

Biovision

Newsletter August 2015

Fruit and timber for the future

Pilot project to counter deforestation in Uganda



A future for all, naturally

Samuel Kyegobola

Farmer in Gadumire, Uganda



“We chopped down the trees to sell the wood. Now, the soil is exhausted and infertile”.



Reforestation in Kaliro

- **Start Date:** January 2015

The Project is using agro-forestry systems to increase the local supply of trees for fruit, construction timber and firewood, generate income opportunities for the inhabitants and improve the health of the environment.

- **Objectives of Phase 2015 – 2016**
 - Train 260 people in the planting and care of trees together with the manufacture and distribution of energy-efficient stoves to 200 householders in order to reduce the demand for firewood.

- **Budget**
CHF 50'000
- **Total Budget for Uganda in 2015c**
CHF 120'088

- **Account for donations** PC 87-193093-4

More trees – less firewood

Uganda is losing its forest; to counter the loss, people in Kaliro are planting trees and introducing energy-efficient stoves that need less wood for fuel.

“This mango tree is the same age as me”, says 73-year old Emanuel Mpira pointing to a mighty tree, adding with a smile that his parents planted it when he was born. However, the old man then looks serious; he is worried about the future of his village Gadumire and the people who live there. Large trees like the one commemorating his birth are now rare in Kaliro District. Mpira also realises that poverty and deforestation go hand in hand. This is particularly true in a climate that is hot and dry. When trees are cleared, the soil dries out more quickly, erosion increases and fertility declines. Others in the same generation as Emanuel have noticed the same thing. They look back fondly on earlier times when they could find shade and a pleasant coolness under the dense tree canopy. “We chopped down the trees so that we could earn money from selling firewood and timber”, says Samuel Kyegobola, a 68-year old farmer, adding that they were forced into it by poverty. “In the dry season, food was sometimes in short supply”. When that happened, farmers needed cash to buy food. What else could they have done?

Fruit and timber for the future

Some time ago, Emanuel Mpira decided that he would seek a way out of this dilemma. With the help of his son, a Professor in agro-ecology in Kampala, he and his wife Frida started a tree nursery. The couple now produce fruit and timber and the demand for both is high. Others in the village watched

with interest and when the Mpiras, supported by Biovision, invited them to join a reforestation project to grow trees for fruit and timber, 25 people signed up immediately. In 2014, the participants received thorough training on how to cultivate seedlings and establish tree nurseries. The Project was soon attracting even more attention and by the end of that year, some 170 people were involved, of whom 130 were schoolchildren. Together, they have planted some 44,000 seedlings and are now starting to plant out the young trees. The pilot project is designed to demonstrate that forests can be retained in Uganda.

Introduction of wood-saving stoves for cooking

However, simply planting new trees to replace those felled does not tackle the root cause of the deforestation and so the project has a second string to its bow; to reduce the demand for firewood. The aim is to introduce 200 simple timber stoves to replace the traditional open fire used for cooking. Emanuel Mpira is aware that some local people are resistant to this approach, even though such stoves are not unknown in Gadumire. Many villagers prefer to stick with tradition and cook on an open fire. The first task, therefore, is to find out why villagers are reluctant to change. Despite this, Emanuel Mpira is hopeful of success: “The level of suffering is now so great that we may succeed at the second attempt”, he says hopefully. | pl

For more information and photos see www.biovision.ch/kaliro-en



Large trees such as the 73-year old tree planted in the year Emanuel Mpira was born are increasingly rare in Kaliro. These giants are disappearing because poverty is forcing people to sell wood in order to survive. The Biovision pilot project is offering a way out of this dilemma through reforestation and the introduction of wood-saving stoves. Frida Mpira demonstrates the benefits of cooking on a timber stove.

SDG 2 provides the basis for a change in the course of global agriculture and food systems and what we need now is action, not words!

Agro-ecological agriculture – a modern, knowledge-intensive and cost-effective approach that protects biodiversity and minimises environmental impact – is undoubtedly the proverbial silver bullet.

As a result of many years of development projects in Africa – always seeking to demonstrate the suitability of scientifically based ecological methods in practice – Biovision can provide innovative solutions that support the implementation of SDG 2. In addition, thanks to our advocacy work with like-minded partners, we have access to national and international policymakers. Raising awareness at all levels is an imperative.

Evidence for the effectiveness of this paradigm shift already exists. By preventing damage to the environment and our health, this change would almost pay for itself. An investment of less than 0.2% of GDP would make agriculture genuinely sustainable by 2050 and also make an important contribution to alleviating climate change.

Do we have that long? I doubt it. That is why I advocate a faster pace of change as delays will only exacerbate the problems and make solving them more expensive.

Do our politicians have the necessary courage? Not necessarily. We all need to exert pressure on our politicians. I am counting on you!



Dr Hans Rudolf Herren
President of Biovision Foundation



Final spurt for the Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations are due to adopt the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in September this year. As part of the preparations for this summit, both Biovision and the Millennium Institute have been calling for the goals to be clear and concrete, especially Goal 2 on food security and sustainable agriculture.

As a result of its strong presence in New York in the last two years, the project Changing Course in Global Agriculture – a joint initiative by Biovision and the Millennium Institute (MI) under the direction of Hans R. Herren – has been able to respond effectively to the ongoing developments in the negotiations. For example, during bilateral discussions with those negotiating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the project has provided regular specialist data on sustainable agriculture and put forward concrete proposals for the actual wording of the goals. In addition, at a high-level Round-

table Discussion in New York in March 2014, they were able to put forward a specific process – SHIFT – that would change the course of global agriculture (see pie chart).

Development Goal 2:

The current draft of the Post-2015 Declaration has the following wording for SDG 2: “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.” Similarly, the draft includes eight targets, which broadly correspond to our demands for fairer and more sustainable food security, i.e. access to adequate food, combat hunger and malnutrition, support small food producers, promote sustainable agriculture and food systems, maintain the diversity of seeds, increase investment in agricultural infrastructure and research, improve global food commodity markets and control excessive volatility in the price of agricultural produce.

In addition, other issues regularly championed by Biovision/MI during the negotiations, e.g. “reductions in food losses and waste” and “soil degradation” have been included in the Agenda. There is a good chance that these draft SDGs will be adopted in September and the international community will sign up to a new framework for sustainable development for the period to 2030.

Without funding, the goals cannot be implemented! Since the end of 2014, the international community has also been discussing the resources required for the SDGs. The negotiations have been complex as topics have also included systemic issues such as debt relief for developing countries, tax avoidance, the improper flow of funds as well as reforms to financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF. The “Addis Abeba Action Agenda” agreed at the 3rd Conference on Financing for Development held in the Ethiopian capital in July 2015, is, therefore, an important milestone in the creation of a sustainability agenda.

Even though many developing countries and civil society rightly criticised the fact that the Addis Conference failed to mobilise sufficient resources to solve the wide ranging global challenges, there were some important successes in the field of agriculture and food security. For example, the “Addis Agenda” confirmed the principle that greater financial support is needed for sustainable agriculture and that more public investment must feed into agricultural research and infrastructure, in particular as a way of improving access to markets for small farmers.

Although it is encouraging that resources are promised for the implementation of the agricultural and food goals, many delegates, particularly those from developing countries, made it clear that they had expected stronger signals from donors. For example, the Conference missed the opportunity to strengthen the position of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), even though this body will have a crucial role in the implementation of SDG 2.

After the summit the real work will begin

The intensive efforts to agree the right framework for a paradigm shift in favour of ecological agriculture as part of universally agreed SDGs will be brought to a temporary halt with the UN Conference in September in New York at which they are due to be ratified. However, even if the SDGs are adopted, it is then that the real work will begin, i.e. their implementation over the next 15 years.

During that period Hans R. Herren and his team will continue to introduce innovative solutions that make an effective contribution to the change in the course of global agriculture and food systems that is so urgently needed. | mbe

Author: Michael Bergöö, Political adviser at Biovision has followed the SDG process since 2013 during which he has also championed the needs of small farmers.

For more information and photos see www.biovision.ch/ccga.

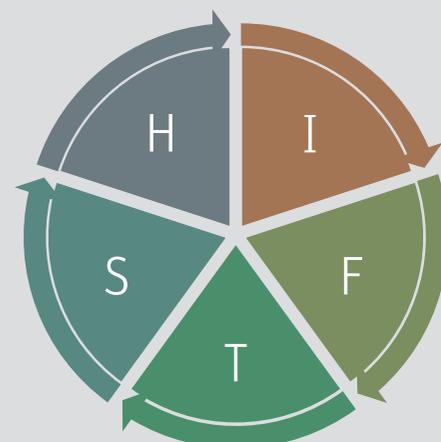


Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary General, speaking to the international community at the Conference on Financing for Development (left). At the Ministerial Roundtable in Addis Abeba, Hans R. Herren called for a global change (right).

The SHIFT Concept

SHIFT means change and in this context refers to change that empowers small-scale food producers.

- S** Refers to the **small-scale** food producers who already produce 70% of the world's food.
- H** **Hunger** and all forms of malnutrition ended, and full access to food ensured.
- I** **Inclusiveness** in decision-making on sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition.
- F** **Food systems** sustainable, diverse, resilient, less wasteful, restore soil fertility and halt land degradation.
- T** **Trade policies** reshaped and food price volatility mitigated.



Milestone in the fight against DDT

Since 2006, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has recommended DDT for use in internal spaces to protect against malaria-transmitting mosquitoes even though the infamous insecticide endangers human health and contaminates the environment. In addition, DDT is increasingly ineffective as mosquitoes develop a resistance to the poison. Despite that, DDT is still allowed; mainly because it is simple and cheap and because the future long-term costs and consequences of misuse have been played down.

Two years ago, Biovision organised a conference on sustainable malaria control attended by representatives from governments, international organisations, civil society and the private sector. Together, the delegates drafted a series of recommendations for consideration by signatories to the Stockholm Convention; they included bans and limits on the use of persistent organic pollutants, including DDT.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Stockholm Convention recently discussed the recommendations and adopted a plan for the control of mosquitoes by sustainable means rather than DDT. This decision is a milestone in our efforts to eliminate the use of this environmental poison and a major success for Biovision. | sk

www.biovision.ch/ddt-en



Sam Adu-Kumi from Ghana, speaking on behalf of the African group of 54 countries at the COP in Geneva, demanded an end to the use of DDT.



Stopping malaria takes time and patience

An important prerequisite for a total ban on the use of DDT against malaria-transmitting mosquitoes is the availability of inexpensive, effective alternatives. The Stop Malaria projects supported by Biovision have already shown that such environmentally friendly options do exist.

For years, some delegates to the Conferences of the Stockholm Convention were reluctant to recognise the efficacy of Integrated Vector Management (IVM), the non-polluting approach to the integrated control of malaria mosquitoes used in Biovision projects. That is clearly starting to change (see adjacent article). All the more important, therefore, to continue the Stop Malaria projects in East Africa that help people living in malaria regions.

IVM as national strategy for malaria control
Since 2004, Biovision has supported two Stop Malaria projects in different climatic regions of Kenya; one in Malindi, a coastal region on the Indian Ocean and the other in the uplands of Nyabondo in Western Kenya. In 2009, it introduced a third project in Ethiopia to investigate how the IVM approach would work in that country.

In the current year, it is planned to reduce further the incidence of malaria in the project regions. In addition to the environmentally friendly *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti), other natural bio-pesticides are being developed for mosquito control. Of particular importance is the integration of IVM in government strategies. In Kenya and Ethiopia, regular workshops have been held with government representatives and scientists – with encouraging results; for example, Kenya has set up a National Steering Committee for IVM and it is planning to implement the strategy on a national scale. | pl

More information:
www.biovision.ch/malaria-en

Mosquito scouts, who explain to local people that standing water provides a breeding ground for the mosquitoes, are crucial to the success of IVM (top photo). The integrated measures are based on robust research, including the regular collection of data on the existence of pathogens and vector mosquitoes (bottom photo).



We value your opinion!

Do you like our Newsletters? What do you think of our email updates? What changes should we make? Are our events interesting enough? How could we improve?

These are questions that we ask ourselves all the time – but always from an internal perspective. That is why we want your opinion. Would you like to come along and discuss these questions with us! We are planning a small group discussion with Biovision managers on how we could improve our information activities and the work of Biovision in general. The meeting, followed by drinks, will be on 14 October from 19.00 to 20.30 hours at the Biovision offices at Heinrichstrasse 147 in Zurich.

Why not join us! To register, please email us at info@biovision.ch or phone 044/512 58 58.



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Cover photo Use of firewood and charcoal is partly to blame for the progressive deforestation in Kaliro. Photo: Peter Lüthi/Biovision

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First winners of the radish competition

The first winner of our radish competition was **Nicole Bussmann**. Her photo of radishes in her garden impressed the jury and she wins a Veg Box subscription from www.bio-box.ch.

Lisa Bischoffberger wins a CHF 100 voucher from Andermatt Biogarten. **Judith Hasler** and **Claudia Zimmermann** each receive a cultivation kit, also from Andermatt Biogarten. The ladybird/lacewing shelter goes to **Mira und Holger Meyer zu Altenschildescher**. We send our warmest congratulations to all the winners!

In the second round of the competition, entrants will compete for the main prize: a Canon digital single-lens reflex camera.



Photo of winners: Nicole Bussmann, 6204 Sempach.

Hans Rudolf Herren at World Expo

A clear statement by a Federal Councillor on global food security “Business as usual will not do,” said Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann at a recent debate on food security and climate change at the Swiss Pavilion at Expo Milano.

After the discussion Biovision President Hans Herren expressed his satisfaction that the commitment of Biovision and likeminded partners to ecological development is slowly bearing fruit.

www.biovision.ch/expo-en

“We will only be successful if we are able to find answers to the many challenges whilst respecting the needs of future generations. We will only move towards more resilience in agriculture and society if we give innovation sufficient priority in policy and society, in the lab and in the field”.

With these comments, Schneider-Amman launched a lively debate between representatives of civil society, the private sector and international organisations. All were agreed; we must support small-scale farmers if we are to eliminate hunger and poverty and minimise climate change: The approach advocated by Biovision for many years now seems to be slowly gaining momentum.



Hans Herren and Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann continuing their discussion after the event.



A story from the life of Romy Erb Knobel and Robert Knobel, Steffisburg

With vision we can achieve great things

Romy Erb Knobel and Robert Knobel have travelled widely. Both love sport and can often be found touring in different countries – walking, cycling or skiing. During his professional career, Robert often experienced life in other countries. A qualified mechanical engineer,

“We don’t know what life has in store for us.”

at one time he managed 170 people in a company specialising in heating and wastewater pumps. Robert grew up in a modest household and worked hard to earn his success. “I always worked even when I was at school,” he recalls, “That had a lasting effect on me”. He did not meet the love of his life Romy until he was 45 years of age. “I was in a train and suddenly there she was with her touring skis”. “Being an enthusiastic mountaineer myself, I simply had to speak to her”, says Robert with an impish grin. Romy Erb grew up in Kleinbasel and worked primarily in the commercial sector. In the last seven years of her working life she found

a job that was close to her heart: She helped au-pairs in French-speaking Switzerland find work, sometimes as far afield as London, Nice and Paris. “For that you need a lot of experience of life and empathy with young women,” she says.

The couple took early retirement several years ago and are now enjoying an active life to the full. They even considered working on aid projects themselves. “But only if I could have passed on my knowledge in a sustainable way”, says Robert Knobel. A good aid organisation does not invest in one-off projects and then simply disappear in a puff of smoke. It was that which impressed them about the Biovision approach; their projects disseminate sustainable knowledge for the longer term. They were also attracted by its size: “No-one in your organisation is a small cog in a big wheel”, they say.

The two of them still have lots of plans and are not ready to distribute their assets just yet. “We don’t know what life has in store for us and want to do as much as we can,” the couple says. Both, however, want to leave some of their assets to worthwhile projects. “That gives us a good feeling: We have provided for our family and Biovision can make better use of some of our wealth than if it stayed wholly within our own immediate circle,” adds Romy: “Biovision is a splendid organisation with highly motivated staff – you sense that immediately. If I were still young, I would be keen to apply for an interesting position with Biovision,” she says with a laugh. | ag

For more on bequests see:
www.biovision.ch/legacy

