

## Tree planting activities in Africa on World Forest Day, 21 March 2023



A chance to increase awareness in communities, and especially schools.

Many Discover partners and friends took advantage of the World Forest Day to increase the awareness of the importance of planting and protecting trees in the local community, and to win the support of local politicians for their work. As you will read in this report, at least two schools have used this day as a launchpad for future tree planting activities.

In Kasasa, Uganda, near the border with Tanzania, Judith Nambi planted seedlings of the indigenous trees *Milicia excelsa* (muvule or African teak) and *Maesopsis eminii* (musizi or umbrella tree) with the “Kasasa Women’s Savings Group” community group. All twenty participants received trees to be planted in their banana gardens as wind breaks and for food security. On the same day, Judith taught the women to make liquid soap.

A couple of female local councillors took part in the activities. Here, as in



most communities, it is the women who get things done!

In Tema West, Ghana, George Zokli planted trees with the teachers and pupils of the newly opened Cargill Primary School. Like many schools, the school compound is very large but completely devoid of trees, and therefore with no shade for the children and no fruits.

On the World Forest Day, 70 trees were planted: *Tetrapleura tetraptera* (prekese), orange, guava, avocado and mahogany.

The headmistress, Irene Ofori Amanfo, wrote, “Our new school compound lacks shade, and the morning assembly must therefore take place either in the sun or in the classrooms. The trees will create a good atmosphere. In the future other schools and churches will replicate what we have done here. We also hope to

extend this action to churches, mosques and other organizations. The teachers and pupils now know the importance of tree planting and they will plant more. (See photos on the next page)







(Tema West, Ghana, primary school)

In Nyirivu, near to Arua in Uganda, under the leadership of Christopher Nyakuni, children, parents and teachers at the Green Star Nursery School planted seedlings of *Azelia africana* (buluku or African mahogany) with all the children being present.

The Guest of Honour was the Parish Chief of Nyirivu Parish who also planted a tree and asked each adult present to plant three trees on this same day. He praised the Green Star Nursery School for spearheading this tree planting initiative and begged other institutions to do the same.



Christopher says the school will go on to plant more trees that provide shade in the school grounds, such as neem, and also to make the grounds beautiful.



Under the leadership of teacher Mpuuga Jartin, the headteacher, and all other teachers and pupils at Wandegaya Primary School, Mayuge District, Uganda also planted trees for the very first time in their school compound. Ivan Timothy, Leadership Development Officer of the Uganda based NGO Teach for Uganda also attended and explained the importance of planting trees.



They now intend to plant trees in the surrounding communities. They planted grevillea, mango, *Acacia nilotica* (karuvelam or gum arabic tree) and *Maesopsis eminii* (musizi or umbrella tree).

In Kaliro District, Uganda, Kihuluka Eric of Mikwano reports that this World Forestry Day developed into a World Forestry Week, simply because so many different stakeholders wanted to be involved.

They hosted the speaker of parliament, members of parliament, the president's representative, and local councillors from the communities involved and district. A host farmer in each of six parishes was selected to teach other farmers how to plant trees and grow vegetables. The host farmer and members of the Education Department spoke with pupils about taking responsibility for planting trees and ensuring that they are well cared for.



A vast crowd of people attended a public event with musicians, politicians and comedy stars. It was well advertised, and everyone wanted to be part of the agroforestry movement. Eric further writes, “we were blessed with a downpour”.

The many politicians present all clamoured to speak. Their message was consistent and clear: “We are alive because of the trees, let's protect them to fight hunger, poverty, and to sustainably fight climate change”. Similarly, the prime minister of the Zibondo Chiefdom said, “Let's protect our heritage and the future generations by planting, protecting and using trees sustainably. They are our natural pharmacy as well as being a source of our livelihood”. (see photo next page)





Health workers, including the District Health Officer, doctors, midwives and nurses, eagerly took part in the activities by collecting polythene bags, bottles and other rubbish, which are unsightly, a health hazard and block rainwater from reaching the roots of trees. The health workers are now eager to plant fruit trees to support good nutrition.

Eric hopes the week's activities will have done a lot to raise awareness. The many positive expected outcomes include improved nutrition and steps towards the eradication of malnutrition. Agroforestry was promoted once again with its benefits of soil improvement and good water retention.



Eugene Bwambale of the Basu Community Rural Development Organization in Kasese, Uganda, planted 10 large avocado trees with the intention that the fruits will provide income for the community.





Kenja Thomas planted trees with the local community of Kighengi Village on the slopes of the Rwenzori Mountains in Uganda. Such tree planting is essential in this region to protect the hillsides from soil erosion, and the communities below from the dreadful effects of flooding.

Seven local political leaders attended, the Sub County chief, the parish chief, and five members of the local council including the chairperson. Some of the community members who are involved in our ongoing tree planting project were present to witness the local leaders demonstrating planting trees on the hillsides.



A total of 72 seedlings were planted: *Prunus africana*, jackfruit, avocado and mango. Thomas encouraged the participants to note which local trees grow well, and to propagate those from seed rather than always seeking seedlings from the nursery. They were encouraged to plant trees on the hilltops and hillsides to enable rainwater to soak into the ground, and thus to minimise the risk of flooding.

Many people in the community are now eager to plant more trees, both medicinal trees, which have disappeared from the landscape, and trees from which they can harvest the branches for firewood, as all trees have become scarce.

#### Footnote

We, the Discover management team here in Germany, are proud of the dedication of our partners in Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Malawi and Zimbabwe to improving their environment, to combating the terrible impacts of climate change and to promoting “climate smart farming”, chiefly agroforestry.

We thank all our supporters for enabling us to offer our partners moral and financial support.

Kindly make donations from the UK via Stewardship: [www.stewardship.org.uk](http://www.stewardship.org.uk)  
From elsewhere via PayPal using the email address [Keith@discover-src.net](mailto:Keith@discover-src.net)