



Title: Conserving Indigenous Trees Species in Buteyo Miti Park in Sang'alo, Bungoma County

Target Audience: Crop and livestock farmers, extension Agents, learning and research institutions.

Introduction

Buteyo Miti Park was started by Mr. G. Wafula Buteyo in 1969 with the aim of conserving the environment through protection of indigenous tree species. "Miti" is an acronym which stands for Measures for Indigenous Tree Improvement. The Park is situated between Mt. Elgon and Kakamega forest. The main Park covers a total land area of 32 acres and has three extensions of two 6 and 10 acre plots in different areas. The Samaki Camp which is a constituent of the Park was started in 2005 as an ecotourism site. This site has a total land area of 7 acres and the main activity is fish production. There are 30 fish ponds of different sizes occupying an area of about 700 m².

Buteyo Miti Park constitutes of different indigenous tree species and a tree nursery. About 2 acres are set aside for herbal medicine production. This site won the second Presidential Award for protection of indigenous trees.

Objectives

Objectives of community-driven conservation and livelihood activities include:

- Being a leading promoter of measures for indigenous trees improvement.
- Enlightening communities on the values of conserving indigenous trees as unique natural heritage, spur scientific research in botanical genera, herbal medicine and sustainable use.
- Protecting the environment with the use of indigenous trees species that are adapted to climate change.
- Improve livelihood through eco-tourism, fish production, herbal medicines, and collaborating with different groups of people.

Approach

- Establishment and management of an indigenous seedlings tree nursery to raise different species for medicinal and non-medicinal purposes such *Kigelia africana*, and *Strychnos spinosa*.
- Processing of medicinal plants for different ailments, packaging and selling.

- Providing training on medicinal and non-medicinal plants to interested members of the community.
- Establishment of a herbal clinic.
- Established Samaki camp in 2005 as an eco-tourism site to improve livelihoods through fish production which is the process of multiplying and rearing fish in controlled environment to reduce time period of fish to maturity, produce large numbers of fish within a short period of time and to produce fish which can attract high market and nutritional value.

Impact

The only extensive remnant of indigenous forest area between Mt Elgon ecosystem and Kakamega Forest.

Community driven conservation has helped to improve the livelihood of the community through eco-tourism, production and sale of herbal medicine and fish production.

Trees have also improved microclimate within and the neighbouring areas, aesthetic value and act as windbreak.

Conserving indigenous species has contributed to improved soil and water conservation, soil fertility, enriched bio-diversity and resilience to climate change.

Innovations and Success Factors

Processing of medicinal plants for different ailments, packaging and selling.

Cautions that sometimes herbal medicines are not effective.

Eco-tourism and fish production has been of help to many farmers. This has been enhanced through training of farmers and establishing woodlots in their own farms.

In order to produce large numbers of fish, a saline medium for breeding is used. An optimum temperature is also maintained.

Constraints

Some of the constraints experienced by the farmer include:

- Encroachment by the communities to get forest products.
- Soil erosion where tree density is low.
- Poaching of the trees.
- Water shortage to sustain fisheries throughout the year.
- Collaborating partners not sustaining their production.
- Financial constraints to improve the area as planned.
- The site is not well marketed and as a result very few people visit the Park.
- Fringe communities cutting grass pay small amount of money.

Lessons Learnt

Some lessons learnt include:

- Most indigenous trees have medicinal value.
- Proper management of indigenous trees species in the eco-tourism sites.
- Integration of traditional herbal medicines for the good health of people.
- Production of mono-sexual fish through hormones.

Conclusion

Community-driven conservation is a good venture for farmers as it enhances protection of environment with the use of indigenous tree species that are adapted to climate change, improves livelihood through tourism, fish production and herbal medicine. Farmers should be encouraged to set aside part of their farm to conserve indigenous tree species as a source of income.

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