



Vi Agroforestry



ALIVE PROGRAMME

Improving Livelihoods of Smallholder Farmers





The situation

Small-holder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa are already experiencing the negative impacts of climate change. This includes vulnerable exposure to frequent extreme weather conditions, increased risk of pests, water deficiency among others. This has a direct negative effect on food production.

Women face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change in situations of poverty. The unequal participation in decision-making processes and labour markets compound inequalities often prevent women from fully contributing. Economic empowerment leads to increased opportunities, power to control and make decisions. Gender equality and empowerment of all women is a pre-condition for the eradication of poverty as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Over 65% of the population in Africa is below 35 years and the unemployment and underemployment particularly among the youth is rising. This is a serious threat to social cohesion, political stability and the future socio-economic development prospects in Africa.

Farmers' organisations play a big role at national, regional and global level. Grassroots farmer organisations mobilize the smallholder farmers to be able to connect with the national actors. They also provide a platform where women youth and men can jointly prioritise focus areas to improve their lives.

Vi Agroforestry

Vi Agroforestry works for sustainably improved livelihoods for smallholder farmer families in Sub-Saharan Africa through increased climate change resilience, food security, higher incomes and greater equality between women and men. Through agroforestry and by strengthening the capacity of democratic farmer organisations our work empower smallholder farmer families to reduce poverty, hunger, and deforestation, and contribute to increased biodiversity.

About the Agroforestry for Livelihood Empowerment (ALIVE) programme

The ALIVE Programme creates societal changes to enable the realisation of human rights and economic empowerment of small-holder farmer families through market-led, sustainable agriculture based on agroforestry.

The programme is implemented through farmer organisations in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda.



ALIVE Programme Thematic areas

Agroforestry

Agroecology supports a holistic working process and integrates several principles that seek to address real issues and offer real solutions. Some of the practices advocated for include diversity in species and genetic resources for plants and animals as well as diversity in food consumption; resilience building both for small-holder farmer families and ecosystems; synergies by using Sustainable Agricultural Land Management (SALM) practices such as nutrient management to enhance biogeochemical cycles and greater ecosystem functioning ; resource use efficiency; core-creation of knowledge , respect for human value, dignity, cyclic economy and importance of food cultures and preferences.

Farmer's Organisations

Farmers' organisations play a big role at national, regional and global level. Grassroots farmer organisations mobilize the smallholder farmers to be able to connect with the national actors. They also provide a platform where women youth and men can jointly prioritise focus areas to improve their lives.

Financial services/VSLA

To increase the farmers access to financial services Vi Agroforestry support farmers to establish Village Savings and Loans Associations. Through the VSLA-group farmers can save and invest in their activities. With the opportunity to borrow money farmers are not as vulnerable to emergency expenses such as medicines and hospital visits.

Gender

Women face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change in situations of poverty. The unequal participation in decision-making processes and labour markets compound inequalities often prevent women from fully contributing. Economic empowerment leads to increased opportunities, power to control and make decisions.

Environmental club/Green schools

The Green schools for better learning project makes use of the school surroundings to teach sustainable environmental behaviour to children. Primary and secondary school pupils learn useful skills for life, get a lush school compound, and make new friends along the way.

When a school starts an environmental club, it is open to all pupils. The children as well as their teachers learn why it is healthy to eat fruits and vegetables, and how to grow them. They learn how to harvest rain water, how to reduce, reuse and recycle waste, and how to start composting food leftovers into fertile soil. The environmental club members furthermore learn how to do environmental assessments of their own schools, how to engage in organisations in a democratic fashion, and how to teach environmentally friendly practices to their peers. Apart from getting their hands into the soil, the children learn through drama, singing, poetry, quizzes, competitions and other playful ways.

The Green schools for better learning project is implemented by Vi Agroforestry in partnership with the Moyo District Farmers Association (MADFA). The project seeks to increase the children's life skills and environmental literacy, engage the children in sustainable management of the environment, empower them to share what they learn, and encourage peaceful co-existence in their communities.





CASE STORIES



Name: Captain Seguya Jabel

Location: Nandiwigi Forest conservation-Uganda

His first experience in the forest was him wearing combat uniform going to war to fight for his beloved country Uganda. He remembers bonding with the trees. Lost in the density and darkness, they were the only things that kept him alive. When he stepped into his first forest, he was a young man who had been forced into it. What he didn't anticipate is the special bond he would create with the forest.

"I did not go to the forest willingly. As young men, we did not have a choice but to go to combat. I had to forget my family and loved ones. In the forest I found a new thing I loved-the trees."

He had no hope of coming back from battle, but he did come back. When he did, he found that people were cutting down trees in the small forests within the community. He brought together other veterans and together they decided to start forest conservation measures.

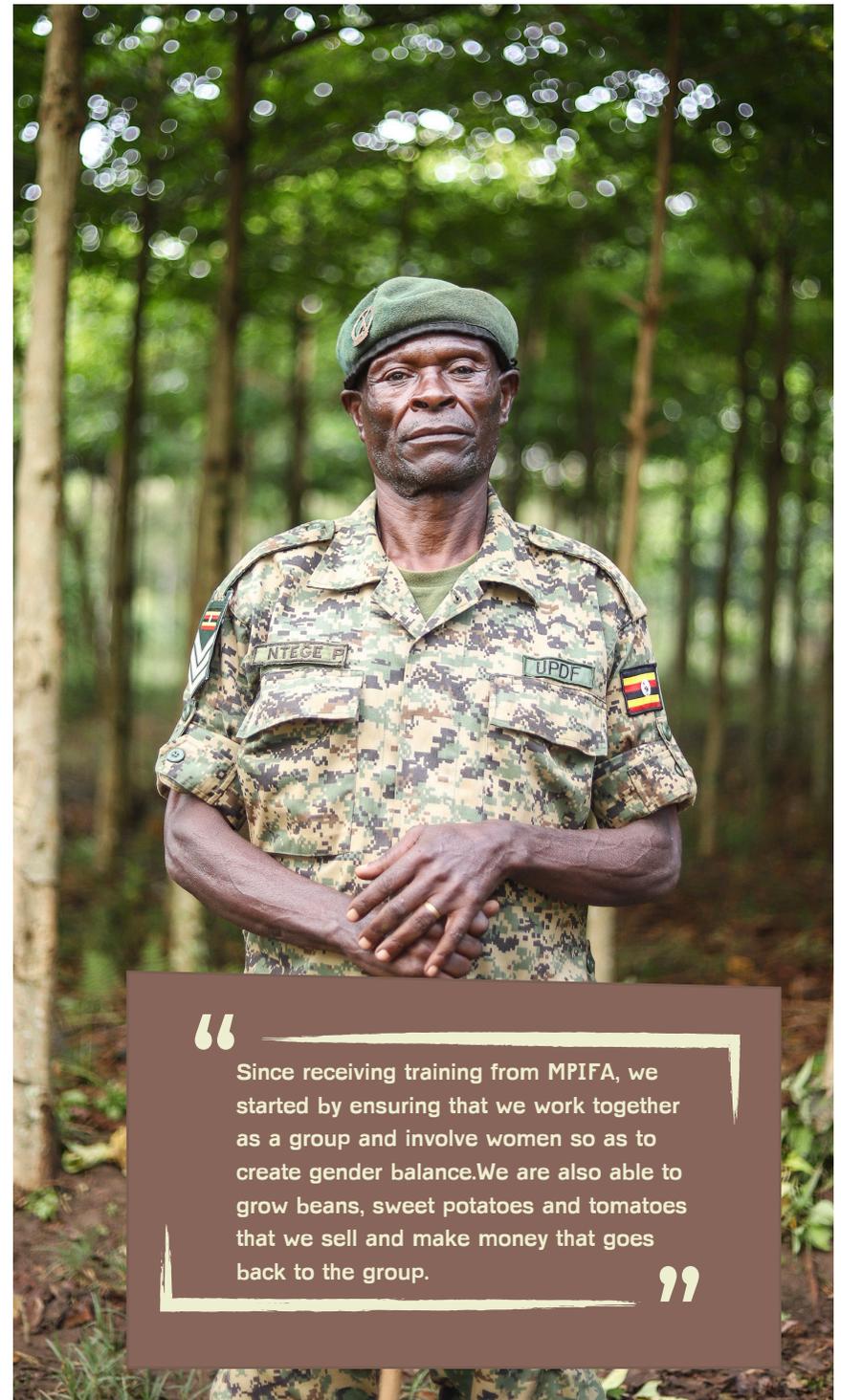
"It was while we were in the process of doing this, that Vi Agroforestry found us and conducted extensive training on the type of trees we should plant in the forest. They also educated us on SALM practices whereby we were able to grow cash and cover crops within the forest."

He walks briskly and talks even faster; a trait he says was a prerequisite for joining the army. He is not retired and so he spends time in the forest; but at the back of his mind, he is ready to be called back to duty at any time.

"Since receiving training from MPIFA, we started by ensuring that we work together as a group and involve women so as to create gender balance. We are also able to grow beans, sweet potatoes and tomatoes that we sell and make money that goes back to the group."

They are also working to train young men in the community on the importance of growing trees and keeping them.

"When we came back from combat, the wells had dried up and our women had to walk long distances to fetch water. When we started our rehabilitation and planted more indigenous trees, the wells started having streams of water flowing through them. Our women and children can fetch water freely."



“

Since receiving training from MPIFA, we started by ensuring that we work together as a group and involve women so as to create gender balance. We are also able to grow beans, sweet potatoes and tomatoes that we sell and make money that goes back to the group.

”







Name: John Namanya

Location: Maddu Chigezi- Uganda



"I am a barber by profession, a technical skill I acquired in an effort to try and make a living. I did it for a couple of years and honestly there's only so many heads you can shave if your passion lies elsewhere."

John Namanya is the chairperson of the Nsimbiziwoome farmers group. Together with his wife, they have 50 acres of land where they are practising agroforestry farming techniques. When he joined the group in 2018, he only had 4 acres of land. Armed with just passion and a drive to not shave another head, he got into serious farming.

"When I joined the group, we were just ordinary farmers. We were very frustrated because we felt that the coffee we were planting was not doing well. The training received from Vi Agroforestry changed the game for us."

The farmers in the group received training on gender equality, VSLA's, Household Road Map (HRM) tools and agroforestry techniques like tree planting. They were also trained on ways to produce better coffee.

"I learnt that my wife is an equal when it comes to decisions that concern the farm and our home. I never used to involve her and had relegated her to kitchen duties, but now since we learnt the HRM tools, we sit and plan ahead. She is also very involved in the budgeting process."

The wife nods as he says this. In their 50 acres, they have now planted bananas and coffee. They also plant kales and other vegetables that they use for home consumption. Their biggest revenue comes from the coffee.

"We used to be poor. Living in a mud house that is still out there. Now we live in a cemented house with iron roofing. We also use the solar panel stove provided by Vi Agroforestry to cook our meals. This is a dream come true for us."

He is a happy farmer, his wife is even happier. Their children are healthy -all thanks to Vi Agroforestry and their efforts to educate farmers and improve their skills.





“

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Name: Lorna Cherop

Location: Kericho- Kenya



Behind her beautifully built wooden house, sits her kitchen garden. She is the youngest member of her group. At just 26 years old, she is a budding farmer. Lorna and her husband, a young couple by any standards, are slowly building towards their future through farming.

"I am a trained teacher. Before I got married, all I knew was tea farming. That is what my nuclear family did and that is as far as my interest in farming went. I did not know that I could grow other crops or even make good money from farming."

Lorna is a member of the Green Growers youth group. She has received training on, but not limited to, kitchen gardening, animal rearing, and VSLA's from Vi Agroforestry. Lorna and her husband own cattle and they have a kitchen garden from which they have been able to grow carrots, coriander, capsicum and traditional vegetables.



"I sell produce from my kitchen garden. Before, my land was bare. I didn't know what to do with it and I had no interest. I have been lucky however to receive training and even visit other farmers in other regions and learn from them. All thanks to Vi Agroforestry."

As a group, they have been able to plant trees within the community, which has then resulted in the dried up wells being able to have flowing water that can serve even the nearby towns.

Through training received on SALM practices, Lorna has been able to create an ecosystem within her farm, whereby from the manure she gets, she is able to use it within her farm.

"I am an organic farmer. I do not use fertilisers on my farm. I use natural ways to dispel pests and also compost from the cow's manure. Even though my husband is working, the money I make from selling produce is what sustains us. We are comfortable."

She is excited about the prospects of agroforestry and cannot wait to buy more land, apply all techniques taught, make more money from farming and save through the VSLA's.

"I wanted to be on Tiktok, Instagram... you know, catch up with my peers and join the cool gang. Farming was not in the plan. I did not think it was cool. After the training and fully adopting the concepts within the ALIVE programme, I am here to tell you, Farming is cool."

"I am a proud young farmer."

“

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Name: Okinyi Ojijo

Location: Ochuna-Tanzania



It's a muddy rough road leading to his house. His new house stands on the far left. His wife stands in the middle. He is one of the farmers in the Ochuna Irrigation scheme group - currently the treasurer of the group. We sit outside his new house that he has built from proceeds gained from rice farming. His young grandchild sits on the floor by his side.

Mr. Ojijo Okinyi is a farmer under the Ochuna irrigation scheme, He is a rice farmer. He received training from the Vi Agroforestry local partners in Tanzania.

"Before the training, the farmers did not know how to work cohesively".

They were trained on the importance of conflict resolution within the group due to too much conflict. They also learnt on Village Savings and Loans (VSLA) and Sustainable Land Management (SALM) practices that have seen them increase their yield from 8 bags to 15-20 bags per farmer.

"The Ochuna irrigation scheme is made up of approximately 120 members. Due to conflict we couldn't fix the water issues we had. After training on conflict resolution, we were able to come together and work towards fixing our water issues. We have not had water issues since then."

Due to the success of the Ochuna scheme we have influenced over 100 non-scheme members who are also practising rice farming.

"I have been able to build a house, take my children to school and properly take care of my family with profits from my yield. We have been able to build a yard with a machine that has helped us harvest our rice."

Before the training, farmers used to throw seeds on the ground commonly referred to as "ukulima wa hasira" where they throw seed on the ground without a pattern hence very low yield. The farmers would stay in the same state for years.

"I have seen farmers who used to harvest 3 bags of rice, now harvest 100 bags which is miraculous to me. We did not have a ready market but Vi Agroforestry local partners have been trying to help us market our produce."

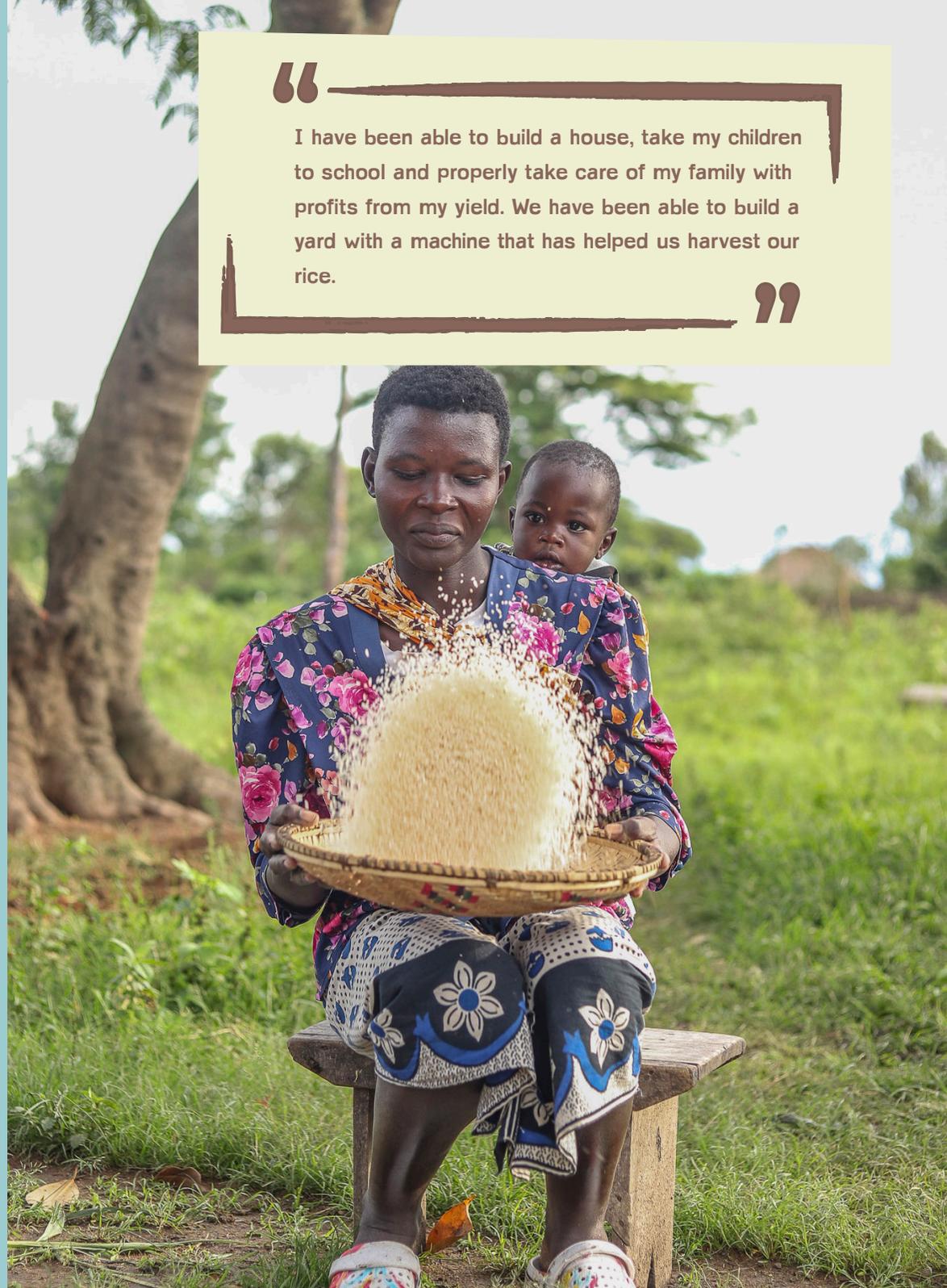
The farmers are able to make approximately Tzsh. 2,000 (Euro 0.82) per bag. They sometimes sell up to 400 bags per season which has really boosted their economic empowerment. His daughter who is about to join high school walks back from the farm. We exchange salutations and Mr. Ojijo happily informs us that when he is not farming he is an avid football fan and in a few minutes one of his favourite local teams would be playing so he will excuse himself.

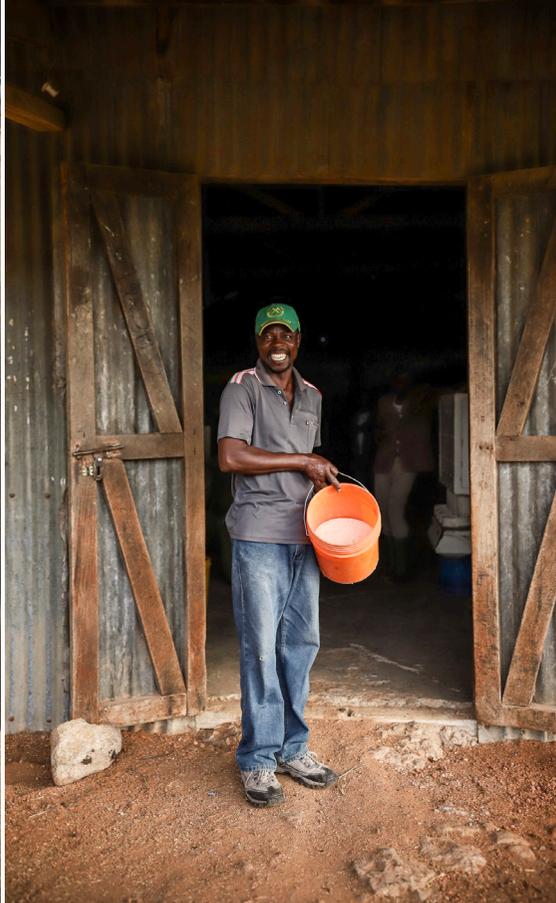
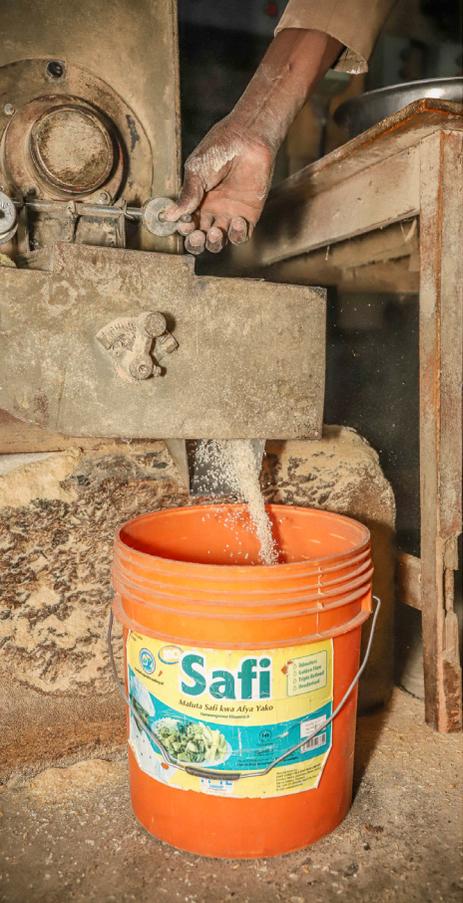
"I bought my first television set from the first round of profit I made after receiving my training from Vi Agroforestry. I am a happy farmer."

“

I have been able to build a house, take my children to school and properly take care of my family with profits from my yield. We have been able to build a yard with a machine that has helped us harvest our rice.

”









Name : Veronica Choba

Group: Mtazamo Women's group-Tanzania

The women welcome us with pomp and song. They are braving the rain that has been pouring for a better part of the day. The excitement is palpable.

Veronica Choba is the community champion, who is a leader in 3 of the 8 groups within the region.

She is the chairlady of the Mtazamo group which was trained by Vi Agroforestry on the VSLA tools which include saving and giving loans within the group. They also come together as a group to buy each other household items, or practice the merry go round systems all from their savings.

"I have been able to build my house and furnish it all from the loans I have taken within the group. I have been able to pay school fees and expand my business. VSLA's changed my life."

Veronica has undergone leadership and entrepreneurial training which she has then transferred to the members of her VSLA group. They have been able to start a pottery business and they work together as women in the group.

"As a group we meet weekly. To join the group, each member contributes a non refundable fee of Tzsh. 3,000 (Euro 1.21). We also contribute Tzsh, 200 (Euro 0.081) on the day we meet."

Through the ALIVE programme, VSLA's have become popular in the region. The women have been empowered to work together.

"I am in a group where we have bought several pieces of land and are planning to practice agroforestry techniques."

The women also support each other to overcome the burden of gender inequality within their communities.

"The overwhelming feeling I have is empowerment. I have been empowered to make my own money, start a business, be a leader, empower other women and give my children a better life than I had."



“

I have been able to build my house and furnish it all from the loans I have taken within the group. I have been able to pay school fees and expand my business. VSLA's changed my life.

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Kikundi cha Kwanza na Kalaga
KITABU CHA HISSA CHA
MWANACHAMA

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Sponge wa Hisq
ICC-VI Project Mara

Kikundi cha Kwanza na Kalaga
KITABU CHA HISSA CHA
MWANACHAMA

Kikundi cha Kwanza na Kalaga
KITABU CHA HISSA CHA
MWANACHAMA



Name: Janepher Adelaide

Location: Kimaeti, Bungoma-Kenya



The midday sun has heated up her iron sheet roofing and now the uncomfortable heat sits with us as the third uninvited guest.

It is hot!

Kimaeti Location, Bungoma county is where we find Janepher Adelaide. She is one of the farmers within the region, who has received training on the different agroforestry techniques under the ALIVE programme.

“Before, my farm was a problem. I didn't know I could keep cattle or know anything about kitchen gardening. My Farm was very infertile so consequently my yield was low. When I received training I have seen great improvement.”



As a woman who has been empowered through the ALIVE programme, she is now more confident in herself and has taken up leadership positions within the community. Training other women on agroforestry techniques while empowering them with Household Road Map(HRM) tools that they can implement within their homes.

"I take my produce to the market. While there, I sit with other women who are constantly admiring my produce. We exchange ideas and I share all my learnings with them. Those who listen and implement, come with testimonies of the difference it is making not only their farms, but their homes in general."

Joint decision making is one of the training given by Vi Agroforestry; it is a tool that has come in handy for this family. They are able to involve their children in farming as well as decision making.

"As a woman, culturally, I was not allowed to be involved in matters that concern land and farming. I wasn't allowed to speak on matters of money, My job was to take instruction and do as told. Now, since we received training, my husband involves me in all decisions and even gives me leeway to make decisions within the home."

"My home is now a peaceful home. I am happy when I see my children happy, when I see them enjoying a meal made with produce from the farm. I am a better farmer thanks to training on Sustainable Land Management (SALM) practices which have helped improve the nature of my soil."

“

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Name: Monica Rwakenshtu
Environmental Club Chairperson
School: G.S Milan Light - Uganda

The Green schools for better learning project makes use of the school gardens to teach sustainable environmental behaviour to children. Primary and secondary school pupils learn useful skills for life, get a lush school compound and make new friends along the way.

When a school starts an environmental club, it is open to all pupils. The children as well as their teachers learn why it is healthy to eat fruits and vegetables, and how to grow them. They learn how to harvest rainwater, how to reduce, reuse and recycle waste, and how to start composting food leftovers into fertile soil.

"I joined the environmental club because it seemed like fun and I liked the idea of 'playing in the mud'. But I quickly realised that it was about a lot more than that. We have been taught how to plant trees, which trees to plant and how to keep a vegetable garden."

The environmental club members also learn how to do environmental assessments of their own schools, how to engage in organisations in a democratic fashion, and how to teach environmentally friendly practices to their peers.

"I have learnt the importance of taking care of our environment. I now look at what we considered waste as something I can use. Now, I am sensitive to waste management and how I can use it to make compost manure."

Being in the environmental club has enabled the children to take what they learn and practice it at home. They are now teaching their parents the importance of planting trees, kitchen gardening, mulching and keeping compost.

"After seeing how well our school kitchen garden was doing, I asked my parents to allow me to use a small piece of land near our house where I now have a kitchen garden and have been able to plant trees."



“

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**Violette Kabaganwa
Nyamagabe District-Rwanda**

Violette Kabaganwa is a farmer living in Nyamagabe District Kitabi Sector Mujuga Cell from DUFATANYENSHUTI Cooperative.

Before the trainings, the family faced many challenges, with a small house, shortage of food to feed the family, low crop yields due to poor agricultural practices, difficulties finding firewood and water for domestic use, difficulties in paying school fees for their children and regular misunderstandings between the couple.

Violette and her husband Faustin Munyakyanza joined the cooperative where they received trainings on sustainable agricultural practices to increase their crop yields, and equal participation of both man and woman in Agricultural value chain. Through the trainings the mindsets of both Violette and her husband changed and they began to take the advice from the agronomists seriously. The husband was selected as a community facilitator in that area, and this helped the family a lot, because he got many training and applied most of all the practices he learnt in his farms. The couple decided to shift from unsustainable conventional farming methods to sustainable agriculture which improved their farm productivity. They increased their wheat production and as such they were able to invest in the education of their 6 children, and they have since been able to build a bigger house for their family.

The couple now understands their different responsibilities towards the household development and now they work together and support each other. Due to the water challenges in the area the husband set up a water tank for the family, reducing the time spent looking for the water. He also constructed a biogas to reduce the burden for searching for firewood by encourage recycling of biomass on the farm and also providing clean energy for the household.





Celestin Ndayambaje
Nyamagabe district-Rwanda

Celestin Ndayambaje is a young man living in Kibyagira cell, Sekera village, Uwinkingi sector of Nyamagabe district. He is the chairperson of Twuzuzanye youth group of KOABITU cooperative, one of the cooperative members of UNICOOPAGI cooperative union. Together with his wife Vestine Uwimbabazi they have 4 children and are currently working together to cultivate their farm and raise their children. "Before being trained on gender equality and the Household Road Map everyone used to work on their own and there was no unity in their home as everyone would do their own things without thinking of the other. The wife is now involved in decision making, and this helped her a lot, before she was not allowed to do anything, the husband was deciding everything to be done at home.

After receiving a training on gender equality they adopted the use of the Household Road Map, where they decided to legalise their marriage, a long pending request by the wife, which the husband had not felt was important. But after this training he changed his view of things and realised they were a team and involving his wife would benefit both in building their future. This formed the beginning of their beautiful journey, working together as a team. They also received different trainings on SALM and now he attests on how their lives have improved.

"My wife doesn't have to travel far to fetch firewood, I have planted enough shrubs to ease her burden". "I am a happy man and my family is happy" He says

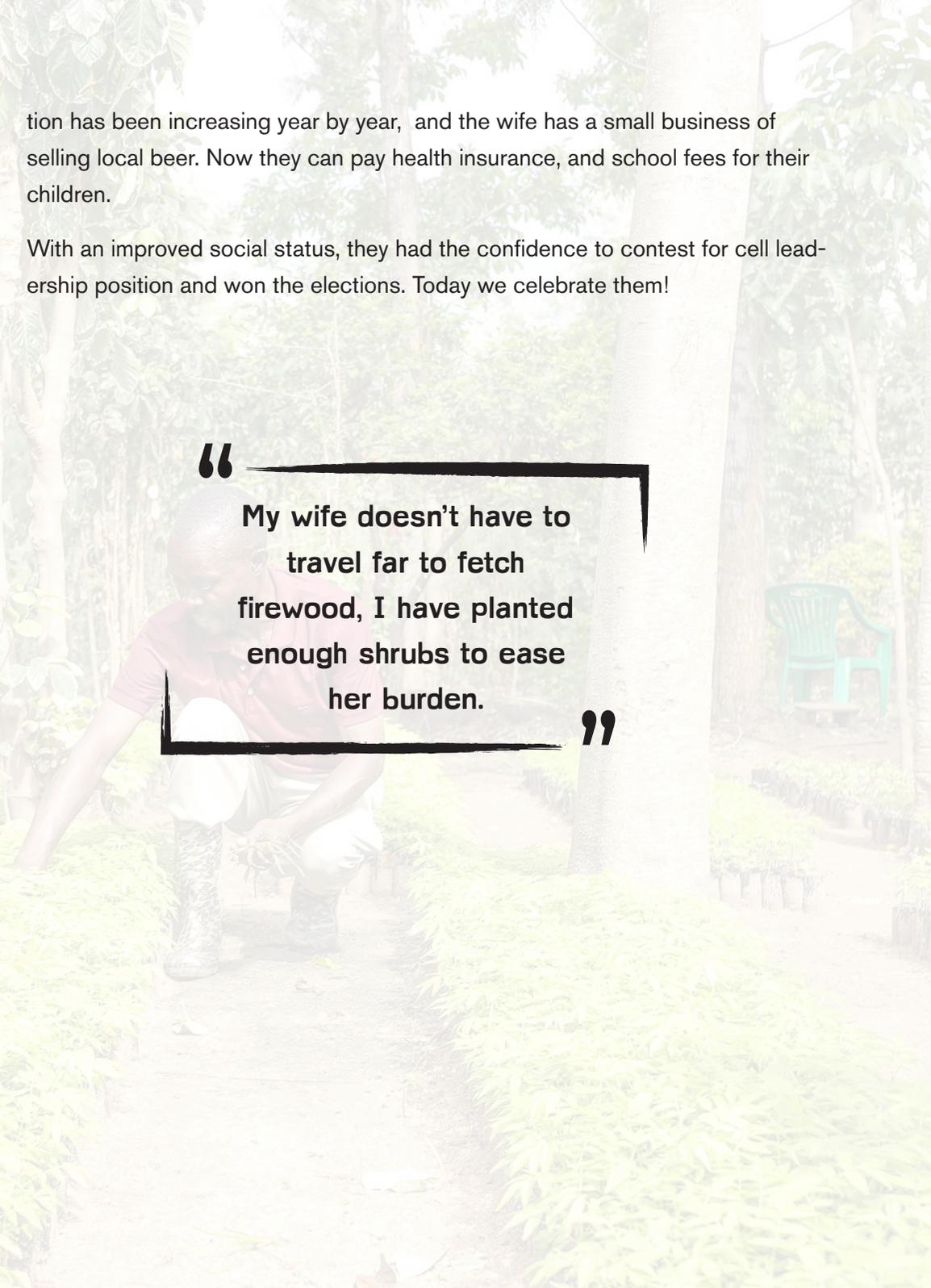
Entering in Ndayambaje Celestin house the first thing you see is the household roadmap vision journey hanged in the sitting room. He tells us it's a reminder of the commitment they have for each other, *"I value her input and now I see her as an equal partner, she is a wise woman"* he says. The family's vision journey from 2020 to 2022 was to increase farm production, buy small animals, more land, pay school fees, pay medical insurance, and rehabilitate their house.

They have so far managed to reach 85% of their targets; they have 8 piglets, bought land of 200,000Rwf, planted trees and grass on terraces and produc-

tion has been increasing year by year, and the wife has a small business of selling local beer. Now they can pay health insurance, and school fees for their children.

With an improved social status, they had the confidence to contest for cell leadership position and won the elections. Today we celebrate them!

“ My wife doesn't have to travel far to fetch firewood, I have planted enough shrubs to ease her burden. ”





Donors



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Tanzania

Mtandao wa Vikundi Vya Wakulima na Wafugaji Nyancha (MVIWANYA)

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(IDS (formerly AICT))

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Foundation for Local Capacity in Agricultural Development (FLCAD)

Foundation for Farmers Services (FSS) - FSS - (formely MVIWAU)

Shirika la Maendeleo ya Kilimo na Ufugaji Musoma (SHIMAKIUMU)

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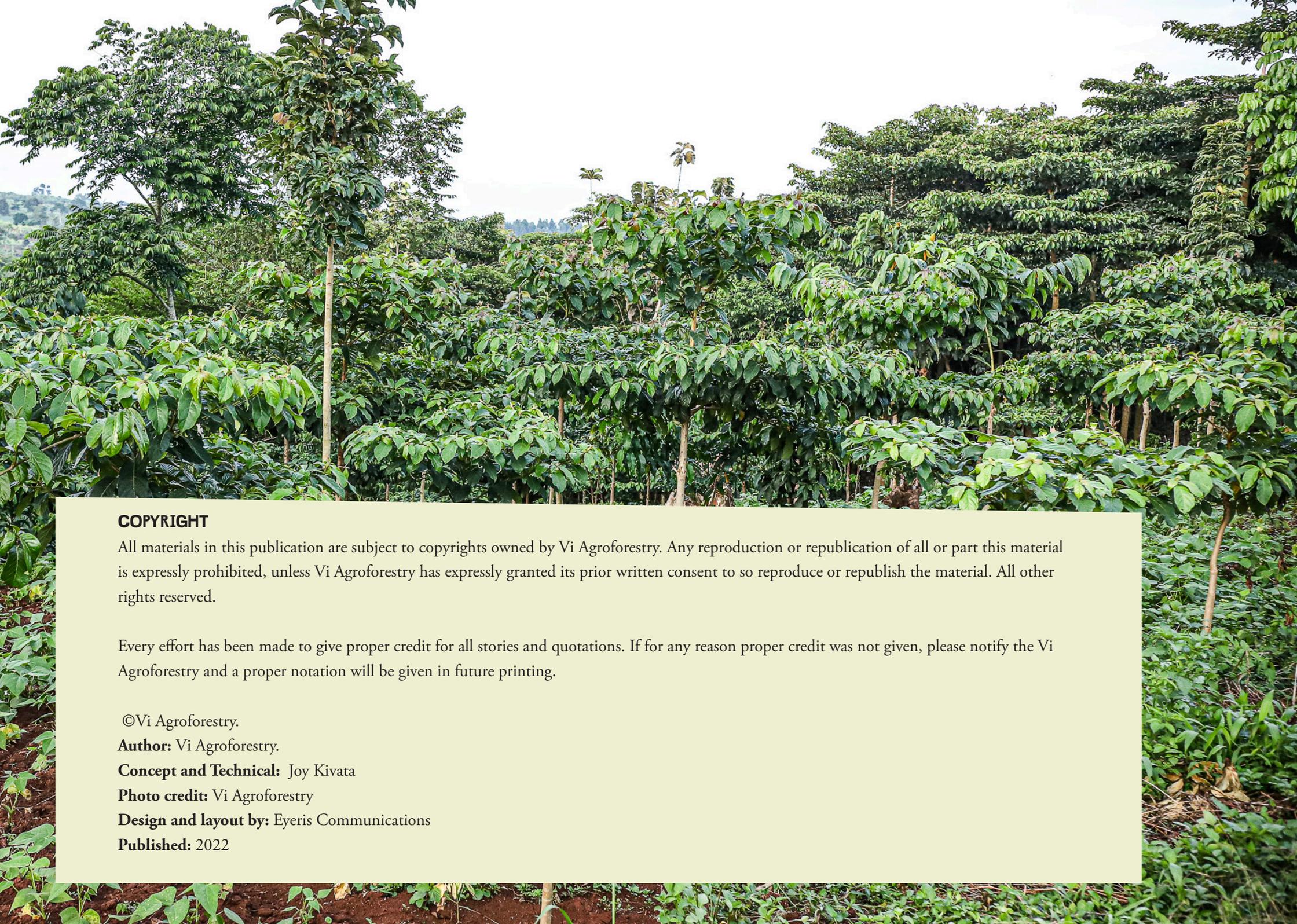
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