

Project Update: May 2013

Mt Moco: a project update based on a May 2013 field visit

I visited Kanjonde village at Mt Moco from 27-30 May 2013 in order to monitor progress with the nursery and replanting project. Rui Marcao accompanied me and Francisco Maiato of ISCED in Lubango met us at Kanjonde. Grassland fires were burning, with an estimated 70% of the grassland areas already burned.

The nursery was in good condition and almost all of the plants planted in January 2013 were looking strong and healthy. There was little sign of insect damage or leaf curl. Plants were sprayed with an organic insecticide. Shade cloth was laid underneath all of the plants in order to retain moisture and decrease weed growth. The nursery is currently divided into three sections:

1. The upper section which is under shade cloth and now holds 108 bags with plants, of which about 80 will be large enough to plant at the start of the next rainy season (October/November). Newly-planted saplings had died in six of the bags, a much higher mortality than in the more shaded lower two sections of the nursery.



2. The middle section is located inside a small patch of forest and still holds about 120 bags with at least two plants per bag (250-300 saplings in total), all of which were planted in January this year. All bags had one or more saplings alive.



3. The lower section is also located inside the small patch of forest and currently holds 41 bags with saplings, all planted in January. Saplings had died in three of the bags.



Besides assessing the survival and general condition of saplings in the nursery, I also assessed the status of the 108 trees now replanted. One tree had died but the other 107

trees looked healthy. Many plants showed some signs of insect predation and spider infestation (leaf curl), but none alarmingly so. All plants were sprayed with an organic insecticide and the more heavily infested plants were carefully scanned and spiders removed manually. We also cleared all taller plant growth within the area replanted with trees; bracken was the dominant plant that needed to be removed.



Finally, a new area of about 0.5 ha in size was cleared of dense bracken and shrub growth in preparation for the next planting season. The next visit is planned for early November, when moist conditions are optimal for planting and growth.