



## 20,000 Mpingo Trees

In 2004, the ABCP reached the goal of planting of 20,000 mpingo trees, the number of trees estimated to be harvested in Tanzania every year. This hope for the future was originally stated by Sebastian Chuwa, when he was interviewed for the BBC *Nature* documentary, *The Tree of Music*.

Also in 2004, Sebastian's community groups celebrated the planting of one million trees in their efforts to reforest Mt. Kilimanjaro and its surrounding lowlands. The ABCP has been a vital part of this effort by providing nursery facilities and financial support to groups helping with the work.

The work of the ABCP has been accomplished largely through the cooperation of thousands of local volunteers from the schools of the area and community groups working for the environment, supported by fundraising efforts in the US, through this newsletter and direct foundation grants and awards.

In the next phase of our work, our intention is to expand geographically and establish youth conservation groups and school and community nurseries in areas beyond where we currently work. We have already started this outreach at Terat, in Simanjiro District, west of Mt. Kilimanjaro, establishing our programs in a Masai community there. Our next step will be to implement similar new projects east of Kilimanjaro at Same and Njiapanda Himo. In each community we will open two school nurseries and one large community nursery. Sebastian already has commitments from officials and educators in these areas who are eager to cooperate in this effort to improve the environment and lifestyle in their communities.

We are asking our readers to assist in this effort by giving as generously as you can. Mpingo conservation will be an



**Moshi Mpingo Plot, August 2005.** Mpingo seedlings of different ages are in left and center foreground. In the left rear is the 75,000-seedling capacity nursery shelter with seedlings in germination beds and pots. At right center is the water tank with the buildings behind. The buildings will house tools and supplies for the nursery, and provide food preparation and sleeping facilities for visitors to the plot as well as provide living accommodations for a permanent nursery attendant. The water tank, water pumping system and buildings have been built with the support of Cottonwood Foundation grants.

important part of this effort, as climatic conditions in these areas are perfect for growing mpingo. For a detailed description of this program see:

[www.blackwoodconservation.org/5-year\\_program.html](http://www.blackwoodconservation.org/5-year_program.html)

## Cottonwood Foundation

The Cottonwood Foundation, which has been responsible for building much of our infrastructure at the Moshi Mpingo Plot, has this year granted the ABCP funding to establish a new nursery on the grounds. In past years they have provided funding for the building on the Moshi Plot, and a water tank and pumping system to provide water to the plot.

In our existing nursery we can grow 50-75,000 seedlings. The new nursery will be of the same size, so that our total capacity for seedling production will increase to 100-150,000 plants. The ob-

jective of this new nursery is to provide new seedlings for replanting and work for the many volunteers who are visiting for extended periods of time. The Cottonwood building at the plot has, of itself, expanded our work there, as now nursery attendants and volunteers have accommodations to facilitate stays of a longer duration.

The new nursery plants will be distributed to private citizens and school groups and used extensively in reforestation efforts.



Treat the Earth well.  
It was not given to you by your parents.  
It was loaned to you by your children.  
-Kenyan Proverb





Mpingo seedlings just sprouted from seed at the Moshi Mpingo Plot. Recent funding from the Cottonwood Foundation will double the nursery capacity.

### New England Biolabs Funds Fonga Women's Group

One adult group associated with Sebastian's tree planting activities is the Fonga Women's Group, located in rural Moshi south of Mt. Kilimanjaro. This group was founded in 2001 by 10 women who came together to try to solve their own economic problems as well as some pressing community needs. They are supporting mpingo conservation and education, as well as other tree planting activities for environmental and



The Fonga Women's Group sponsors the educational and clothing needs of orphans in their village south of Kilimanjaro. These children have just received uniforms, notebooks and writing paper provided by a grant from New England Biolabs Foundation.

economic improvement. They also make and sell fuel efficient stoves to conserve firewood. One very special project is the support of 20 orphans in their village for whom they provide clothing and school equipment until the 7th grade.

In 2004 the ABCP submitted an application on their behalf to New England Biolabs Foundation. The request was approved and provides funding to build a tree nursery, and establish two micro-enterprises, a poultry project and a fish farming project. It also provides funds for educational trips and supplies for the orphans under their care.

### Kibosho East Environmental Group

Five years ago a number of young people in Kibosho East were attending a ward meeting led by Sebastian Chuwa, which was called to discuss environmental problems in the area. These young people had been trained in Sebastian's Malihai Clubs in school and thus were knowledgeable about conservation. After the meeting ended, they talked among themselves and decided to form a group, calling themselves the Kibosho East Environmental Group. Their objective was to establish a small business that would offer products friendly to the environment.

Their first activity was to acquire the rights to a plot of land, where they planted fast-growing firewood species, harvesting the branches to sell for fuel use. They also learned to make fuel effi-



Members of the Kibosho East Environmental Group are transplanting seedlings from their tree nursery to a water catchment area in order to protect the Nsoo River in Sungu Forest on Mt. Kilimanjaro. This river is of importance for farmers in the area and also supplies water to Kibosho Hospital and Mweka College of Wildlife Management.



In its June, 2005 issue, *The Rolex Awards for Enterprise Journal* published an article about the planting of one million trees by Sebastian's community, an event reported in our newsletter last year. In 2001 Sebastian was awarded an Associate Laureate award by Rolex which provided funding to expand his work, thereby making it possible to reach the one million mark far sooner than anticipated. Sebastian has been coordinating renewed efforts and expects to reach the two million mark within 5 years. The Rolex article can be read online at: [www.rolexawards.com/journal/pdf/n19\\_summer2005-art4.pdf](http://www.rolexawards.com/journal/pdf/n19_summer2005-art4.pdf).

cient stoves for their own use and to market. And of significance for Kilimanjaro's coffee farmers, were their activities in establishing a nursery to grow organic, disease-resistant coffee seedlings, which have long been under attack in this area by Coffee Berry Disease. The KEEG is cooperating with The Tanzania Coffee Research Institute (TaCRI) at Lyamungo on Mt. Kilimanjaro, which is developing a resistant strain of coffee seedlings in attempts to revive the coffee industry throughout Tanzania.

When those enterprises proved successful, and others saw that they could make money from such work, KEEG numbers quickly grew. It now has over 70 members, and offers purposeful employment to some in the community who have been without work and to many young people who have no opportunities for higher education.

**"Find your place on the planet. Dig in, and take responsibility from there."  
- Gary Snyder**

### British Petroleum

For several years British Petroleum has donated a gas allotment for Sebastian to enable him to travel around for educational and tree planting work. This year BP has again generously provided fuel—an increasingly precious commodity in today's world.

In the areas where it works, British Petroleum is conscious of its role in the community and helps local people improve their lives by sponsoring a broad

range of social and economic initiatives in the areas of education, environment, health, culture, economic development and energy. It has established programs to provide small loans for small businesses, such as taxi drivers, clothes sellers, hairdressers and fruit sellers. It is providing inoculations against disease like malaria and AIDS. Through its solar energy program, it delivers solar power to communities with no access to electricity.

In 2004 it launched its Community Investment Programme (CIP) with plans to spend \$100m per year in the support of projects of local relevance and need. Funding under the CIP will primarily support education, enterprise development and better access to energy.

### Environmental Conservation – Kibosho East

"Environmental Conservation—Kibosho East" is a handbook published by youth leaders in Sebastian's local ward of Kibosho East on Mt. Kilimanjaro, describing their conservation efforts and chronicling Environmental Day activities sponsored by Malihai Clubs and adult conservation groups. This book contains many photos and offers an inside look at the energetic and imaginative work of this vibrant community. It is now online and can be viewed at: [www.blackwoodconservation.org/kibosho\\_east.html](http://www.blackwoodconservation.org/kibosho_east.html).

### Makuyuni Himo

Trees from the ABCP Moshi Mpingo Plot are being planted at Maku-

yuni Himo near Lake Manyara National Park east of Moshi. The residents of this village are establishing a 25 acre plot of their community land in mpingo trees and Sebastian Chuwa is providing them with seedlings for this work.

They have been assisted in this effort by a group of Makonde Carvers from Moshi. The Makonde are highly skilled and world renowned artists of East Africa who produce intricately carved statues of exceptional skill and beauty. The Makuyuni residents intend to carefully nurture and protect these trees as a future resource for the use of the Makonde.



Villagers at Makuyuni Himo are planting 25 acres of mpingo trees for the future use of East African woodcarvers. Many of these trees are seedlings grown at the ABCP Moshi Mpingo Plot.

"I want to encourage you to support campaigns to save African forests and biodiversity. The importance of forests and the many services humanity gets from them is well known: ecological balance of the earth; they absorb carbon; prevent loss of soil and subsequent desertification; they offer safeguards against flooding; they are reservoirs for genetic resources; they control rainfall patterns and serve as catchment areas for freshwater and rivers. Forests have been a source of wealth and inspiration throughout centuries."

—Waangari Maathai, Kenya  
Nobel Peace Prize Winner, 2004

The ABCP is working along the Northern Circuit, one of Tanzania's primary tourist destinations. Carvers have immigrated into this area to take advantage of the markets available for their products. Since mpingo is so highly valued, not only by artists from within Africa, but by its international users—instrument makers and woodworkers—its numbers are rapidly declining due to over harvesting. The carvers have consequently had to use alternate varieties as substitute for mpingo, even though mpingo is their preferred medium. The work of the ABCP is to replenish

mpingo in this important area.

For information about the carvers of Africa see our website at: <http://www.blackwoodconservation.org/carving.html>. There you can see a photo of a Makonde statue entitled "Tree of Life." It depicts succeeding generations of an extended family intertwined and supporting one another, conveying the idea that everything we do today is built upon the lives of those who came before and laid the groundwork.

### Roots and Shoots

In 1991, Jane Goodall and a group of 16 students in Tanzania, concerned about the state of the environment, founded Roots and Shoots, a youth conservation corps with the objective of promoting understanding and compassion for all living things. It is action oriented, with a decided emphasis on inspiring grassroots work on behalf of all ecosystems in the world community. It now has 40,000 members and 6000 groups in 87 countries.

Sebastian has had a long association with Jane Goodall, beginning in 1978 when he was employed as a conservationist at Ngorongoro Crater Conserva-



Dr. Jane Goodall with members of Roots & Shoots in Tanzania. August 2002. See [www.janegoodall.org](http://www.janegoodall.org) for more info.

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tion Area, an important Tanzanian ecosystem. Because of his extensive knowledge of the area's vegetation, he was helping Mary Leakey (the anthropologist who, along with her husband, Louis Leakey, discovered early hominid remains in Africa) identify plants at her archeological site of Olduvai Gorge, which is adjacent to Ngorongoro. There Leakey introduced him to Ms. Goodall, her friend and associate.

In 2000 Sebastian and Goodall both delivered addresses during a seminar at Mweka College of Wildlife Management and she requested his help with setting up Roots and Shoots groups in the area around Moshi and Arusha. To date he has established 40 such youth groups in schools of the area. Their primary activities are tree planting, preservation of rare and important species such as mpingo and establishing nurseries.

Sebastian is also setting up experiences for international Roots and Shoots students. This year 22 students from Oakland High School in California helped local students plant trees on Mt. Kilimanjaro. He also hosts volunteers in his home or at the Moshi Mpingo Plot building. There they volunteer to assist in the ABCP work of planting and disseminating mpingo and other important species.

### Mpingo Conservation Project

Congratulations are due to Project Coordinator Steve Ball and the Mpingo Conservation Project (MPC) for their recent award of a grant from the Darwin Initiative. Steve is a British mpingo re-



22 Roots and Shoots members from Oakland High School (California, USA) visited Tanzania this summer. Some of these students participated in a tree planting expedition on Mt. Kilimanjaro. Here Roots and Shoots members from Sungu Secondary School of Kibosho, Tanzania show their US friend how it is done.

searcher who has led several scientific expeditions to Lindi Region in southern Tanzania in an attempt to estimate remaining stocks of the tree. The MPC has also been working alongside the District Forestry Office in Kilwa, southern Tanzania, helping them to develop Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in the district. Under PFM, communities are encouraged to set aside some of the forest growing in their locality as a Village Forest Area (VFA), which will then be under the control of the village government. The particular focus of the MPC is on the management of high-value timber species, and especially mpingo, by local communities.

The Darwin grant will support the setting aside of community forest areas in at least 6 villages in Kilwa District in which sustainable harvesting regimes will be implemented. It will support a program of applied research addressing critical issues for mpingo conservation, and raise awareness about mpingo and its conservation locally, nationally and internationally. Project outputs will include some national guidelines for best management of mpingo and other high value timber species under PFM in Tanzania, and a monitoring program to determine timber growth rates. MPC also hopes to oversee the first harvest of sustainable managed mpingo from their main areas of operation to a small-scale instrument manufacturer in the UK.

Beyond the spotlight on timber, they are providing general technical and logistical assistance to the district in implementing PFM, and on-the-job training of staff in project management, IT and rapid forest survey techniques.

The website of the Mpingo Conservation Project has more information at [www.sbcomp.demon.co.uk/](http://www.sbcomp.demon.co.uk/).

### Around the World in 80 People

Sylvain Darnil and Mathieu Le Roux are two young Frenchmen with a vision for the future. Both were deeply inspired by the work of Muhammed Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank, renowned for extending micro credit loans at low rates to people in impoverished countries to help create economic

**Objectives of the ABCP**  
The ABCP was founded by Sebastian Chuwa and James Harris in 1996 to replenish stocks of *Dalbergia melanoxylon*/African blackwood, that are being severely depleted due to over harvesting. Its programs include youth and adult education, tree planting, and encouraging community involvement in conservation of the tree.  
It also contributes to the empowerment of people within its target areas by providing a variety of other tree species to meet the domestic and commercial needs of the people, thereby helping them economically as well as helping their ecosystems recover from long-term degradation and deforestation.

independence.

Darnil and Le Roux viewed Yunus as a hero and began to develop the notion that there must be hundreds of such “heroes” scattered around the planet who were having an impact in improving life on earth. They decided to counter the deluge of catastrophes and depressing input that fills the daily news by finding and profiling people who see problems and invent solutions to solve them.

So in September, 2002, they began a

tour of the world to interview 80 people they had chosen who they thought were making a difference in the quality of life of the world’s citizens and the environment. Sebastian Chuwa was one of the “heroes” they chose. Their main goal was to show that a sustainable world can be created by applying new methods and convincing world citizens that they are potential change makers. A website was set up and now a book covering their travels has been published.

In July, 2004, they visited Sebastian in Tanzania and saw his conservation and education projects. He is profiled in their book and on their website: [www.80hommes.com/80portraits/fiche71.htm](http://www.80hommes.com/80portraits/fiche71.htm). The website is in French, but an English translation is on the ABCP website under “In-print Mentions” on the sitemap on the homepage.

Mathieu and Sylvain decided they would like to offset the carbon emissions from their travel by plane and car during their trip. So in March 2005, they donated 500 Euros to the ABCP to plant mpingo trees to sequester carbon, and thus cancel the carbon released into the atmosphere through their travels by the growth of these trees.



To the readers of our newsletter, Sebastian, and all his students and friends from Kibosho East, say in Kiswahili, “Asante sana, rafiki zetu!” (“Thank you very much, our friends!”).

## Now Available—The "Tree of Music" Video or a Film by the ABCP Showing Sebastian's Conservation Work in Tanzania



The video "The Conservation and Environmental Education Work of Sebastian Chuwa" was produced by James Harris on his home computer to profile Sebastian's work in Tanzania. In compiling this presentation James utilized the many hours of video footage that Sebastian has taken in Africa to record the conservation work of community groups

around Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Also included is original wildlife footage of African savannah animals taken at national parks and reserves such as Ngorongoro Crater, Lake Manyara and the Serengeti Plain during safaris that Sebastian conducts to these areas.

Subject areas covered in the video are: Malihai Clubs, mpingo tree-planting at the Moshi Mpingo Plot, Environmental Day activities, the Kibosho East Environmental Choir, and a student field trip to wildlife parks.

This video and "Mpingo—The Tree That Makes Music" can be purchased from the ABCP. They are available only in NTSC format for US viewers. See the enclosed donation form for pricing and details of ordering. Proceeds will support the work of the ABCP in Tanzania.

• SEE THIS NEWSLETTER ONLINE AT [WWW.BLACKWOODCONSERVATION.ORG/05REPORT.HTML](http://WWW.BLACKWOODCONSERVATION.ORG/05REPORT.HTML) •

### Mpingo— The Tree That Makes Music A BBC-TV VIDEO



The mpingo tree is prized by musicians and woodworkers around the world. The future of the species, however, is under threat. Over harvesting of the wood and its habitat destruction are causing scientists to predict that it will soon be a threatened species. In this video, users of the wood, who consider it irreplaceable, express their apprehension that the precious resource may some day no longer be available for their use. Michael Gunton's exquisite documentary, the first of its kind, has brought the problem of mpingo extinction to world attention. Included is a profile of the work of Sebastian Chuwa who is sponsoring replanting campaigns for mpingo in Tanzania in hope of ensuring its future sustainability. This film was originally broadcast in 1992 on the US PBS *Nature* series and was the inspiration for the founding of the ABCP.

## African Blackwood Conservation Project

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So that  
the song  
of the  
Tree of Music  
will not go  
silent...