



Beyond Subsistence is a non-profit, Christian organisation that exists to bring about long-term sustainable change through forestry and agroforestry development amongst the world's poorest communities.

## Helping Farming Communities During COVID

In 2020 it became clear that Beyond Subsistence would not be traveling to Africa for some time. Like many development organisations during this pandemic, we have been forced to think of creative ways to help from a distance. After communicating with a range of partners in Uganda and Zimbabwe, we learned that access to fresh fruit and vegetables was one of the greatest challenges during the pandemic - particularly for families in semi-urban areas. With many markets and shops forced to close and restrictions on travel imposed, fresh food was not accessible for many families. In contrast, those who had their own farms and gardens had a significant advantage.

With this in mind, Beyond Subsistence decided to set up an initiative in partnership with Global LandCare Australia to sponsor an African Community Garden Project targeting semi-urban areas. After raising approximately \$20,000, we called for expressions of interest and were able to provide a total of 12 grants to partner organisations in Uganda and Zimbabwe. These grants have provided welcome assistance for a dozen local communities to build the necessary infrastructure, buy seed, plants and tools to establish and manage new community gardens.

It is our hope that these gardens will provide an abundance of food and nutrition to vulnerable people throughout the pandemic. Furthermore, that those involved are able to work together to deliver long-term benefits to their communities.

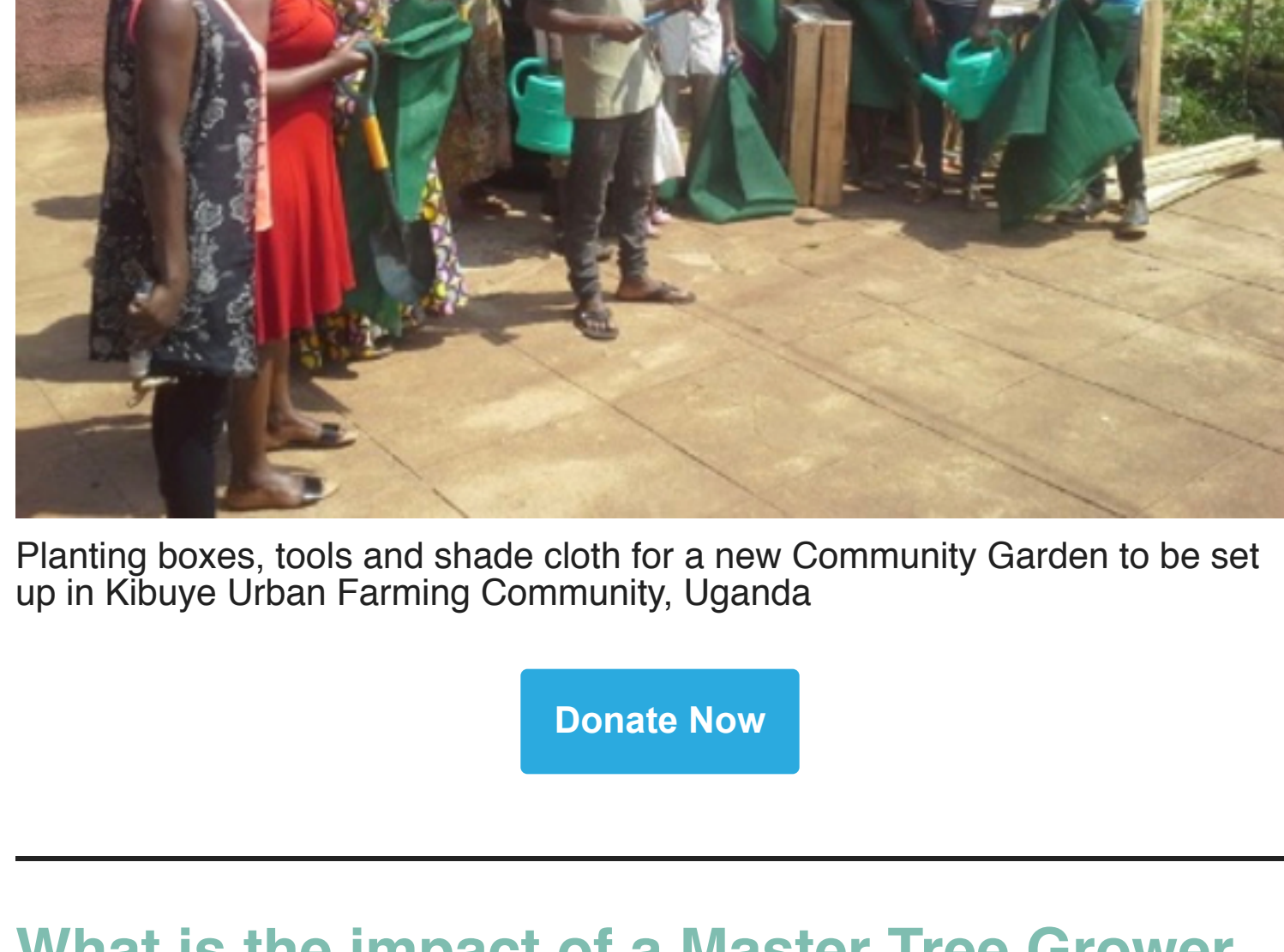
Beyond Subsistence plans to provide funds for further Community Garden projects in 2021.



New water tank and vegetable beds set up for a new Community Garden in Chiural Village, Gokwe, Zimbabwe



Tools and shade cloth for a new Community Garden to be set up at Mapfungautsi Primary School, Gokwe Zimbabwe



Planting boxes, tools and shade cloth for a new Community Garden to be set up in Kibuye Urban Farming Community, Uganda

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## What is the impact of a Master Tree Grower program several years after the event?

The Covid-19 pandemic has prevented international travel and therefore cut off one of Beyond Subsistence's primary activities being face-to-face training of farmers. As much as this has been frustrating, it has nevertheless given us some time to evaluate past training programs.

Recently we completed a survey of participants in our Master Tree Grower programs undertaken in Uganda during 2016 and 2017. Our goal was to assess the impacts of these programs four and five years after delivery. The results were extremely encouraging!

These were the key findings from 70 surveys:

- an impressive 93% believed the training had improved their agroforestry and farming activities;
- 71% indicated that the training had initiated new activities or expanded existing activities on their farms;
- 96% of the participants believed that they had been able to influence others with their learnings;
- 61% indicated that the training had already resulted in an improved financial situation;
- 59% indicated their new activities would have long term financial benefits.

Within the survey results were some other hidden gems. Some participants had formed new network groups for local farmers or women. Others had planted large areas of trees (up to 50 acres) or undertaken new business initiatives such as apirary. One of the most pleasing outcomes however, was to learn that 10% of the participants indicated that they had influenced more than 50 other people with what they had learned. This is extremely pleasing as it indicates that significant leadership has emerged across the area. With strong leadership, there is the potential for community-wide change to occur, which can impact both lives and landscapes on a broad scale.



Master Tree Grower training program 2016, Luwero Uganda

## Update on COVID-19 in Africa

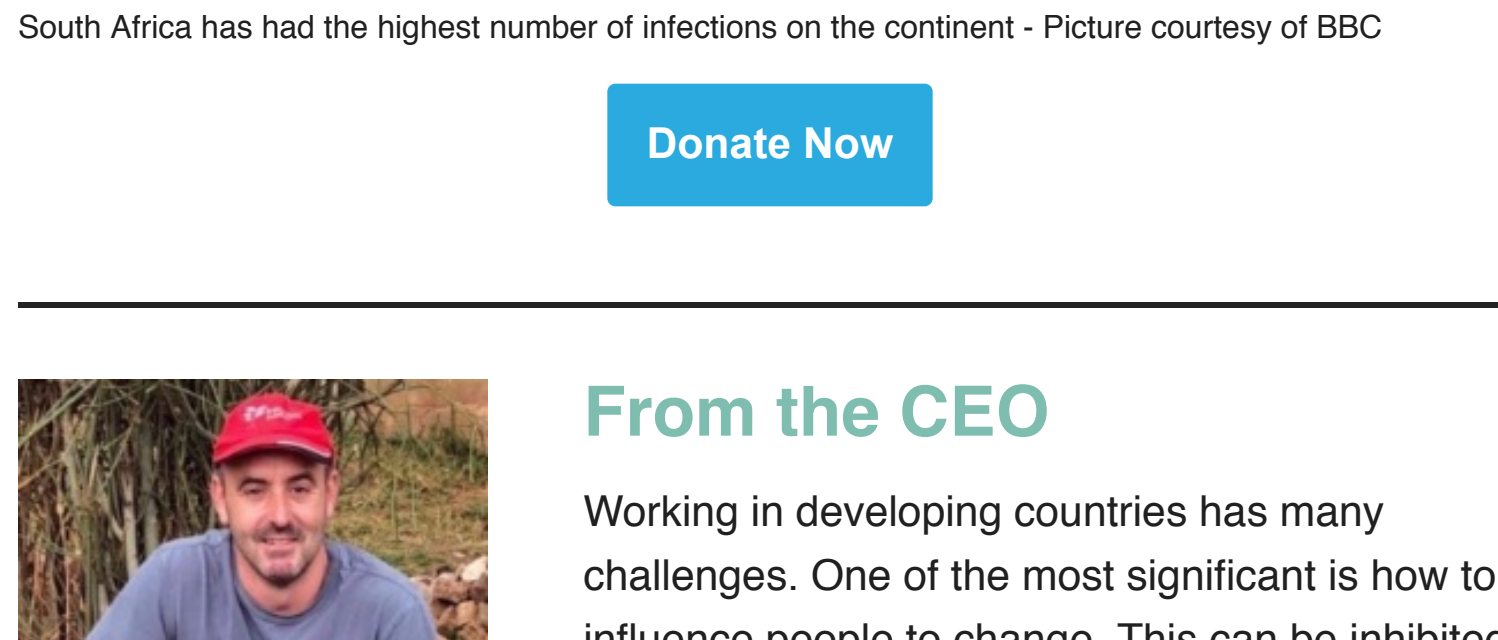
The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recently expressed concern over the resurgence of Covid-19 infections in many African countries. Cases are on an upward trend in 14 countries and in the past week, cases rose by over 30% in eight countries. The WHO believes the arrival of cooler winter weather in southern Africa has increased the risk of infection.

Uganda is the country of most concern recording a 131% week-on-week rise in cases with isolation centres and intensive care units under strain. Lockdowns have recently been re-introduced. Zimbabwe also heads into another lockdown this week with daily infection rates recorded at around 600 per day and deaths at 26 per day. Angola, Namibia and DR Congo are also experiencing a significant resurgence in cases.

Of great concern is the number of Covid-19 variants being detected in Africa. The UK (Alpha), South African (Beta) and Indian (Delta) variants are all active as well as a new variant recently identified in Nigeria. Their prominence, however, is unknown because very few African countries have access to the specialised genomic sequencing needed to detect these variants.

The fatality rate has also become a major concern. Twenty-one African countries are recording death rates above the 2.2% global average. However, this may be due to the low number of tests being undertaken, pushing the average higher than the global figure. In some countries there is such a shortage of testing kits that patients need to pay a USD\$50 fee to be tested.

To date in Africa, the WHO has recorded over 5 million cases of Covid-19 and 134,000 deaths. However, the actual numbers are most certainly far higher than stated given the low testing rates and primitive health care systems in many of the poorer African countries. We remain deeply concerned for the Covid-19 situation in many developing nations.



South Africa has had the highest number of infections on the continent - Picture courtesy of BBC

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### From the CEO

Working in developing countries has many challenges. One of the most significant is how to influence people to change. This can be inhibited by many things including cultural issues, trust, motivation or trauma. Over the years we have worked very intentionally to develop our programs and structures in a way that will maximise influence. For without creating real change in lives and landscapes, we achieve little more than delivering training programs.

Our recent survey of 70 Ugandan farmers has provided a unique insight into the impact of our African Master Tree Grower programs, which we have been delivering since 2013. These programs are always very carefully and intentionally planned. Each program selects a mix of key influential people, both men and women. These are people we believe have the potential to lead their communities in the future. People who have demonstrated a willingness to try new things and to share their knowledge with others. The selected participants are predominantly farmers but there is always a scattering of industry & business people and representatives from relevant government and non-government organisations. This ensures we create a network of people around each farmer, each with a different role. Some are there to walk alongside and encourage as they share the journey. Others provide technical advice or access to markets, supplies or finance.

During the training, we provide each participant with knowledge and skills to help them to plan, establish and manage their agroforestry initiatives. We also provide them with a few simple tools to empower them. Some of these tools help them physically trim or prune trees, other assist them to measure and evaluate their trees or crops. Finally we challenge them. To use the knowledge they have been given, to look after God's creation, and to pass this knowledge onto others freely - just as it has been given to them.

The survey results have been a welcome confirmation of the influence we are achieving through these initiatives. With 93% of participants indicating a change in behaviour and 96% indicating they had influenced others around them, it confirms that we are achieving far more than just running training programs.

Thanks for your support in 2021.  
Jon Lambert, CEO Beyond Subsistence

## Want to help?

Beyond Subsistence is managed by volunteers and we strive to maximise the amount provided for overseas projects. Donations are 100% tax deductible and we guarantee that at least 80% of your gift will go directly to our projects. The balance is required to pay for transaction fees and compliance costs associated with the ATO's requirements for charities with deductible gift recipient (DGR) status.

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