

Anglicans in Burundi aim for 'one person, one tree'

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In the Anglican Province of Burundi, the church has set a goal of planting 10 million trees—one for each person in the country—during the next five years.

Young people who are part of the Green Anglicans initiative in Central and Southern Africa have encouraged planting trees to mark occasions such as baptisms, confirmations, and weddings. The church of Burundi is taking that practice a step further with its effort to promote and maintain forests in its nation.

Such efforts can have multiple positive effects. A recent report showed that wildlife returned to a hillside in southern Burundi after a church-backed reforestation project. The initial aim was to provide security for a group of refugees who had settled on the hill after leaving a refugee camp in Tanzania. Because there were no trees on the hill, it suffered from erosion and was at risk of flooding from different rivers which flowed through the area.

A partnership between the Anglican Church of Burundi and local groups, with the support of the U.S.-based Episcopal Relief and Development, organized the digging of antierosion trenches and the planting of trees and grasses.

Another result of forestation is to send rainwater underground, creating new sources of water that is safe to drink. It also improves the fertility of the soil, increasing yields of maize and beans.

The church has set up nurseries in different provinces of Burundi and aims to plant the first 1 million trees, on public and private land, within the first year. —Anglican Communion News Service