TREES FOR THE FUTURE

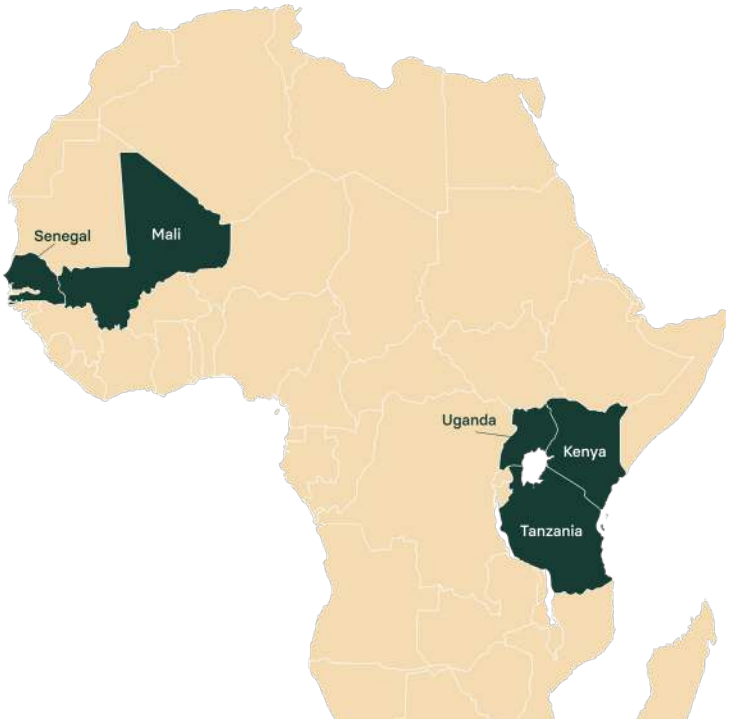
WHERE WE WORK

Trees for the Future (TREES) is currently working with tens of thousands of farming families across five countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Over our 30+ year history, we've worked around the globe. In 2014, we focused our work in select African countries, where the climatic and economic challenges were most pressing and we could make the greatest impact.

Decades of unsustainable agriculture practices have resulted in degraded and unproductive land; nutrient-scarce food systems; and farming families who are unable to grow and sell enough to meet their most basic needs. Using a climate smart methodology we call the Forest Garden Approach, in some of the most challenging growing conditions in the world, farmers are proving that agroforestry is a solution to each of these challenges, effectively ending hunger and poverty while restoring the land and environment.

CLIMATE & GROWING CONDITIONS

We work in regions close to the equator. Farmers are accustomed to high temperatures throughout the year and mark the seasons by rainfall. The farming communities we serve live through some of the most challenging conditions on the planet: extended dry periods, extreme heat, deadly floods. All of these challenges are compounded by the climate crisis.



Local staff teach farmers how to be successful on the land they have and mitigate the growing effects of climate change through agroforestry and climate-smart growing techniques. In the long term, a Forest Garden helps combat climate change and support healthy ecosystems for future generations.

ECONOMY & INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

70% of people in Africa are dependent on agriculture as a livelihood, but generational poverty shows that the current way of farming isn't paying the bills. In sub-Saharan Africa, 40% of the population is living below the poverty line. Trees for the Future identifies farming communities that are living in poverty and interested in adopting the Forest Garden Approach as a way to increase their revenue streams and total income.

Typically, farmers grow just one or two crops on their land when they enter the program. Farmers are dependent on the success of one or two harvests for the entire year. Plus, they're competing to sell the same product as all their neighbors. Through the Forest Garden Approach, farmers diversify their crop portfolio, protecting themselves from unforeseen losses and carving out a niche for themselves in the local economy.

NUTRITION & FOOD ACCESS

Farmers are responsible for feeding the world, but so many of them go hungry themselves. 20% of people in Africa are chronically hungry (278 million people). In the farming communities we serve, roughly one in five people are living in hunger. The maize or wheat that many of the farmers grow when they enter our program is not going to the family dinner table. It is harvested, processed, and shipped elsewhere. If that was the only crop the farmer grew that season, she now must feed her children for months off one payday.

When farmers begin planning their Forest Gardens, we ask them a simple question - "What can you eat and what can you sell?" Farmers plan entire garden beds around their family's nutritional needs. Staff also teach farmers about the importance of perennial crops, like fruit trees, that provide harvests year after year. This thoughtful land management ensures that the family has something to eat year-round.

COUNTRIES AT A GLANCE

MALI

Mali is the newest country of operation for TREES, we first started in the West African nation in 2021. TREES staff work with farming communities in Kayes and Koulikoro, west and east of Bamako respectively. The semi-arid to desert climate of Mali is incredibly challenging for farmers. Temperatures can reach dangerous highs in the dry season and farmers face increasing desertification as the Sahel Desert expands from the north. In addition to extreme heat and limited rainfall, families are living in a country marked by conflict and unrest. An ongoing political crisis and terrorism impact Malians on a daily basis, making it difficult, and often dangerous, to find stable streams of income and nutrition. Commonly grown crops in Mali include millet, rice, and sorghum.

The Mali team has trained more than 650 farmers in the Forest Garden Approach, benefiting more than 6,400 people. In total, we've helped Malian farmers plan more than 2 million trees in their Forest Gardens.

SENEGAL

Senegal is one of our longest running countries of operation. We work across the peanut basin in Fatick, Koalack, and Kaffrine. The farmers we serve in Senegal experience a semi-arid climate, living and farming through a long dry season and a short rainy season. Poor growing conditions and an overreliance on monocropping has destroyed much of the country's arable soil. Plus, farmers are affected by the expanding Sahel desert to the north. Water access is the greatest barrier to success and soil salinity (increasing salt) is quickly becoming a challenge. Commonly grown crops in Senegal include millet, rice, and sorghum. The main cash crop produced in Senegal is peanuts.

We've trained 8,700 Senegalese farmers in the Forest Garden Approach, benefiting more than 61,900 people. To date, we've planted more than 33.4 million trees with farmers and local groups in the country.

KENYA

Our work in Kenya is focused in the country's western region in the Lake Victoria Watershed. TREES staff work in Migori, Kisumu, and Homa Bay counties, all bordering Lake Victoria. The Kenyan climate varies widely across the country, high temperatures and humidity and regular rainfall are common in Western Kenya. Farms in these areas are at risk of destructive, costly floods during the rainy seasons. Commonly grown crops in Kenya include maize, wheat, and potatoes.

We've trained more than 14,000 farmers in the Forest Garden Approach, benefiting more than 76,700 people. In total, Kenyan farmers in our projects have planted more than 32.5 million trees.

TANZANIA

The TREES Tanzania team works across the country, managing projects in Iringa, Tabora, Simiyu, and Singida regions. Growing conditions vary from region to region, but farmers generally experience a moderate tropical climate. Most farmers in these regions grow cereal crops like maize, beans, cassava, sweet potato and millet. Common cash crops are cotton, sunflower and tobacco. Farmers often raise chickens, cattle, goats, sheep, and donkeys. Bee keeping is also commonly practiced in Tabora and Singida regions.

We've trained more than 10,000 Tanzanian farmers in the Forest Garden Approach, resulting in 37,700+ beneficiaries and nearly 33 million trees planted.

UGANDA

The TREES Uganda team is dedicated to reaching farmers in the southeast region of the country above Lake Victoria, primarily in the Mount Elgon and Busia districts. The tropical climate helps farmers grow crops year-round, but intense rainfall (particularly in the mountainous regions where we work) causes deadly and destructive floods and landslides each year. Commonly grown cash crops are coffee, banana, and sugar, but monocropping and deforestation lead to degraded land and increased landslides.

We've trained more than 6,600 Forest Garden farmers in Uganda, benefiting 42,425 people. In total, we've planted more than 26 million trees in Uganda.

LEARN MORE

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