

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## A WORD FROM JEAN-PAUL, MANAGING DIRECTOR

This month, Better Globe Forestry Limited (BGF) started two important activities. The first activity involved the distribution of seedlings to farmers in Dokolo, Uganda. It is part of our afforestation model where farmers enter into agreements with BGF to establish agroforestry systems on their farms. BGF has a nursery in Dokolo where the seedlings are raised.

The distribution process requires detailed planning to ensure synchronization between seedling production and field activities such as farmer recruitment, group formation, training, and verification. It is crucial to execute the distribution correctly to avoid additional costs and maintain farmers' trust.

The second activity focused on Better Globe Forestry's commitment to responsible forest management. BGF recognizes the importance of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, which sets standards for responsible forest practices. Our staff members have undergone FSC training, and the company has set a deadline for certification. The certification process involves addressing any gaps through an internal pre-audit, engaging an external certification body, and undergoing a certification audit. BGF's adherence to the ten principles of responsible forest management demonstrates its commitment to sustainable forestry practices, environmental impact reduction, and community well-being.

## BETTER GLOBE FORESTRY PROMOTES RESPONSIBLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

And is on its way to FSC certification



BGF training a Self-Help Group (Mwambee Mukau Growers) in Kitui county on FSC and its benefits. The big tree is a baobab (*Adansonia digitata*) while several mukau trees (*Melia volkensii*) are visible in the maize field. Photo BGF

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a global nonprofit organization that was established in 1993 to address mounting concerns over deforestation and the environmental impact of logging activities. With a focus on responsible forest management, the FSC sets rigorous standards and operates a certification system. Forests and forest products must meet specific criteria encompassing ecological, social, and economic aspects in order to be FSC-certified.

The organization places great importance on biodiversity protection,

indigenous and workers' rights, community engagement, and endeavors to combat deforestation, promote reforestation, and ensure the long-term sustainability of forests. Through its network of national and regional offices, the FSC collaborates with environmental organizations, indigenous groups, and forest product companies to achieve its goals. By choosing products bearing the FSC logo, consumers can actively support responsible forest management, contributing to forest conservation and sustainable forestry practices.

Better Globe Forestry (BGF), as a dedicated organization focused on sustainable practices, recognizes the importance of FSC certification. BGF staff members have undergone training by FSC East Africa to ensure a thorough understanding of the ten principles. It has allocated August as the deadline for certification, and an internal pre-audit has been scheduled to identify and address any gaps. The subsequent steps involve contracting an external certification body, conducting a pre-assessment, closing any remaining gaps, undergoing a certification audit, and ultimately achieving certification. The audit process encompasses both plantation areas and BGF's collaboration with farmers. It is important to note that certification is not the endpoint but an ongoing and expanding endeavor.

The ten Principles of Responsible Forest Management are:

1. Compliance with Laws and FSC Principles.
2. Workers' Rights and Employment Conditions.
3. Indigenous Peoples' Rights.
4. Community Relations and Workers' Rights.
5. Benefits from the Forest.
6. Environmental Impact.
7. Management Plan.
8. Monitoring and Assessment.
9. High Conservation Value Forests.
10. Plantations.

For the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and organizations like Better Globe Forestry (BGF), responsible forest management is a paramount goal. By adhering to the FSC's ten principles and pursuing certification, BGF demonstrates its commitment to sustainable forestry practices, environmental conservation, and the well-being of local communities.



Most of the Self-Help Group members are women. Although it's their men who own the land, in most cases they tend the trees notably when they are young. Photo BGF



## DISTRIBUTION OF SEEDLINGS TO FARMERS IN DOKOLO

**Detailed planning to avoid mishaps**



The lorry with seedlings, and a farmer collecting his seedlings on a motorbike. Photo BGF

Dokolo site is identified by its unique afforestation model of establishing agroforestry systems on small-holder farms, for which the farmers enter into an agreement with BGF.

The programme covers four districts: Dokolo, Amolatar, Alebtong and Kaberamaido from the North Kyoga of Lango region in Uganda, the bulk of these farmers being in Dokolo district.

As per the agreement both BGF and the farmer have obligations to meet. One of the obligations of BGF is to produce quality seedlings and issue them to farmers in a timely manner. The farmers' main obligation is to plant all the seedlings in an agroforestry system and ensure they all survive and are well tended.

BGF has a nursery in Dokolo district located 2 km from Dokolo town where the seedlings are raised.

However, the seedlings' distribution is only part of series of activities that are inter-reliant and must be executed correctly to achieve a successful programme. These activities are planning, farmer recruitment, group formation, farmer training, verification of training implementation, seedling distribution, follow up to ensure the planting has been correctly done, that the seedlings are well managed and finally monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic planning ensures that field activities i.e. farmers recruitment, grouping and training are in sync with concurrent nursery seedlings production. This means farmers must be registered, group formation initiated, trained on seedling establishment and be ready for planting while seedlings harden at the nursery. An important factor to consider when planning for distribution is the rainfall pattern.

One of the main reasons for organizing farmers into groups is training. After training and checking on readiness of the farmers to plant, a distribution list and plan are generated which pave way for

the actual distribution. Distribution planning cuts across various departments in the company, requiring good coordination between "Forestry" and "Operations". Part of the planning is mapping of the farmers, distribution centers and the roads interconnectivity.

It is good to note that if seedling distribution is not well executed, it will lead to additional costs through:

1. Loss of seedlings on transit and on the farm
2. High transportation costs
3. Loss of trust by the farmers because of not being issued with seedlings according to agreement.

A day before the actual distribution, at the nursery, seedlings at the hardening area are sorted and arranged in labelled crates.

The number of seedlings per crate is recorded before they are moved to the loading bay awaiting loading on the truck, here several verifications are done to ensure the correct number per crate and its status. On the other hand, farmers are notified of the distribution time and when the truck will be at the collection centers near their homes.

On the day of distribution, the truck is loaded and leaves the loading bay by 7 am with an Agroforestry Agent accompanying the truck while another AA is mobilizing farmers (groups) as per the plan. At the collection point, crates of seedlings are offloaded, and the seedlings removed and placed under shade. Some farmers collect seedlings immediately as they are offloaded, and some come later, but at this point the collection is managed by a group official. Each farmer signs on the distribution list as they receive their seedlings.

Three days after distribution another team of AAs follows up on the farmers issued with seedlings to make sure they were all planted correctly.

Independently, a monitoring and evaluation team follows up at all stages and raises corrective action reports where non-conformances are identified. This provides speedy interventions to ensure successful distribution and planting.



Off-loaded seedlings at a distribution point. Photo BGF