



## Uganda Ten Million Tree Planting Project, Mbale

The area is on the slopes of Mount Elgon, an extinct volcano, on the border between Uganda and Kenya. The 6 districts together cover an area of over 180,000 hectares. The

total population of this region is around 1.26 million. Uganda's forests are home to at least 7.5% of the world's known mammal species and over 1,000 different bird species.

### The problems

People can see that their climate is changing. The rains are less predictable and then rain can fall so heavily that there is flooding sometimes leading to landslides that carry away houses and people. The area also has droughts that dry up crops.

People need to make a living and they need fuel for cooking and heating water. Between 1990-2010, the amount of forest cover in Uganda went down from 5 million hectares to 3.6 million hectares. People were cutting down trees to make farms and to get fuel.

### What's the project doing?

Size of Wales is working with the Welsh Government to plant 10 million trees in this area. This year (2019) the 10 millionth tree has been planted.

About 35,000 trees a year are planted because of the Plant! scheme, which plants a tree in Uganda for every child who is born or adopted in Wales.

Size of Wales works with local organisations to run tree nurseries and train local people in the skills that they feel they need.

They are trained

- to grow and plant tree seedlings,
- to make cooking stoves that use a lot less fuel
- to make a living with the forest by growing a variety of things

55 people have got jobs growing seedlings in the tree nurseries.

805 energy efficient stoves were built during 2018-19.

## People's stories

### Running nurseries

Anet Nabumati has five children and lives on a small farm. She was finding it very difficult to make a living before the project started. She was trained to grow seedlings but was so good at it that now she runs 2 nurseries.

She says that with her new knowledge and skills she can now grow coffee plants, ornamental flowers and other trees, as well as the original trees provided by the project. She sells them to pay school fees and buy food and clothing for her family.

She has also learnt how to make fuel saving

stoves from local materials which cook food very quickly and use less wood.

Anet has not only trained local people but has also given radio interviews to inform people of the benefits of tree planting. She is really pleased to be a part of the project.

## **Farming and living with the forest**

Charles Wabumba is a farmer who has been keeping bees for 30 years but in the past he had to go quite a long way to put them in trees. Now he has planted seedlings on his own land and has put beehives in them. He's planted coffee trees and taller trees like avocado that help the coffee trees by shading them. Now he can sell coffee, avocados and honey.



*Locally-made bee hive in trees of Mbale*  
The income has made it possible to



send all his children to school.

When asked about his hopes for the community over the next 5 years, Charles said:

“I can see that not even in 5 years, but in 3 years, I can see according to what this project is doing and the seedlings you are giving, I am anticipating a great change, a positive change.”

“I appreciate you people and the Welsh Government who have brought this project of tree planting that has really opened my eyes as far as the environment is concerned...I love you Welsh so much.”

## **The teacher**

Raphael Opedi is a 91-year-old retired teacher. He has been planting trees in the plot of land around his house since 1979. He cut down the fences and opened his garden for his neighbours and the surrounding community to enjoy. They pick fruits like mango, oranges and avocados from the fruit trees he has grown. As a teacher, he understands the importance of education where care for the environment is concerned. He has dedicated a lot of his life to not only planting trees but encouraging his family and the children he taught to plant trees too.



*Mr Opedi and his wife*

## Women's groups

The Suunu Women's Group write and perform songs to educate the community about the importance of planting trees and protecting the environment.



*Preparing soil for sowing seedlings*

The Makunya Women meet twice a week at their tree nursery to make sure seedlings are replanted in their heavily deforested community. Their nursery produces 35,000 seedlings each year which they distribute for free. They have also been trained in stove construction. These stoves are energy efficient, using approximately 60% less firewood than traditional ovens. If someone in their community doesn't have a stove they will go and build a stove and train the person/family how to use it.

"Being part of this group has improved our relationship with the community because we are working together as women, friends and community members"

Partner – Mount Elgon Tree Growing Enterprise