

Newsletter

JANUARY 2023

Seasonal greetings to all SGG partners, supporters and friends wherever you may be.

As has been reported in the last two newsletters, covid and associated travel restrictions have greatly curtailed SGG's customary activities and forced changes of strategy upon us. This year we started to get back to normal with an April-June field visit to Kenya, although similar field monitoring in Tanzania and Malawi does not take place until early next year. In Kenya I was very pleased to see that our various projects had continued with much local activity and initiative through the covid years when SGG was absent. So much new development was recorded during this last field visit that most of my time since June has been taken up writing reports to donors about progress within their particular projects. My apologies for the delay if you do not yet know about progress in the project where your donation went, but I hope to finish these progress reports before my next field monitoring visit in January.

The second activity which has taken much of our time is fundraising. We started writing funding appeals on a regular basis last year during the covid restrictions, and as we received more funding than initially expected, we have continued the practice of making such appeals to funding trusts. I do not want to give a long list of each trust which has financially supported SGG this year, but the continuation of some of our projects has been dependent on trust funding. So far this year funding from these external sources has reached £21,000, which has enabled SGG to extend our fields of activity.

The largest project continues to be the 'Tropical Tree-Planting and Conservation' project. The original aim in 2019 was to implement the planting of 100,000 trees. However, covid travel restrictions meant that trees could not be counted in 2020-2021, so this project has been changed into a 4 year project with 200,000 the new planting target.



Tropical tree planting and conservation

In 2022 trees have been counted only in Western Kenya. During the May monitoring visit some 38,728 trees were counted and 213 planting sites monitored. As SGG pays a small subsidy for trees counted, some of our community groups are gaining new members. Here [see small photo, previous page] a new member of CIF group has planted 71 *Grevillea robusta* to separate his home enclosure from his maize. Also some long-term partners of SGG are simply extending the area they have under trees. In 2019 SGG paid farmer Edwin Wandera for 180 trees in his woodlot. Here [see main photo, previous page] in May we counted an additional new 364 trees. Local farmers have realised the importance of trees for improved farm production and income. SGG's current data sheet records 140,025 trees planted since 2019,

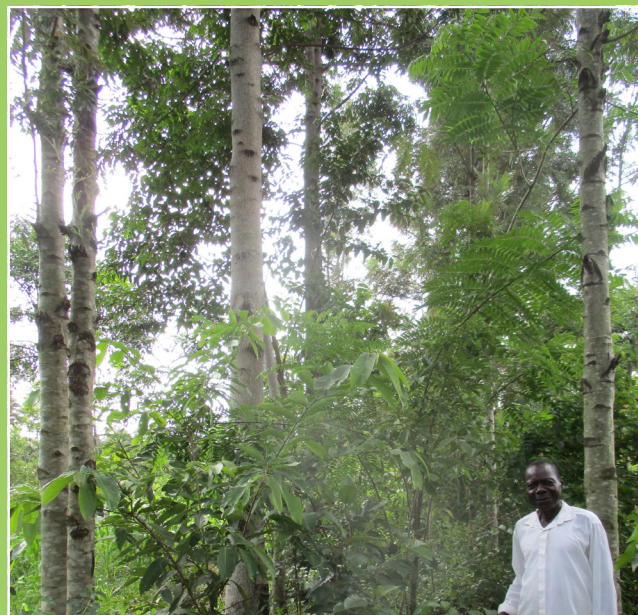
with many more still to count in Tanzania, Malawi and elsewhere in Kenya, so we are currently optimistic about reaching our 200,000 planting target. If tree projects are your particular interest read the progress report at: www.sustainableglobalgardens.org.uk/tropical-tree-planting.

Climate change mitigation

This year there have been some significant shifts in ideas about tree-planting. The most important is that an increasing number of farmers are looking for sponsorship for carbon capture. They are experiencing changing weather patterns, they know about carbon emissions from the industrialised countries and they are hoping SGG can find clients who wish to offset some of their carbon footprint by sponsoring tree growth on their farms.



The above two photos were taken in exactly the same spot, both showing farmer Mark Maloba who one of the many tree-planters in the Siguli group. One photo [see above left] was taken in November 2019 when Mark first mentioned an interest in carbon capture.



The other photo was taken in May 2022 30 months later [see above right]. You can see the increased height of the trees and the thickening of the trunk. This is carbon capture in action! All Mark needs now are sponsors.

500 orphans and vulnerable children

Our second largest project is support for OVCs in Busia, Western Kenya. This is our longest-running programme, it has been in danger of an abrupt end when previous sponsorship ended during the covid years. Fortunately, the Lady Leech Fund, the Canning Trust, the Pamela Barlow Charitable Trust and other funding trusts gave sufficient funding this year to enable this programme to make a slight expansion.

There are two main benefits for the guardians of these orphans & vulnerable children. One is table-banking where OVC guardians can propose an income-generation project to SGG and contribute 70% to the project budget. If the project is acceptable

to SGG, we donate the remaining 30% of the budget. When this project was started in 2009 the maximum contribution from any group was Ksh 5,000/-. This year SGG had to set the maximum contribution at Ksh 70,000/-, which indicates that these are not prosperous groups but that many OVC households have made progress and moved out of absolute poverty.

The other main benefit for OVC households is the continuing development of kitchen gardens with each OVC group now having their own garden, which in turn provides both vegetables to improve the nutritional value of the OVC weekly meal and also additional income from sales of vegetables.



The OVCs at Nyusa Farmers line up to receive a slice of stiff millet ugali [see above right]. SGG has been campaigning in recent years for a more balanced and varied diet for youngsters, so I was pleased to see that these children also received some cabbage [just visible to the right of the ugali] and fruits for their communal meal. Between June 2021 and June 2022, the price of maize rose by 24% so it is not surprising that I was asked by 3 groups to be allowed

to join this feeding programme. Here [see above left] both children and adults of Tumaini Women's Group Esikhoma were anxiously waiting to find out whether they could become a new group joining this programme. The group has been accepted as the tenth community group within this programme, and they now look forward to January when they will start to see the benefits of this SGG project.

Water harvesting

Not all of SGG projects are focussed on the OVCs of Busia. Much of SGG's early tree-planting was located around Busia, but now Malawi, Tanzania, other regions of Kenya and Uganda all have their tree-planting sites. Last year we reported that SGG had financed 3 water-harvesting projects for schools in North-East Tanzania. For these we collaborated with the Finnish NGO Liana.org, whose Tanzanian building team carried out the actual construction of the tanks and guttering. This year we have not been quite as successful at attracting funding, but we received funds this December to construct a water-harvesting system at Kwakihindi Primary School, yet another school without a reliable water supply in a dry region of Tanzania. Furthermore, SGG is collaborating with Sherwood Sunrisers Rotary Club to fund the construction of a water-harvesting system at St Denis Libolina School for the Physically Challenged, near Bungoma in Western Kenya.

Lack of water in Tanzanian primary schools is such a major obstacle to good education that SGG expects a continued demand for these school water harvesting projects.

Natural pest control

Another project which has reemerged after a few years of inactivity is SGG's involvement with the International Society of Pesticidal Plants [ISPP]. For this group of mainly African researchers Carole has acted as Treasurer while I had a more nebulous role as administrative Officer. For three years the development of ISPP was limited, but in July ISPP held their third international conference in the Ivory Coast. Although I was not one of the official organising committee for this conference, SGG provided much informal help during the preparation stages and also two Powerpoint presentations to a conference with more than 200 delegates. At the conference in Ivory Coast ISPP gained a much stronger membership, so Carole and I both thought that July was a suitable time to step back from our activities with ISPP and encourage greater official responsibilities for our African counterparts. Thus, this newsletter is probably going to be the last time this project will be mentioned. Carole and I both feel that we have done important work over the last five years in getting ISPP established, but now is the time to reduce our involvement.

This is the kitchen garden of Nyusa Farmers. When SGG made our monitoring visit, this garden contained plots of onions, groundnuts, soya beans, amaranth, sukumawiki, cowpeas, pumpkins and a variety of indigenous vegetables. Furthermore, the plot included 10 avocado, 5 jackfruit, 1 mango, 1 pawpaw, and banana clumps. It is that diversity of fruit and vegetables which SGG encourages for better family nutrition. Currently we are advising these small-scale farmers to have at least 10 crops/'products' available on their farms.



Kitchen gardens

Towards the end of these annual newsletters we like to introduce a completely new development. This year I would like to mention SCOPE, Schools & Colleges Permaculture Programme Kenya. My last field visit in June was to Pavyuni Primary School in Makueni, a dry area in Eastern Kenya where rainfall is unreliable and farming marginal. As in many areas of rural Africa the local schools have large school grounds which are often an underused resource. SCOPE's aim is to transform such school grounds into productive horticultural units based on permaculture principles. Here [see lower left photo] a group of pupils have just sung a song about the importance of the environment,



and now one of them has been asked by the teacher to explain how the species visible can be used. The two trees visible are the fruit pawpaw and *Grevillea robusta*, which can provide timber, energy from fuelwood but is also a useful shade tree with leaves that can be used for mulching.

The second photo [see lower right] shows the new extension of the schools kitchen garden. Each pupil is standing next to a planting hole with a recently planted fruit. At this stage it is vital that these young, vulnerable fruits are watered regularly – and that is what the pupils are doing. At present SCOPE is contracted to make similar changes in the grounds of St Denis Libolina, near Bungoma.



Thank you for your support

And finally, on behalf of the hundreds of children and farmer households SGG tries to help, I want to thank you all for whatever contribution you have made this year towards SGG's fundamental aim of poverty and hunger alleviation. Thank you so much. Carole and I offer our best wishes for the coming New Year to you and your families.

Paul Keeley

Sustainable Global Gardens,

20 Kensington Gardens, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear NE25 8AR, UK. Telephone +44 (0)191 253 0687.
E-mail: paul_keeley@hotmail.com or carolekeeley@hotmail.com www.sustainableglobalgardens.org.uk