

## MULIRU FARMERS CONSERVATION GROUP

### INTRODUCTION –

*The following is from an interview recorded in December, 2004 with the Maliru Farmers Conservation Group's Chairman, Mr. Thomas Mmasi.*



### Background

“I am Thomas Mmasi, a small-scale farmer who has never had any other type of employment. I only started farming, and have been doing so since 1965 up to the present day. Also, I learned about agro-forestry and forest conservation of our rain forest. There was a time when I started a group to help conserve the forest because I could not conserve the forest alone. So, I started a group which can help to conserve the forest. We are 30 members, 10 men and 20 women. Now, mostly the majority were widowers who are very weak in their living (have very little to sustain them).

**Maliru Farmers Conservation Group** is a community group situated in Kakamega district, Shinyalu Division, Virembe sub-location near Kakamega Forest Station at Isecheno. The group started in 1997 and is organized by people living around Kakamega forest. The group is registered as a self-help group with the Ministry of Social Services.

The main aim of the group is to conserve the forest, which is a rain forest.

### ACTIVITIES –

We started with several activities

- 1) tree nurseries
- 2) agro-forestry
- 3) rearing of livestock, local animals, not big breeds

In 2000 some new crops were started by **ICIPE**, which are:

- 1) Ocimum kilimandscharicum
- 2) Ocimum swave
- 3) Lipy v-gambensis

We also started planting

- 4) Mondia
- 5) Mullberry
- 6) and working with bee hives

### SHORT HISTORY OF Ocimum kilimandscharicum

- 1) Ocimum is a natural plant in the area
- 2a) It was being used traditionally as a medicine for flu, colds, insect bites, but not in the form of oil.
- 2b) This Ocimum also attracts bees and that's why we had some beehives in our area
- 2c) Also Ocimum is a soil and water conservation plant
- 2d) it can be harvested three times per year and in this way is income generating
- 2e) it can also be planted in a very small plot, so for small-scale farmers with small plots, a plant like Ocimum is ideal
- 2f) it's labour is not expensive
- 2g) it is a self-employment crop or plant, harvested three times per year, so it can bring employment to yourself
- 2h) We use it as wood. After harvesting, the remaining sticks are used as firewood, we don't throw them away. Also it is used as a compost.
- 2i) it can be inter-cropped with other plants such as Mondia, which is also a medicinal plant.

### OUTGROWERS –

- We have more than 10 groups along the forest who are dealing with conservation but our proposal is to extend up to the district level as well as internationally.
- Now, through the effort we have made and partnership with **ICIPE**, we were brought a distillery machine by **UNDP** which is now doing the work. **ICIPE** has trained nine youth to distill the natural oil.



Some local members of the Muliru Farmers Conservation Group, near Isecheno, Kakamega forest.



**Ocimum kilimandscharicum** (a member of the mint family) grows naturally in the Kakamega forest area.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### **Yield**

Ocimum produces three harvests per year and doesn't need fertilizer.

Each 40m x 40m plot of land produces about 50kg of dry material at the first harvest. Next harvest produces more. It is possible to use the same plot for the same crop (Ocimum) for 5 years, then rotate with moboga (maize, peas, cabbages & so on).

27 kg of wet material can produce 7kg of dry material. 10kg of dry material is needed for the Nature Rub distilling & production process.

### **Current average income from growing Ocimum kilimandscharicum**

Each kilo of wet harvested material is worth 8/=, of which 6/= is paid to the Muliru farmers/growers, and 2/= is used to cover the group's other operating & production costs (office/admin, etc)



Dried Ocimum leaves



Distilling machine



So, we now would like to strengthen all our activities:

- this is the only building at the moment and we would like to have another building which will deal with the whole process
- we would like to build a drying banda/room
- we would like to have easy means of communication to reach our outgrowers as some are far from the project
- we would like to create employment for the youth in order to reduce reliance on the forest as well as reduce poverty
- we would like to have an addition of other activities, that is what we hope to achieve in this area. Such as larger breeds of animals, because at the moment we are only rearing the local ones, but we would like to rear dairy ones which can be used for producing cow dung as well as milk
- if water conservation could be improved, then production of NATURUB could be extended over a longer period/ year round
- Note, this is the only factory, as well as the only distillery, in the area. This is the only one we have.

So we are asking any well-wisher or any donor to help us strengthen the project, to help the community along with the forest.  
Thank you."

**Thomas Mmasi,  
Chairman, MULIRU Farmers Conservation  
Group,  
PO BOX 19, Shinyalu,  
Kakamega,  
Kenya.**



Thomas Mmasi & his wife on their shamba (small farm) & the local rain forest they are seeking to help conserve.



Some other local income related activities include bee-keeping & the sale of honey, tree nurseries & small-scale re-afforestation projects, rearing of livestock.



*(Information in this leaflet is taken from a transcript of a taped interview recorded with Mr. Mmasi at the Muliru Farmer's Naturub Factory in December, 2004, by Elizabeth Riddiford, UK.)  
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