Cassava field in Yolowee



Cassava field in Yolowee



On-site training of pig farmers at cassava field



### Livelihood Improvement Activities (Rice Cultivation)

A total of 20 community members (16 men and four women) took part in a training program to improve agronomic practices for lowland rice cultivation in Gbobaye. Although rice is commonly eaten in Liberia, most rice is imported, so the aim of this activity is to improve the community's self-sufficiency rate. During last year's training, participants mastered rice cultivation by learning about land clearing, nursery preparation, transplanting and rice harvesting from nine standard plots (40x40).



Lowland rice cultivation in Gbobayee



Rice harvested in Gbobayee

### **Yolowee Public Elementary School Renovation**

Four classrooms at Yolowee Elementary School were renovated. While the elementary school had previously met the standards of government schools, reroofing, zinking, plastering, installation of windows and doors, ceiling, floor laying, white washing and painting were completed to transform the renovated school building. Additionally, 30 desks, three blackboards and office tables were provided to the school.

In addition, buckets with faucet, chloride bleach, Rexoguard, hand gloves and other assorted materials were distributed in the above two communities as CI's contribution to Yolowee and Gbobayee to prevent the spread of COVID-19.



Elementary school renovation in Yolowee



Newly purchased classroom desks

### **Conservation Agreement Compliance Monitoring**

The CAs requires cooperation from signatories in forest conservation, including non-violation in and around the East Nimba Nature Reserve and community forests, as a condition for support in community livelihood improvement activities. As such, the monitoring of CAs is vital to ensure compliance by communities.

Last year, the 25 Frontline Conservationists (12 in Gbobayee and 13 in Yolowee) conducted a total of 396 patrols, where 42 violations were recorded. Of these violations, seven were found in the ENNR and 35 in the surrounding forest, which involved agriculture, livestock farming, hunting, and logging. With the cooperation from villagers, the number of violations is gradually declining.



FCs on patrol



FCs on patrol during the COVID-19 pandemic

### Future Activity Outlook

CI Liberia has submitted a proposal for a REDD+ project in Nimba area. If approved, the project will start in 2021. CI Liberia has also submitted a proposal to IUCN to continue supporting the work of the Frontline Conservationists during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is currently awaiting a response.

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