Tree Talk Plus

Branching out to empower communities

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Vi Agroforestry

FMNR Greening Uganda

"Scaling up the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration Model in Uganda"

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War

Russia vs Ukraine

When Nature Wins!

We all know the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. It is devastating and many would urge the countries to cease fire and the war ends. Words have been spoken, and Russian Press has been refrained form using others such as "war", "conflict" or "invasion". There is a deep concern regarding the maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine and strong support from UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, in seeking a peace and end the "dispute".

Take note that after all our wars, nature wins. Trees growing through and around old guns, helmets, and more will become a common "thing". After battles, when equipment is left strewn around, sometimes the forest makes its own way. During the 1980 war in Uganda, there were skulls all over, but people didn't realise that the war was good for vegetation cover. Even in the recently concluded 20-year war in Northern Uganda, trees survived, thrived and covered the entire space.

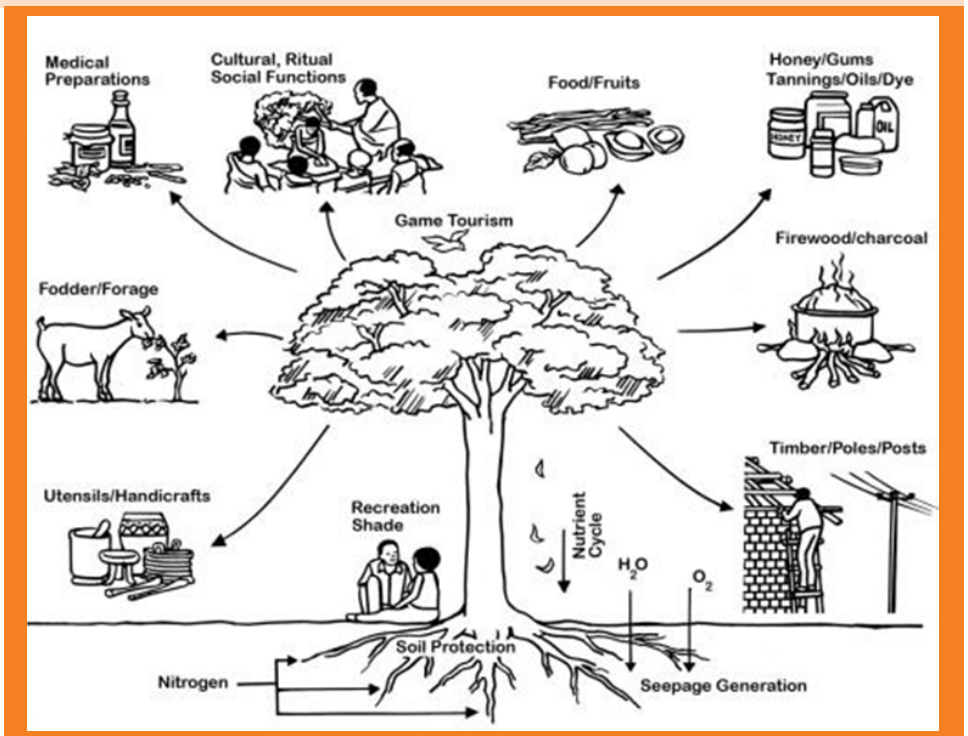
Currently, the concern is about the dwindling aid to development, resources are now used to attend to refugees in Ukraine rather than supporting trees growing.

The war in Ukraine has underlined how severely vulnerable groups are affected in times of crisis. Already enduring the economic effects of the post Covid-19 pandemic and the climate crisis, people in poverty are now suffering from skyrocketing food and fuel prices.

The decision to cut the development assistance will impact us in unprecedented ways.

We embrace FMNR for different reasons

Trees on Farm raised under FMNR model and several agroforestry approaches offer more than 20 benefits, as seen in the illustration on the right. These can be categorized as economic, social and environmental benefits, as detailed here under.



An illustration of twenty reasons for embracing FMNR

Economic benefits

FMNR practioners have increased incomes through improved crop yields when they integrate trees on their farms. Incomes through sale of tree products, including building timber, firewood, food, medicines, tool handles, furniture. It also increases incomes through improved livestock production. In addition, it increases household assets. Most recently, FMNR offers new income opportunities via carbon credit revenues.

Environment benefits

Due to widespread adoption of FMNR model, there is restoration of tree cover where tree planting is complicated. Therefore, it increases biodiversity (flora and fauna), reduces soil erosion, enriches soils, increases water availability, reduces wind speed and temperatures and controls climate change.

Social benefits

Socially, the model forces one to realize, accept, and make decisions to change to tree growing. It does so by building collaboration, networks and partnerships. Under FMNR, one is able to increase education and training, as well as increase empowerment for women. The model creates community advocates, food security, health and resilience to environmental catastrophes.

What else can you say about FMNR?

FMNR Beautifies eating places

Kabalega Diner is run by a visionary director, Mr. Erabu Denis, (Pictured left), a person that trained and excelled in birds (Ornithologist).

He set up an eating place, a bistro, a small informal restaurant, to serve the growing need for food by tourists treking Kampala - Masindi Road enroute to Murchison Falls National Park.

Intersting about this place in the wilderness of Nakasongola is the beauty framed by FMNR that comes with the mix of indegenous trees that have been let to grow to spectactular levels from sprouts.

It welcomes tourists with pretty Ugandan dishes, making it a common place for tourists, living independently of man and growing in a natural state, uninhabited or uncultivated and desolate. Kabalega Diner, a place to visit, with an FMNR mindset.

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Forest foods - an opportunity to enhance FMNR

Examples of forest foods and fruits

Ugandan farmers have selected and domesticated different varieties of forest foods, without their conscience. To date, there are a number of food stuffs which were originally classified as forest foods, these can be revived.

World Vision has proposed forest food assessment for Communal Land Management system that are found at the periphery of Budongo Central Forest Reserve. Forests under Communal Land Association managed and owned by communities, and the resources therein belong entirely to communities. They have a full bundle of rights (own, access, withdraw, management, exclude and alienation).

The forests include Tengele Community Forest, Ongo Community Forests, Alimugonza Community Forests, Mutukai, Kaitampisi, Sonso, Siba, Kyamasuka, Rwentumba and Bimeneza.

Ongo forest is particularly rich with forest foods that are eaten by wild animals and humans such as *Chrysophyllum albidum* (ekalate, mululu) among others.

Collaborative Forest Management approaches, too, will be assessed. There are two major CFM groups in Masindi; Kapeka Integrated Community Development Association (KICODA) and Budongo Good Neighbours Conservation Association (BUNCA). Others are NUBUFOCA and an emerging one in Busajju in Katanga. These have various foods they acquire from the forest.

Keith Bitamazire has a private natural forest, 85 acres along Rwangara / Siiba forest. His forest has *Prunus Africana*, with extracts capable of curing prostate cancer, and other invaluable ingredients. The other species on his forest are mahogany, muvule (*Milicia excelsa*), Mitrigyna and musizi (*Maesopsis eminii*) that form potential food sources. There are mushrooms, white ants, honey, jackfruits, fruits of various types.

Elsewhere, yams (which include kyetutumula, luyiki, nandigoya, and kisebe in Luganda) are common forest foods which are now domesticated. They are a variety that grows in the forest, with tubers varying greatly in size, from less than 5 kilograms up to 80-100 kg for the kyetutumula variety.

They are boiled together with vegetables, or ground into flour for baking cakes and making porridge. Rich in vitamins, potassium, fiber, and manganese, they are also used to cure skin rashes.

Other forest foods include passion fruits, mushrooms, white aunts, Jackfruits and many more. World Vision now wants to carry out an assessment on possible use and value chains and marketing of food stuffs of various categories like superfoods, herbs and spices, dried fruits, seeds, beans, pulses, grains, floor and nuts.

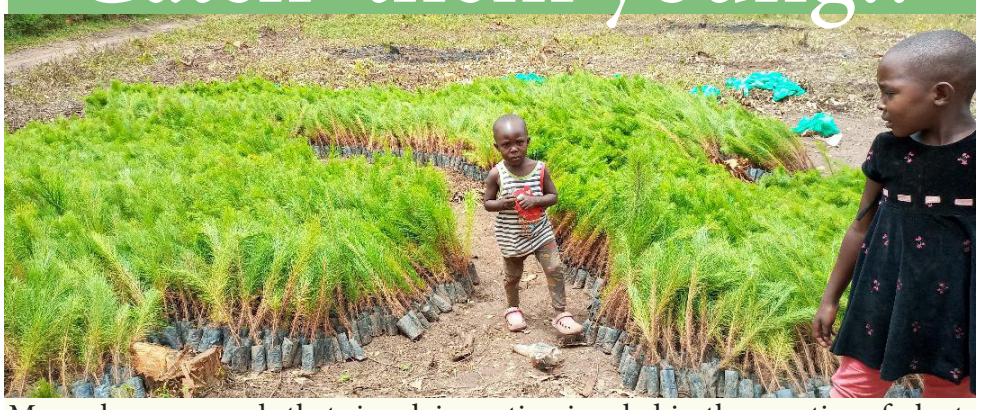
Multi-purpose trees

DCA in Kiryandongo is implementing a multi-purpose tree project with Humanitarian Assistance and Development Services (HADS) funded by UNHCR.

As a contribution to forest protection and development, DCA/HADS established woodlots, planted trees along avenues, households and institutional tree planting with assorted tree species comprising of mainly indigenous and a few naturalized tree species. One of the approaches to an Arboretum for multi-purposes in Kiryandongo refugee settlement.

DCA/HADS extension staff thinning a coppicing tree in the DCA/HADS Arboretum.

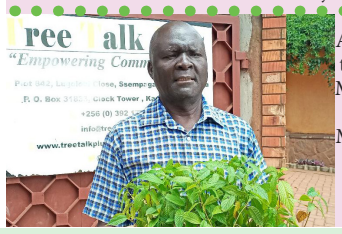
Catch them young!!



Many have argued that involving childred at an early age in tree growing is child labour. But, for us in the FMNR model in Uganda, we seek to encourage children to start getting involved in the practice of planting, growing and protection of trees. Get them involved while still young. They will live to remember how good you were to them.

In pictures

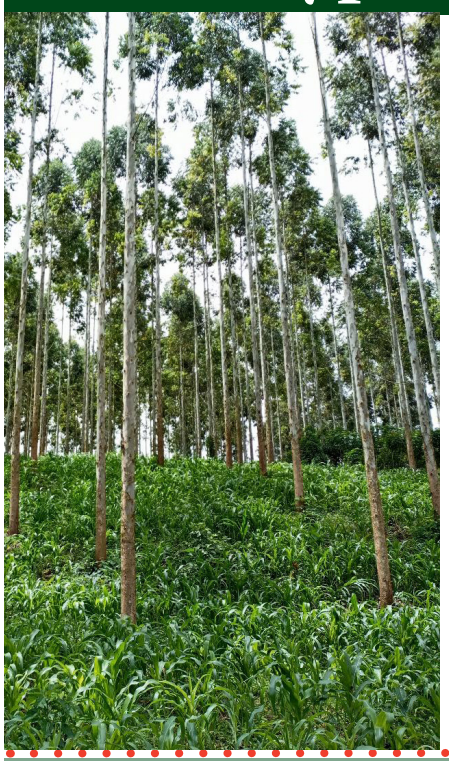
ICRAF/World Agroforestry Center lauched Phase II of the Trees On Farn Project



Age doesnt matter - Kawomera Martin, a senior citizen, picked Musizi seedlings for planting in May 2022.

Tree Adoption Uganda got free seedling of *Albizia chinensis*, *Measopsis Eminii* and *Melia volkensi* from Tree Talk Plus. They were widely distributed during the Kabakas Birthday-Run. Congratulations.

Eucalyptus can be intercropped with crops like maize



Gone are the days when it was a turboo for one to plant crops in existing trees, especially plantations of Eucalyptus. The then Forest Department discouraged the practice because those growing crops cared more about crops, and often "killed" off the trees. That is why, the Taungya Systems was stopped.

We now find large expanses of land planted with trees and mixed with crops such as beans, maize and other categories of annual crops. It is for various reasons.

The integrated agricultural production systems, the scarcity of land for agriclutural production and the need to utilise soil fertility have to be thought about before making choices.
These systems are interesting options for approaching global issues such as food security, climate change and sustainable farming besides improving social conditions in the rural environment.

Farmers can now grow trees to supply timber (as well as biomass) and at the same time grow crops to keep pace with family demads for food. In turn, this pays by having critical areas set aside for conservation of natural resources and provision of environmental services.

Therefore, agroforestry and FMNR are integrated agricultural production systems that consist of cultivation of crops and trees in the same area, which allows increased yield, economic stability and crop diversity.

BUT, for crops such as maize cultivation intercropped with trees are an interesting option for agroforestry systems. However, the degree of impact of the tree component on maize crop is still questioned. Maize often has low yield under shade and therefore the spacing should be wide enough.

Meet Katuramu, a cattle keeper, FMNR practioner, tree grower

Katuramu, a Physics and Mathematics teacher, one of the founding owners of MULUSA Academy in Luwero District, is now retired, a farmer, a cattle keeper, above all, a tree grower in the neighbouring Nakasongola District

He now has a farm of nearly 100 hectare of land, on which he does his tree farming , mixed with gowing of fruits and keeping over 100 cows. He wants to be self sustaining by planting, growing and protection of trees in a country that has experienced severe land degradation due to deforestation, climate change, drought, desertification and unsustainable land uses. Last season, he passed by Tree Talk Plus and collected seedling of *Melia volkensii, Albizia chinensis, Terminalia superba* and Mvule to take to his farm and plant.

He believes that by doing so, he will be consequently contributing to improved productivity and health of

farmlands, grazing lands and forests in a country side that has been devoid of trees, becoming a desert with looming scarcity of water to animals in Nakasongola where he lives. Yes, individuals and communities within Nakasongola can reap high on FMNR and agroforestry for their food supply, health and income.

Coppicing and Pollarding: not the same but similar

At Hotel HB in Hoima City, is where you find the pictured plants grown off the verandahs of every room. At first sight, they have a nice and lovely outlook, simply as a decoration, but have more to that.

They are coppiced, meaning, that they have lots of emerging shoots form a major stem as seen from the photograph.

A coppice is cut to near ground level to encourage vigorous young shoots, usually done from the second year after planting.

The practice of coppicing and pollarding trees and shrubs originated thousands of years ago, when woody plants were continuously harvested for fuel. To date, they are continously being used as flowers. The concept behind these techniques is to encourage rapid new growth thereby ensuring more woody material from the same tree or shrub. However, coppicing and pollarding do not mean the same thing and will give you slightly different results.

Coppicing involves cutting young tree stems down to a foot or less from ground level to encourage new shoots to form. Coppicing produces multistemmed growth instead of a single, primary trunk. In a woodland setting, trees are coppiced in rotational sections, with trees in varying stages. This way, wood is always available for harvest.

To date, the techinique is being extended to various uses depending on need.

Pollarding

The pollarding technique is used to encourage lateral branch growth and to control the height of a tree or shrub. It should also be done during the plant's dormant period and involves cutting a tree stem to about 8 to 10 feet above ground level.

Repeated pollarding encourages a slightly swollen trunk, with several new side and top shoots. Pollarding is used in urban environments to prevent trees from damaging utility lines and sewers.

In a pasture setting, it allows you to keep the tree in a perpetual sapling state, which extends the life of the tree because diseases have little time to infect the wood.

Our FMNR practitioners should know the difference and similarity between the two.

The Steering Committee visits FMNR sites

Members of the Steering Committee in Umoja vetrans Musizi forest

The FMNR Steering Committee (SC) took time off to visit sites in the central part of Uganda, covering districts of Wakiso, Mpigi, Gomba and Ssembabule. It was a learning visits, getting knowledge and eventually give advice on the FMNR activities that are being practiced in those areas.

In **WAKISO district**, the SC met the Wakiso District Farmers' Association (WADFA) and proceeded to Butenga village, where they met Mr. Sempewo Vincent, a re-known resident and a community resource person/ link farmer. He grows trees as well as the coffee. On that day, WADFA was holding a tree planting campaign in the various parishes of Wakiso district, and the team gladly joined the tree planting campaign. Over 4,000 seedlings were planted by different groups in the parish. But also, they donated 2000 seedlings from Tree Talk Plus.

The steering committee noted that WADFA first trained its members on the importance, benefits of trees and asked for their consent before planting. Planting was carried out on un utilized land, compounds and along pathways to save land for production of food. They also identified the need to continuously water the trees so that they survive the dry conditions.

Through Mr. Mugwanya Gerald, the coordinator of Kakiri sub county, the SC was introduced to Mr. Musoke Edward Ssalongo and Mr. Ssentamu Frank, both of them are caretakers of an FMNR plot of land in Buwanika village in Kakiri sub county. The land of 2 acres was set aside in 2017 mainly to put up a forest, which they did with a few challenges like grazing animals, termites and fire that would hinder tree growth. They decided to concentrate on the ones that were regenerating. Later, they integrated with four bee hives, though not yet colonized.

The SC noticed that the bee hives were high up in the branches of the trees making if difficult to oversee them. They lacked a water source, had too much wind, no fencing off the land allowing animals to graze on the land and that pruning of trees is not done. The caretakers stay away from the land which makes it difficult to coordinate.
There is therefore need for more training of FMNR as a practice, its purpose, benefits and integration into income generation activities.

Tree valuable species that were spotted on the land are *Syzygium cordatum* (Jambula), *Prunus africana* (Entasesa), *Albizia coriaria* (omugavu), *Albizia zygia* (ennongo), *Vernonia amygdalina* (omululusa), *Markhamia lutea* (omusyambya), and Accacia species.

In **MPIGI district**, with the assistance of Mr. Bahati Richard and Ms. Stella Nabumba both working for Mpigi District Farmers' Association, the SC visited Umoja Veteran SACCO. Mr. Segguya JB, the chairman of the SACCO, said that it has been in existence for 6 years and has 103 members in total, 48 women [widows] and 55 men. He noted that all members are ex - soldiers.

After cutting down all the trees, the SACCO decided to go for lease with their little money of 7 millions shillings for 228 acres from National Forestry Authority. Later, they planted woodlots of *Terminalia superba* and *Tectona grandis*. The seedlings were provided by MPIFA. They noted that whereas most neighbors cut trees, the SACCO had no option but to carry pangas for protection instead of guns.

They are planning a trade fare for visitors, and to make it a tourism site. In addition, visitors will have an opportunity to buy honey from the 45 bee hives they are keeping and occasionally have fish from the 03 fish ponds. Since they had no comprehensive plan for what they were doing, the Steering Committee advised the SACCO members to have a plan for the trees they planted.

The SC visited a second farmer within Mpigi, Captain Nzori John of Butambara district. Mr. Nzori practices both FMNR and Agroforestry on 2.2 acres of land.

Apart from planting trees, he has a garden of pineapples and a banana plantation with natural trees regenerating for stumps. The various types of trees grown include; Mukuza Numbe (*Wabugia ugandensis*) Mvule (*Milicia excelsa*), Namukago (*Funtumia africana*), Muvafu (*Canarium schweinfurthii*), Enkarati (*Afrosersalisia ceracifera*), omuziru (*Pseudospondias macrocarpa*), Ssekkoba (*Trichilia dregeana*), enkoba (*Lovoa brownii*), Ennongo (*Abizia zygia*), Oluwawu (*Ficus exasperata*), empewere (*Piptadeniastrum africanum)*. The SC noted that this is a combination of trees, foodstuffs aimed at income generation options.

In **GOMBA district**, Ms. Nassolo Josephine Mukisa, a resident of Kyegonza village, Kanoni town council was visted. The land she, and other settlers occupy, formerly belonged to government and had encroachers practicing agriculture and pastoralism. These were forced to leave, later allowing Nassolo to turn the land into a forest, known as Kaaro forest reserve, which is 40 acres and has existed since 2017.

They formed a group and appointed leaders. The group is called "Kaaro Winners Silk Group" that takes care of the forest. They are 30 members, 25 women and 5 men.
According to the group, FMNR is in their blood, and they love trees because they give them life. They hate people destroying tree stumps. The trees provide medicinal extracts, they are a source of food and protects them form harsh environment. They keep bees (seven beehives) which they have harvested several times.

The SC advised to spread pineapple peelings and cassava flour next to the hives for the bees to feed on and harvest a lot of honey.

The SC also visited Mr. Luzze Paddy, whose farm is alongside Kampala – Masaka high way, in Kampande Nsombwe village, Kyegonza sub county, Gomba district. He has two cows, some bananas and grows cassava, guavas, passion fruits and sugar canes on the same piece of land, that is approximately 5 acres of land, and practices both FMNR and agroforestry. The Steering Committee noticed that while he feeds animals on tree-crop products, they get manure in return, from animals.

In **SSEMBABULE district**, the SC visited Mr.Bamwenda Kennedy, a retired soldier in Rwemiyaga village. Kennedy learnt about FMNR from a training in Nakasongola. He learnt that pastoralist can engage in planting trees which later will act as shade to the animals. He converted his 10 hectares of land into FMNR and agroforestry use. On about 4 hectares, he has a banana plantation, on 6 hectares, he has a woodlot of eucalyptus trees and on 10 hectares, that's where he practices FMNR, at the same time a grazing area for his many cows. He also practices bee keeping with a total of 10 bee hives which he has harvested from many times.

The SC tasked Mr.Bamwenda to train his neighbors, like Mr.Magoba Aloziyous, a chairman of Kakoma parish who was present and interested in learning and practicing FMNR.
The secratariat will carry out followup monitoring to support the implementation of the recommendations.

This issue was funded by Vi-Agroforestry in Uganda. Tree Talk Plus promotes plant, growing and protection of trees on farm.
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