

2022

ANNUAL REPORT



Regreening the earth without planting a single tree?

Foreword

Awaken Trees is not about afforestation in the traditional sense. We don't plant trees. Everything we need is already in the ground. The method we are promoting is called "FMNR" – how this approach looks like will be described at the beginning of this report.

Awaken Trees is a non-profit association founded in Austria in 2021. From there we support initiatives of visionary people in Ghana, Tanzania and recently also in Senegal. We support people, who want to take responsibility for their community and get them excited about regreening through FMNR. The ideas and strategies of these persons are implemented in our projects. With our funding, they can realize their visions of regreening and reach as many people as possible.

Their goals are also our goals.

- *Josef Ertl, 21, co-founder & chairman*

Contents

Our solution	3
FMNR in 4 steps	4
Our school programs.....	5
Ghana	6
Tanzania.....	7
Our campaigns.....	8
Kisiki Hai school books	9
Change stories	10
Media appearance.....	12
Thank you!.....	13
Financial report 1	14
Financial report 2	15
What's next?.....	16
Imprint.....	17

Reviving trees – stopping deserts

Our solution

Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) is a simple and low-cost method to grow trees. The important point: The trees are not planted - everything is already in the ground.

In many arid regions of the world, the landscape is covered with small bushes. Often these are actually trees, that have been either ignored or cut down. However, only through a little care and protection, these trees can start growing quickly.

Trees fertilize the soil. Trees protect the soil from drought and harsh winds. They give us shade, firewood, fruits and fodder for livestock. Especially in drylands, trees on farmland can bring huge benefits for the local population.



In the African country Niger farmers could double their crop yields through FMNR. Even in years of drought they were able to harvest a surplus. That's why 200 million trees have been regenerated throughout the country and over 5 million hectares have been restored. The method has been spreading independently from farmer to farmer. This movement hasn't stopped until the present day.

That's why Awaken Trees supports initiatives of people, that are spreading the knowledge about FMNR - in the past year in Ghana and Tanzania. It is our goal, that this story of hope will repeat in other parts of the world. With the mission to combat both food scarcity and global warming.

FMNR in 4 steps

1. **Observe the land:** Wild growing trees are often mistaken for small bushes – if you take a closer look, you can identify them by their leaves.



2. **Select trees:** Numbers and types of trees can vary from person to person – the decision depends on your own individual needs.



3. **Pruning:** To stimulate new growth, cut away all shoots except three to five of the strongest ones.



4: **Protect & care:** A small red ribbon signals, that the desired shoots should not be removed. Prune new branches every two to six months.

Students of today – landowners of tomorrow

Our school programs

The students of today are the landowners of tomorrow. The future is in their hands. That's why we focused on involving the younger generation in 2022.

Through our school programs we have reached a total of 54 schools in Ghana and Tanzania and have directly involved 1100 students so far. A total of 100 teachers completed our training courses.

Ghana & Tanzania

54 schools

1.100 students

100 teachers



Upper East Region – Talensi District

Ghana

15 schools – 300 students – 30 teachers

In Northern Ghana we have supported school programs in 15 schools. 300 students and 30 teachers have been directly involved.



The students met regularly in groups of 20 together with one responsible teacher to form a so called **FMNR eco club**. The students learned about current environmental issues in their region, such as heavy deforestation, land burning and drought. In this context, the importance of trees was conveyed. The topics were mostly worked out in an interactive way.

The centerpiece of the eco club was practicing the FMNR method. Together the club members raised trees on school compounds and on communal land.

In workshops lasting several days, 30 teachers were able to acquire extensive knowledge about regenerating trees. We presented them playful methods to pass this awareness on to the younger generation in the best possible way. We also gave to the course participants practical trainings in the implementation of FMNR.

The program was developed and managed by our local partner organization FONAR.



Singida, Arusha & Dodoma Region

Tanzania

36 schools – 800 students – 70 teachers

In Tanzania we have supported school programs in 36 schools. 800 students and 70 teachers have been directly involved.

FMNR has several names – depending on language and culture. In the East African language Swahili, the term "Kisiki Hai" is common, which means something like "living tree stump". In September 2022, the **Kisiki Hai for School (KH4S)** program started in 3 regions of the country. The students met regularly once a week with a teacher to learn about the FMNR technique and related topics.



At the beginning of the program, 70 teachers completed our training course in the country's capital, Dodoma. The participants were prepared for the new school activities and learned about our methods of regreening. Media, politicians, musicians and other stakeholders shared our vision and took part in our event. Frida Amani - rapper and ambassador of our initiative - performed her new song, which is also called "Kisiki Hai".

The program was developed and managed by our local partner organization LEAD Foundation.

The fight against bushfires

Our campaigns

3.000 students – 56 teachers – 15 schools

In many regions of Ghana, bushfires have led to soil erosion, deforestation and desertification. Therefore, a total of 3.000 students and 56 teachers from 15 schools took part in our campaign against bushfires. The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness about the danger of bushfires and how to prevent them. The Ghanaian National Fire Service supported this campaign and presented students and teachers ways to extinguish fires, that occur. Posters have also been put up to raise awareness at the local population.

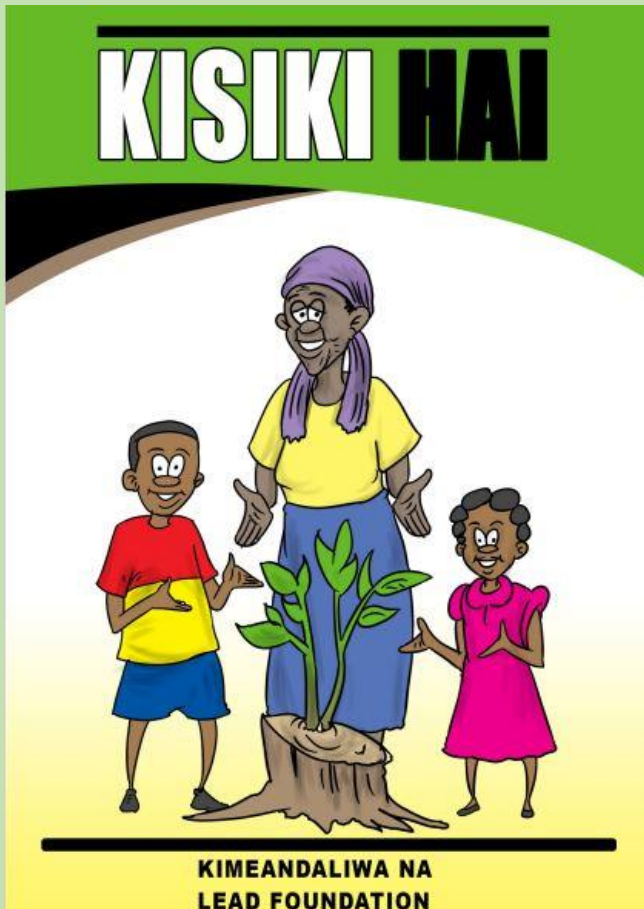


Sumaila Seidu Saaka, Director of our partner organization FONAR, said in an interview: *"Although bushfires are difficult to prevent altogether, proper management and control can reduce occurrence and spread, or at least minimize the damage they can cause."*

regreening mindsets through school books

Kisiki Hai school books

After long preparations, we have produced a comic book for students in Tanzania with our partner LEAD Foundation. The book is titled "Kisiki Hai" (living tree stump). All schools participating in our program (36) have received Kisiki Hai books. The books were integrated into the curriculum to sensitize the students to the environment. The message: Don't cut down small trees - give them a chance to grow - through care & protection!

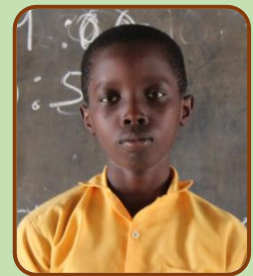


Change stories

What has changed in the lives of the children through our school programs?

That's what 7 students from Ghana have to say:

Gideon (13): "As a member of the eco-club I now know that trees are our best friends - trees give us oxygen, fruits to eat and sell, medicine, shade, protect our school and homes from strong winds, help to protect the soil and increase soil fertility for our parents to produce more food to feed us. I have made a lot of friends through the eco club. I have learned how to keep the environment clean. I have been able to educate my parents on the benefits of trees. I tell my friends to be agents of change by protecting the environment. I also advise my friends and parents to grow trees."



Priscilla (12): "I love trees, trees give us shade, fruits, firewood and make our school compound look beautiful. As a member of the eco club, I have learned that cutting down trees can cause drought and desertification. Learning about the importance of trees will help me to educate my community members on how to protect trees through natural regeneration to prevent drought and desertification."

Blessing (15): "I have also learned about the causes of bushfires, for instance through people who smoke cigarettes, hunters who burn the grasses to hunt wild animals and honey tappers, who used fire to kill bees during night honey harvesting. I have been able to educate my colleagues, who are not part of the eco club, on the importance of trees and how they can prune trees properly to allow them to grow well to protect the environment. I tell my friends, that pruning is the best method for assisting tree growth. I have educated my parents to practice FMNR on their farmland. Any time I go with my mother to look for firewood I do advise her not to cut, but to take off the branches."



Michael (14): "I have learned a lot from the eco club. I learned, that we should stop cutting down trees, and that when we prune trees, they grow faster. I have learned, how to create fire belts and how to prevent and control bushfire by using tree branches, cutlasses, fire-beaters and rakes."



Caroline (15): "As a member of the eco club, I have learned how to prune trees and shrubs properly. I now know, that having more trees in our community here in Baapelug will give us more firewood, so that we (girls and women) don't have to travel far to collect firewood. I have learned how to help in preventing and controlling the outbreak of bushfires in our community. For instance, we can create fire belts to stop bushfires from spreading."

Yella (12): "I have learned, that we have to take good care of trees so, that trees can also take care of our needs. After all, trees give us oxygen to breathe, we get firewood from trees, trees provide us with shade and protect our buildings from strong winds during the raining season. I have realized that pruning can make trees grow faster. Through the eco club activities, I got to know the simple tools used in controlling small bushfires (tree branches, cutlasses, rakes and fire-beaters). It was interesting to learn during the bushfire education session, FONAR organized for us, that fire is caused by combination of three things: Heat, oxygen and fuel. And that in our community (Kulpeliga) here dry grass during the dry windy season is an important fuel for bushfires. We have been advised to be careful, when handling fire, so as not to cause bushfires."



Evans (14): "I have learned about the importance of trees and how to prune shrubs properly. I have learned, that indiscriminate cutting of trees is bad and that bushfires destroy soil micro-organisms. The eco club helped me to know, how to prevent and control bushfires. If I had not joined the eco club, I wouldn't have known the names of many of my school mates. I have made a lot of friends through the eco club. "

Media appearance



About 15 different media platforms - mainly from Ghana - published articles about our programs. Beside newspaper articles and radio broadcasts, this included a report on national Ghanaian television. A podcast of the British news channel BBC (BBC World Service) also portrayed our activities in Ghana.

The song "Kisiki Hai" ("living tree stump") by our ambassador Frida Amani from Tanzania has already reached almost 100.000 views on YouTube.



The voluntary work of the 20-year-old Rodion Belousov deserves special mention. When Rodion came to Austria in early 2022, he began to get involved with Awaken Trees. In his home country Uzbekistan, he worked as an IT expert and content creator. For Awaken Trees, Rodion produced an animated learning video, that illustrates the FMNR method step by step. In addition, Rodion has created numerous contents for our social media channels.



Thank you!

The Austrian association Awaken Trees is run exclusively by volunteer men and women.
Thank you to all our volunteers!

We thank all ambassadors for spreading our message.

We thank Justdiggitt for providing us with professional image material from Tanzania.

We thank our partners LEAD Foundation in Tanzania & FONAR in Ghana.

We thank all other organizations that have cooperated with us.

Awaken Trees is a non-profit organization. The work of Awaken Trees is funded by donations.
Thank you to all donors!



Financial report 1

Source of funds

I. Donations **127.879,70 EUR**

a. Undedicated **1.546,00 EUR**

b. Dedicated **126.333,70 EUR**

II. Membership fees

III. Operating income

a. Operating income from public funds

b. Other operating income

IV. Subsidies and grants from the public sector

V. Other Income

a. Asset management

b. Other forms of income, unless included under points I. to IV **1,68 EUR** (interest income)

VI. Reversal of liability items for items not yet used for their intended purpose

donations or subsidies

VII. Release of reserves

VIII. Annual loss

Financial report 2

Use of funds

- I. Payments for statutory purposes **35.337,82 EUR**
 - II. Fundraising
 - III. Administrative expenses
 - IV. Other expenses, unless listed under I. to III. **18,27 EUR** (bank charges)
 - V. Allocation to liability items for donations or subsidies not yet used as intended **50.000,00 EUR**
 - VI. Allocation to reserves
 - VII. Annual surplus 2022 **42.525,29 EUR**
- + Annual surplus 2021 **164,64 EUR**
- = 42 689,93 EUR**

Awaken Trees forwards donations directly to their partner organizations, which implement the respective programs. This year these included **Forum for Natural Regeneration (FONAR)** in Ghana and **LEAD Foundation** in Tanzania. Both organizations are legally independent institutions in their respective countries, their goals overlap with the statutory purpose of Awaken Trees.

In 2022, **99,95% (35.337,82 EUR)** of our expenses were spent directly on our programs. The administrative expenses were zero, because the association Awaken Trees has neither paid employees nor a rented office. The association also did not spend any funds on fundraising. **00,05% (18,27 EUR)** of the expenses were bank charges.

Additional costs incurred in connection with the association, such as travel expenses to project countries, were entirely covered privately by the board members.

Part of the donations (**42 689,93 EUR**) remained on the association's bank account to be used for funding the programs in 2023. Another part of the donations (**50.000,00 EUR**) were transferred to a savings account of the association to ensure the continuation of the programs in 2024.

What's next?

*In 2023 we will continue our school programs.
At the same time, we will also support initiatives for farmers:*

FMNR community project (Ghana)



In 2 villages in Northern Ghana, regreening will be carried out using the FMNR method - with the participation of the entire village community. In addition, various aids will be provided to reduce the pressure on tree resources. This will include for example wood-saving stoves. Overall, the food shortage is to be combated and the quality of life improved - especially for around 400 women, who are in the focus of the project.

Assistance for farmers - Senegal

In the Kaffrine region of Senegal there is a local group of volunteers called JEBBI. JEBBI spreads knowledge about FMNR and assists farmers for implementing the practice. Awaken Trees will support JEBBI in their mission so that as many farmers as possible can be reached.





Imprint

Awaken Trees

association for the greening of drylands of the Global South

Awaken Trees is a registered non-profit association under Austrian law. The activity of the association is of public utility or charitable and not aimed at profit.

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