

ABCP NEWSLETTER

Texas - Tanzania

African Blackwood Conservation Project

Annual Report No. 21—Fall 2020

ABCP Mijongweni Nursery (R)

Volunteers from local and international groups have visited the ABCP nursery over the years to contribute to its work and learn to raise mpingo.



Sungu Nursery— Kilimanjaro (L)

Sungu nursery attendant selects plants to deliver to communities on Mt. Kilimanjaro for local reforestation and school nurseries. Private householders grow trees for domestic needs such as firewood, food and medicines.

ABCP Planting Projects - 2019-2020

During the past year the ABCP extended its outreach into several new planting areas, distributing trees seedlings to 30 schools and community projects in several districts of northern Tanzania.

The ABCP manages two tree nurseries, one on the southern slope of Mt. Kilimanjaro at Sungu Village (elevation 6,000 ft.) and one in the lowland plain south of Kilimanjaro at Mijongweni. At Sungu Nursery are propagated species appropriate to the reforestation of Kilimanjaro, which has suffered significant environmental damage during the past 50 years. At the Mijongweni Moshi Mpingo Plot thousands of mpingo seedlings are cultivated each year, along with other indigenous lowland species.

In addition to supplying seedlings, the Tanzanian coordinators also are raising awareness about ecological issues and the international importance of preserving the mpingo tree for future generations. Because it is the national tree of Tanzania, its citizens take an active interest in its protection and propagation and cooperate with the efforts of the ABCP to increase recognition and enlist help in its conservation.

Retrospective - James E. Harris, Co-Founder - African Blackwood Conservation Project

In 1996, James Harris, a US artistic ornamental woodturner from Texas, was first introduced to an initiative created by Tanzanian botanist Sebastian Chuwa, to help conserve a tree that James considered unequalled for its beauty and excellent woodworking qualities, namely *Dalbergia melanoxylon*, or in local Tanzanian parlance, mpingo. In the years following Sebastian and James designed and implemented a program with the objective of reestablishing the species in areas where it had once thrived but had become commercially extinct. During almost 25 years of involvement James with his wife, Bette, took responsibility for fundraising and public outreach while Sebastian organized both educational and replanting efforts through schools and public institutions in Tanzania. The work involved not only mpingo conservation but reforestation initiatives for Mt. Kilimanjaro, a vital watershed for all of northern Tanzania.

This year James passed away following a two year struggle with cancer. All who knew him realized how important this project was to him and admired the many years of effort he had dedicated to conservation of his beloved “Tree of Music” so that future generations could have access to a species so often referred to as ‘irreplaceable’. It is to be hoped that his efforts, along with those of so many who have helped to support the project, will continue to inspire future generations to protect this precious resource.



Sebastian Chuwa, James and Bette at Arbor Day ceremonies honoring the ABCP. >

The ABCP receives support from France’s leading woodwind manufacturers, Buffet Crampon, Henri Selmer Paris, Marigaux and F. Lorée, who work in association with CSFI, which is organizing efforts for mpingo conservation. French musical instrument groups ALADFI, UNFI and APLG are also supporters.



Mwanga and Same Districts - Kilimanjaro Region

Mwanga and Same Districts are located in the lowland planes southwest of Mt. Kilimanjaro. The Pangani River, which runs through these districts, is a water source that is vital for agriculture, wildlife and the three hydroelectric installations along the river. Therefore, District Councils in the area are taking measures to protect the watershed from excessive tree cutting and soil degradation so that river levels, which have been decreasing in recent decades, may be maintained. To this end they conduct educational campaigns and tree planting programs among the citizens and in the schools of the area.

In 2015, the Same District Department of Natural Resources announced a program to establish nurseries and to plant 1,500,000 trees. It is also conducting educational activities and has instituted a special program in Same schools that all students starting from class five should have a tree to care for within the school compound. Mwanga District Council's Five Year Plan for 2016-2020 also targeted numerous conservation measures with the objective "To motivate and involve various stakeholders in the development of natural resources by planting trees." These governmental programs have raised awareness and activism in the communities and schools of the area, and the ABCP works in cooperation with such initiatives through its education outreach and distribution of tree species. Of particular note is that *Dalbergia melanoxylon* is not only an important long-term economic resource, but in the short term, as a nitrogen-fixing legume, it also enhances the environment wherever it grows.

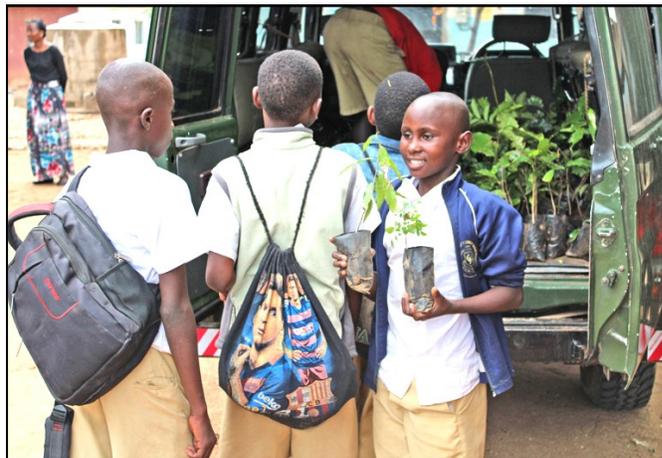


Assisi Medium School

Assisi School, owned and governed by the Ursuline Franciscan Congregation, is situated on 34 acres of land. Its teachers and students are enthusiastic about conservation issues and are cooperating in ABCP tree planting efforts. This year Assisi School planted over 500 mpingo trees on its school grounds.

Chanjale Seminary

Sister Leokadia Maley (R) from SMAM Farm helps the ABCP by enlisting local schools in its replanting projects. This fall she helped deliver mpingo seedlings to Father Frank (L) at Chanjale Girls' Seminary School in Mwanga.



Handeni Primary School

Handeni Primary is a government school located in an area of Mwanga with conditions favorable to growing mpingo trees. The school educates over 600 students and includes conservation studies as part of the curriculum.

Kwanyange Primary School

Teachers at Kwanyange Primary such as Mr. Leonard Mndiyombo (shown below), along with his associate, Ms. Jesca, are actively encouraging students to take to heart the replanting of trees. The school has constructed a dam for water catchment to create an easily available source of water for growing saplings planted within the school compound





Rombo District - Kilimanjaro Region

Rombo is one of the seven districts of Kilimanjaro Region. It is bordered by Kenya to the north and contains a large portion of Kilimanjaro National Park within its boundaries. Rainfall in this area was especially favorable this year and the ABCP delivered tree seedlings to 17 schools in the area. These efforts have been well supported and encouraged by Rombo District Officer Ms. Alice Makule, who has a special interest in the sponsorship of conservation activities throughout the District. Ms. Makule promised that she would make follow-up visits to ABCP planting sites in order to ensure that the trees are well tended.



Above - Usongo Headmaster, Mr. Kessy, instructs students in planting techniques to insure optimal growth of tree seedlings.

Mtimhoo primary school

Mtimhoo students below prepare planting beds. This year the school planted 350 mpingo seedlings on school grounds.



Usongo Primary School

Usongo is a Primary School in Rombo District with a highly motivated headmaster, Mr. Emmanuel Kessy, who is focused on sustainable development and sponsors tree planting activities to teach students about conservation and impart skills they can carry into adulthood. The school also has an active parent group assisting with these initiatives.

Kessy is also involved in village conservation projects which help to support local lifestyles. This year the school planted over 1200 ABCP trees, of which 600 were mpingo and the remainder a variety of indigenous species such as *Terminalia*, *Trichilia*, Avocado, *Grevillea* Silk Oak, Guava and Bottle Brush.

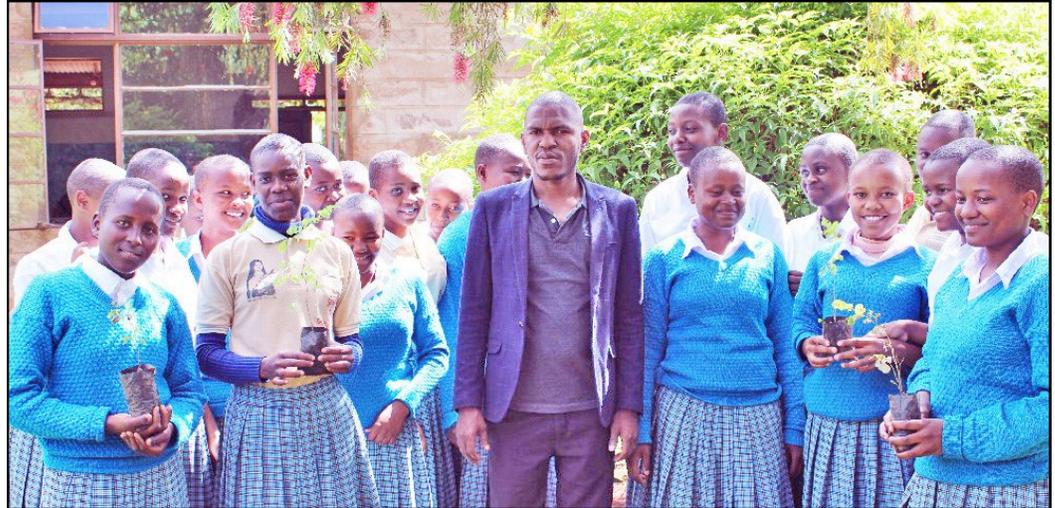
Oleleni na Mengeni Primary

Oleleni prides itself on the beautifully landscaped gardens surrounding the school where students can study and its thriving vegetable plots where they learn the skills of horticulture. Instructor below helps Oleleni student plant mpingo seedling.





Majengo Primary teacher Happiness Andrea organizes ABCP work. Above: Majengo student with tree sapling.



Kiraeni Girls Secondary School is known for its academic excellence and the quality educational opportunities it offers to girls, particularly in the arts and sciences. It currently enrolls over 500 students. Science and environmental teacher, Mr. Denis Kilawe above, organized a tree planting project at Kiraeni as part of his environmental curriculum.



Kilamacho Secondary School students with teachers and staff members.

Kiura Primary School student below.



Ikuini Primary School has a large area within the school complex which is being targeted for tree planting. Its more than 600 students are instructed in the principles of conservation and eagerly participate. Below (back row) are Headmaster Mr. Fadhili Kidaya (L), Mr. Michael R. Chuwa, Ward Education Coordinator (C) and environmental teacher, Mr. Adieli Azaliwa (R), with a group of students who have received mpingo tree seedlings cultivated in the ABCP nursery.



Arumeru District - Kikatiti Village - Arusha Region



Cyril Chuwa (R) with teachers and students at Nazareth Primary School in Kikatiti.



Nazareth Primary School

Nazareth Primary School is in Kikatiti, a lowland area to the west of Kilimanjaro where mpingo was once prolific. It is a somewhat dry area, with a climate favorable for mpingo and a high potential for reforestation. Many of the local tribal affiliations are with the Maasai and Meru people and conservation awareness in the area is high. Through educational outreach among the villagers and schools several school were located with a high motivation to assist in conservation work for land renewal and mpingo planting. The ABCP hosted planting days and distributed trees to Nazareth Primary, as well as Valeska Primary and Valeska Secondary Schools.

(L) - Nazareth Primary students help with reforestation projects that benefit their schools as well as the larger community.



AFRICAN BLACKWOOD CONSERVATION PROJECT



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Crowther Lab, Plant for the Planet and UNEP's Trillion Tree Campaign

The ABCP is proud to be part of a global tree planting initiative sponsored by Crowther Lab, a research facility affiliated with ETC Zurich, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. Founded by Tom Crowther, the lab is doing groundbreaking research in creating a system's approach to global warming. Its scientists are studying ecosystems, soil types, climatic zones and global tree coverage to arrive at nature-based solutions to global warming. The lab was catapulted suddenly into the world environmental spotlight with the publication in 2017 of a study suggesting that most of the world's carbon is stored in the high latitude regions of the tundra belt, where temperatures remain low year round. With global warming, it surmised, this enormous store of carbon could rapidly be released into the atmosphere. The lab was also able to estimate the total number of trees covering the Earth as being 3 trillion trees, seven times previous estimates. It did so, not by solely relying on satellite photos, but by analyzing thousands of ground-based observations and extrapolating to the larger ecosystem.

Crowther also estimates that the earth has enough available land to support an additional 1.2 trillion trees, which would wipe out a decade of CO2 emissions. The publication of this information drew worldwide attention and inspired a global movement of nationally and locally based groups to undertake the task of reaching this goal. UNEP changed its Billion Tree Campaign to the Trillion Tree Campaign. Crowther Lab works with UNEP and Plant for the Planet in order to achieve this ambitious goal. See: <https://www.crowtherlab.com/about-us/>



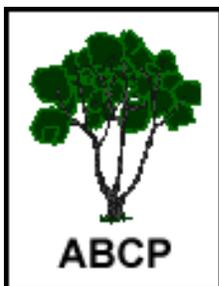
Ecosia - The Search Engine that Plants Trees

Ecosia, a partner of Crowther Lab, is the world's largest environmentally aware search engine because it generates profits for tree planting every time it is used. Developed by German Kristian Kohl, it donates 80% of its profits to tree planting projects located in strategically-based biodiversity hotspots that contain most of the world's endemic species. Founded in 2009, by 2020 Ecosia had planted almost a million trees. Its website and search engine installation can be found at: <https://info.ecosia.org/#install>.



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