



## Project Status

1999-2000 has been an exciting and multi-dimensional year for the ABCP. Our website now gets 600-700 hits a month with visitors from over 30 countries and we have established mutual links with a number of conservation and music organizations. We continue to receive inquiries from people interested in various aspects of the project.

Most importantly, the goals projected in our last newsletter of acquiring funding for video equipment to undertake an educational effort have now been realized. We have been recipients of grants from two environmental foundations. Lastly, we have achieved tax-exempt status with recognition as a US IRS 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

The future of our project is bright and the impact of our efforts is gaining in significance. We encourage your support so we can continue to work towards a happy future for "The Tree of Music".

## Lindbergh Grant

In April of this year Sebastian Chuwa

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**"The accumulation of knowledge, the discoveries of science, the products of technology, our ideas, our art, our social structures, all the achievements of mankind have value only to the extent that they preserve and improve the quality of life."**  
Charles A. Lindbergh

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was awarded a grant of \$10,540 by the Charles A. and Anne Morrow Lindbergh Foundation (<http://www.lindberghfoundation.org/>). The grant was written to cover a TV, video camera, VCR, generator and a supply of

tapes. These will give Sebastian the means to make videos and set up educational presentations on mpingo propagation and general conservation topics. It also funds educational and sports equipment for the establishment of 8 Mpingo Clubs and 2 field trips for the children. In addition, it gives a stipend to Sebas-



**In Dec. 1999, with row of mpingo saplings stretching behind him, Sebastian measures growth of trees transplanted in Dec. 1998. Average increase in height was 80 cm.**

tian for his work.

Following are quotes from the Lindbergh 2000 Grant application form: "As individuals, they (Charles and Anne Lindbergh) each had a special place in history, but for the family, and to those who knew them best, they were above all a partnership. Together in pioneering aviation, together in exploration, together in philosophy and in vision, they shared the belief that true human progress depends on achieving and maintaining a critical balance between our scientific and technological achievements and the preservation of our natural world. Through a wide variety of educational and research projects and programs, the Lindbergh Foundation seeks to further this balance between nature and technology.

Each year, the Lindbergh Foundation awards up to 10 grants in amounts of up to \$10,580 each (the cost of building the

"Spirit of St. Louis" in 1927) for projects addressing the issue of balance in various fields. Over the years, Lindbergh Grants have become increasingly prestigious awards, supporting innovative ideas at an early stage of their development and establishing pilot projects which often receive much more extensive funding later on from other sources."

We believe that this phase of our project will be highly successful. The people and government of Tanzania have a high respect for education. Sebastian thinks that his presentations will gather large audiences and many volunteers to help with mpingo conservation and replanting. Knowledge inspiring action is the goal of his efforts.

In addition, we are honored that ours is the first grant in memory of the Lindbergh Foundation's Chairman Emeritus, James D. Newton, who died just before Christmas. His wife, Ellie Newton, chose our grant as the one she thought her husband would have most liked.

We are very honored to be a recipient of this award and extend our deepest appreciation to the Lindbergh Foundation. We feel certain that their gift and endorsement of our work will have countless positive ramifications in the lives of the many people who are touched by the work of Sebastian Chuwa.

## Cottonwood Foundation

Our first grant came from the Cottonwood Foundation, in the amount of \$1000 to install a watering system on the Moshi Mpingo Plot.

In his yearly report Sebastian explains, "It has been impossible to begin our own tree nursery because of lack of water. As a result we continued using the gardens of interested and supportive local

residents like Mrs. Mary Sambeke. We are extremely indebted to her for permitting us to use a part of her garden for our purposes.

Towards the end of last year we received



Unloading the water tank at the Moshi Mpingo Plot. Dec. 1999

assistance for the water project from the Cottonwood Foundation. With this assistance we were able to build a storage water tank of 2000 liters and to purchase plastic plumbing items.

We have opened a new tree nursery or shelter at the site and employed as nursery attendants a local resident Mrs. Natalia Mallya and Edmund Mallya (her son). The new nursery can carry 2000 seedlings of various types of trees. We expect to plant seeds of various trees including fruit trees and trees for shade. The nursery shall be used as a training ground for the local residents, and it will also be used for research."

We extend our deepest appreciation to President Paul Moss and the Board of Directors of the Cottonwood Foundation for their help in facilitating our tree planting efforts. In most countries in Africa the yearly wage is so low and the cost of consumer goods so high that people live with a bare minimum of material goods. Purchases like the water tank would be difficult indeed without the generous support of a foundation like Cottonwood.

From its website (<http://>

### Background & History of the ABCP

Mr. Sebastian Chuwa, a Tanzanian botanist, and Mr. James Harris, an Ornamental Turner from Texas, started the ABCP in 1996. The intent was simple: Mr. Harris would raise money among concerned people of the western world and send it to Mr. Chuwa to sponsor research, educational, and tree-planting programs for African blackwood (mpingo) in his native Tanzania.

Mpingo is important within Africa for ecological reasons. It also supplies various subsistence needs such as fuelwood and fodder and is utilized extensively by a group of world famous carvers, the Makonde. Internationally it is used by the music industry for the manufacture of woodwind instruments and by western woodworkers who practice a lathe technique called Ornamental Turning.

During his 25 years of field experience as a conservationist, Mr. Chuwa has become increasingly alarmed not only at the high rate of mpingo removal but also at its growing inability to establish young and viable trees in the wild to replace those which are being harvested. Habitat loss from increased population pressures, uncontrolled agricultural burning, and increasing cycles of drought have all contributed to the demise of a young mpingo population.

The ABCP has established a model project — an experimental orchard and educational program in Moshi, Tanzania. In the future it hopes to expand into ever wider areas of eastern Africa. All of the donated funds raised by the ABCP are sent directly to Mr. Chuwa. Mr. Harris, joined by his wife, Bette, donate their time, as well as the printing and postage costs for the fundraising campaign.

[www.pressenter.com/~cottonwd/](http://www.pressenter.com/~cottonwd/);

"...The Cottonwood Foundation is dedicated to promoting empowerment of people, protection of the environment, and respect for cultural diversity. The foundation focuses its funding on committed, grass roots organizations that rely strongly on volunteer efforts and where foundation support will make a significant difference."

#### The ABCP is now Non-Profit!

The ABCP received formal recognition of its non-profit status by US Internal Revenue Service Letter of Certification as a 501(c)(3) organization in October 1999. This status now makes the ABCP eligible to apply for funding from all environmental conservation funding foundations that

require non-profit status of their recipients. Additionally, all donations to the ABCP in the U.S.A. are now tax deductible.

### Kilimanjaro Environmental

### Conservation Trust Fund

In September of 1999 Sebastian was appointed to the post of Chairman of the Kilimanjaro Environmental Conservation Trust Fund, an office he will hold for 3 years. The objective of the fund is to mobilize resources and channel them to the community with a view to financing community-driven activities geared towards combating environmental problems and hence improving living conditions in the Kilimanjaro region.

As chairman he also participates in all

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."  
Margaret Mead

environmental meetings of the Regional Government. After we informed him about the Lindbergh grant he wrote: "I was at the Kilimanjaro Regional meeting this morning and I informed them about the Lindbergh Foundation Award and the equipment I'm expecting for the education program of the ABCP. Because everybody was happy they granted me about 1.5 acre of land which was government property for my work and to build an educational centre or youth centre. I couldn't believe that one day I will get a plot like that for the future of my work and our youth."

### Mpingo Women's Group

Empowerment of women is becoming a focus of institutional giving because it is well understood the great influence women have in family matters and in the care of the environment. In many areas of the world they have, however, been greatly hampered because of their lack of access to money, tools, and land.

For the past 3 years Sebastian has been an advisor to a group of 20 women who are organizing a co-operative in Kikavu Chini (south of Moshi.) Their objectives are to start commercial operations such as bee-keeping and tree and vegetable nurseries. They are interested in educating themselves in both commercial skills and wise conservation practices, with the



**Sebastian and Edmund work on securing a support for an Mpingo sapling at the Moshi Mpingo Plot in December 1999.**

objective of teaching their youth and offering opportunities to those who have no hope of future education. These women have already been influential in their village in protecting their river from erosion and poison chemicals.

Since they are planting mpingo trees, we have donated \$250 to their funds and are looking for funding organizations to further support their efforts. The following is a statement from one of the group members, "For the first time ever the women of our village are allowed to plant trees in the traditional family farms. Owing to the strong traditions and customs, women in the past had not been allowed to own any trees because they did not have any land. Today each group member now owns at least two trees or more with the full support of the men in the community. This is an achievement for the women of our group and village and we are proud that we have also managed to influence women of the surrounding villages."

### Mary Sambeke

Until this winter, when the water tank



**Meeting of Women's Group at Kikavu Chini**

donated by the Cottonwood Foundation was installed at the Moshi Mpingo plot, we had no permanent nursery, but had to rely on local residents, particularly Mary Sambeke, who permitted us to use their gardens. In addition the Sambeke's have made it possible for us to set up email communication with Sebastian. Since he has neither telephone or electricity, he carries his computer to their floral shop and uses their telephone to pick up his email. The ABCP would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to Mary Sambeke for the assistance she has given the project in Moshi.

### Mijongweni Village

Sebastian is initiating a program to educate people in areas where mpingo grows about the importance of both replanting and the conservation of the tree, including branches that have already

**"Power over life must be balanced by reverence for life."  
Anne Morrow Lindbergh**

been cut. The pilot project, using films, drawings and artwork from Mpingo, was started in Mijongweni Primary School where 320 students have signed up for the Mpingo/Malahai club. 100 mpingo seedlings have been planted along the school boundary and it is hoped that at the end of this year each student will receive 2 seedlings to grow in areas around their homes.

In October 1999, at a celebration of the founding of the Mijongweni Mpingo & Malihai Club, 36 local villagers signed up for membership. Each was given an annual membership certificate and 10 mpingo seedlings.

### Support from BP Tanzania

Mr. Charles Mmbaga, Public Relations Officer of British Petroleum (BP) Tanzania, has written several newspaper articles about the plight of the mpingo and the efforts of the ABCP. Last year he traveled to Moshi with a cameraman and photographed Elizabeth Chuwa at the Moshi Mpingo Plot for the BP Tanzania 2000 calendar. BP Tanzania has generously offered to provide a fuel allowance of US\$625 for Sebastian's use in carrying out the Lindbergh Grant projects in the upcoming year. ABCP is very grateful to Mr. Mmbaga and BP Tanzania for this vote of confidence in our work and we look forward to future cooperation in conservation work in Tanzania.

### Cambridge Mpingo Project

Our 1999 newsletter reported on the work of Steve Ball, team leader of the



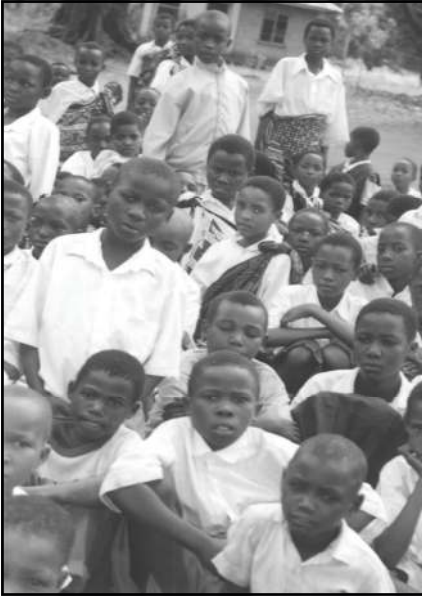
**Village Chief Mr. Musa plants a ceremonial Mpingo seedling at Mijongweni in recognition of founding of conservation club.**

Cambridge Mpingo Project '96. Steve has led several expeditions to Tanzania to study the ecology and distribution of mpingo and threats to its survival.

In the summer of 1998 a team of 13 members, from both Britain and Tanza-



**Sebastian presents certificate of membership to the Head Teacher at Mijongweni Primary School during celebration.**



New members of Mijongweni Primary School Mpingo/Malihai Club listen to environmental lecture by Sebastian Chuwa.



Children in traditional dress dance in ceremonies celebrating founding of Mijongweni Mpingo/ Malihai Club.

nia, conducted research in the Lindi Region, measuring and counting trees within and near the Mitarure Forest, the largest reserve in Kilwa District. The team also met with local villagers and their leaders to question them about their use of mpingo and to broaden their knowledge base about the tree. At the conclusion of the fieldwork phase a few members toured the Region, visiting various Forestry Offices and several sawmills. An expedition in 1999 and one scheduled for the summer of 2000 will add to the body of knowledge already collected.

The Full Report of *Tanzanian Mpingo '98 (TM98)* offers considerable insight into causes of its declining numbers and suggestions about steps towards its con-

servation. Its two major threats are:

- 1) Increased population pressures are reducing the range of mpingo because of land clearing and seasonal burning. In the isolated Lindi region where he worked, mpingo was still plentiful but the government of Tanzania is building a bridge across the Rufiji River and dredging harbors on the coast. This will open the area to settlement and commercial use, undoubtedly threatening existing stands of mpingo.
- 2) Commercial exploitation by sawmills is particularly problematic because of the huge volume of waste they produce. Better milling practices, common sense measures like end-sealing of logs and proper storage, and the sharing with native wood-carvers of their cut-offs and rejects would significantly reduce the number of trees being harvested.

Steve thinks that mpingo is ideally suited for a sustainable harvesting regime: "Mpingo's cultural significance, as Tanzania's national tree and its importance to musicians make it an interesting species for conservation intervention...It has the potential to become a flagship species for Tanzania by providing an income which allows the whole miombo ecosystem to be conserved through traditional management practices."

Of crucial importance will be an education program to teach residents the value of its commercial woodland species and to emphasize the dangers of burning, particularly late in the dry season. Also important will be an inventory in order to determine an estimate of remaining stands. This would indicate whether the current rate of harvesting is sustainable. ABCP thanks Steve Ball for supplying both Sebastian and the US office with a copy of *Tanzanian Mpingo '98*. The report can be ordered online at the Cambridge Mpingo Project website at <http://www.sbcomp.demon.co.uk/>.

### GPS and GIS

Sebastian has conducted numerous botanical surveys over the years and used Global Positioning System (GPS) transponders during his work with the National Park system at Ngorongoro Crater. The ABCP hopes to acquire a new GPS receiver for Sebastian to plot mpingo growth patterns in Tanzania. In

time we hope to create maps using Global Information System (GIS) software documenting this valuable research. This is a long-term project for Sebastian and the ABCP in which we hope to contribute to the body of scientific knowledge about mpingo—its current status and implications for the future. The ABCP thanks Veronica Betancourt of the San Antonio office of Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI — <http://www.esri.com/>) for her kind assistance in donating ArcView GIS manuals to our project for use in both the US and Tanzania. ABCP appreciates the support of ESRI, makers of fine GIS software such as Arc View, for their support of non-profit environmental and conservation organizations such as ours with donations of their publications and software.



Members of TM98 pose in front of their battered Land Cruiser before a venerable Mpingo tree in the miombo woodlands of southern Tanzania. (Photo © 1998 by Steve Ball)

### Mpingo Seeds

Last summer we received a package of mpingo seeds from Sebastian. We sent some of these to past contributors who wanted to experiment with growing the tree. We also gave some to Mr. Matt Johnson, of the Desert Legume Program (DELEP) in Tucson, Arizona. He is using a portion of them in an experimental program. Others will be on storage at the DELEP seed bank and the USDA National Seed Storage Laboratory, in Ft. Collins, Colorado. We have kept the remainder of the seeds in a freezer. If any of our readers would like a supply please ask.

### Towards the Future

During the coming year, Sebastian will be busy making films and giving presentations in fulfilling his responsibilities to the Lindbergh Grant. We are, however, already making plans for a future 5-year

program which will extend our outreach into the provinces of Kilimanjaro, Arusha and Tanga. Using the films he makes with equipment from the Lindbergh grant, Sebastian will travel to communities interested in duplicating the model project in Moshi, setting up a community nursery and educational program. The ABCP will offer start-up funding for purchasing nursery supplies and Sebastian will conduct training sessions for nursery attendants. He will also train 2 assistants to help him in the work. Of vital importance, because of the distances covered, will be a diesel engine 4-wheel drive vehicle, such as a Toyota Land Cruiser or Land Rover. We will be corresponding with fundraising organizations to ask for support for this project.

What we have established in Moshi is only a beginning. In this 5-year project we will be encouraging not only mpingo propagation but the planting of a variety of fuelwood, fruit and nut bearing and commercial timber species. In this way the communities which sponsor nurseries and orchards will maintain an interest in the trees over time because along with mpingo, which takes at least three to four generations to mature, they will have trees that produce fruit, nuts, fodder or fuelwood within a few years, thus

***We can do no great things—Only small things with great love. —Mother Teresa***

providing an immediate return while encouraging long term mpingo care.

All support for this ambitious undertaking, as the ABCP seeks to expand its influence and thus the number of mpingo trees replanted each year, is greatly appreciated.

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**Edmund, an Mpingo Club volunteer, plants an Mpingo sapling. Dec. 1999**

**The ABCP wishes to acknowledge with deep gratitude the support of all its contributors since its founding in 1996. Without your faith in our efforts demonstrated by your financial support, we would not have survived to secure the recent grants and be looking towards the bright and hopeful future which is now on our horizon.** In addition to acknowledging the financial support of its contributors, the recent foundation grants and those who have been mentioned previously in this newsletter, the ABCP wishes to thank the following individuals and organizations for their help and support during the past year:

- **Rafiki/Friends Foundation** for all their kind support, guidance and advice over the years. Particularly appreciated last year was the laptop computer bought by the Rafiki to replace Sebastian's old system which was rendered inoperable by a high-voltage power surge.
- **Paul Desanker** for the Miombo CD (<http://miombo.gecp.virginia.edu/>) on Global Land Use and Cover. This project for sub-Saharan Africa provides valuable data for assessing climate, topography, and vegetative growth patterns in Tanzania.
- **John Corbett** of the Characterization, Assessments and Applications Group of the Texas A&M Blackland Research and Extension Center (<http://www.brc.tamus.edu/char/>) for a CD copy of US AID's African Country Almanac Series. John's workgroup has created the Almanac Characterization Tool (ACT), also included on the CD—a packaged set of geo-referenced data and query tools targeted for use in agricultural and natural resource management activities. For example, one could construct a query to find all the areas in Tanzania between a certain elevation, temperature and rainfall range and the program would produce a map showing those areas which would have optimum growing conditions for Mpingo.
- **Tom Dureka** of the Bastrop County Environmental Network (<http://www.bcen.org/>) for his generosity, guidance and support in acquiring GIS capability.



**Farmer Mzee Mbaraka holds 2 of the 6 Mpingo seedlings he requested to plant on his farm in celebration of the Millenium. Dec. 31, 1999.**

## Support ABCP and Get a Copy of the "Tree of Music" Video

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the "Tree of Music" video, which was originally broadcast in 1992 on the US PBS *Nature* series and was instrumental in the founding of the ABCP, please let us know (see order details on the donation form). The Television Trust for the Environment (TVE) in the UK, to which the BBC has granted distribution rights for the film, has made copies available at a discounted price to the ABCP for fundraising purposes. This video was previously unavailable for non-broadcast sale in industrialized countries and we thank the TVE and BBC-TV for the change in policy which now makes it available in all countries of the world. The video is available from ABCP only in NTSC format for US viewers. We are offering the video for the same \$40 price as is it is offered on the TVE website, plus shipping and handling, with a portion of the proceeds going as a contribution to the ABCP. Contributors donating \$200 or more to the ABCP may receive a copy of the video as a premium if they so desire.

For those in countries other than the United States, the film is still available to individuals from TVE in PAL format for \$40 payable by international cheque or money order. You may order the film online from the TVE website by first loading the Search page (<http://nt.oneworld.org/cfdocs/tve/mp6/search.cfm>), typing in *Mpingo* in the "Search titles for:" box and then clicking the "Start Search" button. This should bring up the results page with information about the film, called "Mpingo - The Tree That Makes Music" (the UK title), and a link to place an order. After placing the order, TVE will send the customer a pro-forma invoice by international mail confirming payment and order details.

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



At a musical instrument factory in France, skilled craftsmen work fragments of African blackwood into clarinets and flutes for the international market. But in the early 1980s, with more and more wood cracking under pressure on the lathes, investigations turn to the plains of Tanzania, and to the Mpingo tree - the source of the remarkable black heartwood. The Mpingo takes over 70 years to reach commercial maturity. Prized by musicians around the world, it is also much sought after by Tanzania's Makonde woodcarvers whose sculptures play an important role in cultural life. Michael Gunton's exquisite film links the instruments of today with the forests where people first made music, and shows how sustainable management of Mpingo plantations benefits local communities and international markets alike. (Source: TVE website)

**African Blackwood Conservation Project**  
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So that  
 the song  
 of the  
 Tree of Music  
 will not go  
 silent...