



Movement of Strength Ermera Love Nature

Agroforestry goes rural

A success story

Looking at the topography of East Timor, which is dominated by mountains (montanoso land), many communities living in mountainous areas often abandon their land because it is considered unproductive. This leads to significant community mobility towards the plains. Therefore, introducing agricultural land technology is essential. This will provide rural communities in mountainous areas with the knowledge to sustainably use and manage land for agricultural production. The aim is to generate economic income for the local population, increase food production, and preserve natural resources and the environment. MFHNE encourages local communities and farmers to apply the knowledge and experience gained in the programme to their own farms or yards. Agroforestry systems offer a technique to integrate various plant types into the field, meeting farmers' needs according to harvest time. Practicing agroforestry and agricultural land management technologies is crucial for the Erualo village community. The objective is to significantly improve production in their yards, ensuring agricultural output, a healthy environment, sufficient food production, and water infiltration into the soil.



Training

Before implementing agroforestry practices, MFHNE conducted a one-day training session to educate local communities about agroforestry's concepts, benefits, and practices. This addressed the unsustainable practice of shifting cultivation, prevalent in the mountainous region. Agroforestry, as a permanent and sustainable system, aims to increase food production, generate high-value products, and conserve plants to maintain ecological balance. The training also covered water conservation methods to improve soil infiltration, recharge springs, and ensure water availability for household and agricultural use throughout the summer.





Planting

Following the training, MFHNE, in collaboration with community leaders, organised a tree-planting event in Darudu village, Eraulo sub-district, Letefoho administrative post, Ermera municipality. The event, which concluded on 23 August, saw strong participation from young people, students, and local women and men. Local authorities and community leaders also attended the launch. A variety of agroforestry trees were planted, including food-producing, fruit-bearing, and conservation species. There were 90 individual plants, three boxes of root vegetables and a further box of fruit planted into the project.



Looking to the Future

All activities that MFHNE targets for implementation in the next plan are:

- Continuing to ensure all trees planted around the fence survive.
- Community awareness workshops on ecological crises and sustainable agriculture practices for global climate change adaptation.

MFHNE considers the spaces shared with rural communities crucial for building community knowledge and resilience. The essential lesson that MFHNE learned from the implementation of this program is the strength of community collaboration in Eraulo, which will be further strengthened through their collaborative efforts in preparing tree planting sites. It also incorporates local knowledge that the community possesses as a modality. This can enhance the program's implementation through customary agroforestry, a central practice with which the local community is already familiar.

