



# KENYA YOUTH IN FORESTRY

CONFERENCE • EXPO • TREE PLANTING

## KENYA YOUTH IN FORESTRY CONFERENCE, EXHIBITION & TREE PLANTING CAMPAIGN

Nairobi, 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2023



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT  
AND FORESTRY

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



GREENING  
EDGE  
CHAMPIONS



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*The Background papers and materials presented during the Kenya Youth in Forestry Conference can be obtained by emailing [conference@Youthinforesy.com](mailto:conference@Youthinforesy.com) . Some sources cited in this report may be informal documents that are not readily available.*

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## Acknowledgments

The inaugural edition of the Kenya Youth in Forestry Conference was organized by Youth in Forestry Organization. Whose Mission is to encourage youth participation in the Forestry sector, for Climate Action and Sustainable Livelihoods.



The Conference Activities on 17th & 18th May 2023 included:

- Conference Presentations
- Panel Discussions
- Exhibition
- Master Class
- Short Film Showcase

On the 19th May 2023, The delegates then gathered at the Kibiku Forest and planted 3,000 tree seedlings. This is the same place where the President launched the 15 Billion tree campaign.

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For walking the journey with us on a daily basis, supporting us, and being present always to ensure our success.

*We say Asante Sana.*

## Partner Acknowledgement



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT  
AND FORESTRY



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



OFFICE OF  
THE FIRST LADY



## Introduction

The Kenya Youth in Forestry Conference Was **Organized by Youth in Forestry Organization** ([www.youthinforesstry.com](http://www.youthinforesstry.com)) and this report presents a summary of the proceedings.



## Objectives

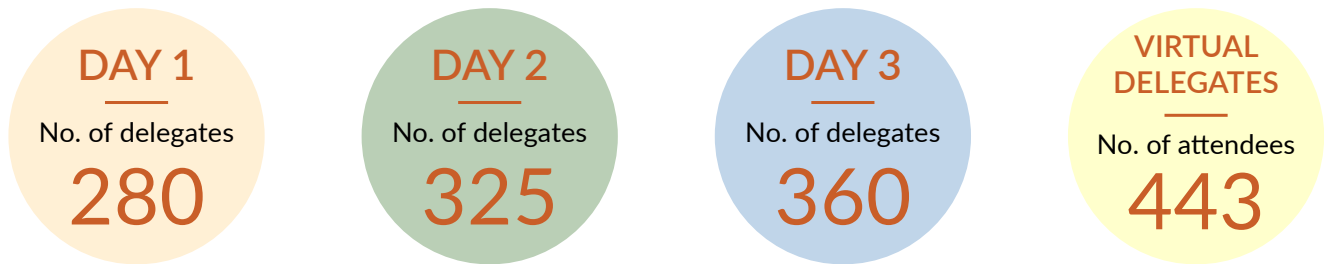
The Kenya Youth in Forestry Conference was held from 17<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> May 2023, under the theme: *Securing youth's participation to achieve the 30% tree cover agenda for sustainable development.*

This conference aimed, to demonstrate that forestry has development opportunities for the youth to address the challenges of climate change and unemployment so as to encourage entrepreneurship ventures within the sector, while conserving the environment for current and future generations.

**The expected outcomes of the conference were:-**

1. A change of mindsets and behavior towards the forestry sector and its abilities to create both employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, into fulfilling careers.
2. To demonstrate that the forestry sector is attractive enough and invite more youth to join the sector in order to further the conservation, commercial forestry agenda.
3. To establish a national database of forestry practitioners that will link youth with professionals within the forest sector for mentorship, knowledge exchange and networking within the 47 counties for future reference.
4. To enable youth to create the future they want by engaging in entrepreneurship within the commercial forestry sub-sectors such as tree-seedling production, forest value chains and marketing of end products while restoring nature.
5. To contribute, long term, to the establishment of resilient, competitive, inclusive and sustainable forestry sector that will support economic growth in Kenya and East Africa while conserving our environment for current and future generations.

## Number of Conference Delegates per day



## Counties Represented

Nairobi, Kiambu, Nyeri, Meru, Laikipia, Marsabit, Garissa, West Pokot, Kirinyaga, Embu, Kajiado, Homabay, Migori, Uasin Gishu, Kwale, Kilifi, Narok, Vihiga, Makeni, Mombasa, Eldoret, Nakuru, Baringo, Bungoma, Kisii, Nandi, Kisumu, Machakos, Kitui, Siaya, Turkana, Nyamira, Elgeyo Marakwet, Trans Nzoia, Samburu, Isiolo, Kakamega

## Countries Present

- Kenya, Ghana, South Africa & Zimbabwe

## PWDs Participation

- We had 2 visually impaired persons who were supported by their assistants, and one of them was also a presenter at the conference
- We had 1 person on wheelchair, who also came with his assistant



## Key Note Addresses

### State of Forestry in Kenya

#### Mr. Fredrick Namsusende - Senior Officer, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry

Mr. Fredrick Namsusende spoke on behalf of the Cabinet secretary, Hon Sopian Tuya and the principal secretaries. He began by providing a clear background on the State departments structures mandated with environmental protection and forest sector to enable young people engage with the government in an informed, clear and constructive manner. He highlighted the role of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry in protecting the environment, overseeing a clean, healthy, safe and sustainable management of Kenya's environment and forestry as well as leading the country's climate change interventions.

He noted that the State department of Environment and Climate change and the State Department of Forestry were spearheading good governance, protection, conservation and restoration of the country's natural resources. This was done with the help of Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies (SAGAS) namely National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Kenya Water Towers, and National Environment Trust Fund (NETFUND) among others. The State Department of Forestry has the mandate to protect and manage Kenya's forests through the technical assistance directly or indirectly from Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI).

Key priority areas for the State Department of Climate Change and Environment were waste management, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and climate adaptation. Key priority areas for State Department of Forestry were mentioned as: ecosystem restoration to increase Kenya's tree cover from 12.3% to 30%; planting 15 Billion trees in 10 years through restoration of degraded areas and promotion of agroforestry; and the development of new forests in northern range lands where land is adequate for restoration.

As a way forward, he urged the youth present to:

- Dialogue with Kenya Forest Service since they were in charge of management of Kenya's forests, restoration of degraded areas, expansion of forest acres in their interest in protecting and expanding our existing forests. This includes reporting of illegal forest activities such as logging and charcoal burning.
- Engage with KEFRI if they are seeking to establish tree nurseries as groups as they are known for tree seedling development and are able to produce tree species relevant for various ecological zones given their scientific expertise. This would provide professional guidance in their support for the 15 Billion Tree Campaign.
- Utilize the Jaza Miti app, a technology employed by the ministry to generate green certificates for individuals who have planted more than 300 trees and site species matching and provide a database for tree seedling vendors in the country.

He concluded by stating that the Ministry was happy to partner with youth and would use the outcomes of the conference to accelerate the push of the 15 Billion tree campaign with youth as a key stakeholder.



## Chief Guest Speech

### Dr. John Chumo - Chief Executive Office, Mama Doing Good, Office of the First Lady

Dr. Chumo who represented her Excellency the First Lady of the Republic of Kenya Mrs. Rachel Ruto officially declared the conference opened. In his speech, he stated that the First Lady was committed to environmental conservation and climate change. The President; His Excellency Dr. William Ruto had an ambitious tree cover agenda aimed at achieving 30% tree cover by 2032 and youth are a key stakeholder in realizing this agenda and achieving the constitutional threshold of 10% forest cover. He noted that our forests are facing degradation, illegal logging, charcoal burning, droughts, floods and climate change effects. He called upon youth to discuss solutions to the challenges and that through the office of the First Lady, those solutions would be implemented.

He added that it was essential to engage the youth in capacity building, tree growing, use of technology in protecting our forests as agents of change. Dr. Chumo then informed the delegates that the office of the first lady was committed to growing 5 million trees by 2027 in the national restoration campaign to tackle climate change. Out of the 15 Billion, her total target was 500 Million trees. As a result, she adopted 500 acres of Kakamega Forest, Dundori in Nakuru, Aberdares, Kiambu and Mangrove planting in Diani and during birthdays. In addition, Mama Doing Good, has set up a department to work with youth and women on climate action via capacity building and training on tree nurseries establishment. They have also established the Mazingira Award scheme, targeting learners in primary and secondary schools across the country, to appreciate climate change and environmental conservation. Five awardees from this scheme will be sponsored to attend COP 28 in Dubai 2023.

Dr. Chumo ended his remarks by noting that one of the conference outputs should be a registered youth institution for youth, working and collaborating with youth on forestry, environment and climate change issues in the country. This structure would have a national secretariat and a chapter in all the counties to enable youth become organized and attract support from development partners. He noted that youth led organizations can be platforms to advocate for policies that promote sustainable forestry practices, learn and share ideas and collaborate in forestry projects while amplifying youth voices in forest conservation.

The Kenya Youth in Forestry Conference served as a platform to revolutionize youth involvement in the Forestry sector, to create opportunities for them to participate actively in the sector through training. He urged the organizers of the conference to formalize the Kenya Youth in Forestry as a body, as this will enable the country achieve its national conservation and economic objectives. Lastly, he challenged youth to embrace technology and boost online participation in conservation.



## Opening Remarks

### Balancing Restoration and Entrepreneurship in the Forestry Sector

**Dr. Joram Kagombe - Deputy Director Socioeconomic Policy and Governance Theme and (Chief Research Scientist, Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI)**

Dr. Kagombe highlighted the following in his presentation: Kenya's current forest cover stands at 8.83% with a tree cover of 12.1% which the government wishes to increase to 30% by 2023. This goal requires a collective societal approach and youth have a pivotal role to play towards achieving this commitment. Challenges facing the forestry sector include competition from alternative land use; inadequate lack of investment data; inadequate information; lack of infrastructure; rising population growth, inadequate technology, inadequate knowledge of species site matching, investment choices and opening of the market outlets for various products, valuation techniques and market specifications i.e. requirements for trees for poles and furniture production. These challenges leave tree farmers to be exploited by middlemen. The lack of crucial information has hindered the development of the sector. He mentioned that Sweden converted their country to a high forest cover through commercial forestry.

Entrepreneurship in the forestry sector entails envisioning land as an enterprise for commercial tree farming. He emphasized that youth have opportunities in the entire forestry value chains. Entrepreneurship options for youth include: seed sourcing, tree nursery establishment, plantation establishment, and harvesting and value addition. He called for youth to enroll in the upcoming Kenya Commercial Forestry Innovation Center at <https://kcfic.org/> that will serve as an incubation Centre for commercial forestry.

### Spotting Existing Gaps in the Forestry Sector for Economic Opportunities and Livelihoods

**Dr. Kaberia Kamencu - Timber Sector Chairman, Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM)**

Dr. Kaberia highlighted the following opportunities for youth in the forestry sector:

- Tree nursery establishment and operation. This, he noted, is the quickest economic opportunity available for the youth to engage in commercial forestry. These nurseries could produce high value tree species such as:- *Melia volkensii* or Maka or African Mahogany which takes 12 to 15 years to mature at a spacing of 7 by 7 meters and can be inter-cropped with fodder *Acacia tortilis* which can be grown in dry areas. This tree species produce high quality charcoal with high calorific value. It could therefore contribute to halting forest degradation once the right policies are in place. *Acacia senegal* is known for gums and raisins. It grows within 3-4 years and thrives in drylands. Gum is a key ingredient for coca cola and the pharmaceutical industry.
- Working closely with KFS and KEFRI in the protection and conservation of forests.
- The incubation center for commercial forestry at KEFRI will serve as a platform for youth to incubate their commercial forestry ventures and benefit from them.

He concluded his remarks by emphasizing that the next frontier was forestry thus youth need to change their mindsets and harness the opportunities in the sector. 'If you are planting trees to cut, you will plant more.'



## Analyzing and Dis-Aggregating Available Data to Gain Insights on the Latest Trends in the Kenyan Forestry Sector

### Mr. Calvin Shikuku - CEO MotorBrix Limited

Mr. Shikuku provided an overview of how facts and figures are disaggregated to visualize underlying trends and make informed decisions that gives the desired value regarding the forestry sector.

In this respect, he highlighted the following key points:

- The best source of forestry data can be found from Kenya Forest Service, The Kenya Association of Forest Users, International Tropical Timber Organization and the National Bureau of Statistics.
- The common trend on the use of forests include: - timber production, fuel wood, non-timber forest products such as bees wax, essential oils and charcoal. Emerging trends in the sector include forest conservation and sustainability and existing opportunities in carbon markets.
- Technology is emerging to make forestry better through precision forestry; for example, the use of tools and technology to collect data to make decisions for site specific management which can be used in all phases of forestry, to capture data real time and solve problems real-time such as forest fires. Youth should therefore use methodology pegged on data as compared to traditional methods that are manual and not digital. These include: selective breeding and cloned seedlings, digital forest management inventory, use of drones among others.
- Trends in investments in the forest sector are a challenge due to perceptions that hinder investments and best practices.

## Integrating Innovation and GIS in the Forestry Sector

### Mr. Wycliffe Matika - International Tree Foundation

Mr. Matika stressed the following key points in his remarks about the potential use of GIS in the forestry sector:

- GIS can be used to rehabilitate threatened ecosystems given the great need for it. For example, technology has been used to guide the rehabilitate sections of Mount Kenya attacked by invasive and alien species i.e. *Lanataka camara* and *Mauritius thorn*. GIS solutions allowed them to partition the plots and allocate them for rehabilitation.
- GIS technologies are also used to monitor threatened tree species. For example, in Meru, Embu, Tharaka Nithi, Kiambu and Marasabit counties, International Tree Foundation is using GIS to trace stable mother trees, identify the seeds and connect the communities to seeds sources hence enhancing the quality of the tree seedlings for the 30 Billion Tree Campaign. In this way, women and youth are able to access thick forest canopies while avoiding wildlife and engage in entrepreneurship through seed banks to earn a living.

He concluded by challenging the delegates to plant at least 10 trees to cater for their oxygen needs. This he noted is the number required to comfortably accommodate an individual's oxygen needs per day.



## Exploring the Potential of Bio-Enterprises in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands as a Viable Strategy for Ecosystem Restoration

### Mr. Meshack Muga - National Project Coordinator, The Restoration Initiative Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Kenya

Mr. Muga informed the delegates that dry-lands occupy 80% of the landscape in Kenyan land and 39% of the Kenyan population lives in dryland areas. However, the country has a restoration potential of 38.8 million ha of which, 26 million lie in the drylands. He emphasized the need for the youth to promote the 4 Betters that is, Better Production, Better Nutrition, Better Life and Better Environments. He added that as a country, Kenya's restoration potential stands at 38.8Million Ha yet, out of this, 26 Million Ha of restoration lies in the ASALs.

He then proceeded to highlight the several opportunities and benefits derived from the drylands forest.

Forest and landscape restoration results in benefits ranging from food security and nutrition, carbon storage, drinking water supply, biodiversity, ecotourism, wood and non-wood forest products. Non-wood forests products include extractive, non-extractive and pharmaceuticals namely herbs, honey, gums, raisins, aloe and fruits. However, the exploitation of non-wood forest products is challenged by poor and unsustainable production practices, policy and institutional barriers and low investment in market development. Opportunities for funding bio enterprises include: private public partnership, domestic and external market and private sector involvement.

Mr. Muga concluded by stressing that sustainable commercialization of non-wood forest product had great potential for creation of employment, contribution to improved benefit sharing, reduced land degradation, improved conservation of bio diversity, improved household incomes, reduced vulnerability for local communities to climate change and improved household income. He also highlighted the urgent need to finalize the strategy of non-wood forest products, market linkages, commercialize production of non-wood products, and encourage private public partnership, capacity building of youth and stake holders, standardization and certification of products.



## Pinpointing Practical Solutions to Existing Challenges to Enhance Appeal the Youth to the Forestry Sector

### Mr. Abdikadir Adden Hassan - Garissa Million Trees

Mr. Hassan noted that youth have the capacity to address deforestation. This is because they have the networks and the numbers (comprise of 75% of country's population). Youth therefore need to take on this responsibility.

He highlighted the following challenges experienced by youth in forestry sector: the lack of mentorship, poor visibility particularly on social media, lack of patience as trees take long to grow and institutional bureaucracy hindering their participation in forestry. They are also unaware of the government and corporate world processes. In terms of solutions to these challenges, youth can overcome these challenges by:

- Having the right paper work, getting legal registration for tree nurseries from municipalities, directorate of Youth Affairs Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) and Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) to make it easier to lobby for resources.
- Documenting their work on social media and websites. This will help when organizations want to conduct a background check and build positive narratives of the work they are doing. Social media also allows for their work to be shared through apps including WhatsApp.

Abdi concluded by challenging youth not to shy away from partnerships even those that are not financial in nature. He also urged them to go back to the villages and develop their counties by planting trees, look out of opportunities in commercial forestry and adapt forests as done by the first lady.



### Panel Discussion: Unearthing the Untapped Potential of Dryland Forestry

The panel discussion was moderated by Adrian Leitoro. The panelists were:

- Festus Lolimo - Graduate Assistant, University of Eldoret,
- Abdikadir Aden Hassan - CEO, Garissa Million Trees
- Ann Kinya - Farm Forestry Small Holder Producer Association of Kenya (FFSPAK)
- The following key points were made with respect to the untapped potential of dryland forestry:
- Dry land forestry has numerous untapped potential for youth to plug into especially on harvesting gum arabic and raisins.
- Unemployed youth could be local seed collectors. Instead of transporting the seeds from Nairobi to distant areas like Garissa, KEFRI should also set up regional seed centers since local seed collectors don't usually know where to take the seeds collected. In addition, KEFRI should utilize all seeds and not only those that they recognize. They also need to provide the communities with information on the type of trees suitable for drylands.

Invasive species have a huge potential for youth to explore in the control, management and exploitation in drylands.

- Collaborating with government institutions and being included in their databases by registering their groups/associations in the forestry sector. This will give youth government recognition and the legitimacy to work with them.
- Youth should embrace environmental conservation studies in learning institutions as the uptake of such courses has significantly reduced over the years. For example, University of Nairobi has just launched a very special program offering

a course on Bachelor of Science, on Dryland Sustainability, Science and Technology. Other Universities that offer Forestry related course is the University of Eldoret.

In the end, the panelists declared that, 'we don't have unproductive dry lands we only have dry minds'.

## Innovative Enterprise Showcase



### Tony wild - A Wildlife Ecologist

The delegates were treated to a 10 minute film titled “*The Forest Guardian; Empowering Youth to Grow Trees*”. This was a showcase from Tony Wild, a wildlife ecologist and conservation organization. The film was shot in Itoya Forest in Western Uganda under the Mitigation Project with the aim of empowering young learners to bridge the gap in environmental conservation and interact with nature by nurturing a tree. It showcased forest philosophies and values necessary for keeping the conservation agenda ongoing throughout generations.

### Examining Barriers that Prevent Youth Led Ventures in the Forestry Sector from Engaging in the Tendering Process

#### Wycliffe Kimutai - Kiboron Environmental Community Based Organization (CBO)

This session aimed to enable the participants to identify policy opportunities they can leverage on to accelerate their participation in forestry.

Mr Kimutai provided a brief background on the work that the Kibron Environmental CBO. He elaborated that the Maasai Mau covers 17000 Ha and is under the 22 forest blocks. It is a water catchment area supporting 4 counties, Nakuru, Kericho,

Bomet and Narok. However, the forest had been encroached and degraded. In the restoration effort, the youth noticed that the tree seedlings being planted were being brought from other regions.

He then went on to highlight several barriers that are locking out youth from participating in the tendering process. These include:

- The lack of information this refers to, when tenders are floated, they are only available on newspapers and websites, and this makes it hard for locals to get the information about the tenders. The use of English language is also a barrier, because some locals don't understand some terminologies, and this makes it hard for them to participate in the bidding. He however, noted that companies such as Base Titanium did away with bureaucracy and doesn't rely on the normal tendering as other companies.
- Capital; when the tender requires a bidder to have a bid bond of millions of shillings, youth will be locked out because a huge percentage don't have that kind of money, and their interventions are also not large scale.
- Security for loans to supply tree seedlings for forest restoration. Most youth do not own property, and they have also not gotten their share on inheritance from their parents. This can make it hard for them to get a loan from the bank due to lack of security.
- Unfriendly procurement laws. He therefore called upon the Public Procurement Oversight Authority (PPOA) to look into this issue. Tender documents should also be made public so that the public can know why a company won and what they had that those other companies did not have to qualify for an advertised tender. This will ensure transparency in the tendering process.

He ended his remarks by calling upon the First lady to adopt one of the remaining 100 blocks in the Maasai Mau Forest.

## Panel Discussion

### Policies: Accelerating Youth Participation In the Forestry Sector

**Moderator:** Marvin Kimani - Program Lead Economic Empowerment, Livelihood and Opportunities, Emerging Leaders Foundation

The panelists:

- Johnson Ridhaa - National Youth Council
- Encok Kimintia - CEO, Nairobi Water Resources Users Association
- Joan Nelima, Policy Expert, University of Nairobi
- Jim India - Policy Officer, Emerging Leaders Foundation
- Agnes Lusweti - Research Scientist National Museums of Kenya

The session sought to address the policy gaps that facilitate inadequate youth participation in the forestry Sector. The following key points were made during the discussion:

- Politics cannot be done away with, thus we require laws that will enable the forestry sector to thrive. In addition, every county develops its own County Integrated Development Plans that works towards the achievement of vision 2030. Unfortunately, everyone is working on their own and not coming together collectively to get a common result in forestry conservation.
- As participants in the forestry sector, we should understand the entire value chain including the role that politics play along the value chain. Thereafter, youth can plug into a national institution and advocate from within and not in silos.
- Youth participation in public platforms is crucial for their active engagement in the forestry sector. Youth should therefore ensure they participate in public baraza's to ensure that their voices are heard.
- Opportunities exist for policy dialogues involving the youth such as The Kenya Youth in Forestry Conference, COP 28 side events, Climate Cafes where they can register online to participate. Such opportunities facilitate youth to be able to shape policy dialogues.

- Access to land to set up tree nurseries is possible, through partnerships with Kenya Forest Service and County Governments where youth can join into conservation and rehabilitation efforts.
- Youth should lobby senators, Members of Parliament and women representatives from their counties to adopt the National Resource Revenue Sharing Bill for them to be able to benefit from funds collected from the use of natural resources for their development needs.
- The Public Procurement Regulatory Authority should examine barriers that prevent youth in forestry from accessing tenders and eliminate the barriers for them to maximize the benefits in forestry tendering processes.



## Conference Day 2

### Documentary on Ngong Hills Forest Ecosystem

Dr. Jane Macahria - Research Scientist, The National Museums of Kenya

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the conference, the delegates were treated to yet another round of short film, produced by the Museum of Kenya. The film focused on the Ngong forest degradation.

Ngong Forest is of great economic value, home to wild animals and more than 300 plant species, 3 of which have been red listed by IUCN, as threatened species. The Ngong hills, block, which is the largest block, is ideal for ecotourism, team-building activities, wind power generation, masked installation hiking and high altitude sports training and as such, the forest is under immense pressure due to heavy exploitation. As a result, we are seeing the following key issues;

- There is an increase of human settlement. Towns are developing such as Ngong and Kiserian, giving rise to slums. The development begun from the north side of the forest going to the south side of the forest.
- Deforestation is rampant due to household uses e.g. firewood, and plants such as Orchids have become rare and a lot of rivers are drying up.
- Poaching is happening and as such Buffalos are retreating to the south. This encroachment is causing increased human wildlife conflict as the Buffalos retreat to the boundaries.
- Eco tourism activities are on the rise in the Ngong area, and as such, there are hotels and lodges, introduction of activities such as zip lining and picnics. This has resulted to littering.
- There is also an influx of windmills, roads and even Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) activities that are having a major impact on the ecosystem.

The video ends in a positive way by reporting that four (4) companies have teamed up under the banner PLANT A FUTURE INNITIATIVE, to plant 250,000 indigenous tree seedlings in their efforts to participate in re-afforestation.



## Entrepreneurship in Commercial Forestry: Risks, Incentives, Returns

### Lilian Magak - Intervention Manager, Gatsby Africa

After comprehensive consultations, Gatsby Africa consolidated some of the challenges facing youth in the Commercial Forestry Sector, in no particular order:-

- Access to financial resources, Access to Quality inputs, Access to land, Access to market and participation in decision making, Access to information and Technical skills, adding that the information is there, but youth do not know where to search and get the information.

### Gatsby's Findings and Evidence

Looking at a real life case study, Gatsby noted that there is a very low uptake of funds from the non-banking financial organization Example Youth Enterprise Development Fund have 3 types of loans



### Loans

- Asset financing loan, and they finance up to 75% of the value of an asset
- Vuka Loan, for financing both start-ups and existing business
- Local Purchase Order ( LPO) financing loan, these works for anyone who has an LPO from a recognized organization

### Grants

Micro and small enterprise authorities have grants that they extend to start-up business that are owned by youth between the ages of 18-19 years.

Through constituency development centers, they facilitate youths by providing working spaces; they also provide common user equipment for startups. And so far they have 178 centers open, with the AIM of having a center in each constituency.

### Conclusion

The organization concluded that funds are available, but some of the youth collect the loan and then disappear. And some don't even use the money for the intended purpose. To have avoided this, the lending organizations have put in place mitigation factors.

Some of the non-bank financial institutions are offering pre-financing and entrepreneurship training. They also offer business development services and they include: Micro and Small Enterprises Authority, as well as Youth Enterprise Development Fund.

Tapping into the government agenda of the day, such as the 15 billion tree campaign, the government has funding for this project and has allocated 50% of the opportunities to the private sector and this includes the youth in commercial forestry.

Participation in conferences, forums and other learning events. Youth are also encouraged to participate in legislation, development, and dialogue forums, so that their issues are considered.



## Unlocking the Innovation in Commercial Forestry; Application of Bamboo Based Materials in Product Development

Ann Wanja and Teddy Ngendo - International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR)

### Fun facts & statistics about Bamboo

- There are over 10,000 uses of Bamboo globally
- The shoot of Bamboo tree is edible
- Bamboo matures within 3-4 years and it regenerates
- Annual Trade for Bamboo products is estimated at USD 1 Billion, globally
- Bamboo Kitchenware is the most popular category occupying 23% of the market, Followed by Bamboo daily uses at 22%, Woven Bamboo products at 13%. Bamboo edible shoots at 11%, followed by Bamboo panels at 11%, Bamboo Furniture at 6%, Bamboo building material at 6%, Bamboo Material at 3% and Bamboo charcoal at 3% Globally

### Key opportunity areas in Kenya's Bamboo sector

It is estimated that Kenya has 140,000 Ha of land under indigenous Bamboo *Oldea alpemia* which is largely an abandoned resource and as such, it is under-utilized. In Kenya, Bamboo is mostly used as Bamboo poles, for traditional utilities and in class during craft lessons.

There exists huge potential in the sector globally or for job creation and income generation. With Kenya contributing only 2% of the Global trade, this shows that there is a lot that Kenya can do and needs to do to scale production and trade of Bamboo products both locally and internationally.

Despite the low activities in the Bamboo sector, there are several achievements that the sector has and they include:-

1. Bamboo was declared a cash crop in Kenya
2. There is reasonable progress in the National Bamboo Policy
3. There is a 10 year Bamboo strategy action plan, awaiting approval by the Cabinet
4. There is an establishment of Bamboo Farmers Societies in different counties

### Financing Forestry Initiatives: KCB Jaza Miti Campaign

#### Judith Sidi - Head of Sustainability, KCB Group

KCB bank realizes that youth are keen to continue working with organizations that have sustainability agenda at heart, and they are also aware of the 15 Billion Trees agenda of the government. Here are some actions that the bank is taking towards supporting the achievements of this forestry agenda:

#### Key areas of partnerships

- Through their branch network, they have allocated each branch the responsibility of planting 1,100 tree seedlings in public primary school, but where there are no public schools, the branch can plant the trees in private schools. The bank is fully financing this goal so that it is accomplished.



- The bank is excited to partner with the Bamboo projects, because of the ability to scale the projects, and the positive impact that bamboo has on the environment, and because of the role the sector plays in creating income sustainably.
- The Bank is also keen to support small and micro Ventures such as Nurseries, tree seedlings, because of the impact these kinds of ventures will have to the youth. The bank is asking youth to start Forestry initiative, and then partner with KCB bank, so that the partnerships can improve livelihoods. By this KCB buys the tree seedlings from women and youth owned business to plant in schools as part of the 1,100 per year, per branch and this will continue for the next 5 years.

## Pursuing Forestry as a Catalyst to Elevate Communities, Encourage Behaviors Change and Create Income Opportunities for Young People

### Mary Maroro - Finance and Administration Officer, National Alliance and Community Forest Association (NACOFA)

Mary used the opportunity to help the youth align themselves with the forestry sector to reap the benefits. In this session, Mary was educating the youth on how they can benefit as entrepreneurs in the forestry sector by giving practical examples and breaking down the system for the youth to understand how things work. She emphasized the following key points;

- Anyone living near a forest is recognized by the law as co-manager of the forest in partnership with Kenya Forest services. The role of Co- Managers has been relegated to the Communities through the Community Forest Associations (CFA).
- You cannot benefit from the system when you are outside. Unfortunately, Youth are not joining the CFAs in the grassroots. Youth are therefore being encouraged to come together and form a *youth user group* within their local area, then join an existing CFA, This way it will be possible to access the financing and other resources, all of which can only be accessed at the grassroot level.
- CFA is anchored under the forest act of 2016. There also exists an agreement called participatory forest management, signed between the Government and the CFA in the communities. In every forest station, there is at least 1 CFA that is fully supported by the government.



- For youth who are wondering where they will get land to raise nurseries, All the CFAs have access to Government land. Some CFAs have an office station at the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) office and youth can benefit greatly from this arrangement.

She concluded the session by emphasizing that the youth should join the CFA's in their areas.

## Networking within the Sector, to Create Synergies with Peers

### Anita Soina - Founder Spice Warriors Environmental organization

#### Key Points

Environmental conservation is the most welcoming sector, because you don't have to be an environmentalist by profession to participate in the sector, you can be an environmentalist by passion and your contribution will still be impactful.

This sector has not always been attractive, and the goal should be to leave no one behind, that is why networking is important in this sector. The youth also need to make use of the social media to research and get to be current on the development in the sector.

Social media and the digital space should be used to research, to amplify work being done by ourselves and by those youth groups that do not have a huge following yet they are doing an impactful work in the sector.

- Youth should learn to collaborate rather than compete, especially those who are working in the same space. Collaborations will help us gain meaningful engagements, and it will also get us a seat at the table, because currently, what is happening is that, youth are treated as a checklist, where they are involved just to tick a box.
- Youth should consider having members of parliament, women representative and senators as patron for their projects, so that these people in position of power can help pass motions that favors the forestry sector.

Anita ended her presentation by encouraging the youth to be proud of the work that they are doing, and use social media to promote their work and that of others, who may not have huge platforms but are doing wonderful work that impacts the sector.

## Transforming Africa's Carbon Markets

### Brian Nyangena - CEO , Verse Carbon

#### Key Points

- Most people in the carbon markets sector are foreigners. It being a fairly new subject, there is dire need to do your research and get to know the audience and the language they best understand. Only then will you be able communicate with them, as a community, in your efforts to pass the carbon market knowledge to them.
- The biggest challenge for youth joining this space is where to start, who to talk to , where to get financing and how to make sustainable income from the carbon, that is why there is need for them to participate in forum and conferences on carbon for them to find people who are in the same spaces as them, and that can be a great place to start.



- The Carbon trade has a whole value chain that needs to be explored; the lack of adequate information amongst the youth is what's keeping them from pursuing opportunities in the interesting sector.
- With more and more youth taking control of the future they want to see, there is need to the youth to find ways to demonstrate what Africans can bring to the table, because as earlier stated, most of the players in this sector are foreigners.

## Exploring Pathways to Engaging the Youth in Forestry

Juliet Achieng - Secretary, Global Network for Young Forest Professionals

### Key points on how to be engaged in the forestry sector

- There are many opportunities within the forestry sector that youth can take up. But the key is to identify your part as soon as possible and try working towards attaining your goals. Eg do you want to be in policy? Do you want to be a lecturer? Etc and begin to work on that goal as soon as possible. Be proactive and don't wait to be given chances, rather, go for it.
- As a young person in the forestry sector, be innovative in your thinking, and find different ways to contribute as this will move the sector forward. Don't be afraid to share your ideas because the sector needs your ideas if it is to progress.
- Many young people are constantly decrying there being lack of information, but be challenged to look for the information. You should be hungry for information all the time and try to find relevant opportunities. You can do this by visiting different websites, social media pages and follow sector leaders to get the information, because information will not look for you, you have to look for the information.

She completed her presentation by encouraging the youth to Build networks. New networks are so powerful and should never be undermined.

## Using Social Media to Advance the Forestry Sector

Raphael Obonyo - Founder Youth Congress & Obonyo Foundation

Raphael begun by walking the delegates through the different social media platforms, and segmenting them based on the age of the users. This would help the delegates know which social media to use, when targeting a specific age group with their messages.

### Key Points from his presentation on Social media usage in the forestry sector:-

- Social media is a powerful tool. The business community is successfully using it to market their products and services and youth in forestry sector should use it to advance the forestry agenda in order to advance the work that we are doing.
- To be in a given social media platform, a person needs to sign up first. The social sites offer prompts that make the signing up easy. Most require the proper names, a profile picture and such details to begin.
- To have an impact, youth need to define their goal; some of the reasons why people utilize social media is to share information, see opportunities, build our networks, build connections, and mobilize other people around a certain agenda.



- Although there are many social platforms, all of them are different in the way they work and who their target audience is. Find a platform that is very relevant to the audience you are trying to reach. If you want to educate a younger audience on the importance of planting trees, its best you use TikTok, if you want to educate an older audience, its best to you Facebook etc
- The content, they say content is king. Youth should organize and package their content in a way that their audience is going to consume it with ease. The content can be in the form of Pictures, Videos, Audio, words or infographics.
- The reason why you are engaging the audience, is because you want some feedback, so make your call to action very clear, do you want them to sign a petition? Do you want them to share the information with their audience? What action do you want them to take?

He concluded his presentation by asking the youth to Engage with their audience, don't just post and disappear, because the forestry agenda is quite technical, the audience might want to ask questions, it is important to keep on engaging them respectfully.

## Pitching Project Ideas

### SueEllen Mumbi - Sustainability Consultant & Evans Bett - Youth Empowerment and Development Foundation

SueEllen is a winner of a pitching competition. Her presentation was geared towards helping the delegates understand what it takes to win a pitching competition.

#### Key points

- Start by reading the guidelines keenly and follow each instruction accordingly. This is an important step to enable you know what is required of your pitching, and how to best present your pitch.
- Demonstrate the impact that you are looking to have by painting a picture that makes you the most attractive amongst all the other applicants. Make sure that you administration costs do not go beyond 10%, and make sure the rest of the money goes towards the impact.
- Have government backing, and evidence of the work that you are doing or have done before. It is important for you to document all the work that you are doing, use social media and your website, to show the work.
- For oral pitching, she advised that the contestant has to prioritize practicing the pitch to fit into the time allocated, and make sure to have submitted the most important points within that time frame.

The presenters challenged the delegates not to be a briefcase organization, but have an existing address where they can be found.

## Conclusion

The Kenya Youth in Forestry Conference came to an end on the third day where delegates planted 3,000 trees seedlings at Kibiku Forest in Ngong, as a symbol of commitment towards accelerating youth participation in the forestry sector. The sessions garnered concrete recommendations and commitments, new opportunities of partnerships, ideas of new projects and initiatives and identification of new and promising talent. Building on the achievements already reached so far, the conference opens the way to amplify grassroots impact for the benefit of the youth in forestry in Kenya.

