

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## A WORD FROM JEAN-PAUL, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter!

We are thrilled to share with you the incredible impact that CSR initiatives can have on our environment and the communities we serve. The Green Initiative Challenge, spearheaded by the Kengen Foundation and proudly partnered with BGF from the very beginning, is a shining example of such an endeavor.

At its core, this initiative focuses on tree planting in arid and semi-arid lands, benefiting a wide range of stakeholders. The significance of this mission cannot be overstated, as it directly contributes to the sustainability of our planet and the well-being of future generations.

Here at BGF, we firmly believe that children hold the key to our future, and their hopes and dreams inspire our every action. The

Green Initiative Challenge aligns perfectly with our vision and mission, as we strive to create a better world through environmental conservation and community development. While the importance of CSR may sometimes be underestimated or overlooked by those unfamiliar with the challenges faced by farmers in harsh areas, we recognize it as a crucial parameter for success in large-scale dryland afforestation. It not only brings about positive change but also ensures widespread benefits for all.

Thank you for your continued support, and we hope you find this newsletter both informative and uplifting. Together, we can make a difference and create a sustainable future for generations to come.

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Taking care of farmers not only trees**

The long-term commitment that BGF demonstrates towards its partner farmers is crucial for project success. By nurturing the relationship and fostering trust, BGF ensures that farmers remain invested in the growth and maintenance of the forests they help cultivate.

BGF's CSR initiatives have a positive ripple effect within the communities it serves. By empowering farmers and promoting sustainable practices, BGF contributes to overall development and resilience in these regions. Through its commitment to social and economic welfare, BGF breaks the cycle of poverty and provides communities with the resources needed for a more sustainable future.

For BGF, CSR is not just a checkbox; it is fundamental to its mission. By exemplifying the potential for businesses to make a lasting impact, BGF serves as a model for other companies seeking to combine profitability with social and environmental stewardship. Its approach paves the way for a more sustainable and equitable future.



Village Bank at Kamuwongo, where small-holders part of our tree planting programme, can get banking facilities and capacity building on use of money (loans, savings etc). Photo BGF

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become an integral part of modern business, with companies recognizing the importance of contributing positively to society and the environment. Better Globe Forestry (BGF), a company specializing in agroforestry projects with farmers, understands the power of CSR in its operations, particularly in impoverished dryland areas. BGF's commitment goes beyond tree planting, as it actively addresses the social and economic challenges faced by these communities.

BGF engages with partner farmers to ensure a focus on their welfare. The success of agroforestry projects is closely linked to the well-being of farmers, and BGF works collaboratively with them to improve their quality of life. This involves providing training, education, access to micro finance, and other support systems.



Village Bank at Mbuvi, also a micro-finance institution supported by BGF, with over 6,000 farmer-shareholders, in an area with no formal banking facilities. Photo BGF



## THE GREEN INITIATIVE CHALLENGE

Motivating school children to plant trees



Jean-Paul Deprins planting a ceremonial tree during the Awards event. Photo BGF

The Green Initiative Challenge or GIC is a competition between hundreds of schools, on tree planting. Organized by the KenGen Foundation with Better Globe Forestry (and initially Bamburi Cement Ltd of Lafarge), this exists now for 8 years (or 8 Phases) in the Seven Forks area of Kitui, Embu and Machakos counties. In view of its climate and culture, this is not an easy area for planting trees. The climate is semi-arid, with irregular and poor rainfall.

KenGen has the majority of its hydropower stations on the dams of Tana River, which is the Seven Forks area, while BGF is implementing its agro-forestry programme there. The GIC reinforces BGF's message to farmers to take part in our Farmers Programme, and plant trees with us. The training and capacity building school children are getting through the GIC help to create a mentality of tree protection against free-roaming livestock, which is vital to growing of *Melia volkensii* in the area. BGF's inputs in the programme are the provision of seedlings and the monitoring and evaluation.

Each year one hundred schools are selected, trained in tree planting

and its management, and provided with seedlings. Each school gets 300 seedlings. The event is not only about schools, and the Ministry of Education, Board of Management and teachers, but involves the whole community around the schools, through the parents. The KenGen Foundation and BGF put considerable

efforts in the process, to make it a success. Each Phase takes 2 years, to be sure the trees are growing well. During this period, all schools are closely monitored and by its end, the best schools, and teachers, are selected in a top 10. This then becomes a top 3, after final assessment by the Technical Committee that oversees the competition. Schools are aware of the process and try hard to have the best trees, so they can share in the awards. The awards are worth to toil for, including help in infrastructure, water tanks, cash money, scholarships, school trips and certificates, courtesy of the KenGen Foundation. They are publicly announced during a festive ceremony where easily 200 and more people attend, with entertainment by school children, music, speeches, ceremonial tree planting and a good lunch. All stakeholders are there: the winning schools, the relevant Government organisations (representatives of the Central Government -The Chiefs, of the County Governments, the Ministry of Education, KEFRI, Kenya Forest Service, National

Environment Management Authority), the community and of course the organizers. This year, the launch took place on 6th July, in Matendeni Staff Camp of KenGen, and the award-winning schools were (i) Karuari Secondary School (Embu County), (ii) Kamutu Primary School (Embu County) and (iii) Mbandasalama Primary School (Machakos County).

This is a big event for the area, where otherwise not much is happening. And meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of school children and their farmer parents have become aware that tree planting and growing not only is possible, but a good thing too.



Entertainment by school children before announcing the award-winning schools. Photo BGF