

Newsletter #1

Bunyonyi Food Forest, Uganda

March 20, 2024

The main purpose of the Food Forest is to support a Lake Bunyonyi community who are committed to promoting local food sovereignty, while addressing heightened challenges of malnutrition, gender inequality, inaccessibility to quality education, natural resource degradation, and climate change.

A lot has happened since this sustainable, women's-led initiative was introduced. Here are a few highlights since my return from Uganda (January-March, 2024)...

Judith visits Land

First, Judith Bakirya (renowned Ugandan permaculturist), visited the 3-acre land on Lake Bunyonyi to determine its feasibility for a Community Food Forest.



This is what Judith determined:

"I am very happy with what I am seeing. The land for the Bunyonyi Food Forest is perfect for sustainable permaculture. It will become the center for transforming the area. Once we demonstrate to the community and they see, let it spread out like a wildfire so that everyone can preserve the environment, have the food, have the income, and preserve the land into the future."

(Judith Bakirya, February 2024)

[VIDEO-2024-03-08-09-56-10.mp4](#)

Proposed vegetation:

- "Outer Green wall will have firewood, herbs, and food trees such as guava, avocado, and moringa, which will drop their leaves to create fertilizer and replenish the forest
- Canopy layers with commercial trees and jackfruit trees (which grow very tall)
- On a third layer we can plant vegetables such as: cabbages, tomatoes, potatoes, beans, maize, pumpkin, and shrubs such as passion fruit
- All these plants can coexist together beautifully...

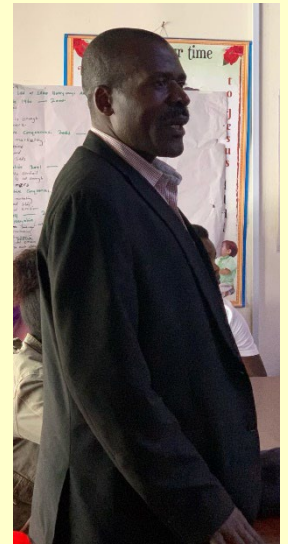
Pine and Eucalyptus (found on land) do not fit in an agro-forest, but can be used for income generation"

Support from Local Government

Secondly, we met Hamuhambo Town Council members, and gained support for the Bunyonyi Food Forest. We learned a lot about rural governance in Uganda!



HAMUHAMBO TOWN COUNCIL



LOCAL CHAIRMAN (ARDRON)



MET WITH ARDON & FERIDIANA, LOCAL LC1 CHAIRMAN & WIFE'S FAMILY

Community Fieldwork

Through Judith's leadership (and her research assistant Emma Kagoma), we then conducted extensive fieldwork with Women's groups, Mixed gender groups, and a Youth group, to: i) determine historical patterns of agriculture, ii) vision for the future, and iii) share Food Forest model of agriculture.



A great deal of excitement was generated as community groups planned, mapped out, and presented their own versions of a Food Forest!!



Visioning with group of Youth (not in school) was a particular, unexcepted highlight!! This is what they desire for their future:

- A future with a sustainable job
- Learning new skills
- Peace and safety in homes
- Fertile soil with enough food to eat
- Being happy with their siblings being in school
- Being actively involved in solving community issues



Everyone left feeling very excited, energized, and grateful for the opportunity to be part of a Food Forest vision!



Facilitators also felt optimistic that this community model and direction would be successful and sustainable!

*“Using practical design, ecological principles, and participatory information collection tools and technics, **the approach to the study was uniquely collaborative and participative.** Involving community members from the inception of this initiative has the desirous potential to generate long-term positive impacts, as well as generate*



sustainable community involvement, ownership, and accountability”

(Bakirya & Kagoma, Field Report, March 2024)

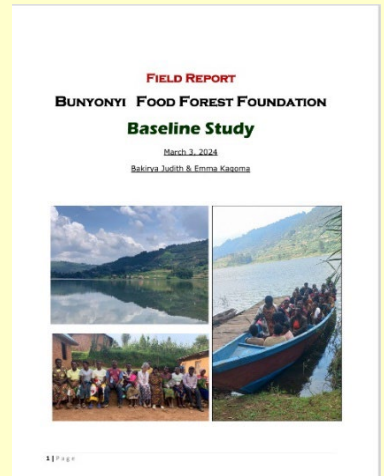


Determined Next Steps (Still can't believe all of these happened!!)



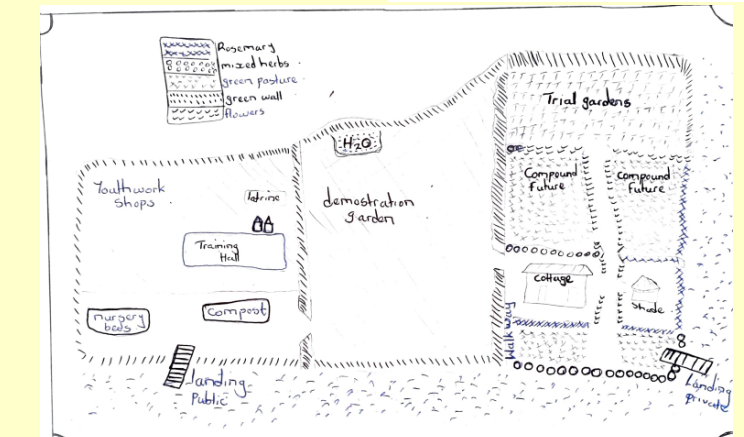
“The key findings, the lessons learnt, and the suggestions for action indicate that the Lake Bunyonyi area – and the designated Food Forest Land, in particular - is an ideal place for introducing Food Forest Gardens because of the hilly terrain, fertile soil, existing knowledge of land terracing, intensive nature of land use practices, the adjoining fresh water lake, the vibrant commercial activities, and the enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by the local community”

(Field Report, March, 2024)

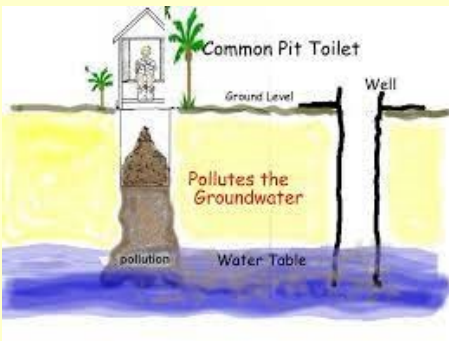


Forest Forest Map Design

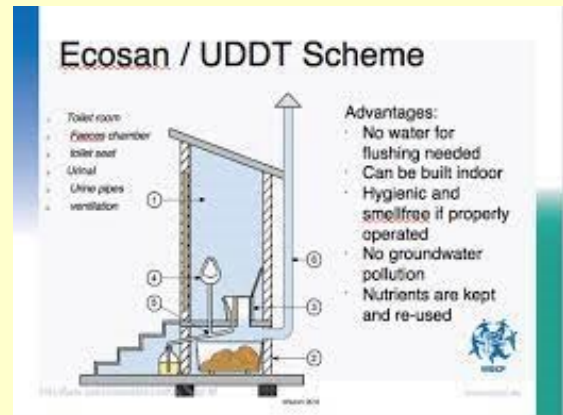
We met (on the land) with local engineers and builders to determine designs and costs for initial infrastructure (i.e., Landing dock, Eco-san Latrine, Women’s Gathering Place, Food Forest crops).



BUNYONYI FOOD FOREST MAP DESIGN (FIELD REPORT, MARCH 2024)



From common Pit to Eco-Friendly Latrine



Community Groups



We walked (a long way) to meet with local chairman and to identify a *Women's group* (who will lead the BFF Demonstration Gardens) and a *Youth Group* (for Vocational skills-training and Community Action projects)



BFF - WOMEN'S GROUP

	8-7-2021	15-7-2021
1. Franska	P	P
2. Martha	P	S
3. Betty	P	S
4. Meja	P	.
5. Jasodina	S	P
6. Mavia	S	.
7. Irethi	O	.
8. Anisha	.	.
9. Prosi	P	P
10. Demetinao	.	✓
11. Penicopuf	P	✓
12. Hadiria	P	P
13. Deceni	O	.
14. Rovina	O	.
15. Emily	P	P
16. Edinah	P	P
17. Dinah	F	P
18. Chance	P	P?
19. Jonah	O	P?
20.		



BFF - YOUTH GROUP



Bunyonyi Food Forest Website

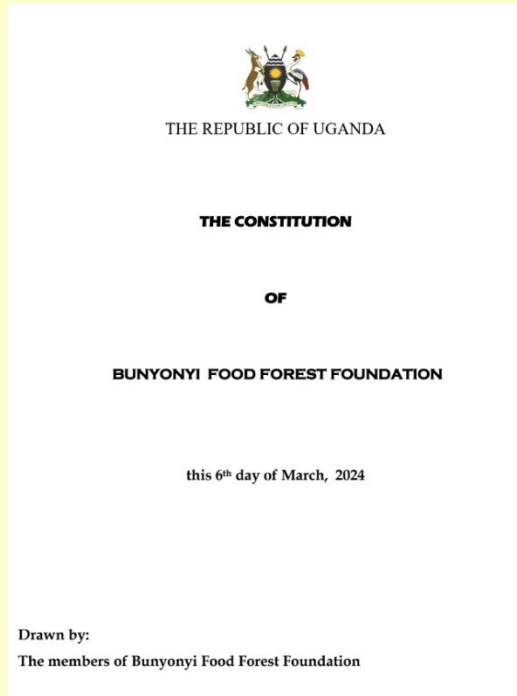
A huge thank you to friend and colleague, Maery O'Neill who is assisting us with this!

Registered Bunyonyi Food Forest Foundation (BFFF) was established!

Highly skilled and talented, Bunyonyi Food Forest Foundation Members:



**Ms. NIWENSHUTI SHARON
(COMMUNITY GROUPS
COORDINATOR)**



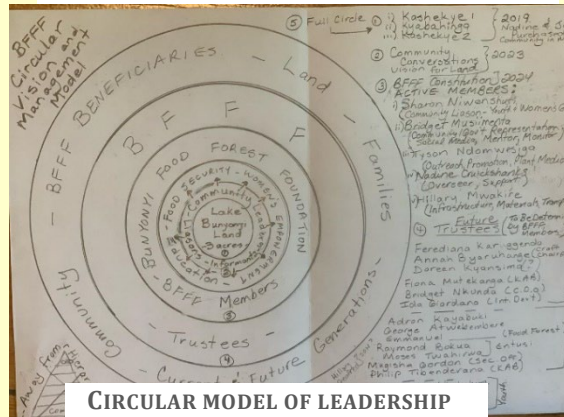
Drawn by:
The members of Bunyonyi Food Forest Foundation



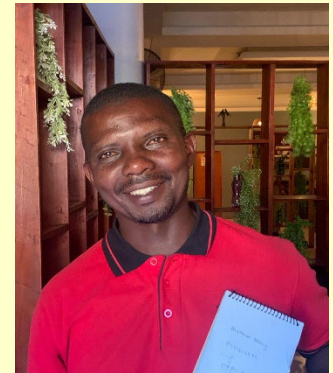
**Ms. MUSHIIMENTA BRIDGET
(COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
OFFICER; BFF MENTOR &
MONITOR)**



**Ms. BAKIRYA JUDITH
(FOOD FOREST LEAD)**



CIRCULAR MODEL OF LEADERSHIP



**Mr. MWAKIRE HILLARY
(TRANSPORT, MATERIALS,
INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN)**



**Mr. NDAMWESIGA TYSON
(OUTREACH, INDIGENOUS
MEDICINAL HERBS (WITH
BATWA))**



**SIDE NOTE: AFTER A NEAR-DEATH BODO BODA ACCIDENT
(THE DAY BEFORE HE MET JUDITH), TYSON WAS
CONVINCED OF JUDITH'S MEDICINAL HERB HEALING.
HERE IS HIS VIDEO SHARING THIS EXPERIENCE:**

[20240202_113223000_iOS.MOV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20240202_113223000_iOS.MOV)



**Ms. CRUICKSHANKS NADINE
(BFFF SUPPORT)**

Plans for certified BFFF registration and Uganda bank account are in process...

So many unforeseen, serendipitous, encounters....

Meeting with Dr . Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka (*world renowned Ugandan Wildlife Veterinarian*) and her Conservation through Public Health (CTPH) Team, affirmed BFF's commitment for land and water conservation, stewardship, and Youth engagement.



Caring for land and water of Bunyonyi Food Forest, cares for the people of Bunyonyi's Food Forest.



Reuniting with **Nyaka** Friends also confirmed a holistic and intergenerational approach to BFF...



Interconnected, interdependent, Whole System's Food Forest model.

Unexpected BFF encounters, right to the end of my visit....

Two days before Nadine was leaving Uganda, we were signing our Bunyonyi Food Forest Foundation Constitution, and crafting our first 'minutes' (in a Kabale coffeeshop ☺). We chatted with a couple of Ugandans, who just *happened to be* from the Lake Bunyonyi region and *happened to be* local filmmakers.

In conversation, they shared their interest in documenting the unfolding Story and Impact of the Bunyonyi Food Forest Foundation – through Photojournalism and/or Documentary.



KING AND TASHA (FAR RIGHT) - FILMMAKERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, DOCUMENTARIES (INTERESTED IN BFFF)

That same evening, we were invited to meet Kabale mayor, ***Emmanuel Byamugisha Sentaro***



Where these encounters might lead...



who knows???

I have come to realize that anything is possible!



Beautiful Land and Most Amazing People!

By far, the best, most extraordinary attribute of the Bunyonyi Food Forest is the people that we have met along the way. Without them, and support from many others, this Seed of an idea could not have grown to where it is today!



SPEAKER

Ms. Judith Bakirya
 Managing Director, Business Profile & Practice
 East Africa, London Uganda (2014)




TRANSPORTING AND BAGGING RICE FOR FIELDWORK



So.... Here we are, March 2024!

The Bunyonyi Food Forest community and members are super excited
- and motivated –
to make this dream a reality!

After 5 years of building trusting relationships within the Lake Bunyonyi community, and thanks to recent support, all of the foundational work is completed. Every cent and well wish that has been kindly offered has gone into this community fieldwork and to establishing next steps for the physical, on-the-ground Food Forest work!



Community optimism and momentum is strong and
our BFFF Team is trying hard to keep this going.

Next steps include raising funds for the building of a landing dock, ecosan latrine(s), women's gathering space, youth skills-training site, children's nature-play area, irrigation, documentary, and of course.... the Food Forest itself (Green wall, fruit trees, ground crops, medicinal herbs,...).

If you are able and/or interested in supporting these next steps...here are a few ways to do so:

1. Deposit funds to our registered **BFFF Bank Account** (to be established in Kabale, Uganda once Certification is finalized)
2. **E-transfer** to Nadine
3. Share your **Well Wishes** or **Spread the Word...** they go a long way!
4. Come **Visit and Offer your Skills on the ground!**



- Our new favorite motto -

Mpora, Mpora

(Slowly, Slowly...)

From a small seed, a food forest will grow



THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
(Weebale Munonga)

Please know that
EVERY CENT will go
on-the-ground
towards this
initiative!

