

## KITGUM

By Jackson Kitara

# Kitgum district recovers 8% forest cover

Kitgum district has recovered 8% of its lost forest cover through tree planting, Martin Anywar, the Kitgum district forest officer, has revealed.

He said in the last 10 years, the district lost 17% of its forest cover, but recovered 8%.

Anywar said most trees were cut down for charcoal burning and firewood, noting that the recovery of forests has been possible because of partnership with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as Community Road Empowerment (CORE), a Japanese non-government organisation that has been engaging the local community in tree planting.

He said farmers' groups in the community were trained on tree planting and are engaged in production of tree seedlings from their nursery beds. They were also given energy saving stoves with the aim of reducing the wood used in cooking.

Anywar made the remarks during the closing ceremony for CORE project at Acaki Lodge in Kitgum on Friday.

Yuka Iwamura, the project manager of CORE Uganda, said the project focused on community access road improvement using Do-nou technology, environment conservation of afforestation, tree nurseries establishment, construction of energy saving technologies and solid waste management.

"CORE used appropriate innovative engineering and environmental technologies to directly address the needs of communities, especially the rural poor to empower them to be self-reliant," she said.

"When we came, the public did not know how to plant trees, but we trained them, now they are eager to plant more. We have 85 people who came together and set up a

### LOOKING AHEAD

Michael Okello, the chairperson of Lagoro sub-county, said the project has empowered the community with skills and tools of conserving the environment.

He requested the beneficiaries to train other people who are also willing, so that they gain skills to empower others in the community.

"This project has benefited our community members in terms of providing temporary employment, skilling them and also giving them income-generating projects to empower them", Okello said.

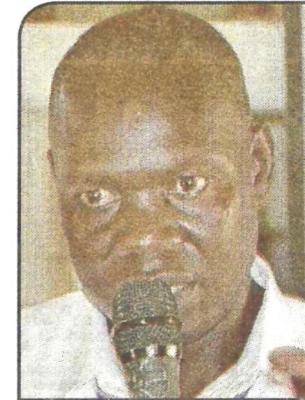
Alex Canogura, the chairperson of energy stove makers in Lagoro, said they made 175 energy saving stoves after the training.

He said they used the money they got from the training to start a piggery and goat rearing project.

"We are planning to buy more goats and piglets, so that we empower ourselves as we conserve the environment."

tree nursery bed because they understood the importance of planting trees for the next generation," Iwamura said.

She requested the district to make good use of the trainees in order to sustainably conserve the environment.



Anywar

### TREE PLANTING

Priscilla Kugonza, the project environmentalist, said in one year, they planted 40,093 seedlings of eucalyptus clone and black teak on 32.9 hectares in Namokora and Lagoro sub-counties.

She noted that they trained and facilitated farmers' groups

in tree planting techniques, nursery bed establishment, management and seedling raising to enhance tree cover and combat climate change.

Kugonza said as an encouragement, learners were rewarded with scholastic materials for trees planted around the school compound under the 'tree for books initiative'.

### STOVE MAKING

Shivan Ahebwe, the project manager Rocket Lorena Stoves, said they trained the community on stove making and so far, they have made 350 stoves for various homesteads.

"This reduces reliance on firewood, minimises deforestation and promotes environmental sustainability. The stoves reduce firewood consumption by 70% by consolidating the heat generated," she said.

Christopher Arwayi Obol, the district chairperson, said: "We shall continue implementing the project to see that our people plant more trees and we protect our environment."