High above the terraced fields a Mafa chief offers a libation of beer to the spirit of the mountain



Map 1a. National boundaries and the proposed International Peace Prk



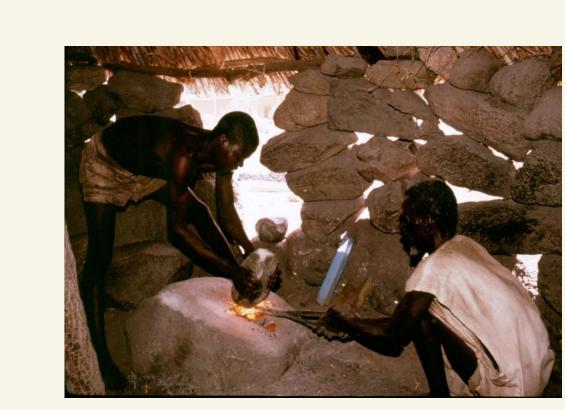
proposed International Peace Park



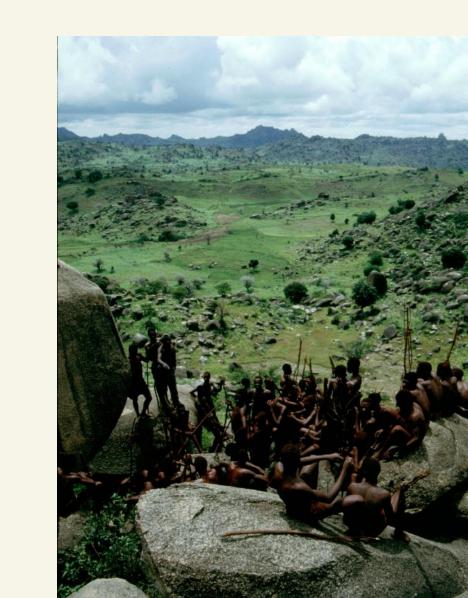
The Ziver and Oupay massifs terraced almost to their summits, here seen in October with ripening sorghum.



The house of the chief of Sukur



At work in a Mandara forge. Photo D. Killick.



Sukur youths are initiated into manhood.

Tourism and sustainable development in the Mandara Mountains of Central Africa (N. Cameroon and NE. Nigeria)

Judy Sterner (Alberta College of Art and Design) & Nicholas David (University of Calgary) 2006

The Mandara mountains are the home of numerous ethnic groups vho have over the centuries developed forms of agroforestry that have continued to sustain high population densities in the face of raiding and other threats from states based in the surrounding plains he demonstrable sustainability of the montagnard way of life is unfortunately associated with extreme poverty.

In this situation Mandara communities' remarkable lifeways constitute mobilized to support low impact eco-cultural tourism. We recommend the establishment of an International Peace Park. The involvement of Mandara mountain communities is a necessary and integral part of any such development. This will require a sensitive, anthropologically informed, approach to local communities.

Only a pro-poor approach can render eco-cultural tourism viable since it is the montagnards' crafts, agriculture, and lifeways that constitute the primary resource capable of attracting an international tourist clientele. Grassroots involvement, with specific educational and formational goals, is required if tourism is to contribute to sustainable development.

The region and its cultures

The Mandara Mountains are a rugged, low altitude, mountain range that straddle the international boundary between northeastern Nigeria and northern Cameroon (Maps 1a and b). Its northern half, bordering the plains of Borno and Lake Chad, contains the range's highest peaks and finest sites. This is contained within an area delimited by the towns of Pulke, Gwoza and Michika in Nigeria and, in Cameroon, Mozogo and the village of Rhoumsiki (Map 2). Over many centuries its numerous ethnic groups (Map 3) have dealt with Islamic states of the Lake Chad region engaged in slave raiding, absorbed refugees from these same states, survived a jihad, German, French and British colonization and administration, and incorporation into the independent nations of Cameroon and Nigeria. Despite locustcaused famines, at times brutal policies of taxation and resettlement, lack of transport, health, and education infrastructure, and the impacts of Islam and Christianity, these communities have maintained themselves and, over the decades, increased their numbers to a far greater extent than their standard of living. They provide excellent models of sustainability under objectively adverse circumstances.

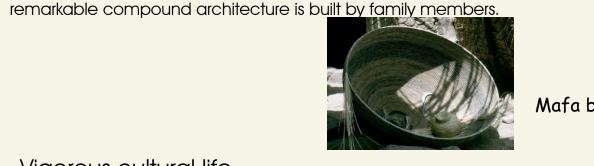
A remarkable agricultural system

In a boulder-strewn and spectacular mountain landscape, sandy granitic soils and erratic rainfall have been expertly exploited by the montagnards who have transformed their rocky environment by terracing of slopes on which they cultivate a richly elaborated range of sorghums and millets, besides legumes, tubers, and other crops of both African and exotic origins. Even in the most densely populated regions where fields rarely lie fallow and chemical fertilizers are virtually unused, 'The mountain farmers have perfected an effective agricultural system which is suited to their specific environment, maintains soil fertility and would seem difficult to do better. When rainfall is normal, they cover their own food requirements and earn modest incomes.^{1 2} Combined with the raising of livestock, focusing on bulls and small stock necessarily contained half the year in stalls, management of trees and shrubs that approaches gardening, and limited cash-cropping of cotton and peanuts, this system maintains densities that can reach 200 inhabitants/km² at production energy

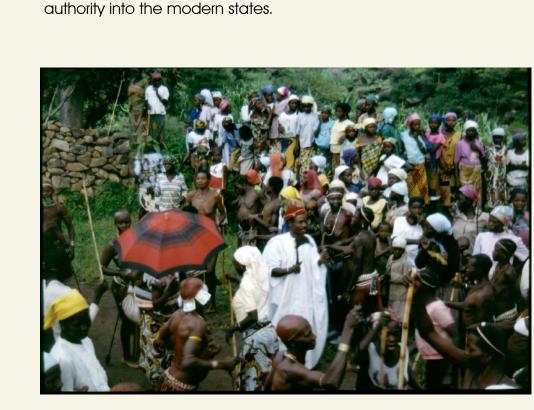
costs of less than a quarter those of Euro-American agribusiness. The beauty and interest of cultural landscapes produced by centuries of effort have been recognized by UNESCO which in 1999 listed Sukur as Nigeria's first World Heritage site. Sukur, an ancient center of the iron trade, is located across the border from the spectacular volcanic plugs in Kapsiki territory around Rhoumsiki. The scenery is magnificent, and while mammalian wildlife is limited, there is a rich avifauna and a



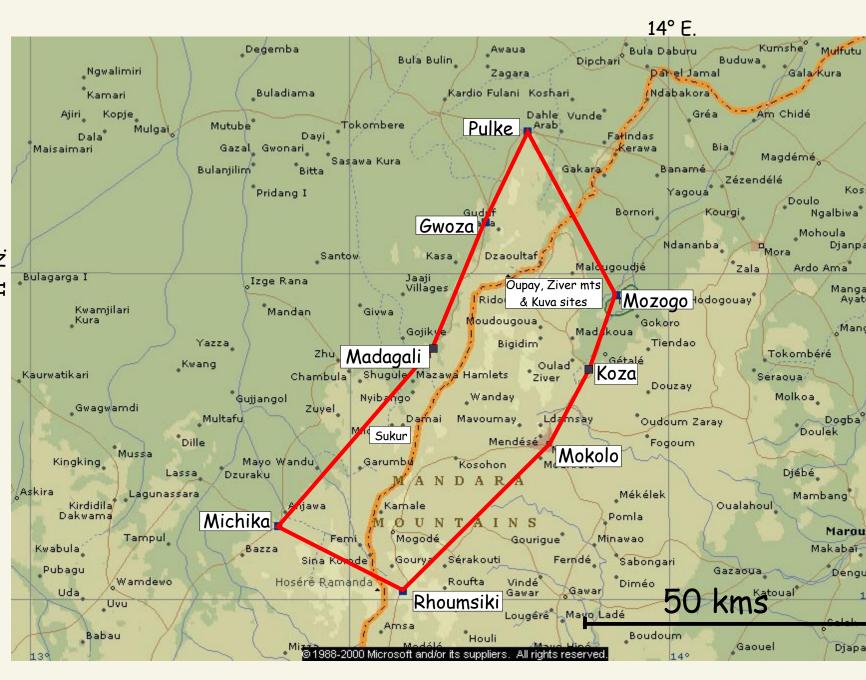
Montagnard agroforestry is sustained by vigorous local crafts, some practiced by casted specialists. While the smelting of iron ore in a unique form of furnace is nowadays undertaken only in the form of reenactments, smiths produce a full range of tools, weapons and ornaments.³ Brass casting is practiced by Kapsiki. Potters, often the wives of smiths, manufacture high quality terracotta wares for utilitarian, social and ritual purposes. Cook pots, beer jugs, brewing vats, and other types of pots are produced for local use, and sold in regional markets and beyond.4 Many types of craft products including basketry, made by women or men depending upon ethnic affiliation, are produced in every household, and while the mud domes of traditional huts are often formed by experts, most of the



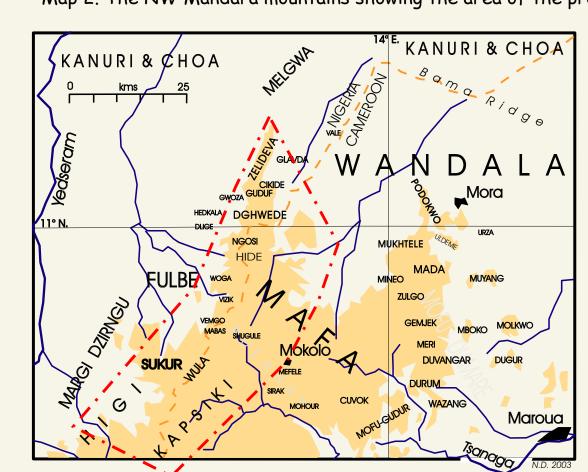
Vigorous cultural life This thriving material culture is complemented by an equally flourishing cultural life that looks back to prehistoric roots in the Neolithic and Iron Age of Central Africa. About five hundred years ago remarkable stone-built monuments were being constructed near Koza on the flanks of the Oupay massif, at 1449 m. the highest point of the mountain chain. Recent research suggests that they may have served as rain shrines.⁵ These and later integrative institutions did not inhibit the development of a kaleidoscopic array of local cultures. Amongst other manifestations including a remarkable musical tradition, these maintain varied and often photogenic ceremonial cycles -- bull and harvest festivals, the initiation of young men, ⁶ and the like -- while jealously retaining a degree of independence despite the partial integration of traditional structures of



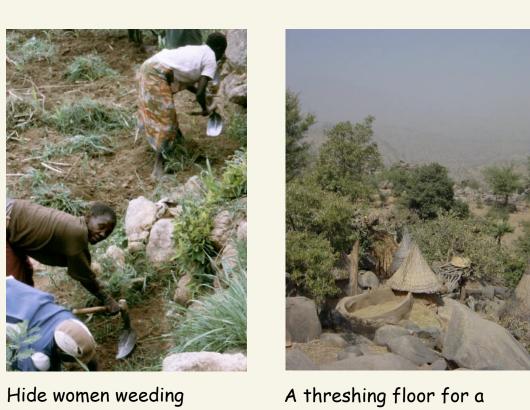
The final dance after the young men's initiation, Sukur.



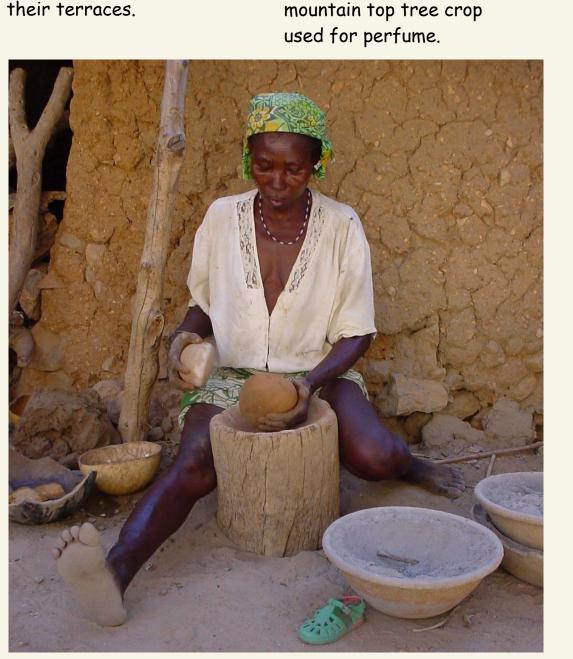
Map 2. The NW Mandara mountains showing the area of the proposed Peace Park outlined in red.



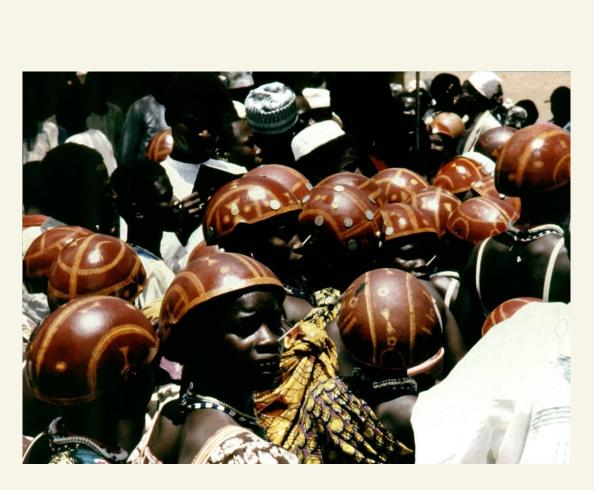
Map 3. Ethno-linguistic groups of the northern Mandara mountains.



mountain top tree crop used for perfume.



A Mafa potter uses a forming technique unique to Africa.



Young Hide women at Tourou market.

Tourism today and its potential for tomorrow Although the region lies within a day's travel of London and Paris, Although Sukur may now be receiving more Nigerian visitors, in 1996 tourists of any kind were few and far between. On the Diamaré plain in Cameroon, Maroua offers a limited tourism infrastructure, but its and to big game hunters than to hikers and others who might enjoy Mokolo and minibuses stop off for half an hour at the Djingliya artisanal cooperative, the contribution of tourism to the local economy is best gauged by the fact that the latest statistics on 'tourism' in Cameroon available on the web relate to 1995 when under a quarter of a million non-residents visited the country for an average of 2.06 days. In other words most foreign visitors, whether there for business or pleasure, were not in the country long enough visit the Mandara mountains. The tourists who in any one year visit Rhoumsiki, the most 'developed' tourist site in the mountains, to consult a diviner and visit a forge before taking lunch at the

It is clear that the potential for tourism in the Mandara mountains is effectively unrealized, and in the remainder of this brief contribution we argue that its realization requires international cooperation and national intervention, but above all local small scale initiatives backed by a sensitization of montagnard communities to the advantages and disadvantages of increased contacts with the wider world.

'campement,' number only in the low hundreds. Far fewer participate

in the locally advertised treks through the Mandara mountains. This is

hardly surprising since information available from travel agents is

sparse and often phenomenally inaccurate and misleading (see



The Mandara region on the World Wide Web Despite a wealth of geographical, anthropological and other data on the Mandara mountain and its peoples (see www.Mandaras.info) much of the information intended for tourists is muddled, misleading, and perpetrates the worst stereotypes of a pristine Africa existing out of time. According to <u>columbusguides.com</u> 'the village of Rhumsiki ... features a maze of paths linking the small farms known as the Kapsiki; the Kirdi live here, whose customs and folklore have changed little for centuries.' Farfungplaces.com tells us 'There are 120 tribes or so in this northeastern region. At one time they were part of Old Sudan, then they migrated to Nigeria, then over into Cameroon.' Under the heading "Roumsiki is a village," <u>jat.esmartweb.com</u> informs us that '... most people here are Moslems. Cameroon law presently allows each man to have four wives at one time. For Moslems, this is quite a restriction to impose....

Clearly, any attempt to develop eco-cultural tourism in the Mandara region will require education of international tour guide firms besides the formation of the host communities.

Developing tourism The development of a form of eco-cultural tourism that can help sustain Mandara mountain communities requires international, transnational, national, and local action and initiatives. We will deal with

scale tourist industry.

most familiar and best qualified as anthropologists to comment. Internationally and trans-nationally, we would recommend the establishment of an **International Peace Park** covering the area outlined in red on the maps. National policies regarding the issuance of visas must be changed to encourage tourism, and other administrative measures need to be taken, but above all there must be local action and initiatives. In what follows we focus on the question of how montagnard communities can become effective hosts in a small

each of these, while focusing on the local situation with which we are

International aspects We have already mentioned that Sukur was declared an UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999 under the category of 'Cultural Landscape'. More recently the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) has been involved in the

border has been peaceably and amically resolved. 10 Trans-national aspects The establishment of a trans-border park would facilitate the development of tourism to the benefit of both nations: 'Several transboundary parks are specifically designated as Peace Parks, intended to provide a peaceful solution to a conflict or potential conflict or contribute to the rehabilitation of an area after a conflict. There has

University of Calgary's excavations of the Kuva monuments⁸ in the context

of its Africa 2009 conservation program. On an equally positive note, the

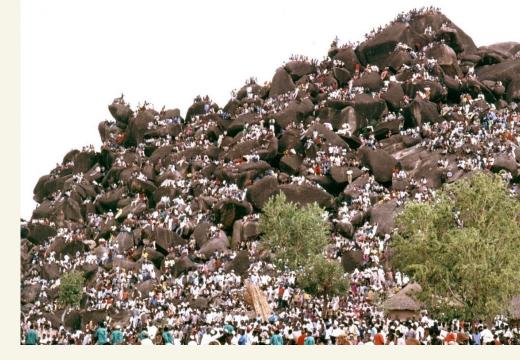
tension previously existing between Cameroon and Nigeria over their

been a dramatic increase in transboundary parks in recent years ...' Visa requirements for both Nigeria and Cameroon currently make it virtually impossible for tourists who are not part of organized groups to enter their countries, and it is difficult and expensive for foreigners to cross the international frontier. A trans-border park within which visitors entering from either country could freely circulate would transform tourism in this area.

At present there is active and friendly interaction across the frontier at all levels, from administrators attending each others national holidays to formal and informal trade and social interactions. These provide the context of cooperation needed for the development of an attractive eco-cultural tourism package.

National aspects There already exist in both countries the administrative institutions at the national, state/provincial, and local government levels required to develop and implement policies regarding tourism. These include amongst others: the Nigerian Commission on Museums and Monuments, Arts Councils, Tourism Boards, and Community Associations. Their disparate and piecemeal activities need to be integrated and reoriented in order stimulate and to facilitate initiatives generated at the

Kapsiki dwarf shorthorn cattle, an ancient breed.



Crowds at the Mokolo horse races on Independence Day.



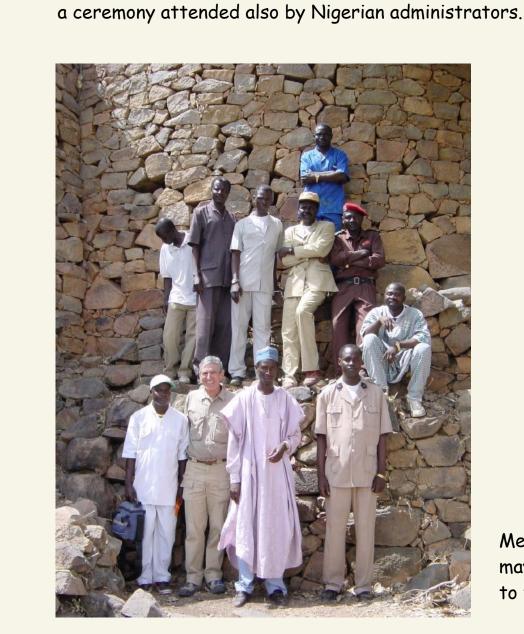
Volcanic plugs at Rhoumsiki.



The largest of the Kuva stone-built sites showing the entrance to a covered passage..



Installation by the Prefect of Mokolo of the Mayor of the Rural Commune of Mayo Moskota,



There already exist in the region a vast variety of institutions and even individuals whose dispersed activities could productively be mobilized and integrated into a broader program of the kind we advocate. We point to a small sample of these both positive and negative.

The Sukur Development Association was founded in 1976 and in 1992 established the Sukur Mini' Museum with support of the Adamawa State Arts Council. The 'museum' was a large hut with a mud domed roof. Traditional objects - costume, implements, weapons, ceramics were initially on display. However fears for their security caused owners to remove them. The museum then became the temporary home of anthropologists and other visitors, Nigerian and expatriate. A second structure was built in 1996 with traditional 'furnishings' incorporated a grinding stand, hearth - with the prospect of objects being hung on the walls. A local man now employed by the Arts Council of Adamawa State as 'interpreter/guardian' later attended a course on museum management at the National Museum at Jos.

Sukur was declared a State Monument in 1997 before becoming a UNESCO World Heritage two years later. International recognition led to some quite inappropriate suggestions, including that that a '100-bedroom countryside resort could be put in place to serve as the main recreational facility ... [with] helicopters and airstrip provision for fast tourist shuttles and trans-country air transportation, based on a mutually sustainable and well-tailored cultural and eco-tourism agenda or master plan.¹¹² While thankfully none of these 'improvements' has materialized, in February of 2003 the Sukur Yawal festival 'attracted prominent sons and daughters, government officials, experts from UNDP and visitors from far and near. 13

In Cameroon tourism has been longer but not always better established. Van Beek describes how in 1970 German, French and Italian travel agencies offered tours through the Mandara mountains as 'the touristic highpoint of a trip in Cameroon.' 14 Such tours were monopolized by Norcamtours, a Cameroonian government agency. A hotel was built at Rhoumsiki where tourists could visit the chief and a smith's forge, consult a diviner, and 'take pictures of women at the village well'. When visitors complained that the locals wore clothes, Norcamtours solved the problem by 'advising' them to 'take off their modern clothes, and emerge in traditional (un)dress'. A few people, mostly smiths, diviners and young men who acted as guides, made some money from these exchanges. Since 1970 Rhoumsiki has become something of a tourist trap and is said to have the distinction of being 'the only village that we have visited in Cameroon that has special "staged" demonstrations for tourists. ... All were created for the "show" to raise funds for the village." ¹⁵ Thus an admirable aim was achieved by misrepresentation and conforming to tourists' mistaken stereotypes of African village life! Norcamtours no longer exists but Rhoumsiki remains a tourist destination, and a local entrepreneur has built up a reputable tour company that operates throughout Cameroon.

The 'route touristique' through the Cameroon Mandara includes a visit to Mabas (iron smelting furnaces) and stops at a privately run Campement (Motel) in Mokolo, the Artisanat at Djingliya (limited accommodation and a souvenir shop) run under the auspices of the Catholic mission. At the nearby village of Gousda a small weaving cooperative operated by women and a man is overseen by nuns from the Catholic mission at Koza. Local women andmen also make baskets, pottery and other craft products some of a non-traditional "tourist art"

Other initiatives have been taken independently by communities and by individuals. The people of the Ziver massif, once hostile to outsiders, now bring soft drinks and bottled beer from Mokolo to sell to thirsty trekkers. Visitors must engage local guides in order to avoid

The necessity of a 'pro-poor' approach to tourism

In order for eco-cultural tourism to succeed, enabling montagnards to remain in their mountain communities while enjoying a better, and sustainable, standard of living, a 'Pro-poor' approach is essential. Pro-poor tourism generates net benefits for the poor. Benefits may be economic, social, environmental or cultural. 17 This approach has much in common with other alternative forms of tourism: sustainable tourism, ecotourism and community-based tourism, and fair, just, equitable tourism. The differences are to be found in the emphasis on countries of the South, on the poor rather than on the environment, and on their desire for access to opportunities beyond those of the local community.

A set of six principles characteristic of a pro-poor tourism approach have been identified. 18 We address the two that are most critical to the current discussion, participation and holistic <u>livelihood</u>, and suggest how they might be realized in the Mandara mountains. Through participation 'poor people must participate in tourism decisions if their livelihood priorities are to be reflected in the way tourism is developed.¹⁸ Education and mobilization of village communities is essential and must be tackled with sensitivity to cultural norms. Thus for example an initial meeting with chiefs, ward heads, and elders is a prerequisite to any and all forms of cooperation. Montagnards have suffered a long history of exploitation and are sensibly sceptical of proposals from beyond their hills.

'Holistic livelihoods' refers to 'the range of livelihood concerns of the poor -- economic, social and environmental, short-term and long-term -- that need to be recognised. Focusing on cash or jobs is inadequate.' The founding of the Sukur Museum was an initiative of the Sukur Development Association. This comprises men and women living at Sukur who continue to live by farming, as well as Sukur practising a variety of jobs and professions in towns and in cities throughout Nigeria. Similarly in Cameroon every jurisdiction, rural and urban, has locally elected councilors. Consequently elders living on the mountain slopes, as well as often Western-educated younger people living in new settlements at the foot of the mountains may come together to discuss tourism strategies acceptable to all concerned. These will include respect for and protection of traditional ways and sacred sites, the formation -- as suggested by Edward Matenga in his report to ICCROM -- of local guides, masons, and conservators, the upgrading of campements and rest houses, and other supplemental forms of local employment for men, women and children. None of this can be achieved in the heavyhanded top-down manner to which montagnards are only too accustomed.

A pro-poor approach to tourism has the potential to enable montagnards to continue to live in their mountains, rather than relocating to the hot and less salubrious plains to be nearer roads, schools and health centres, or to the towns of the region. This 'descent from the hills' began forcibly in colonial times and has continued since independence in 1960. Such downward migration has environmental as well as social consequences. 'Quand les gens descendent, la terre les suit' ('When people move down, the soil follows them.'). But resettlement is slowed and even reversed by the building of health care centres and primary schools in hard-to-reach mountain areas, and by the construction of tracks accessible by motorbikes and 4x4 vehicles. The well-established system of terrace agriculture could be augmented by income generated from a form of tourism that enables and requires peasants and artisans to become teachers of sustainability, and of traditional skills and knowledge. For indeed the North and the West have much to learn from the inhabitants of the South.

18. Ashley et al. 2001. Appendix 2

Our research has been carried out since 1984 with the permission of the Cameroonian and Nigerian authorities and has been supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and by the Universities of Calgary and London. We are happy to express our gratitude to all those in both countries who have been so generous with their time, hospitality, and often friendship. We hope the material presented here will one day contribute to their welfare.

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6. David, N. 1999. Regenerating Sukur: male initiation in the Mandara Mountains. (Video, 22 mins). Calgary: Comm. Media, University of 7. www.afristat.org/Cameroun/stats/Tab39.htm 8. Matenga, E. 2002. Report on the state of conservation of stone-built structures in the Extreme North Province of Cameroon and observations on requirements for intervention. Conservation of Immovable Cultural Heritage in Sub-Saharan Africa (ICCROM), Rome. 9. http://www.iccrom.org/eng/programmes/africa.htm 10. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2353989.stm 11. Ali, A. 2002. A Siachen Peace Park: the solution to a half-century of international conflict? Mountain Research and Development 22(4):316-

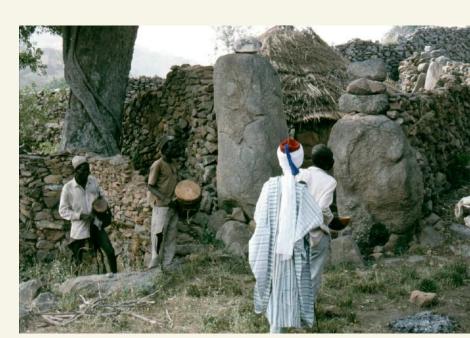
14. van Beek, W.E.A. 1986. L'état, ce n'est pas nous; cultural proletarization in Cameroon. In State and local community in Africa, W. van Binsbergen, F. Reyntjens, and G. Hesseling (eds.), p.81. Brussels: Centre d'Étude et de Documentation Africaines (CEDAF/ASDOC). 15. http://jat.esmartweb.com/village-story.htm 16. David, N. and Y. Le Bléis. 1988. Dokwaza: last of the African iron masters. (Video, 50 mins). Calgary: Department of Communications Medic University of Calgary. 7. Ashley C., D. Roe and H. Goodwin. 2001. Pro-poor tourism strategies: making tourism work for the poor. A review of experience, p. 2. Pro-Poor Tourism Report No. 1. Overseas Development Institute (http://www.propoortourism.org.uk).

13. Adzu, B. 15 March 2003. Evoking tradition at Sukur: the Yawal Sakun Festival. Weekly Trust (http://mtrustonline.comm/sukur1532003.htm

12. Ofulue, G. 9 September 2000. Sukur: Nigeria's own wonder world. Punch 17(1019):22.



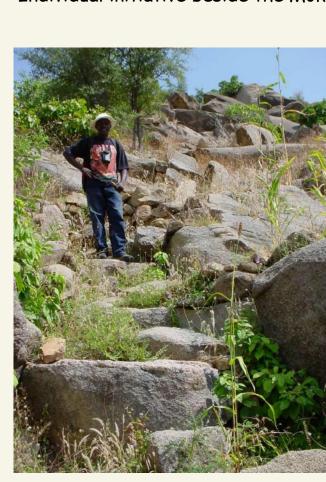
Isnga Sukur works on the Sukur Mini-Museum in 1996.



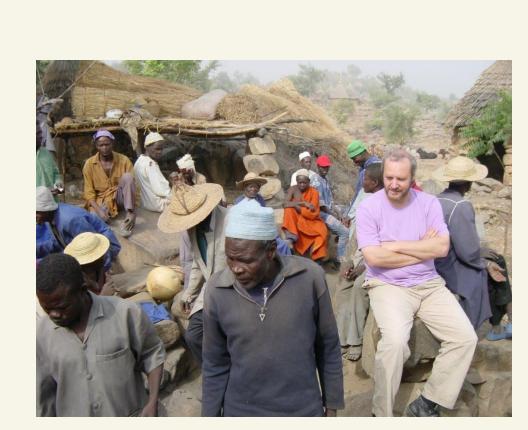
The chief of Sukur passes through a megalithic gateway into his residence during the Yawal ceremony.



Individual initiative beside the Mokolo-Mozogo road.



A staircase in the Mandara moutains.



Gerhard Müller-Kosack at a meeting with Kuva elders to discuss permission for archaeological research.

