Mara, Tanzania

Mid-Year Update 2022

Despite the delayed onset of rainfall this year, the project has been going well: 404 312 seedlings were raised and distributed to be planted by individuals and institutions, exceeding our target of 400 000 for this period. A survey assessment of the planted tree seedlings will be carried out later in the year.

Training is well on track. Our annual target is 120 farmers and 120 institutions, and so far 124 institutions – including 114 schools – have taken part in training sessions. 87 farmers (49 men and 38 women) attended four workshops on improved agroforestry practices. They covered agroforestry system design and techniques; growing and planting timber and multipurpose trees; perma gardening and composting; and pruning, harvesting and pest management. Training ensures that farmers and institutions can better manage the seedlings they have received from the project, and that the benefits they bring as they mature – which include shade, fruits and timber, soil improvement, cleaner water, nitrogen fixing and carbon sequestration – will continue long into the future.

Our partner in the field, the Global Resource Alliance (GRA), presented Awards for Excellence in tree planting and care to 12 farmers and 6 institutions who managed their planted seedlings particularly well, demonstrating good after-planting care and high survival rates. Here, second prize winner Karindo A. from Butiama is being awarded a wheelbarrow, and two students from Meshpen secondary school in Rorya District show off their trophy.

The nursery staff attended training on grafting and budding at Morogoro Tanzania Tree Seed Agency, and then grafted 740 fruit seedlings across both nurseries, with more to follow. Grafting joins two different plants to make valuable new ones: the root system of one is connected to the shoot of another, which has a desirable trait – such as fruit size or quantity, or a reduced gestation period – not seen in the first plant. Together they grow and develop as one plant, preserving the required trait coming from the genetic makeup of the second plant. Each grafted seedling is sold for TZS 3000 – ten times more than a non-grafted seedling.

What is agroforestry?

Agroforestry combines agriculture and forestry: trees and shrubs are grown around or among crops or pastureland. It plays a critical role in successful forest restoration by:

- reducing the pressure on forest resources and incentivising sustainable forest management by alleviating poverty;
- compensating the loss of access to forest resources;
- ensuring reliable incomes to fund sustainable forest management.

The value of an agroforestry system is in its diversity; selecting and distributing a variety of environmentally and socially appropriate tree species. In Tanzania, our programme grows between 45-70 species each year that have specific uses.

Some trees, such as timber, are harvested and ideally replaced. Planting fast-growing species in dedicated woodlots reduces pressure on the natural and degraded forests we are working to restore. Others, such as fruit and nitrogen-fixing trees, are pruned year after year providing food, soil fertility and numerous other benefits. Of course, all the types of trees sequester carbon as they grow.

Please visit our **Why and How** webpage for more information.

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You'll receive an annual update in March. Meanwhile, stay up-to-date with our interactive **Mara map**, and check out the **photos** on Flickr.