

Conservation and sustainable use of the Kikuyu Escarpment Forests

Implemented By: Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO)
Location: Kikuyu Escarpment Forest (Southern Aberdare Forest), Lari District Kiambu County.
Total Project Cost: US\$ 75,800
Total Grant from GEF/SGP: US\$ 50,000
Community Contribution: US\$ 25,800
Size of the Forest: 37,600 Ha
Altitude: Ranges between 1,800-2700m



The Kikuyu Escarpment Forest is an important bird area and home to a variety of animal and plants that have been threatened by years of illegal activities such as timber harvesting, commercial fuel wood harvesting, charcoaling (especially Kinale forest block), encroachment, destruction of catchment sites, overgrazing and poor resource management. Due to high poverty levels and the lack of opportunities to involvement the local community in the participatory management of the forest have put additional pressure on the ecosystem.

For this reason, the Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO), with the support of the GEF Small Grants Programme, embarked in a project aimed to conserve the Kikuyu Escarpment forest by empowering the Peri-communities in using a Participatory Forest Management approach.

Other project objectives included raise community awareness on key environmental issues through participatory programmes around the Kikuyu Escarpment Forest; facilitate information sharing among local communities and groups that are engaged in forest conservation; develop and strengthen a school, youth and women environmental programme within the Kikuyu Escarpment landscape; and promote ecotourism and bee keeping as alternatives source of income for the peri-forest communities to reduce the pressure on the ecosystem.

RESULTS

To date, the project planted over 20,000 trees to rehabilitate degraded areas; produced an institutional survey to assess existing and active community conservation groups around Kinale Forest to develop a community action plan to protect and conserve the forest; and created monitoring and policing activities around Kinale Forest to curb illegal activities.

In addition, the project held 10 community workshops focusing on conservation held across Kikuyu Escarpment Forest reaching over 2000 people directly; equipped the Kieni Forest Resource Centre with furniture, stationeries, library books and binoculars; strengthened 5 Community Forest Associations across Kikuyu Escarpment Forest through training on Participatory Forest management; supported the Community Forest Association at Kereita forest to finalize a Forest Management Plan and develop a Forest Management Agreement, both of which have been signed and launched.

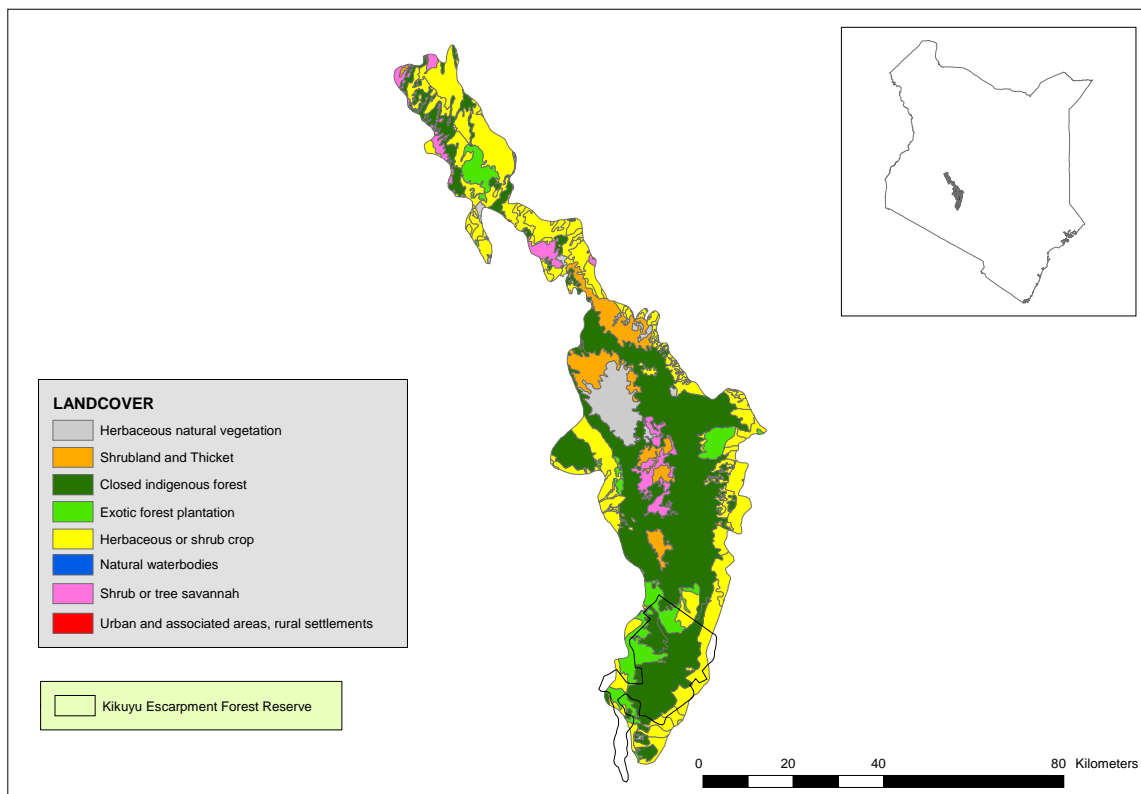
Training has been provided to teachers, youth and pastors on environmental awareness as a way to ensure the protection of the forests by future generations.

In particular, the project involved youths in conservation activities during World Environment Day. Five community groups and schools were supported in the establishment of tree nurseries.

The promotion and establishment of networks among the 5 Community Forest Associations in Kikuyu Escarpment Forest led to the development of a joint project that is currently seeking funding to develop participatory Forest Management Plans and Forest Management Agreements to be able to take part in forest management in a beneficial way as provided for by the Kenya Forest Act 2007 as well as per the provisions on the Kenyan New constitution.

This GEF funded project has created a successful platform and invested in developing the capacity of the Community Forest Associations within the Kikuyu Escarpment Forest to actively participate in the conservation and management of the forest.

MAP



Aberdare Ranges Forest with the Kikuyu Escarpment at the Southern end of the Aberdares.