A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH TO RESTORATION IN UGANDA

IUCN has been working with a range of partners to operationalise Uganda's 2.5 million hectare restoration commitment to the Bonn Challenge. Two key elements of our strategy have been conducting a national-level assessment of degraded and deforested areas that will benefit from restoration while simultaneously empowering local farmers to initiate restoration interventions on the lands they manage.

Section 1:
Designing interactive radio programmes for farmers

Radio is one of the most effective mediums of communication across Africa. It reaches communities living in remote pockets of countries and is a proven, cost-effective method of disseminating information. IUCN worked with Farm Radio International (FRI) to design a 24-week participatory radio show focused on forest landscape restoration (FLR) that was broadcast in Mount Elgon, Uganda. The programme was specifically targeted at 4,000 households in 89 communities (representing 18,800 individuals). An estimate, based on the strength of the radio transmitted and mapping, showed that it reached over 200,000 potential listeners in the Kapchorwa and Kween districts, in addition to 800,000 potential listeners in surrounding areas.

Our approach

The best ideas for FLR solutions come from the people who will be implementing them. IUCN and FRI convened a stakeholder committee comprising local government officials from the disaster risk reduction and natural resources departments, community members and representatives from the agriculture and water ministries. The group helped identify what information gaps needed to be filled, the ideal day and time for a radio show for farmers and the stations they trusted. This inception workshop built upon extensive formative research conducted by IUCN and FRI which involved interviewing a total of 248 farmers (123 men and 125 women) from nine villages to understand how they viewed FLR, who their opinion leaders were and any relevant information about local culture.

This information helped us zoom in on Kapchorwa Trinity Radio (KTR) as the most suitable station for the programme. A workshop was held to design the radio show and three district officials, representatives from two civil society organisations, eight farmers (four men and four women), the KTR station manager and two broadcasters participated along with IUCN and FRI staff. A participatory radio series (PRS) was developed to address topics such as digging trenches, planting Napier grass (to reduce erosion and to feed livestock), maintaining buffer zones adjacent to rivers, mulching, using energy-efficient stoves, planting fruit trees, and kitchen gardening were compiled. Information on the potential impacts of climate change was also woven into the segments.

KTR staff received intensive training on conducting interactive shows, gathering and responding to feedback and how to use tools such as beep-to-vote, among other relevant skills.

Boda bodas to reach remote villages

When IUCN and FRI's on-ground staff were informed that certain villages were not able to tune in to the programme due to a lack of reception, they jumped into action. The District Assistant Forestry Officer began recording each week's programme on a solar-powered radio which he would then take to villages on a pre-determined day on his boda boda (motorbike). Farmers organised themselves into listening groups to provide him with feedback that he would convey to KTR staff who were collecting opinions and comments during the segments.
The radio show was supplemented with a daily spot message campaign targeting the selected FLR options that were being implemented by local farmers. Using street plays and music composed by farmers, local government bodies and key policy makers were encouraged to support FLR.

**Impact**

A recent evaluation of the radio programme showed encouraging results – 98% of people who listened to most or all of the broadcasts said they conducted one of the interventions recommended to them. Knowledge rates were found to be higher among women than men with 64% of women, as opposed to 51% of men, attributing the practices they had adopted to the show. This was despite 72% of men owning radios while only 61% of women owned one.

**Helping farmers pick the right species to plant**

A common concern voiced at the Mount Elgon stakeholders forum was which trees farmers needed to plant. Increasingly, eucalyptus and fodder trees were being planted along riverbanks owing to their commercial value. This was despite the fact that some of these species could be invasive. Keen to get farmers planting the “right tree for the right place”, IUCN worked with the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) to develop Africa Tree Finder – a mobile phone application that guided farmers about the trees they should be planting on their lands. On opening the application, a clickable map loads with a list of suitable species for that location. The application was developed based on a detailed consultation process with stakeholders where their common concerns with identifying and planting trees were identified and incorporated into the design.

A short documentary on the effort – *Equipping Uganda for Restoration: Radio and Apps for Reforesting Landscapes* – was selected as a Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) video award winner and screened for 3,000 people at the opening plenary at the 22nd Conference of Parties (CoP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP22).

The project is now being scaled up to the Upper Aswa-Agago sub-catchment area in northern Uganda. The website [www.vegetationmap4africa.org](http://www.vegetationmap4africa.org) which supports the application had 11,016 page views from 3,876 users between January 1 and June 30, 2016. The dataset used for the application is also being utilised by the World Resources Institute and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa Biodiversity Programme (BMP) and ICRAF are looking at ways to expand the application to all IGAD countries.

**Section 2:**

**National assessment of restoration opportunity in Uganda identifies 8 million hectares of land suitable for interventions**

IUCN worked directly with the Ministry of Water and Environment, Government of Uganda to conduct a national assessment of degraded lands that were suitable for FLR. A phased multi-stakeholder approach was adopted to ensure that relevant sectors were involved from the inception. This was supplemented by high-level engagement with key government officials to ensure that supportive policies were in place to ensure the success of interventions. Over the course of the ROAM process, seven sub-national consultations were undertaken involving 416 district local government officials and 46 private sector and civil society stakeholders.

A national core team was constituted, including representatives from the agriculture, finance and environment ministries, partner NGOs including the World Resources Institute (WRI) and Makerere University, to lead the process.
The country was divided into seven zones viz. viz. western mid-altitude farmlands, Lake Victoria Crescent, Karamoja, South Kyoga floodplains, Afro-montane high altitude, north moist farmlands and south west rangelands. This classification was created by overlaying agro-ecological zones with climatic factors, altitude data and farming systems. Stakeholder meetings were held to verify the classification.

It was determined that deforestation and degradation have occurred largely in the northern moist, southwest rangeland and western mid altitude landscapes over the last decade. This was due to a combination of factors including anthropogenic pressure, weak law enforcement and inadequate funding to the natural resources sector. The Northern moist and western mid-altitude landscapes were the most severely deforested landscapes followed by southwest rangelands respectively. The western mid-altitude was the most degraded followed by southwest rangelands and Lake Victoria crescent respectively.

A total of 8,079,6221 hectares were identified as suitable for restoration with the northern moist, Karamoja and southwest rangeland landscape zones offering the highest acreage for restoration.

The study further delved into the most suitable FLR interventions including afforestation, reforestation, agroforestry and natural regeneration. Twenty two priority zones were identified.

A roadmap for action

ROAM has helped chart a clear pathway for Uganda to achieve its restoration commitments. As a follow up, in-depth economic assessments are being undertaken for selected sites to identify and develop clear sub-national packages for implementation. The Ministry of Water and Environment is also mobilising resources to implement FLR packages in the Northern moist and Karamoja zones identified during the ROAM process. In September 2015, a large-scale tree plantation drive was led by the government, designed on the basis of several results from ROAM. By mid-2016, a Farm Income Enhancement and Forestry conservation project, led by the Government, African Development Bank (ADB) and Nordic Development Fund (NDF) was launched with a goal of restoring 902,000 ha. of degraded lands in five key catchment areas. Specifically in Mount Elgon, early action pilot carbon offset projects have been initiated with targets of restoring 200 ha. per year.