

5 Minute Inspiration: Deforestation and the pop star - How Uganda cut illegal logging by 70% by Emily Janoch 06th Aug 2018



FOREST programme participants, Uganda

Denis Tumwesige used to make his living illegally cutting trees in protected forests in Uganda, until he got arrested. Instead of a jail sentence, the local officials connected him with CARE's Forest Resources Sector Transparency (FOREST) project, which taught him about the importance of forest conservation. Denis then wrote a song about forests, which is a huge hit, and is routinely played on national radio. The song succeeded in raising awareness of forest policies. Here is what else the project achieved.

What did we accomplish?



Deforestation has dropped dramatically:

The project saw a **70%** reduction in illegal destruction of forests, a **68%** reduction in the number of illegal farms destroying forests, and a complete end to livestock grazing in forests.



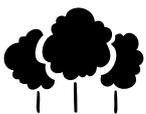
Kids are getting better education: **20%** of families involved said they used extra income to send their kids to better schools.



Governments are investing in forests: The Kyegewa district government increased their budget to the local forest service by **27** times, up to **\$14,626**. The national government is now paying for a consultation group that CARE used to pay for, so civil society can continue to influence policies around protecting forests.



Media is paying attention: Media coverage of forest issues went up more than **5** times, and the number of media outlets that cover forest issues went up **3.5** times.



Forests are growing back: The government revoked **154** illegal land titles that ate away at protected forests, and community groups replanted **200** hectares of trees.



Improved livelihoods: Beekeepers saw a **320%** improvement in honey production. Families who grow corn improved more than doubled production (2.6 times more). This meant that families didn't have to depend on forest grazing to survive.

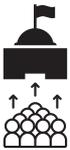
How did we get there?



Help communities organise: The project helped set up community forest user groups, that appointed monitors to oversee illegal forest activities. **50%** of the monitors check in on forests weekly. **96%** of them are actively working to protect forests.



Work with women: Women were **22%** more likely to plant trees on land they had been given than men.



Connect communities to government: In addition to organizing meeting, the project helped community groups use Whatsaap to get in touch with government officials and express their views.



Think about government practicalities: The project started with a policy analysis, and decided that it was most important to work on implementing existing policy instead of working on new ones. That meant helping different ministries and government actors work together to solve problems.



Listen to feedback: The project set up call centers so people could call in and report illegal activities. They were able to resolve **24%** of reported cases, and got nearly **1,000** community reports.



Work with all kinds of media: In addition to training **12** journalists on the importance of forests, the project successfully generated **12.8** million twitter impressions about forest issues, helped set up a weekly radio hour on forests and the environment, and even supported the creation of a hit song promoting forests. This means that knowledge of forest policies went up 2.7 times.



Support partners: The project worked with the Joint Effort to Save the Environment, the Anti-Corruption Coalition of Uganda, the Action Coalition for Development and Environment, and other local groups to implement the project and tap into local expertise. The partners especially cited the importance of CARE being a flexible and supportive partner that would let them adjust plans and budgets.

With support from the local field officers from the Mid-Western Anti-Corruption Coalition, Denis created a concert series on the environment. He went on to open his own recording studio and is proud to be a role model for his community.



More than **115,000** people were part of the Forest Resources Sector Transparency (FOREST) project in Uganda, which ran from 2013-2017, with the generous support of **\$3,776,170** million from DANIDA

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