

TREES_{FOR} TRANSFORMATION

PARTNERSHIP INVITATION:

Our long-term tree planting programme in Northern Uganda transforms the environment, the local community and the lives of ex-child soldiers by empowering them to become agents of change.





Africa is facing a major challenge: desertification

The Sahara desert has increased by an area three times the size of Britain over the past 50 years. The same fate now threatens more than one-third of the African continent. This issue also affects Uganda and at the northern border they are already experiencing Saharan sand coming in on the wind.

However, the main cause is not drought but the mismanagement of land, the over-grazing of cattle and the felling of trees for fuel.

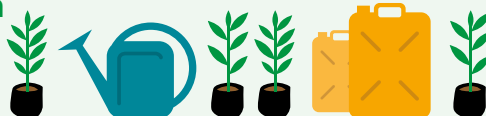
89%

The percentage of Ugandans who use firewood and charcoal as their main source of fuel.

25_{years}

The time left until Uganda is likely to lose all of its forests at the current rate of deforestation.

The statistics are stark, however there is hope for change. Third Hope is working to reverse this trend in the region where we operate in Northern Uganda. We are working with local people, for local people, bringing long-term transformation through the planting and protecting of trees.



Join us in a long-term, community based tree-planting programme that looks beyond the number of trees planted, to the number of trees nurtured and brought to maturity.



Despite many tree-planting efforts, Uganda's natural forests are still being cleared at an alarming rate. Even in the rural region in which we operate, large areas which were covered in trees when we arrived in 2009 are now almost completely denuded of tree cover. Poor land management, slash-and-burn farming practices and the incessant cutting down of trees for building or making charcoal, are decimating the ecosystem of the area.

Over that time, we have seen several tree-planting programmes introduced locally, however after one or two years, almost every tree has died. The severe dry season, combined with the army of goats and cattle that are set loose during those months, devastate the tender new saplings. Organisers become disheartened and the programmes come to nothing, leaving the rural poor no better off than they were before.

Over the years, we have been developing ways to reverse this trend whilst also encouraging sustainable business opportunities in the region. These will help to boost the rural economy and reduce the destructive trend of urban migration. We have come to see that for lasting change, a tree-planting programme must be embedded in the local community, championed by local people and integral to the local economy.

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Planting trees as a carbon sink is a long-term goal

There is, quite rightly, a lot of interest currently in the potential that planting trees can have in reducing carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere by sequestering carbon. About half the dry mass of every tree is made up of carbon and all of this comes from the atmosphere, so it is easy to see how planting more trees can have a beneficial effect on reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide.

Because of this, many people feel motivated to assist in the planting of trees, us included. However, just as the rehabilitation of ex-child soldiers needs to be long-term, so does the vision for the planting of trees need to be long-term.

Many tree-planting programmes focus only on how many trees are planted. Unfortunately, as we often see in our region in Northern Uganda, many of these trees die in the first couple of years. We can see from the diagram below that to nurture just one tree to maturity can remove more carbon from the atmosphere than planting a hundred saplings that do not survive the first few years. What is

of critical importance, therefore, is the training of local people to care for and nurture the young trees through their vulnerable early years.

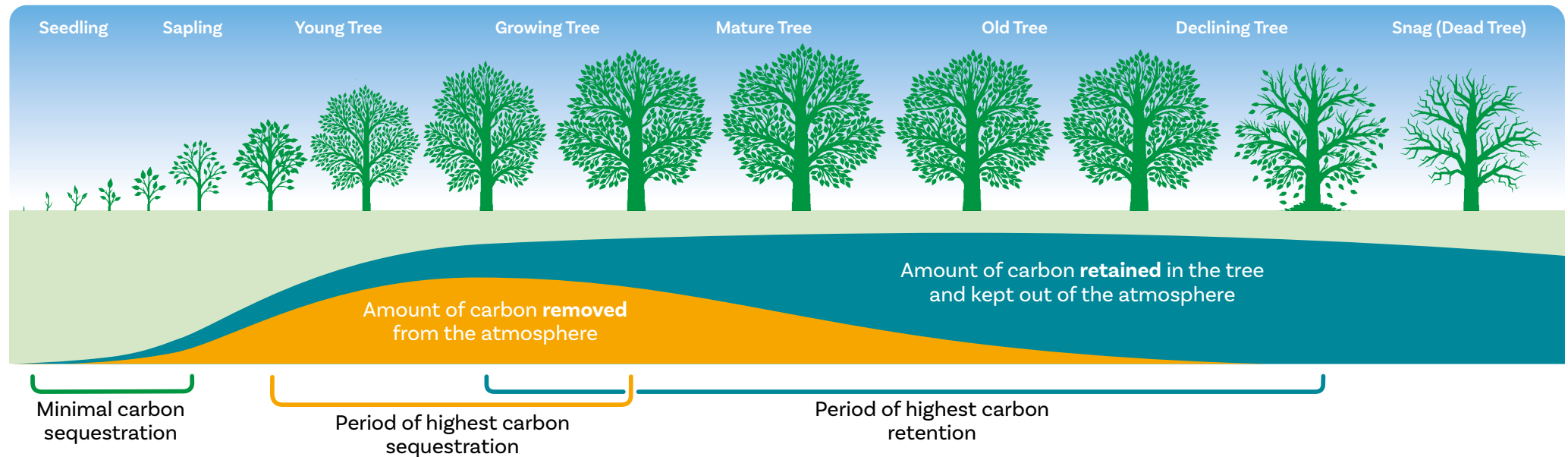
The ex-child soldiers that have trained with us have learned how to protect the tender saplings from drought and over-grazing so that they reach their full stature. They are also proving this knowledge on their own land and many new, healthy fruit trees are testimony to their success. They are the ones now who are best placed to take this valuable knowledge out into the wider community.

This means that not only do trees have the best chance of surviving to adulthood, but our trainees also become known for their farming expertise and not for the stigmatisation resulting from their past experiences as ex-child soldiers.

A double transformation!

“To nurture just one tree to maturity can remove more carbon from the atmosphere than planting a hundred saplings that do not survive the first few years.”

Amounts of carbon removed from the atmosphere throughout a tree's life cycle





As well as classroom teaching, a lot of practical demonstration gives extra confidence to the trainees.

How the programme will work



Third Hope Africa works exclusively with ex-child soldiers in Northern Uganda for their long-term healing and restoration. One of our key strategies is providing the opportunity for them to give back to their community and become agents of change. It is in the context of this ongoing work that we are launching the 'Trees for Transformation' initiative.

'Trees for Transformation' is a locally based tree-planting programme that also aims to re-educate local farmers about the crucial role that trees must play in a prosperous rural economy. Most farmers have abandoned tree planting due to the high failure rate, and have focused on annual cash crops, like maize, to provide an income. This makes farmers very vulnerable to price fluctuations and changes in annual rainfall. A move to perennial cash crops is essential for long-term food security. Trees, once past their early vulnerability, will provide many years of reliable harvests. Our trainees are well equipped to provide training on how to successfully achieve this.

We have, as of 2021, trained over 70 ex-child soldiers in our regenerative agriculture course. They are now well placed to communicate all they have learnt to the wider community – further building their dignity and self-worth. A planted tree is of no real value if it does not survive the early years, so our programme, as well as counting trees planted, will also count the number of trees that reach maturity.

Our programme is unusual in that it focuses on the number of trees brought to maturity.

Tree-planting programmes can only truly bear fruit in a community

when they have taken root in the community



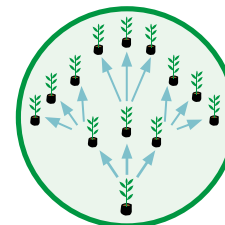
1 Healthy saplings are carefully nurtured at Third Hope's Model Farm (or purchased from local nurseries).



2 The trainees then plant and care for these trees on their own land, proving the effectiveness of this training.



3 Our trainees are equipped to train other members of the community through our *Trees for Transformation* groups.



4 Through these groups, knowledge of how to nurture healthy trees is multiplied to local farmers across the region, leading to long-term reforestation.



Profitable trees can give financial security



Distribution of trees from the Model Farm



Classroom learning is mixed with practice

Just a few ways that the work of Third Hope helps to meet the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

1 NO POVERTY 	Empowering women with vocational skills Teaching about the importance of small-scale rural businesses	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	Encouraging ex-child soldiers to set up community training groups Providing low tech affordable solutions
2 ZERO HUNGER 	Improving rural food security by teaching sustainable farming Encouraging the use of resilient indigenous crops	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	Working exclusively with the poorest sector of society Building confidence and self worth in ex-child soldiers
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	Training on nutrition, especially to women with children Teaching disease prevention and reproductive health	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	Encouraging the use of natural building materials Adopting traditional Acholi modes of consensual leadership
4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	Deliver vocational training to improve skills and livelihoods Providing literacy and life-skills training	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 	Teaching on the environmental impact of plastics Encouraging the use of low impact materials on site
5 GENDER EQUALITY 	Training women alongside men with equal access to learning Employing women in management positions	13 CLIMATE ACTION 	Pioneering an extensive rural tree-planting programme Delivering training on how climate change affects the poor
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	Providing clean drinking water for several local villages Training and demonstrating the safe use of composting toilets	14 LIFE BELOW WATER 	Uganda is land-locked, so little can be done for the oceans, although we do teach and model inland fish farming.
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	The whole project is off-grid and powered by solar energy Modelling water harvesting and widespread use of bicycles	15 LIFE ON LAND 	Offering training on the value of trees to the environment Giving practical training on the care and propagation of trees
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	Encouraging diversification of skills to expand income sources Advocating actively for the end of the injustice of child soldiers	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	Our Peace Centre provides a forum for community dialogue It also encourages analysis of the roots of war in each of us.



Farming the natural way is hard work, so the trainees and team join hands and help each other.

Would you join us in this long-term project of hope?

Your commitment to us

We are looking for forward-thinking businesses, organisations and individuals who are able to commit to give regularly to the programme.

A commitment to monthly donations will provide a stable base for taking this programme into the community and supporting the ex-child soldiers in their new roles as teacher/trainers.

Our commitment to you

We will commit to using these funds efficiently and accountably, and to keeping you regularly updated on progress, letting you know of the successes as well as the challenges!

To get involved or find out more, please contact

fiona@thirdhope.org or david@thirdhope.org



For the long term rehabilitation of
Northern Uganda's ex-child soldiers

"There are two kinds of projects that come to us here in Northern Uganda. One kind are those that look for easy victories with good news stories to send back to donors. These swim in the Red Sea. Here there are many avenues for funding and much noise is made about achievements.

Then there are those that work towards long-term goals. These swim in a Blue Ocean where there is little competition because few journey there. Third Hope Africa is one of these long-term projects and it is towards these that many of us are looking for the true hope for our people."



The late **Mark Avola**, who had worked with ex-child soldiers for over fifteen years. Mark joined us at Third Hope Africa for three years before he passed away in 2015. We are thankful for the wisdom he left us as a legacy.



*"If we care for trees
when they are young
they will care for us
when we are old."*

(PROVERB)

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