

## 2025 Tree Planting Report for ABCP-US/ABCEO-TZ



**Jeremiah Godfrey and Arbogast Mallya, nursery attendants at the Moshi (Kiungu) nursery, fill polythene bags with soil for planting seedlings.**

In the 2024 planting season, the ABCP made significant strides in expanding its reach and impact. This year, the focus shifted to not only planting African blackwood but also a variety of indigenous species to create diverse, resilient eco-systems that can thrive in the face of climate change. The project's efforts were intensified through active partnerships with local communities, government bodies and non-governmental organizations, enabling a collaborative approach to environmental restoration. The ABCP expanded its operations in the Kilimanjaro Region, covering key districts such as Moshi, Moshi Rural, Mwanza, and Arumeru. Each area faces unique environmental challenges, including soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and deforestation driven by unsustainable agricultural practices and logging.

In Moshi, the project concentrated on urban reforestation and rehabilitating degraded agricultural land, while in Moshi Rural, the focus was on engaging rural communities in tree planting and promoting agro-forestry techniques. The initiative also worked to combat habitat degradation in Mwanza by reintroducing indigenous tree species, while in Arumeru, efforts centered on promoting sustainable farming and land management practices. Throughout the year, the ABCP conducted several high-impact activities, including tree planting events, community outreach programs, and environmental awareness campaigns. These activities targeted schools, churches, local clubs, and community organizations.

Notable collaborations with the Tanzania Police School, Moshi Catholic Parish, the Environmental Celebration Committee, and youth groups such as UVCCM (Youth Wing of Chama Cha Mapinduzi) allowed the project to maximize its outreach, engaging thousands of individuals in conservation work. By planting 65,000 tree seedlings and hosting educational workshops, the project was able to foster a sense of community ownership over environmental conservation efforts, ensuring the sustainability of these actions well beyond the planting season.

### KEEG Nursery– The Kibosho East Environmental Group

The KEEG nursery (lower rt), founded in 1996 by Sebastian and Elizabeth Chuwa, is located in Sungu village on the lower slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro at an altitude of 1,600 meters above sea level. This elevation provides favorable cool temperatures, reliable rainfall, and fertile volcanic soils that support the growth of a wide range of indigenous tree species. The nursery focuses on raising both forest and village species that are ecologically appropriate for Kilimanjaro's climatic zones.

These seedlings play a critical role in supporting both environmental conservation and livelihoods for the Kilimanjaro community. Reforestation using indigenous species helps restore degraded forest edges, protect water catchments, stabilize riverbanks, and improve soil structure, all of which directly contribute to the long-term health of rivers feeding the Pangani Basin. At the village level, tree planting on farms, schools, and communal lands strengthens climate resilience by reducing erosion, regulating microclimates, and enhancing biodiversity. Community cooperation is central to the success of the KEEG. Through a shared effort, the nursery acts not only as a source of seedlings but also as a focal point for environmental education, collective action, and sustainable mountain conservation. The nursery currently produces 15,000 seedlings per year.



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.



### Environmental Day Celebration – 2025



One of the most significant events held during the year was the Environmental Day Celebration, a large-scale event organized by the ABCEO in collaboration with local authorities, environmental clubs and KEP (Kilimanjaro Environmental Preservation), a local NGO that focuses on environmental advocacy and conservation. This celebration aimed to raise public awareness about the urgency of conservation, especially in the context of climate change, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. During the event, participants engaged in activities such as panel discussions, workshops, and tree planting. Special attention was given to honoring individuals and organizations that have made substantial contributions to environmental conservation.



The event served as a platform for showcasing the achievements of the ABCP and its partners, while also encouraging more community involvement in conservation efforts. In a moving moment of recognition during the environmental ceremonies, the KEP awarded the ABCP a trophy to honor the memory of Sebastian Chuwa, the founder of the organization in Tanzania. (See above photos.) Sebastian's tireless efforts in promoting environmental conservation and his pioneering work in restoring the African blackwood population were honored through the presentation of KEP's Environmental Excellence Award. This award is given to individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions to the conservation of indigenous tree species and the preservation of Tanzania's natural resources. The event also highlighted the visionary leadership of Sebastian, whose legacy continues to inspire the ABCP's work. In addition, the celebration extended its appreciation to the Tanzania ABCP Directors for their dedication and leadership, enabling the project to thrive despite numerous challenges.

### Cyril Chuwa Receives Top Honor at Mweka



Cyril Chuwa (row 2, 3rd from left), with teachers and classmates, was first in his class in 2025. (See certificate: below left.)



The ABCP has a long association with the College of African Wildlife Management at Mweka on the lower slopes of Kilimanjaro. Established in 1963, it was the first African college to train wildlife managers, and in 1986 the UN awarded the college the prestigious Sasakawa Environmental Prize.

ABCP founder, Sebastian Chuwa, attended classes there and his son, Cyril, is following in his footsteps, working towards an undergraduate degree. In 2025 Cyril received a certificate for achieving the highest grades in his class. When he graduates, Cyril intends to continue his education in conservation-related subjects. Cyril has also instituted planting programs at Mweka, spearheading the planting of 6,300 trees in 2025, of which 1,579 were mpingo.

### Cyril Chami Secondary School

Cyril Chami is a Secondary School located in Kibosho East on Mt. Kilimanjaro. The environmental teacher at the school, Ms. Saida, has organized an environmental education program that combines curriculum studies as well as the planting of tree seedlings.

These activities have been supported by members of the College of African Wildlife Management (Mweka) Youth Environmental Club, who help raise awareness among students about tree planting within the school compound. A recent collaboration between the two schools involved a day of friendly sports events between the college and the school to strengthen collaboration and involvement.



Coletha Mbilingi, of Mweka College (in gray suit) and environmental studies teacher, Ms. Saida (behind), with students.

**Collaboration with UVCCM – Youth Wing of Chama Cha Mapundizi**



**UVCCM youth leaders above, with Cyril Chuwa on right.**

The UVCCM is the Youth Wing of the ruling party of Tanzania, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). It has been central to mobilizing the younger generation in environmental conservation activities. UVCCM’s vast network of youth groups across Tanzania has made it possible to engage thousands of young people in tree planting and environmental education campaigns. These events are held in various schools and community centers, where youth volunteers

participate in planting trees, organizing educational sessions and spreading awareness about the importance of indigenous tree species, especially African blackwood, the national tree of Tanzania. This collaboration ensures that the environmental message reaches a wide and diverse audience, empowering young people to take an active role in preserving their natural heritage.

**Tree Planting at Tanzania Police School – Moshi, Tanzania**

The Tanzania Police School (TPS) is an institution dedicated to training police personnel in Tanzania. With headquarters in Moshi, it serves as a key center for the professional development and education of law enforcement officers, providing foundational and advanced training programs. The school owns large acreages which are used for training police personnel. Since they are fenced and guarded, they are also excellent sites for planting tree seedlings. In 2012 ABCP founder, Sebastian Chuwa, began a collaboration with the TPS, and between 2012 and 2018 he and his wife, Elizabeth, supplied tree seedlings which were planted in some of these training areas.

The trees have grown very well and are now producing an abundance of seeds. Since the areas are not disturbed by animals, the trees have created a good environment with strong growth, good shade for students, and a very nice forest setting. In 2025 the ABCP has continued the program, supplying 5,900 seedlings, and plans are being made for future collaboration when a new area is opened in Siha District in west Kilimanjaro.



**< Members of the TPS, in front of the Moshi office, planted 5,900 trees in 2025.  
> Michael inspects seeds of mature mpingo trees planted by Sebastian and Elizabeth Chuwa.**



The TPS has 4 military bands across Tanzania, and the Daraja Music Initiative (DMI) (see pg. 4) has upheld a partnership with the bands for years, playing alongside them at concerts, teaching and mentoring the band members, and helping DMI students secure jobs with the bands. Two students have been hired by the police school and DMI members are continuing to work with its leadership to employ more DMI students in the future.

## DMI – Daraja Music Initiative



Ian Tyson and Michele von Haugg visit Michael and Cyril Chuwa at ABCP Nursery.



Majengo Primary School students perform at the 15th Anniversary Concert, using violins that the DMI team members brought with them from generous donors in the US.

The Daraja Music Initiative (DMI), currently directed by Ian Tyson and Michele von Haugg, celebrated its 15th anniversary this year. DMI provides music and conservation education to students at Majengo Primary School in Moshi, offering children ages 5–12 the opportunity to learn clarinet and violin. These instruments are taught specifically because the African blackwood, or mpingo tree, is the primary wood used to make clarinets as well as the fingerboards and pegs of violins.

DMI's annual visit to Moshi, Tanzania occurred from June 12–July 24, 2025. Since 2010, DMI has impacted over 300 students, 14,000 community members, and planted more than 3,000 African blackwood trees. Bridging music education and African blackwood conservation, DMI harnesses the transformative power of music to cultivate a sustainable future through innovative initiatives that foster environmental stewardship, ensuring the longevity of music's natural resources.



Through this connection, students not only develop musical skills but also gain a deeper understanding of the ecological importance of the mpingo tree. DMI also leads tree-planting initiatives at schools throughout the Kilimanjaro region, where students plant both mpingo and fruit trees. These hands-on activities teach young people about the value of the mpingo tree, its role in their culture and environment, and the principles of caring for and sustainably managing this vital resource. (See photo left.)

This year, DMI also celebrated a significant milestone with its 15th Anniversary Concert. The celebration featured performances by Majengo students, faculty presenting commissioned works by Tanzanian composers, remarks from board members on DMI's impact over the years, and a slideshow highlighting memorable moments from the organization's history. It was a truly special evening honoring DMI's enduring mission and the community that has shaped it. Learn more about how you can make an impact by visiting DMI's website at [www.darajamusicinitiative.org](http://www.darajamusicinitiative.org).

## Africado Cultivation

In 2013 a friend of Sebastian Chuwa gave him the gift of seedlings of a grafted variety of avocado, called the *africado*. The trees were cultivated in the KEEG nursery on Mt. Kilimanjaro for the benefit of the people who live on its slopes. Michael and Cyril are continuing in this tradition and have recently grafted 7,000 of the seedlings.

Cyril comments: "On the nursery side, we have completed the avocado grafting. We worked with Africado to obtain quality scions, and now we are waiting for the grafts to take, after which the seedlings should start sprouting new leaves. We learned a lot from Sebastian. Since he started the avocado project, it has had a strong influence in Sungu. Many people are already harvesting fruit, and others are asking for more seedlings to plant." (See photo right.)



**Uru Seminary School**



Uru Seminary Secondary School is managed by the Catholic Diocese of Moshi, with objectives of providing secondary education to youth. This year the ABCP donated 2350 trees. Uru students planted some in the school farm and others they shared with nearby community farms.

**Lombanga River Residents**



Mt. Kilimanjaro residents planted tree seedlings on the badly degraded banks of the Lombanga, a Kilimanjaro river flowing into the Pangani Basin. The Pangani is a primary river that fuels a hydroelectric dam downstream at Nyumba ya Mungu, and its viability as a water source is crucial towards a continuing electrical supply for a large area.. The ABCP donated 3,800 seedlings for the project.

**VETA Rhombo**



> Michael (3rd fr. left) with members of Moshi Catholic Church, who planted 6,000 seedlings in the past year.

< VETA Rhombo (Vocational Educational and Training Authority) is a training institute that has newly opened at Rombo to help students develop technical vocational skills. Rhombo students planted 4,903 seedlings during 2025.

**Moshi Catholic Church**



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**Cyril and Michael Chuwa Summit Mt. Kilimanjaro with ABCEO Banner**



Cyril and Michael Chuwa carried the ABCEO (Tanzania branch of the ABCP) banner to the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro, the tallest mountain in Africa. (Ht: 19,341 ft./5,895 m.) Cyril is in photo on the left.

Mt. Kilimanjaro is iconic on the African continent. Early European explorers were astounded to find a snow-covered peak just 3 degrees south of the equator, but now thousands of people climb its slopes every year. The ABCEO directors, Michael and Cyril, were raised on its slopes, as were 3 generations of their ancestors.

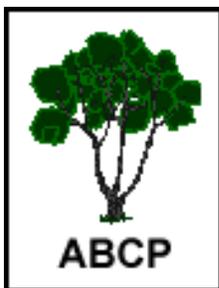
Each worked to protect its ecosystems in order to ensure that Kilimanjaro would continue to thrive, and now Michael and Cyril are doing the same.

In the summer of 2025, they climbed to the peak, and the photo at the left shows their summit. This is how they described the experience:

“The summit trip was part of an expedition exercise conducted with students from Mweka College. We ascended Mount Kilimanjaro via the Rongai Route, successfully summited at Uhuru Peak on Kibo, and then descended through the Marangu Route. We felt it was meaningful to carry and display the organization’s banner at the summit. Taking a photo at Uhuru Peak was symbolic, as it marks an important milestone in our journey and reflects the origin, purpose, and long term vision of the organization. It also helps to build recognition for the work we are doing.

The people seen in the photo beside us were fellow tourists we met at the summit. They showed interest in our banner and asked about the project, so we explained our work and objectives. They were particularly intrigued by the initiative and appreciated it. They were visiting from Canada.”

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