Information on Carbon Neutral project field visit by Peter Michael Oumo, Climate Change Focal Point, Embassy Kampala

The Embassy of Ireland in Kampala is engaging in a carbon neutral programme to contribute to the Government of Uganda's commitments on emission reductions. It has been shown that carbon finance payments have supplemented incomes enabling farmers to pay school fees, pay health care bills, build stronger houses and carry out other investments to improve their livelihood. In addition, the target area where the ‘Trees for Global Benefit Project’ is implemented, has benefitted from reduced environmental degradation and reduced pressure on forest reserves, which had previously been the case.

Beatrice, one of the pioneer and most active farmers and a member of the Savings and Credit Cooperative, has attended conferences in Canada, USA, South Africa, Tanzania and Sweden to talk about Trees for Global Benefit. She has featured in an inflight magazine and started a school called Bitereko Infants School. From the sale of carbon credits, she has educated her two children up to university level and has been able to build a permanent house.

Farmers have also engaged in planting trees that offer extra benefits. Cyril Bagyenzire has a well-established woodlot comprising mainly medicinal plants from which he earns at least Shs 20,000 (€5.20) every week, by selling semi-processed medicinal tree products in the local market. Others have established fruit tree farms (mangoes, oranges, avocados and guavas) where they earn income, in addition to the sale of carbon credits.

The 450 member Ndangara-Nyakiyanja Tutunguke Group in Rubirizi District has planted 541 hectares of eucalyptus and indigenous tree species. The 250 farmers who planted indigenous tree species have to date been paid UG Shs. 125 million (€32,552) and a second payment of Shs 65 million (€16,927.08) is due in June 2017. Trees have formed a basis for other related enterprises like commercial wood fuel, transmission poles and timber milling.

The sale of carbon credit has improved community livelihoods and promoted diversification from routine farming. The Ndangara-Nyakiyanja Tutunguke Group has established 680 bee hives (412 colonized) yielding 2,472 Kgs of honey annually. A kilogram of unprocessed honey is sold at Shs 5,000 (€1.30) and at Shs 27,000 (€7.03) for processed honey. With Shs 18 million (€4,687.5) in savings from their CCF, the group started a SACCO and a revolving loan fund for members. The SACCO has been able to procure a honey processor and 10 manual coffee hullers.
Lydia Kuganyirwa (extreme left) – Ecotrust area coordinator western, Beatrice 3rd right, group chairman 4th right, group committee members and SACCO manager – extreme right.

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Jovanis Kisegyensi (middle in yellow) explains her experience with carbon trade.

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