## Regreening Africa















# Introduction by Regreening Africa project manager





Well, it happened, and like the famous Scottish Poet, Robert Burns said, "the best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry," implying, no matter how carefully a project is planned, something may still go wrong with it. And indeed, our plans, like everyone else's this year, did go awry. But we quickly assessed the situation across the eight countries and came up with key mitigation measures.

We know very well that survival is for those who can adapt to change and do so at the speed that is required. Therefore, during this time when we cannot travel to countries where the project is being implemented, we have reinvented ourselves as a team through online meetings via Zoom, restructured our field activities to increase our radio programmes across the eight countries to continue to reach farmers with land restoration as well as health and safety precaution messages.

Our local partners will continue to support smaller groups of farmers with technical trainings and manuals while keeping physical distance and wearing personal protective gears such as face masks and practicing hand sanitising. In fact, the team has taken COVID 19 challenges and turned it into opportunities by making the links between environmental degradation with pandemics, and sensitising local communities on the need to act to reverse the trends before it is too late.

We are confident we shall post good progress in a year that unforeseeable circumstances turned our initial plans upside down! So, fill up your cup of coffee or tea and indulge your mind in some of the exciting highlights we have prepared for you in this newsletter!



## Workshop in Nairobi



Participants in clinic sessions at the workshop. Photo: May Muthuri

At the dawn of 2020, the Regreening Africa team held a planning workshop to build and accelerate impacts on land restoration. Participants drawn from project partners including World Vision, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Oxfam, CARE International and Sahel Eco held the event from 13-14 January in Nairobi, and thereafter, field visits to the project sites in Western Kenya. Led by ICRAF's Stakeholder Approach to Risk-Informed Decision-Making (SHARED) team, the two-day event was a safe space to propel the project in the right direction.

Round table discussions tailored for each project component were a time to probe into the data that may have been found complex

or misconstrued by partners. For example data on indicators for soil health had been challenging for some but a session with ICRAF's Land Degradation Dynamics (LDD) team, made it clearer. The Regreening Africa App, a mobile-based application designed by the team encouraged animated discussions on hectares under restoration and household reached. ICRAF's Design, Techniques and Implementation (DTI) team together with partners explored how to diversify land restoration approaches, strengthen value chains and build capacity trainings. These include through approaches such as trainings, Rural Resource Centers (RRCs), manuals and simple guides for extension agents and



returned home. We can confidently that the say workshops in the beginning of the year set the pace for translating lessons learnt into action. A huge turnaround is being witnessed in project intervention areas highlighted in the Senegal newsletter and subsequent updates in this bulletin.

#### **End Result...**

On return to duty stations in **Ghana**, World Vision and CRS set about running two trainings for farmers on conservation agriculture. The first covered soil health. The second addressed tree nursery establishment and planning.

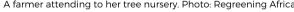
farmers. The SHARED team took partners through design process for five country-level dashboards to discuss available data and the co-design process. Country teams also discussed priority policy objectives and the outcome mapping tool so that behaviour change is tracked alongside project implementation activities.

Country teams also had an opportunity to exchange with one another on key topics such as leveraging, the Regreening App, Rural Resource Centers, community engagement, value chains and monitoring approaches.

The workshop culminated with field visits to reflect on the Kenyan experience and inspire creative and strategic thinking once partners







The two NGOs set targets to ensure the same knowledge is shared with farmers in each site. By March, World Vision had five nurseries set-up to supply 100,000 seedlings each and CRS established 10 community nurseries to raise 2,000 assorted seedlings each. Both NGOs procured seedlings from local communities and other seed suppliers to meet the estimated seedlings target. What determination!

In Niger, staff from the two implementing partners, World Vision and CARE, took the monitoring route. **Trainings** data on collection, monitoring and management of natural resources at community level were newly acquired skills for 57 community agents, who also wear secretarial hats in



A farmer harvesting maize from his farm. Photo: Regreening Africa

village committees of Simiri and Ouallam. Another training on the manufacture and use of improved fireplaces was run in the same communes and successfully taught 1,210 farmers. "This concept saves on fuelwood consumption and time spent in search for the same," says Mrs. Dommo, a champion farmer from Ouallam commune. Benefits of the concept are highlighted in this **feature**.

Rwanda. the World Vision team completed distribution of 4,086,231 tree seedling of and planting the same! 2,794,796 of these were agroforestry Calliandra species: calothyrsus, Sena Spectabilis and Gliricidia sepium. The remaining 1,291,435 grafted mango and

avocado seedlings were distributed to smallholder farmers, schools, churches, and government administrative entities. A foundation had been laid and quarterly meetings are held with lead farmers to review past performance and chart a roadmap to scale restoration practices.

Mali. the Economics of Land In Degradation (ELD) team presented their results on land degradation in relation to cotton culture in the implementation sites. The study revealed that a minimum of 10 trees incorporated in a hectare can translate to improved cotton yield by 22%. But, this does not mean an improvement in food security. Onward, these results are to be translated to simple language to highlight the need for sustainable approaches when cultivating cotton. Secondly, a national agroforestry be instituted to raise plan is to multi-stakeholders awareness to including the private sector. This way, efforts made now won't be hampered along the way.

In Ethiopia, CRS and World Vision teams received training on FMNR, agroforestry practices, area enclosures, RRC establishment, fruit crop production and management. These have been instrumental in establishing two RRCs in Jeju and Hula communities, to serve as centers learning on regreening interventions. Furthermore, these centers are an income generating avenue for farmers, especially women and youth. Conservation groups, in Amanit and Debrenazret Tabias Woredas were

educated on FMNR techniques and 10 environment clubs established in Medebayzana and Shashogo Woreda's. 84 volunteer farmer trainers and government staff were recipients of experience sharing visits between Woredas. This has birthed five stakeholder negotiated action plans to strengthen targeted value chains.

In Senegal, the World Vision team schooled farmers and forestry agents on the Regreening Africa App, for accountability at multiple levels. With sensitized farmers, geo-location of plots has been done and data on number of people trained, households reached and under hectares restoration, recorded. "The App is a strona moment of communion between a producer and facilitator. It is an ideal moment for learning and exchange," says Badara Ndao, a focal point facilitator from Kaffrine region.

In Somalia, World vision and CARE implementing teams' had their hands full with a flurry of activities. Firstly, overseeing formation of village level FMNR groups coupled with trainings on the same for 40 lead farmers. Tasked to encourage adoption, these trainees have since then certified 160 farmers. including 34 women. Secondly was a farmer to farmer exchange programme for co-learning, supported by community sensitization meetings on promising FMNR models.



A farmer demonstrating FMNR techniques on his farm in Kenya. Photo: Brian Wambua

"The experience sharing visit was an eye opener for me. I can easily sustain the proposed FMNR and agroforestry practices through drip irrigation. I have enough ideas, knowledge and sound practices to replicate on my farm and at community level," says Mr. Hassan from Baki.

World Vision team in **Kenya** embarked on a tree nursery mission to implement a one million tree seedlings model proposed in January 2020. This is targeted at enhancing tree variety at sub-county level with accountable stakeholders across the board. Courtesy of ICRAF, *Grevillea robusta*, Casuarina equisetifolia, Sesbania sesban, Leucaena leucocephala, Moringa oloifera, Melia volkensii, Cordia africana, Markhamia lutea and Acacia polyacantha tree species were distributed to meet different ecological and community livelihood needs.

Another restoration initiative targeted at reclaiming 1,000 acres of Mirema Hills was launched. Warm reception of this initiative is translating to a Participatory Forest Management Plan (PFMP) and gazettement of the same is underway. The ceremony was graced by the National Kenya Forest Service (KFS) Board Vice Chairman, Mr. Peter Wandera.







## **Snapshot of February**

The Design, **Techniques** and Implementation component kicked-off the month on a writing spree on value chains at the Aberdares, Kenya. With an ambiance suited to get minds at ease and creative juices flowing, the donors' request to produce journal articles was bound to be met. Working tirelessly over a four-day period, the team generated several drafts scheduled to be completed by August 2020. Upon return, the team procured over 200 kgs of tree seeds to support tree planting and FMNR activities in direct and leveraging project sites. This was followed by trainings to firm up survival and adoption rates.

ICRAF's Monitoring, **Evaluation Learning** team carried out uptake surveys in Kenya, to inform the country team just how many farmers were taking regreening practices and what can be done to improve low adoption rates. From the assessment, it appears that concerted efforts are needed to motivate more farmers to incorporate trees on farms. With this, the country team can formulate sensitisation messages that will promote tree species that are compatible with crops, as well as suitable restoration practises that will ensure sustainability.



Farmers in Puntland participating in a tree nursery establishment training. Photo: Ahmed Mohamed

The SHARED team qot creative by developing alluring dashboards for each country. Scheduled to launch prototypes in July, this interactive platform is meant to allow real-time interaction with data. In the meantime, partners across the 8 countries are familiarising themselves and providing feedback to graphic auides dashboards. Here's a sneak peek.

Outcome mapping to track behaviour change is also being updated by each country. This way, the project can systematically document leveraging opportunities and policy influencing activities and impacts. The SHARED team has also facilitated the virtual team calls with each country and is developing a process for a virtual Joint Reflection and Learning Mission this year.

#### Sahelian updates

In Niger, the team participated in Salon de l'Agriculture, de l'Hydraulique, de l'environnement l'Elevage workshop. Accompanying World Vision staff were two farmers exhibiting Darey cookies baked from Ziziphus mauritiana, Hyphaene thebaica tea and biscuits, Garbey syrup from Balanites aegyptia, food seasoning from Acacia nilotica seeds, and crafted from fruits soap of Azadirachta indica (Neem) and millet stems.

Adansonia digitate, Vitex doniana sweet, Anacardium occidental, Tamarindus indica, Psidium guajava and citrus fruit seedlings, were additional items on display. By close of business, the exhibition stand was empty, save for posters and banners. There's more to a tree than meets the eye.







A farmer practicing FMNR techniques in Senegal. Photo: Anna Daba

In Ghana, project staff enrolled in the Resilience Against Climate Change (REACH) inception workshop to showcase project interventions. Restoring 80,000 hectares in country the calls for multi-stakeholder engagements and this event was a steppingstone to achieving that. Hopefully, improved resilience at household level will be an indication of the need to embrace agroforestry, FMNR and other sustainable agricultural practices,

In **Mali**, a consortium of partners rewarded villagers from Tominian cercle for emerging top in undertaking restoration approaches proposed by the project. "What we are witnessing today should be encouraged across the board," said Mr. Moussa

Coulibaly, Deputy Prefect from the cercle. "These organisations are doing what is required of authorities to recognise efforts at ground level. But, with limited resources this is not the case, so thank you for bridging the gap."

To the prize winners, Mr. Coulibaly added "I applaud you for what you have done for the environment, and to those who were not awarded today. shouldn't vou be discouraged, rather double your efforts." In his closing remarks, Mr. Coulibaly said "We should all remember that these partners are only here for a specific period of time, it is upon us to take up the lesson that without trees, there is no food security. It's time to more vigilant in protecting our environment."

The annual event was broadcasted on Radio Moutian and featured in an Inter-Regional Newspaper.

The team also trained 2.420 farmers including 958 women. across intervention villages overseen by Sahel newly acquired Eco. The **FMNR** techniques are to be passed on to 2,200 more farmers. Later that month, technical project staff and a women's' group from Koutiala District perfected their skills on shea production. Elaborate business and marketing plans are being developed to ensure desired results are achieved early on in the implementation stage.

#### **Updates from East Africa**

In **Somalia**, a hands-on training on pruning, coppicing and thinning was delivered to farmers and stakeholders. from relatable Drawing examples. benefits of these techniques articulated and could easily be sustained since arowth rates of trees are accelerated. World Vision staff also established 7 tree nurseries and supplied relevant materials to ensure smooth running. This initiative benefited 90 households, including 18 led by women.

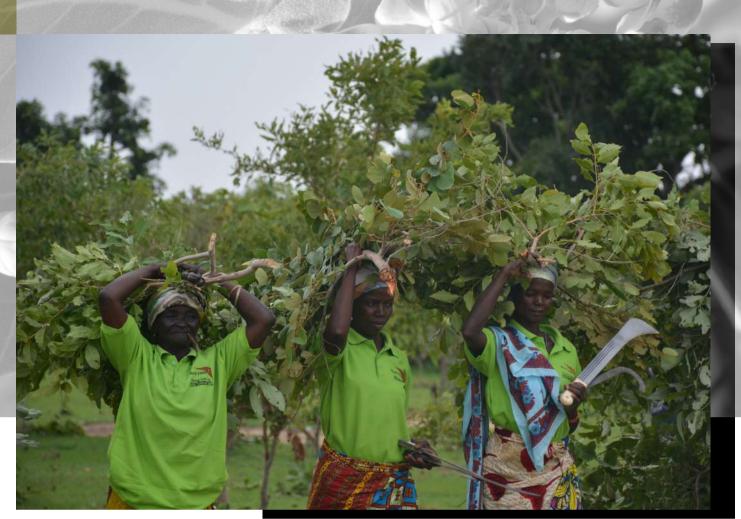
CARE in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Climate Change (MoEACC), steered a training on frankincense and myrrh to 37 farmers. To some, the legendary products are only quoted in Babylonian

texts, the Christian Bible and seen as the epitome of luxury by Egyptian pharaohs and Roman emperors alike. Since Puntland is the epicenter of frankincense and myrrh, sustainable production is key. **Participants** therefore needed to address challenges, propose solutions, identify opportunities and create a clear roadmap that will crown the country as a lead producer.

Drawing to a close, it was evident that strong cooperatives and regulations need to be set to govern protection of the tree species. Needless to say, ideal packaging of end-user products will attract investments from the private sector.

In Ethiopia, Woreda level agricultural officers, schools and Kebeles worked with implementing partners to deliver multiple trainings to 546 men and 130 women on nursery management and quality seedling production. facilitated engagement of volunteer farmer trainers, community-based organizations (CBOs) and cooperatives. A month-long annual water-shed management campaign involving 23,506 women, 30,927 men and relevant stakeholders has translated to delineation of 28,600 hectares of land for rehabilitation.

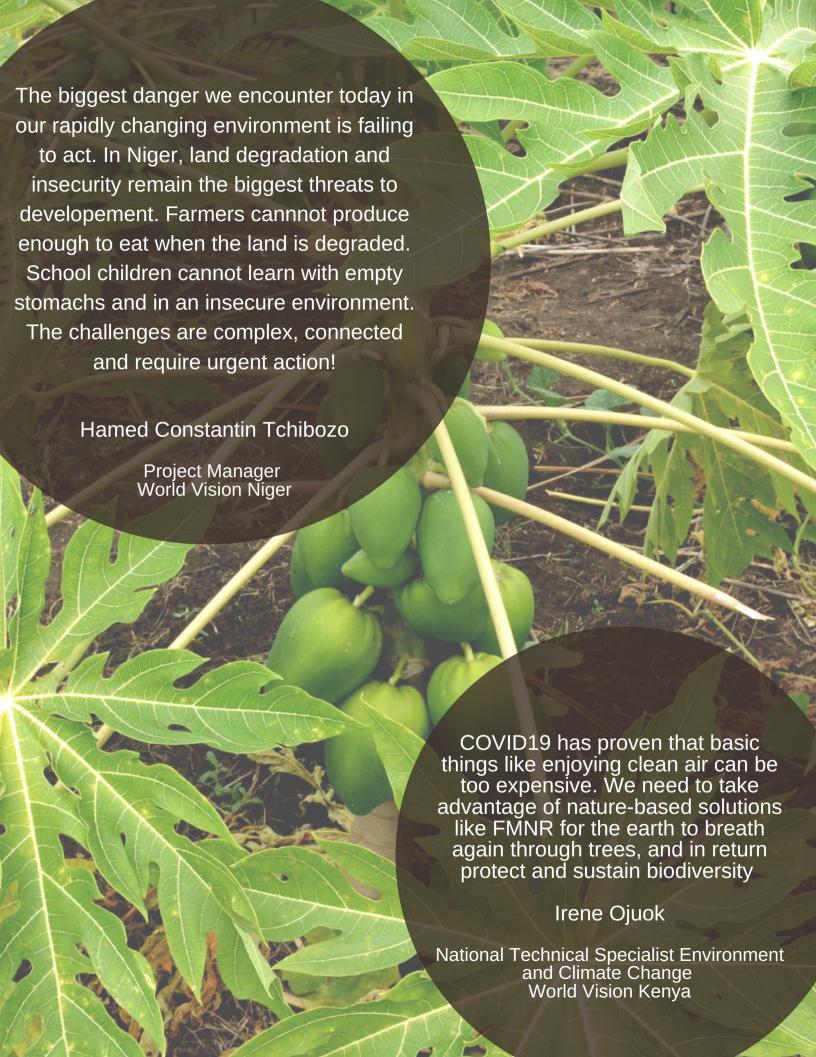
Exchange visits between 5 Woreda's brought together 16 stakeholders, including agricultural and finance office experts, Kebele leaders, zonal



Women carrying firewood from an FMNR farm in Ghana. Photo: Jason Amoo

agricultural and finance experts and local administrative officers. Scalingup plans are underway to facilitate the development of community restoration action plans. Schools were also part of the teams agenda, establishing several environmental clubs different junior high schools, with total of 525 members across the board. All clubs have since then setup tree nursery sites and advocate for the rehabilitation of degraded lands. A learning hub for farmers was formed and RRC strengthened to reinforce adoption.





## **March Highlights**



Farmers taking part in an awareness training on the value of shea. Photo: Drissa Gana

The **ELD** team presented results on economic benefits of investments in sustainable land management and consequences of doing contrary to this. Studies carried out in Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and Senegal reveal that with only five years of implementing FMNR, farmers can expect an 86% increase in crop production and income base. In Rwanda, the exploration reveals that improving country's conservation efforts is essential to the long-term viability of agriculture and the livelihoods it underpins. With a positive increase in the Net Present Value (NPV) of investing in sustainable land management, it is clear the project is moving in the right direction.

The **DTI** team published captivating booklets with simple and clear instructions on how to grow and graft mangoes, as well as strategies to tree planting. The reception by team members. farmers extension agents is tremendous that the team is now working hard to produce simplified manuals in the same series. Get yourself a copy and try those techniques in your backyard - and if you live in town, pass a copy on to your friends and family back home and enjoy the results when you visit!

Technical plans and progress reviews have also been completed for Senegal, Ghana and Puntland This has accelerated teams. capacity building of project staff, lead farmers, line ministries and local communities through trainings, refresher sessions, online courses and exchange visits.

#### **Features from East Africa**

The month started with a bang in Kenya with celebrations at Ruma National Park in Lambwe county to mark this years' World Wildlife Day. Graced by Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife, Hon. Najib Balala, lead farmers had the honour of showcasing regreening initiatives which sparked positive feedback.



Habex Agronomist inspecting newly grafted avocado seedlings, Eldoret Kenya. Photo: Irene Ojuok

In Nyatike county, different denominational churches heeded the restoration call and they along with their members combined efforts to establish tree nurseries. One of the groups, Nyandema Catholic Church targets to raise 5,000 tree seedlings on their nursery.

In **Rwanda**, a long-standing plan to engage community and local government in construction of an RRC was finally realised. The timely set-up will improve farmers' access to quality germplasm, seedlings and planting materials. Refresher courses on nursery establishment and management will now be easy as the center will serve as a knowledge hub. Job opportunities also await qualified nursery operators.

In **Ethiopia**, the team capitalised on farmer field days, experience sharing visits and trainings to perfect restoration practices and share insights to circumvent challenges on communal land use and free grazing. Students, school directors and Woreda education officers were also considered to ensure youths take up the restoration challenge.

Jeju area program purchased 405 kg of tree and grass seeds to facilitate degraded lands and fodder production. To increase the area under restoration, the team mobilized 6,062 households owning 1,301 hectares of land to construct soil and water conservation structures and plant multi-purpose seedlings.

In **Somalia**, the team contextualised existing manuals on nursery management, tree propagation and marketing. The manuals originally published by the **DTI** team are now available in Somali language, courtesy of the Ministry of Environment and Rural Development (MoERD). These are envisaged to benefit more than 1,200 households.

#### **Updates from Sahel**

In Mali, a campaign dubbed 'one woman, one shea tree' was launched to create awareness on the value of shea and the benefits that can be accrued if the trees are well cared. 388 women have adopted the campaign so far and more are envisioned through the continued regional and national media outreach programs. Subsequent trainings are being conducted by each implementing partner to increase survival rates and ICRAF is supplying Nere (Parkia biglobosa) seeds. Karite (Vitellaria paradoxa) seeds are sourced by farmers as they are readily available within each community. Local authorities have also been challenged to spare at least a hectare of their farm to plant either species.



Farmers in Mali placing stones on a farm to protect soil against water runoff. Photo: Drissa Gana

## **Looking Ahead**



As March 2020 drew to a close, the teams across the project were confronted with the COVID 19 challenge and most field-related activities came to a near halt as governments across Africa started imposing travel restrictions and limiting the number of people who can congregate in meetings. Consequently, exchange visits for farmers, community mobilisation activities, data collection and monitoring of activities have been rescheduled.

Nonetheless, team cohesion has aided smooth transition to virtual activities that are creating a semblance of normalcy for the project. Webinars with each of the eight countries to restrategise and restructure activities during COVID 19 have steered back the project in the right direction. Activities that don't require field visits such as data entry production of extension manuals and communication material have been prioritised.

Radio programmes are now running across most countries to keep farmer groups and other stakeholders engaged and making the crucial links between environmental degradation and pandemics such as COVID and climate change related risks.

While adhering to safety precautions such as observing physical distance and keeping the number of participants within the numbers allowed by governments in each country, staff in countries with eased movement regulations continue to produce seedlings, train small groups of farmers on FMNR and collect data in implementation sites. Staff in countries with eased movement like Senegal and Ghana are producing tree seedlings and distributing to farmers in implementation sites. In Ethiopia, volunteer farmer trainers and government agents are providing extension services through phone calls. Lead farmers in Kenya are mapping hectares under restoration using the Regreening Africa App.

As we all adjust to the new normal, we can build back better by making nature part of the solution. We can do so by regenerating and growing more trees—particularly indigenous species, investing in soil and water conservation techniques and protecting our biodiversity. This way, we can restore damaged ecosystems and enhance our resilience to climate change and future pandemics. In return, our soils will be nourished, we will have increased and safe food to eat, beautiful voices from birds and other species and money in our pockets.

## **Upcoming Events**



Twenty fourth
meeting of the
Subsidiary Body on
Scientific, Technical
and Technological
Advice (SBSTTA 24)

17 - 22 August 2020 Montreal, Canada <u>Learn more and register here</u>

FTA Science Conference



15 - 17 September 2020 World Agroforestry (ICRAF), Kenya

Learn more and register here



EU Green Week (Nature and biodiversity)

20 - 22 October Brussels, Belgium <u>Learn more and register here</u>

## **Publications**



<u>Mango Growing</u> <u>Booklet</u>

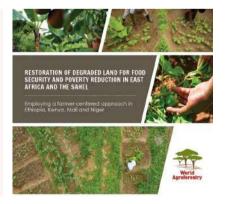
<u>Mango Grafting</u> <u>Booklet</u>



Policy Gaps and Opportunities
for Scaling Agroforestry in
sub-Saharan Africa:
Recommendations from a policy
review and recent practice

Policy Gaps and
Opportunities for
Scaling Agroforestry in
sub-Saharan Africa

RESTORATION OF
DEGRADED LAND FOR
FOOD SECURITY AND
POVERTY REDUCTION
IN EAST AFRICA AND
THE SAHEL



Ky-Dembelo C, Savadago P, Doumbia M, Trace FT, Samake O, Kone B, Carson S.

<u>Manuel pour le</u> g<u>reffage in situ</u>

## **Publications**

Réussir la plantation des arbres au Sahel









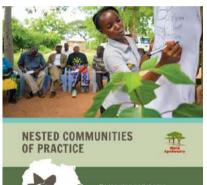






**IMPACT OF ON-FARM LAND RESTORATION PRACTICES ON THE** TIME AND AGENCY OF WOMEN IN THE **DRYLANDS OF EASTERN KENYA** 

**NESTED COMMUNITIES** OF PRACTICE



Investir dans la gestion durable des terres au Sénégal pour atténuer les conflits d'usage



Cas d'études au Sénégal: Retombées <u>économiques</u> des investissements dans la gestion durable des terres dans quatre sites au Sénégal

Investir dans la gestion durable des terres au <u>Sénégal pour</u> atténuer les conflits <u>d'usage</u>

Cas d'études au Sénégal : Retombées économiques des investissements dans la gestion durable des terres dans quatre sites au Sénégal



## **Publications**

The Case for
Farmer Managed
Natural
Regeneration
(FMNR) in the
Upper West
Region of Ghana



Ghana Case Study: The Case for Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) in the Upper West Region of Ghana

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Insights from
capacity building
on the economics
of land
degradation in
Rwanda





Let's green first, the harvest will follow!



<u>Senegal Newsletter – English</u>

<u>French</u>



<u>Mali Newsletter</u>



REGREENING AFRICA IS RESTORING ECOSYSTEMS IN 8 COUNTRIES AND IMPROVING THE RESILIENCE OF 500,000 HOUSEHOLDS ACROSS SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.







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