

COMMUNITIES BACK TO THE ROOTS BY EMBRACING NATURE-BASED CONSERVATION TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVELIHOODS



A model analog forest with fruit trees in a degraded land managed by Nantogo Joyce, a rural woman in Kikandwa

Small scale farmers and indigenous communities in Kikandwa – Mityana district embrace nature-based conservation through analog forestry methodology. It is an intervention to restore the life support to degraded forest land and a move to improve their income and livelihoods. In July 2018, Kikandwa communities together with partner NGOs participated in a training on analog forestry organized by Kikandwa Environmental Association (KEA).

Analog Forestry combines methodologies to restore forests and enhance biodiversity to create healthier and happier communities living in more productive and functional environments.

The methodology includes *“Home gardens and Forest gardens which are traditional forms of crop cultivation in many countries. Patches of cultivated land dominated by trees and perennials resemble forests, providing economic products as well as a pleasant living environment in rural communities. Analog Forestry is the deliberate design that mimics natural forests both in structure and ecological function, and the encouragement towards maturity as well as in design to promote non-target crops and native biodiversity. AF can affect land use planning, watershed conservation, and empower ecosystems and communities to adapt more efficiently to the effects of global climate change.”* – Says **Analog Forestry: A Practitioner’s Guide by International Analog Forestry Network (IAFN)**

CEGGI’s background was founded on closing ecological and gender gaps that are created by development trends which tend to raze natural ecosystems, that are the indigenous communities’ life-support structures. Because of opposing interests between economic growth and conservation of biodiversity, CEGGI has realized that closing gender gaps and creating an ecological balance plays a pivotal role in human development, governance, environmental conservation and social justice.

To promote mitigation and adaptation to climate change through planting of indigenous foods that are resilient to climate in respective landscapes, CEGGI is networking with partner organisations to realize its agenda of closing ecological and gender gaps accelerated by national development processes that pose social, economic and environmental challenges to grassroot communities.

Benefits of Analog Forestry as Narrated

Analog forestry is a methodology that pursues stability of opposing interests of economic development and biodiversity conservation. It enables farmers to boost ecological resilience in their small farm-lands that are usually degraded due to excessive natural resource extraction and other factors induced by climate change.

Because natural forests have been aggressively depleted due to great need for land, analog forestry methodology enables communities to plant and conserve their own forests in small plots of land which would mimic natural forests to address the impacts of climate in a given the landscape.



Nantogo Joyce (in a traditional busuti) sharing knowledge with a participant next to her forest in Kasejere – Kikandwa

It supports women's efforts as custodians of food and seeds by promoting revival and growing of indigenous seeds for food security and sovereignty.

Because of the shedding of leaves from the different tree species in the forest, analog forest minimizes the use of external inputs, such as agrochemicals thus promoting the production of organic, healthy and nutritious foods.

It provides rural women who are economically hand-capped and directly depend on natural resources for their survival, with easy access to wood fuel which is their primary source of energy.

Most analog forests are near the homes of owners, thus providing them with a perfect place for relaxing, meditation and resolving of conflicts in cases of disagreements, as related by Nantogo Joyce from Kikandwa.

When well planned and maintained, an analog forest can be a picture-perfect destination for ecotourism, providing economic returns to the owners.

At its mature stage, analog forest provides habitation to wildlife which creates a balance in the ecosystems, driving it back to its original natural state.