About International Tree Foundation

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**Table of Content**

**INTRODUCTION** .................................................................................................................................................. 4

**DASHBOARD** ..................................................................................................................................................... 5

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY FORESTRY** ........................................................................................................... 6

**KENYA PROGRAMME: 20 MILLION TREES CAMPAIGN** ..................................................................................... 17

**MOUNT BAMBOUTOS INITIATIVE (MBI)** ............................................................................................................ 20

**UK TREE PLANTING COMMUNITY PROGRAMME** ............................................................................................. 22

**WELLBEING IN THE WOODS** .......................................................................................................................... 24

**ITF PLANS FOR 2020** .......................................................................................................................................... 25

**HOW OUR INCOME WAS SPENT** ..................................................................................................................... 26
African countries in which ITF currently works

- Ghana
- Cameroon
- Madagascar
- Kenya
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Malawi
- Rwanda
- Madagascar
Introduction

For nearly 100 years, ITF has been evolving. Our structure and the projects we deliver have changed to meet different circumstances and needs, all the while drawing on lessons learned from the best available knowledge. What remains unchanged since our founding by Richard St Barbe Baker and Josiah Njonjo in 1922, is our ethos: positioning communities at the centre of all forest restoration, conservation and development efforts. Time and again, this approach has proven to be sustainable and effective.

All our projects are about trees. However, depending on community decisions about how they want to collaborate with us, activities can range from tree planting to natural regeneration, agroforestry, education programmes, habitat conservation and community empowerment. Our approach focuses on the community for whom forests provide a livelihood, environmental services, and a sense of wellbeing. Though our projects are about trees, growing trees alone is rarely sufficient. People and trees coexist, in a landscape. Though obvious, this fact is often overlooked.

Trying to understand the impact of this rich and varied portfolio, now dispersed across the UK and nine African countries, is a challenge. Monitoring, evaluation and learning are a key responsibility for ITF, and one in which our partners play a central role.

As shown in our dashboard, ITF systematically tracks twelve key indicators in all our projects. But numbers tell only part of the story. For example, while we record the number of trees planted and their survival rates in each project, it is equally important to recognise that the growth rate varies between trees, such as fruit trees, leguminous soil-improving trees and fast-growing exotics. Different trees serve different functions and have different values for communities too. Numbers alone do not capture the complex relationships between trees and people.

In addition to describing our projects and the rationale behind them, this report therefore gives a voice to project participants to share their stories on how ITF activities changed their lives. Learning from these experiences with our partners will support further expansion of our work and its positive impact in communities.

There is so much to do. As Richard St Barbe Baker said, “we need more and more trees”. Though simple, this message is as true today as it was when he said it. In practice, ITF’s ethos and model is proving its value again and again across diverse programmes. We are working hard to build new partnerships to restore more forest and create a better world – a world in which communities thrive in a sustainable relationship with nature. We hope this introduction to our work inspires and encourages you.

Fiona Cotrell  
James Kemp  
Ricardo Romero
6,315 young people engaged in learning activities

20,438 people reached through awareness-raising activities and campaign platforms

408 teachers and youth workers trained

512,147 trees grown

37,354 ha land protected or restored

10 no. of projects reporting increases in biodiversity/ecosystem services

6,318 community members active in landscape restoration

2,137 smallholder farmers with increased yields

3,055 people who have increased their income

3,725 staff, volunteers, and members trained

119 CBOs with increased capacity

52% women in leadership roles in partner CBOs

6,318 community members active in landscape restoration

3,055 people who have increased their income
According to the FAO, between 300-350 million people around the world depend directly on forests for their livelihoods, including approximately 60 million indigenous people who rely almost entirely on forests for their economic activities. OECD calculations state that 90% of people living in extreme poverty depend on forests for at least part of their livelihoods. Forests cover almost 30% of the terrestrial land mass and include 80% of the world’s terrestrial biomass. Deforestation and land degradation are a direct threat to the livelihoods of vulnerable and indigenous groups around the globe. Equally, deforestation and land degradation affect all of us, due to biodiversity loss and increasing atmospheric carbon concentration. The loss of trees and entire ecosystems is affecting people, biodiversity and the climate.

Across Africa, deforestation and land degradation threaten natural forest landscapes and the livelihoods of the people who depend on them. The ever-expanding agriculture frontier, slash and burn farming methods, charcoal production, use of firewood for cooking, illegal timber extraction and over-grazing are commonplace in rural areas across the continent. All these factors are putting pressure on the sustainability of forests and the survival of people that depend of them. Deforestation is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, food insecurity and regional effects of climate change, including increasingly unpredictable weather patterns.

ITF’s Sustainable Community Forestry programme (SCF) is designed to mitigate some of these trends locally, and in doing so help communities become economically sustainable and resilient while fostering a conservation spirit.

SCF supports community-based organisations that wish to improve local landscapes and livelihoods through tree-planting initiatives. These projects are designed and run by local partners, whose expertise and relationships are crucial to the success of community-based forest restoration. ITF believes these principles could and should be applied across the world.

Thanks to a Prince of Wales’s Charitable Fund (PWCF) grant, ITF selected seventeen new community projects across Commonwealth nations in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2019 to start operations in 2020. We could have supported many more. The fact that we received over 600 applications is testament to the inspiring desire of communities to
engage in forest restoration, agroforestry, livelihood diversification, regenerative farming, food sovereignty and water security, soil fertility management and local climate stabilisation.

Below is a summary of the 26 active partnerships within the SCF programme. We invite you to travel with us across Africa, from Ghana in the Northwest to Madagascar in the Southeast.

Location of partners within ITF’s Sustainable Community Forestry Programme (SCF). Projects in dark green are those funded by the Prince of Wales’ Charitable Fund (PWCF); projects in light green are existing projects, supported by a mixture of donors.

New PWCF projects
Existing SCF projects
Ghana

1. ENVIRONMENT AND AGROFORESTRY FOUNDATION (EAF) (PWCF)

This partnership was selected in 2019. Operating in the Northwest of Ghana, EAF will rehabilitate 24 hectares of riparian habitat within the Black Volta River basin. This area has been damaged due to bushfires and unsustainable farming techniques. Alongside planting indigenous trees for the benefit of wildlife and soil conservation, EAF will support local farmers to transition to more sustainable farming techniques, including agroforestry.

2. COMMUNITY SELF-RELIANCE CENTRE (COSEREC) (PWCF)

This partnership was selected in 2019. The Upper East Region of Ghana, on the border with Burkina Faso, is a region populated with many subsistence farmers. Increasingly unpredictable rainfall, illegal forest clearing, mining and bushfires are degrading the landscape, causing local farmers to struggle to make a living using traditional farming methods. COSEREC are creating two new tree nurseries, and working together with local farmers across eight villages, to increase knowledge of alternative farming systems that can reverse the degradation of land, and sustainably improve livelihoods.

3. AGROINTRODUCTIONS GHANA, MION (PWCF)

This partnership was selected in 2019. This partner operates in the semi-arid regions of northern Ghana, where traditional farming methods are becoming less reliable as climate change disrupts rainfall and weather patterns. Agrointroductions will facilitate training for farmers from three villages in agroforestry farming techniques, proven to reverse land degradation and increase farm productivity. These farmers will plant 30,000 trees.

4. CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL AGRICULTURE & DEVELOPMENT (CSRAD) (WESSANEN)

CSRAD started a partnership with ITF in 2017. The current project started in 2018 and is conserving the native, biodiverse Montonso Sacred Forest in Western Ghana. Forest destruction had been caused by overexploitation of forest goods, such as timber. Working with local farmers, CSRAD has been supporting the planting of agroforestry trees on their farms. By providing timber and other forest products themselves, pressure on the forest decreases. Crucially, CSRAD is working to empower local farmers to gain official recognition for the trees they have planted, and form a more strictly observed forest-edge, making further incursions into the native forest less likely.
RURAL-URBAN PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA (RUPFA) (PWCF)

This partnership was selected in 2019. RUPFA’s ‘Schools’ Afforestation Project’ aims to encourage school children to plant trees in and around school compounds in the suburbs of the capital city, Accra. By doing so, school pupils will develop a deep abiding sense of the role trees play in environmental and personal wellbeing. Though small-scale, RUPFA expect to plant 4,400 trees.

Cameroon

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPMENT (COMAID) (WEssANEN)

This is an extension of an earlier successful ITF-supported project to protect the Dom Forest in the Northwest of Cameroon. COMAID has been an ITF partner since 2015. COMAID’s current project is training farmers from two villages bordering the forest in agroforestry techniques, promoting more diverse crop production practices and native tree planting. In addition to developing more sustainable livelihoods, COMAID aims to strengthen the stock of native trees in the area and protect vital water catchments.

CENTRE FOR NURSERY AND ERU POPULATION (CENDEP) (PLANT FOR THE PLANET)

This partnership initiated in 2017, and the current project started in 2018. CENDEP understands that population growth has led to an unsustainable demand for harvested forest goods, and is causing a rapid loss of forest cover in the Northwest region of Cameroon. This project is conserving and restoring the Mbiame Community Forest, by training local community members in forestry and food forest farming techniques.
Rwanda

FOREST OF HOPE ASSOCIATION (FHA) (PWCF)

Initiated in 2019, this project is contributing to the protection of a vast region in the west of Rwanda called the Gishwati-Mukara National Park. Over twenty years, this park was subject to severe deforestation. Now, there is a risk that farmers settle in the newly cleared areas and go on to clear the remaining patches of biodiverse forest. FHA will plant a buffer zone of both indigenous and agroforestry trees along the southern edge of the Gishwati Forest, for use by the local Batwa community who were evicted from the forest. These trees will provide the Batwa community with the foods and medicines they would otherwise need to harvest from the protected forest, thereby improving their livelihoods as well as restoring the biodiversity and soil quality of the area.

Uganda

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH UPTAKE (CRU-AFRICA) (PWCF)

This project aims to provide assistance and relief to the indigenous Batwa people of the Bwindi Forest. Since being evicted from their ancestral lands, they have struggled to integrate into Ugandan society and are often criminalized for sourcing foods and medicines from the forest. This project aims to plant native pocket forests on Batwa-owned land outside the forest reserve, for them to be able to access their traditional foods and medicines without running the risk of being further marginalised.
**ALPHA WOMEN EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE (AWEI) (PLANT FOR THE PLANET)**

ITF has been working with Alpha Women since 2015. The current project with ITF aims to build the capacity of their 1000+ strong membership, comprised of local women farmers. The focus of the programme is agroforestry, and one of the key outcomes will be reduced soil erosion on the lower slopes of the Rwenzori Mountains in Western Uganda. 100,000 Maesopsis emini, Albizia coriaria and Moringa oleifera trees will be planted on local farms to help with soil conservation, food production and livelihood improvement.

**KARAMBI GROUP OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (PWCF)**

This partnership was selected in 2019. The partner helps people with disabilities to gain access to food and education. 200 families from three schools in Karambi will be trained in agroforestry to raise awareness of its potential to produce food sustainably.

**MASAKA DISTRICT LANDCARE CHAPTER (MADLACC) (PLANT FOR THE PLANET)**

MADLACC started its partnership with ITF in 2014. The new project is a continuation/expansion of previous work, to train teachers in the Masaka region of Uganda to build and manage a tree nursery in their school, and to support school pupils as they learn about trees. Students are then invited to take seedlings home to plant on their family farms. This way, understanding of the practical value of trees is promoted across the region. This new project aims to plant 150,000 trees.

**SAVE A SEED FOR THE FUTURE (SAFE) (JOHN LALLY)**

SAFE has been an ITF partner since 2017. This project started in 2019. SAFE’s work in the Soroti region of Uganda is improving food security for households. School teachers are trained to plant and maintain orchards and fruit trees around school playgrounds. School pupils then gain ready access to nutritious fruit. Additionally, agroforestry trees including Maesopsis emini and Markhamia lutea are provided for pupils to plant on family farms and in gardens.
Kenya

**MULIRU FARMERS CONSERVATION GROUP (MFCG), KAKAMEGA (PWCF)**

This partnership was selected in 2019. MFCG’s Kakamega Forest is the only remaining rainforest in Kenya and is home to a multitude of indigenous plants and wildlife. It is also at risk of severe degradation due to the local communities’ overdependence on the forest to meet their everyday needs. The ‘Trees for Sustainable Development Project’ will reduce this pressure and conserve the Kakamega Forest, by planting 31,330 agroforestry, indigenous and fruit trees with local communities, to meet daily needs and provide sustainable sources of income. To support this change, MFCG will also work with local people to increase awareness of the benefits of biodiverse forests and provide training in sustainable livelihoods.

**KIJABE ENVIRONMENT VOLUNTEERS (KENVO) (PWCF)**

This partnership was selected in 2019. KENVO is working to conserve the Kikuyu Escarpment Forest – a biodiversity hotspot in the southern Aberdare mountain range, and home to the critically endangered Black Rhino. These forests provide important ecosystem services to local people, including water catchment, fuel wood, construction timber, herbal medicine, and livestock grazing. With a growing local population, pressure is increasing on forest resources, causing unsustainable exploitation and severe degradation. Working with the local communities, KENVO will grow 40,000 trees for fruits and forest restoration in the area, supporting alternative livelihoods and reducing pressure on the forest.
RURAL INITIATIVES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (RIDEP) (PWCF)

This partnership was selected in 2019 and will reduce water insecurity for people around the Manyiirani watershed. Working with the local community, RIDEP will reclaim land and increase tree cover around the watershed from zero to 40%. Tree planting will take place around river intakes and on local farms, and RIDEP will lead an awareness-raising programme about the environmental and community benefits of forest conservation.

METHODIST CHURCH IN KENYA – THARAKA
CHILDREN & WOMEN WELFARE PROGRAMME (MCKTCWWP) (PWCF)

This partnership was selected in 2019. MCKTCWWP is working with women tree planters and school pupils in semi-arid areas of Kenya, to improve awareness of the benefits trees can bring in low-rainfall areas. This project will also support the community as they invest in high-value fruit and forest trees in schools and farms. The aim is to establish a reliable women-led source of income within the society. The programme aims to involve 60% of residents and to increase afforestation by 40%. These actions are expected to have positive impacts on biodiversity, landscape restoration, and ultimately increase ecological resilience.
Tanzania

**LANDSCAPE AND CONSERVATION MENTOR’S ORGANISATION (LCMO) (PWCF)**

This partnership was selected in 2019. This project will restore the sacred village forests in the Katavi region, which are currently threatened by over exploitation for firewood and timber. To relieve pressure on sacred village forests, LCMO will work with community groups to plant native trees and economically valuable agroforestry crops.

**WAKWETU PEOPLE’S DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION (WAPEDO) (PWCF)**

This partnership was selected in 2019. WAPEDO is working in the Eastern Arc Mountains in central Tanzania, and the project aims to preserve the valuable biodiversity of local forests. To achieve this aim, WAPEDO will support people in three villages to earn a sustainable income from the forest through activities like beekeeping. They will also create nurseries to provide agroforestry tree seedlings for local people to meet their timber needs without degrading the forest. Remaining forest remnants will be conserved and restored by planting indigenous forest trees.

**MPINGO CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MCDI) (SYNCHRONICITY EARTH)**

MCDI has been an ITF partner since 2012. The current project started in 2018, and in 2019 MCDI planted 22,000 trees across 19,000 hectares in the heart of the miombo woodland habitat. By working with communities around this forest, they were able to increase appreciation of the environmental and economic value of conservation and native trees.
Zambia

21 BAKASHANA BASAMBALILE (PWCF)

This partnership was selected in 2019. Demands for timber and charcoal are increasing rapidly in Kasama, northern Zambia, causing deforestation and the associated problems of soil degradation and water insecurity. Bakashana is working with two women-led community groups, offering training in agroforestry fruit tree cultivation, and livelihood diversification. These two groups will plant 9,000 trees while raising awareness among community members about the role trees play in their landscape.

22 REVIVAL NGO, (CHARLES HAYWARD)

With the partnership having initiated in 2017, the current project started in 2018, and is restoring the fertility and resilience of the Kapichia Landscape. Revival in 2019 established a ‘food forest’ programme in three schools in the Lundazi district. Teachers, pupils, and parents learned agroforestry techniques, and how to manage a tree nursery. Once the seedlings are ready, school pupils are given two trees each to plant at home. The result is a re-greening of both school land and the surrounding homesteads and farms.

23 PAZESA HORTICULTURAL COMMUNITY (PWCF)

This partnership was selected in 2019. Following decades of landscape degradation, rates of malnutrition amongst the people of Chipata have increased. By planting trees, Pazesa’s ‘Poverty-Alleviation and Food Security Initiative’ aims to improve soil fertility and landscape resilience, and provide forest goods to help lift people out of poverty.

Malawi

24 MULANJE MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION TRUST (MMCT) (PWCF)

This partnership was selected in 2019. The project aims to reforest a 28-mile section of the newly tarmacked road that circles the Mount Mulanje Global Biosphere reserve. Restored forest will provide shade and protection for villages alongside the road and stabilise the land, protecting the road and the livelihoods which depend upon it.
These two community partners started their partnership with ITF in 2017. In the current project (est. 2019), they are working together in six villages near Madagascar’s remaining central forest biodiversity corridor. This joint project under the name: “Better Lives for the People of the Forest Corridor”, has reduced pressure on the natural forests by providing local residents and farmers with alternative sources for the materials they need on their farms. By training people in improved rice cultivation and integrating trees into local farming systems, they are helping to improve livelihood options for local people while helping to restore the unique flora and fauna of the natural forests.
The forest ecosystems in Kenya are a critical resource for the national economy and household livelihoods. Depletion of major highland forests, known as ‘water towers’, is one of the main causes of erratic rainfall in recent years, contributing to poor yields for farmers, rising food prices and flooding. Reduced water infiltration caused by deforestation leads to reduced drought resilience. A growing body of scientific research confirms that Kenya’s semi-arid and arid areas are slowly turning into deserts due to receding forest cover.

The main causes of widespread deforestation are forest mismanagement, illegal logging, charcoal production, and the clearing of forest for agriculture. It is critical that these native forests are restored. And doing so is possible if, and only if, the expertise and interests of local communities are at the centre of restoration efforts. The 20 million trees campaign is ITF’s programme to achieve this aim.

The programme takes a three-pronged approach: 1) Forest landscape restoration, 2) Agroforestry and 3) Inspiring young environmental stewards to become conservationists.

The Mount Kenya Forest Landscape Restoration Project was the first phase of ITF’s campaign and started in 2016, with two partners based around the Mount Kenya Forest: 1) Mount Kenya Trust and 2) Mount Kenya Environment Conservation.

This is a critical water catchment and one of the five main water towers in Kenya. ITF and partners have now planted over 800,000 trees in and around Mount Kenya forest, mostly indigenous species.

In Kenya, women are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change, largely due to their limited control over the natural resources. ‘Women Tree Planters of the Mara’ is a project that ITF is implementing together with the Mara Training Centre. The project focuses on women’s empowerment, gender integration in natural resource management, and improving livelihoods through small enterprise development. The project encourages the women to plant agroforestry trees, as well as suitable trees for riverbank restoration and erosion control.

Kakamega Sustainable Greening and Livelihood Project is led by women in partnership with ‘Women in Water and Natural Resource Conservation’.
In partnership with Globe Gone Green, the ‘Schools Tree Challenges’ works to inspire children to understand and protect the natural world. Learning about trees and forest resources has been a unique chance for children (and their teachers and parents) to learn about how natural resources support life. In 2019, 8,439 trees were planted in different schools.

On the slope of Cherangany Hills lies the Saiwa Swamp National Park. It is the smallest national park in Kenya and was created as habitat for a rare aquatic antelope called the Sitatunga. Kipsaina Crane and Wetland Conservation Group, in partnership with ITF, have started a new project to help conserve the area, called ‘Planting Trees for Water, Health and Wealth’. This project is supporting indigenous tree planting for permanent wetland conservation. Agroforestry trees have been planted to support local community livelihoods, and tree planting work around schools with and to engage younger generations is ongoing.

2019 was an extraordinary year for ITF’s Kenya Programme. At the grassroots level, the programme has again expanded to new sites and the rate of tree planting has increased. This year ITF was able to plant over 293,847 trees in forests, on farms and school grounds. The programme continues to promote community-led action to protect, restore and care for the environment and sustain livelihoods, to reverse deforestation, land degradation and build resilience to climate shocks.

Our goal of growing 20 million trees and improving the livelihoods of 50,000 households is gaining momentum. ITF partners are planting trees and empowering communities in ten counties around the North and South East sides of Mount Kenya, the Imenti and Nyambene Forests, Tharaka, southern Aberdares, around Kakamega Forest, around Cherangany Hills, in the Mara (to the north of the Reserve) and around Gilgil. In partnership with community-based organisations and grassroots communities, ITF has planted over one million trees in Kenya’s forests, schools, on farms, and along the rivers. The average tree survival rate is over 80%.

ITF’s community-based model has proven to be sustainable, effective and scalable in reversing environmental degradation and reducing extreme poverty. Based on our experience in environmental conservation and management, we know that community empowerment and engagement is critical to natural resources protection and ecosystems restoration.

“\nI have not seen a project like this before, this project has considered us and my life has changed. I can now have access to a small loan in a group and do my projects. Personally, before I had been buying fruit seedlings for planting in the market at a very high price. I’m now grateful I have managed to get fruit seedlings in the nursery for free. The fruit trees I have planted will help generate some income in the coming years.

Harriet Marigu,
74 years from Gaturi Location
Highlighted project from Kenya

Fruits for Livelihood Project, working in partnership with Mount Kenya Environmental Conservation (MKEC) in Embu County, Kenya, provided support and training for farmers from vulnerable families to develop enterprises for selling high-value grafted fruit trees. By creating a shared source of income and access to fast-maturing fruit and nut trees, Fruits for Livelihoods improved the income security and nutrition of 160 families.
In the 1960s, Mount Bamboutos was one of the most biodiverse ecosystems in continental Africa, home to gorillas, chimpanzees, antelopes and elephants. Its unique ecosystems were home to many threatened species. Today, due to human activities, Mount Bamboutos forest is severely degraded and more than 200 flora species in the region are considered endangered.

In April 2018, the Environment and Rural Development Foundation (ERuDeF) in Cameroon, and ITF, in collaboration with the government of Cameroon, started the Mount Bamboutos Initiative (MBI). The first phase of this partnership is due to complete in 2021. The long-term objective of the project is to provide the basis for an integrated and sustainable management of the resources of the area.

To date, MBI has worked with ten Fondoms (traditional Kingdoms), nine Village Forest Management Committees (VFMCs) and three local partners to secure access rights to community lands and individual farms. The project is building shared accountability and responsibility for the restoration of Mount Bamboutos. MBI aims to contribute to ensuring the social and economic independence of communities around the project area. Farmers and other stakeholders have shown significant interest and engagement in generating income through tree planting and a willingness to provide farmland for agroforestry and fruit orchards, as well as other general planting.

Due to the efforts of local communities, the governance structure of Mount Bamboutos has begun to transition from an over-reliance upon Government, to shared and mutual accountability by a range of stakeholders. There is still, however, a long way to go. A complete transition of the governance of Mount Bamboutos and its resources will need time and project continuity.

The project underwent a third-party, mid-term review this year, to assess the capacity of the project to deliver the initial tree-planting targets of 900,000 trees in both project regions (Northwest and Southwest).

In summary, there is a delay in achieving the targets, due to over-reliance on one central nursery per Fondom. Political unrest in the region made it far harder than anticipated for the nursery to deliver the targeted number of seedlings. Also, the April 2018 project start date did not leave enough time for tree seedling production to grow.
seedlings for the 2018 tree-planting season. As such, the project has completed one full planting season only (2019) rather than two, as originally planned.

To significantly improve on the tree planting targets for 2020 and 2021, MBI is moving to a multiple small nursery strategy. MBI’s training and capacity building activities have strengthened local partners, Fondoms and private landowners to achieve the project aims. The allocation of additional land for tree planting has renewed community engagement too. And an improvement in the security situation in the NW and SW regions has made nursery management and tree planting easier.

To address the project’s challenges, MBI have made following changes: 1) deepen community engagement and participation in the programme of all concerned villages; 2) strengthen the monitoring, evaluation and learning systems at all project levels; 3) support the Fondoms and Paramount Chiefs in efforts to reconstitute the Mount Bamboutos reserve so that it recognises traditional laws; 4) ensure youth and gender balance in the programme process and activities, so that to ensure the whole community is committed to and feels ownership of the project. With these changes, MBI will strengthen the community’s ability to preserve the resources of the area whilst increasing and diversifying their livelihoods.

Location of the Mount Bamboutos Initiative (MBI), as well as other ITF partners in Cameroon.
Over 20 years, our UK Community Tree Planting Programme (UKCTPP) has supported more than 50 small-scale community tree planting projects, from community orchards to native woodland planting, making a valuable contribution to UK reforestation needs. (At just 13%, the UK currently has one of the lowest levels of tree cover in Europe, compared with an average of 35% in the EU). We are also creating opportunities for people to connect with nature. There is a growing body of research linking regular contact with nature to various wellbeing indicators. With this programme, people connect with nature and shape their own landscapes.

In 2019, and with thanks to generous funding from the Orentreich Family Foundation, we supported five new community tree-planting projects in Oxfordshire and Hampshire: two mixed woodland planting projects and three community orchard projects resulting in the planting of 1,204 trees:

**PROJECT MANNA, SANDLEHEATH, HAMPSHIRE**
Fruit varieties: £1,000
50 trees

**ROSE HILL & IFFLEY LOW CARBON, EAST OXFORD**
Mixed deciduous woodland: £500
525 trees

**STONEHILL COMMUNITY GARDENS, DRAINTON, OXON**
Fruit varieties: £982
50 trees

**OXFORD CITY FARM, EAST OXFORD**
Fruit and mixed woodland: £946
54 trees

**LOW CARBON OXFORD NORTH, NORTH OXFORD**
Native mixed woodland: £592
525 trees

“We hope people will get inspired.”

Sally Mullard, Oxford City Farm
These modest grants can have a large impact on communities, and the benefits are broader than trees planted. These projects collectively report to have restored six hectares of land and engaged more than 400 people. Stonehill Community Gardens in South Oxfordshire are engaging local vulnerable adults to help with its forest garden project, giving them vital activities to improve their self-esteem and confidence. Another community partner, Oxford City Farm, ran a series of trainings and community engagement events that attracted over 220 people from all over Oxfordshire. They report that many people went away inspired and planning their own tree-planting projects.
In 2019 we ran twelve Wellbeing in the Woods sessions, where vulnerable young people (aged 16–24) could connect with nature and learn woodcraft skills, including how to use a pole lathe, coppicing, tree thinning, stool making, and nature photography. Engaging this hard-to-reach group is difficult. For those who attended, we were pleased to see that retention across the sessions was good. Participants found participation rewarding.

The final session was an inspiring exhibition at Exchange Place Studios in Sheffield. This was a chance for the participants to produce and exhibit their own work, including photography and art pieces, and to demonstrate woodcraft skills they had acquired on the course. Our exhibition provided participants, invited guests and the public with a space to explore the role woodlands could play in their lives.

“There is something special about being in the woods – people are happier the more they are in nature. Your body needs it and your mind needs it too. Wellbeing in the Woods made a massive difference to me.”

Kieran McSorley

IN FOCUS. MEET KIERAN

Kieran was one of the participants for Wellbeing in the Woods in 2019. Having found himself living on the streets of Sheffield, he explains how he picked himself up and the ways in which these woodland sessions helped him refocus his life.

“At the first session I learned how to make a fire with the bow and drill – although I didn’t manage to do it at first. I got it the second time because I was absolutely determined to! The photography was awesome, and my photos turned out way better than I thought they would. At Greno Woods we made shelters, but the best thing was picking and eating bilberries. They would be really good in porridge - and of course I made a stirrer for that on the pole lathe.

All of the activities had a challenge in some way. I never made a walking stick before or that type of stool – nothing with green wood. I did feel a bit anxious about messing up and when I had to show other people how to do things at the exhibition - that was terrifying as the room was full of people!

Wellbeing in the Woods made a massive difference to me – I was a depressed mess when I got here. Going outside is easier now – going to events on my own in town. I used it as a way of getting out – a stepping stone to meeting people face on. Group therapy doesn’t work for me – but this did. It made me feel like I’ve achieved something.”
ITF plans for 2020

2020 is a year of renewal for ITF. Once again, we are adapting to fulfil our potential, and address the many challenges we are facing. Our focus is threefold:

1. Strengthen the **evidence base** for our programmes’ impact, and knowledge sharing capacity between partners.

2. Invest in **longer-term partnerships**, so that the full potential of our projects can be realised.

3. Renew our **strategy**, so that as we head towards our centenary in 2022, we have the methods, systems, skills, culture, and resources required to effectively fulfil our mission.

Through 2020 and beyond, we are working to learn from, develop and scale successful projects, and provide ongoing funding where possible to ensure SCF projects can fulfil their potential.

We brought our partnerships in Kenya together this year, into a single integrated programme called Watu wa Miti – the name ITF was given at the founding Dance of the Trees ceremony in Kenya. We are working closely with partners to implement a set of overarching objectives for Watu wa Miti and build better knowledge-sharing practices.

The Mount Bamboutos initiative will enter its 3rd year, with the current strategic adjustments discussed in the MBI section above now being applied. The project expects to make real progress towards its goal of planting 900,000 trees by 2021.

In the UK, we are expanding our UK community tree-planting programme to offer support to communities in Oxfordshire and the surrounding counties. We are also developing a new nationwide programme intended to support mental health and community wellbeing in post-COVID Britain. This programme will focus on bringing people together to benefit from the proven restorative effects of trees, woodlands and nature.

As ever, ITF adapts to the circumstances we find ourselves in, while remaining true to our vision of a world in which trees and forests flourish, and where their vital role in supporting planetary and human well-being is valued and realised.
How our income was spent

ITF has continued to increase its income, with total income for 2019 at £739,827, compared with £637,036 in 2018, an annual increase of 16% year on year.
Our expenditure in 2019

- Charitable spend: 87%
- Fundraising: 13%
With much gratitude to our programme donors

Thank you to our corporate partners
We share your vision, of a world where trees and forests flourish, and where their vital role in supporting planetary and human wellbeing is valued and realised.