

## Discover Newsletter for colleagues in Africa

August 2022

### Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR)



Dear Friends and colleagues,

In previous newsletters I have written about agroforestry. This is where vegetables and trees are grown on the same land. Many Discover partners are promoting this in their communities and the positive benefits are already evident. If you have missed or lost these newsletters, you can find them here: <https://discover-src.net/en/information/from-africa/>

Many of you are “growing trees”. Some collect seeds and germinate them in their tree nursery. All active partners plant seedlings and hope that the rains come at the right time so that the seedlings flourish. Collecting seeds, buying seedlings, planting them, watering them and caring for them needs a lot of work, time and money.

An alternative approach is to allow trees to regenerate naturally. In many areas there is an “underground forest” of roots. These roots belong to trees that have been cut down, sometimes long ago. When these roots push shoots up, they are usually cut off to make space for the crops. But these shoots already have strong roots and can grow into tall, healthy trees – if well cared for.

To allow natural regeneration the area must be fenced to keep animals away. Animals might eat the new shoots. The procedure then is as follows:

- Select the tree stumps and shoots that look most promising.
- Decide how many stems you will allow to grow. Perhaps two or three.
- Select the tallest and straightest stems. Remove side branches up to about halfway up the stem.
- Cut away all the remaining stems.
- Return regularly to prune any unwanted new stems and side branches.



Naturally regenerating trees in the grounds of the Sacred Heart Recreational Centre, Zimbabwe

Trees may also grow from seeds carried by birds or the wind. If they germinate and grow, then they too will be strong and not need a lot of care.

Joachim Nyamande of Green4Life in Zimbabwe is developing a recreational park in the extensive grounds of a Catholic primary school. In a fenced off area, Joachim and his team have already identified 20 different species of tree that are regenerating, most of which are indigenous.

For more information, I recommend that, if possible, you watch this video in which Australian Tony Rinaudo describes his experience of natural regeneration in Niger:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9ztYNoLenw&t=8s>

Pages 29 and 30 of this excellent teacher’s guide, published by the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration Project, World Vision – Uganda, describe FMNR clearly and simply:

[https://fmrhub.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/A\\_handbook\\_for\\_your\\_environment\\_A\\_teach.pdf](https://fmrhub.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/A_handbook_for_your_environment_A_teach.pdf)

I wish you success! Best wishes, Keith