

A group of four women stands in a rural village setting with thatched-roof huts and a body of water in the background. In the foreground, a large, close-up portrait of a young woman with a red headwrap and a floral patterned top is shown, looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background image is partially obscured by a white, torn-paper-like graphic element.

Kikonda Forest and the people

Who we are

Kikonda Forest is a forestry company licensed by the government of Uganda to establish and manage a commercial forest on over 12,000 ha of land in Kikonda Central Forest Reserve.

The 50-year license running till 2051 is meant to enable us to supply the much-needed timber and other forest products to the Ugandan market and elsewhere they may be in high demand.

At a closer look however, it is not all about trees – it is the people that are at the heart of our interest. We wish to briefly share with you the benefits which a large number of women and men from near and far derive from what we do.

“ We are not perfect, but we try
our best to be good neighbors ”



Labor

Over 800 people offer services to Kikonda Forest and its contractors, for which they receive salary and wages every month. Given Uganda's average household size of 5 people, it means that over 4,000 people depend on Kikonda for their livelihood. Kikonda Forest endeavors to offer employment opportunities to the local people. About 90 % of the money invested in Kikonda is spent on salaries/wages. Workers who reside or operate in the neighboring villages spend a sizable part of their income in support of the local businesses of various types. In this respect, our investment has particularly boosted growth in the agricultural, hospitality, telecom, transport and housing business sub-sectors in the vicinity of the forest reserve.

Livestock training

About 600 households of cattle keepers live in a 5-km belt around Kikonda Forest. The majority of them still follow the traditional herding methods which have become unsustainable. Kikonda Forest has so far trained over 370 of them in alternative livestock management practices including feeding and breeding. Further, we constructed 6 valley tanks for livestock watering. Through cost-sharing arrangements, Kikonda Forest has so far supported 10 cattle keepers with advanced water harvesting and management systems.

Research and training

As commercial tree farming does not have a long history in Uganda, research and training is still greatly needed. In order to achieve that goal, we work alongside Makerere University and Nyabyeya Forestry College in addition to other Universities and research institutions around the world. We also run a trainee program which has so far qualified over 40 young professionals that not only serve Kikonda Forest but also various enterprises and institutions all over the country.

Community forestry

We share the joy and excitement of tree farming with our neighbors. Without charge, we have supported over 350 farmers with more than 300,000 seedlings on top of on-going technical advice. They are now proud tree growers; optimistic to kick poverty out of their lineage come the harvest time!

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“ From 2013 to 2015 alone, more than 1,000 households have been trained in improved farming practices and advanced agricultural value chain management ”

Water supply

It is a common saying that water is life – and that is what it is! We have so far installed 6 boreholes in various communities to increase access to safe water. We have supported 10 households with 10,000-ltr rain water harvesting tanks. Whenever water is scarce our borehole at the forest station is open for the communities. We have also repaired many boreholes in the neighboring villages. In response to the extreme need of water by the cattle keepers, Kikonda Forest has constructed 6 valley dams for mainly watering cattle though in dire times, they serve domestic needs as well.

Green technologies

We endeavor to promote green technologies so as to conserve the environment. Through cost-sharing, we have so far supported 6 households with bio-gas plants; while over 200 households have adopted fuel-wood saving stoves. We also promote the use of solar lamps in the community.



Agricultural training

Since about 85% of the households in the adjacent community derive their main livelihood from agriculture, Kikonda Forest embarked on supporting farming households with an advanced skills development package in agriculture, entrepreneurship and social awareness. From 2013 to 2015 alone, more than 1,000 households have been trained in improved farming practices and advanced agricultural value chain management. We support them with basic farm inputs to ignite adoption of the new techniques. Kikonda Forest supports farmer groups with heifers for milk production to boost nutrition and income generation. The farmers also use the animals to collect manure for soil fertility improvement and production of bio-gas. Our extension workers support agriculturalists to plant species of beans and maize that are more valuable and help in market access. Farmers working with Kikonda Forest report improved family nutrition as well as increased soil productivity through application of the training content; the net impact of which is a rising trend of household food security and general livelihood improvement.

Financial literacy

In order to enhance livelihoods and boost entrepreneurship, Kikonda Forest has so far trained over 600 community members and company employees in financial literacy. In 2 years, 26 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) have been formed with cumulative savings in excess of UGX 70m=.

General training and sensitization

On an on-going basis, we share knowledge with and sensitize our neighbors on various topics. Over 600 field workers have been equipped with business and life skills. We continuously train management staff, contractors and supervisors on a wide range of health and safety measures in order to roll out overall occupational health and safety awareness and responsiveness in the entire company. More than 1,400 community members have been sensitized on HIV/AIDS prevention and home hygiene improvement. In partnership with IDI, we have enabled over 300 male field workers and community members to access HIV counseling and testing as well as safe male circumcision services. Over 150 women were sensitized on cervical and breast cancer and guided on available referral options for testing and treatment.

Environmental education

Universal awareness and appreciation of the relationship between environment and people's livelihoods is vital for sustainable development. To achieve this, we have trained over 6,000 neighbors and close to 3,000 school children from the neighborhood in environmental conservation and sustainable forestation. By establishing an Environmental Education Centre at Karagi village near Kikonda Forest station, we aim to provide on-going expert forestry and environmental management information to the general public.



Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

global woods strives to be a socially and ecologically responsible company that cares for the wellbeing of its neighbors, workers and the environment. In order to promote CSR in the forestry sector, Kikonda Forest facilitated a workshop with representatives of the private sector, research institutions, donors and NGOs. This initiative is now followed up by the Uganda Timber Growers Association and the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme to imple-

ment CSR nation-wide. With support from Danida Business Partnerships, the we have crafted a business model to increase our positive impact on the community, improve the working conditions of its workers and increase the productivity and competitiveness of our investment in Kikonda. Our vision for our CSR program is to see a happy forest in harmonious co-existence with a happy community and happy employees; all in a happy ecosystem.

Third party certification

We embrace the idea of third parties evaluating the impact our work has on communities and giving input for further improvements. The World Bank, Overseas Development Institute, Heifer International and several other entities conducted surveys and livelihood assessments. Our operations are constantly monitored by third party auditors against the criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) – an initiative for socially and ecologically sound forest management endorsed by WWF, Greenpeace, trade unions and many more. Continental Forests Ltd (the company managing global woods operations in KCFR) is an active participant with the UN global Compact. We wish to maintain this policy of "open doors" allowing the public to get an impression on how Kikonda Forest and the communities are getting along and making suggestions if things could be done better.

Education

Education is widely regarded as key for all forms of development. We support the basis of education in the region by financing a teacher and by providing exam papers to public primary schools in Nsambya and Banaanywa Sub Counties as well as Butemba Town Council since the schools are unable to afford this for now. The exam papers enable pupils to get acquainted with the Primary Leaving Examination-type of exams that are set by the Uganda National Examinations Board and by so doing they increase their chances of passing the final exams. The company has embarked on a school woodlot establishment program to enable schools grow sufficient quantities of eucalyptus and pine trees to generate funds in the long run in order to buy the exam papers themselves.

Land-use conflicts and grievance redress

The Kikonda Forest Reserve was delineated more than 50 years ago. Its boundaries and its exclusive use for forestry purposes is well known to the local people. Cases in which some people claim to have a land use right in the reserve – often times being misled by fraudulent individuals-, are settled by Kikonda Forest peacefully on a case by case basis respecting all applicable formal and traditional rules. We have implemented a structured community grievance redress procedure to effectively address all emerging issues of discontent on both sides. People unhappy with the work of Kikonda Forest can complain either directly to the company or to independent third party FSC-auditors (www.sgs.co.za) or to the courts of law.



SPGS and UTGA

Our greening efforts go well beyond Kikonda, stretching over the entire forestry sector in Uganda. To ensure that this trend continues through sharing knowledge and combining efforts, we are a proud member of the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme and the Uganda Timber Growers Association.

Maintaining roads

Whenever possible, roads leading through the forest reserve are kept open for public traffic. They are only restricted from cattle that stray into the plantation, thus damaging our trees! The company is working hard to further improve the road network in the forest reserve.

Supporting community projects

The Christian communities in Kyakabuga and Kigando have demonstrated commendable self-help efforts to build churches by their own means. We were happy to support these efforts by providing timber for roofing.



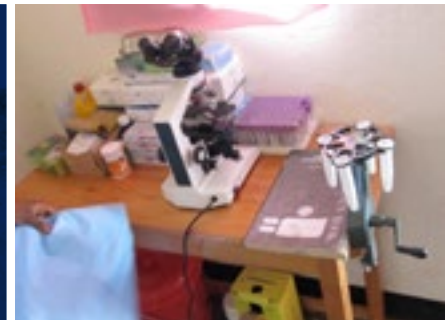
Health

We operate a health center that caters for the most common ailments of field workers and staff. It offers services to the local population too, and supports the public health service in immunization and HIV counseling and testing campaigns.



Culture and sports

Kikonda Forest organizes and sponsors an annual soccer tournament, a long-distance run as well as a music and dance festival. These activities have become a very popular part of the local calendar! Our facebook page boost pictures of a good number of sports enthusiast and dance-floor heroes!



Why are we planting trees

In the past two decades, the forests in Uganda were decreased by more than 30%. Meanwhile, the population has increased by more than 90%. Today, only 0.2% of Uganda is covered with forest plantations.

Does that mean that trees have to be planted everywhere?

No! About 35% of Uganda is bush-land and grassland that can be used for cattle-keeping. About 45% of Uganda is farmland.

Only about 1% of the country's surface would need to be planted with trees to make sure there will still be timber and poles on the market for buildings, furniture, transmission lines and so much more!

To secure the timber and poles supply, the government has declared Forest Reserves like Kikonda "for tree farming only". Kikonda Forest, on invitation of the people of Uganda, is bringing the expertise and finance needed to develop and manage the forest.

