

Within our vision of Education for Sustainable Development we designed a programme to engage and prepare key stakeholders for setting up and running medicinal plant gardens in schools.

The gardens will promote active and participatory teaching and learning, and help educators relate curriculum teaching to everyday issues and contexts

Medicinal plants are widely used in our communities, as simple everyday remedies for cuts and bruises, sore throat, fatigue, and many other ailments. Many medicinal plants are easily grown, but surprisingly few people know how. Growing our own can both save and generate money. A first training, that included teachers, school administrators and students took place in January 2014. A central part of the training was a demonstration garden on the ISTP compound in Bamenda. Some medicinal plants were already established there, integrated throughout the site, but a corner of the compound was cleared to make space for a new demonstration nursery - so that participants could see and have practical experience of how to get their own gardens up and running.



The site was cleared (above left), terraced (above right) and finally enclosed to prevent the ever present chickens, and often present goats from damaging seed beds and young plants.

Two trees in the picture – one with a double stem at the bottom of the nursery and another at the bottom of the lawn are ‘njangsang’ (*Ricinodendron heudelotii*, Euphorbiaceae family) that were planted in 2006. Njansang is a common spice used in most households that also has health qualities. Almost all njansang is harvested from the wild, it is still rare to find people who cultivate the tree.

The garden was used throughout the training. The opening introductions, group work and refreshments were held outside, as well as the ‘original encounter’ / garden tour in which participants examined and discussed features of the nursery and garden, discussed practical concerns, interests and shared tips and experiences. Participants appreciated the space, the fresh air and alternating from sessions in the conference room kept their minds alert and the atmosphere relaxed during a long demanding training day. They saw for themselves how easily they can incorporate outdoors learning into routine teaching activities at school, and experienced the benefits. During group work, all the shaded spaces in the garden were used, by adult and young, participants alike.



