

## **Brief Report on follow-up visit to Uganda with emphasis on trees around schools in Soroti area, Nov. 2023:**

As a member of the Trofaco-Team, it was a pleasure to revisit tree plantings in Uganda. The Trofaco Team: CEO Steffen Johnsen, CFO Thomas Kirk and assisting Student Alexander Kirk had a constructive meeting with Dr. Joucho and David at CIDI HQ in Kampala.

General progress in tree-plantings was positively noted as were some apparent shortcomings in follow-up and progress possibly to some extent due to the Covid lockdown. CIDI agreed to bring forward some input towards organizing payouts to the farmers/schools with well-kept trees. The main concept in tree-payments to be seen by farmers as a reward primarily to the tree-owners and secondly to the societies involved in the process. Trofaco will then add comments and suggestions before bringing the proposal to the CO<sub>2</sub>-Fund's Board for their consideration.

On the shortcomings, especially one Danish key customer has twice lost the trees allocated for his CO<sub>2</sub> purchase. Unfortunately, this has resulted in Trofaco having to replant his trees twice planted in Uganda and, now the replanting has been done in Vietnam to avoid further damage. Trofaco's reputation has suffered by the repeated planting, let alone the additional cost, and the unfortunate customer is not quite satisfied.

In view of the above, the Trofaco Team were keen to assess progress on the schools around Soroti where trees were planted in 2018.

At Soroti the Trofaco Team had very beneficial meetings with the local CIDI Office and the 5 schools with tree plantings were visited. The local CIDI Team was well prepared, and the school management and staff were involved in checking up on the trees planted. The positive process concluded that out of the 5 schools with trees planted in 2018,

For us in the Soroti area it was especially positive to note that one of the schools has performed very well, 2 schools had done well whereas two schools were poor in performance. The CIDI Team in Soroti was eager to assist the schools in upgrading the experience-sharing between the schools and if this can work, no doubt all schools can improve significantly.

The discussions clarified problems and challenges learnt and the schools visited noted the following areas:

Covid closure of schools, cows eating the small trees, lack of community sensitization, termites, some types of trees were not suitable to local conditions, new trees brought up late for planting and thus not in time for main rainy season.

Suggestions mentioned:

Grow small crops under the trees planted as this will support caretaking, some appropriate fertilizing and pruning of trees. With intercropping and care-taking the pressure from termites could be reduced.

Next time emphasis has to be more on good siting and where appropriate with trees in school boundaries, timely planting, good sensitization, more fruit trees and only plant trees proven to grow well in the local area.

Out of the discussions, it was clear that especially one school is doing very well and is willing to become a role model for others to follow and further develop. In this experience sharing between schools it was suggested to:

Upgrade the appreciation and visibility of the tree-caretakers in the schools. Assign 2-3 pupils for each tree and possibly a specific class as key care-taker' of a particular group of trees. Where appropriate the good performing class or pupils could be rewarded with Certificate of Appreciation at the schools' public gatherings. With more appreciation to support pupils' active involvement in the environmental improvement due to tree growing, the children are likely to copy the tree planting back home and this could in fact multiply the overall environmental impact. Likewise, the management and teachers need to be proactively engaged and appreciated in the environmental progress by planting and caring of trees.

A key suggestion was on experience sharing and the need for this was demonstrated in the schools visited. The well-performing schools were quite willing to share the experiences gained with other schools. CIDI could initiate and co-organize the start-up of experience sharing and in collaboration with the schools involved fine-tune the method and process of improvement.

To the Trofaco Team it was very positive to be part of the internal and constructive assessment of progress around the Soroti schools. With a school performing excellent, a path is visible to follow for environmental improvements and general development.