

Project Update: June 2018

Introduction:

This project phase implementation was initiated in March 2018 and is currently in its 5th month. This is a report of on the updates of the activities that have been conducted.

- (i) **Community outreaches:** -Since the project implementation started, we have been able to conduct successfully four educational outreaches in groups reaching out to 126 people from living around the Akara Hills forest ecosystem. These outreaches have been empowering the locals with skills on sustainable forest conservation, ecosystem values and viable alternative livelihood earning initiatives in the Akara hills forest. We also tackle green energy alternatives (solar lamps, energy saving cook stoves) and market linkages for the locals with service providers e.g. where to get seeds, pesticides and market for seedlings.
- (ii) **Agroforestry and tree nursery extension services:** - The project has been able to establish 18 tree nurseries in four community groups (Nyiego, Yasco, Friends of Yala and Ndai Fish farmers- Rapudo). In these, we have been engaging the community nursery attendants on potting and over 3,600 seedlings have been successfully potted with more seedlings yet to be potted and some still germinating. A giant community tree planting is planned in July- August 2018 in the Akara Hills Forest.
- (iii) **Akara Hills Guide:** - The project has been able to produce, a tailor-made guide for the Akara Hills conservation groups and schools titled "**TREE NURSERY ESTABLISHMENT, TREE MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINBLE FOREST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES-Training Manual for Community Tree Nursery Operators, Tree Farmers and Forest Resource Users**". This guide was launched on 8th June, 2018 during the project stakeholder meeting and has been produced in several copies for free distribution to the project area target group.
- (iv) **Stakeholder forum:** - The project has conducted one stakeholder forum that was held on 8th June 2018, a session that brought together 24 participants who were drawn from government line ministries, community groups, opinion leaders and special interest groups. This one day forum sensitised the participants on the project goals and methodologies, roles of each stakeholder, environmental policies governing forests conservation, weather and climate advisories, disaster preparedness and agroforestry as both income generation and ecosystem restorations. Presentations came from the invited government officials and it was concluded by drawing of the work plan for schools outreaches.
- (v) **Extension of Conservation Education and Agroforestry services in schools:** - This initiative has been started and four schools (Kanyaboli, Nyalula, Hawinga and Ndai Primary schools) have been trained so far. They shall be equipped with agroforestry skills, watering cans, seeds and potting materials with rigorous supervision to ensure the objectives are met. Other six schools shall be equipped with forest conservation knowledge and skills through organised schools outreaches and shall also be involved in community tree plantings in the forest.

Challenge: - Potting materials have become a challenge due to the recent Kenyan Government ban on use of plastic bags, however, through our own innovation, we have resorted to collecting used milk packets through schools and friends to help us in potting the seedlings.

