



Environmental Protection through Expanding Lemon grass growing and Education in Uganda

Report on Activity 2.2 Support 4 sub-county councils to debate and discuss by-laws on environmental protection

(Venues): Sub county head quarters

Date: 2nd October 2017 to 10th October 2017.

Introduction

With support from Japanese Fund for Global Environment(JFGE) and Global Bridge Network(GBN), SORAK Development Agency was able to support four sub county councils to debate on by laws of environmental protection.

Purpose/ Objective of the council debates

The purpose of the council debates was to discuss the possible by-laws of environmental protection in the four sub counties.

Participants

The council debates were attended by a total of 160 participants. Each council debate was attended by a number of 40 participants. These debates were held at the respective sub county headquarters as in the table below

No	Date	Sub county	Participants reached
1	2/10/2017	Kibalinga sub county	40
2	4/10/2017	Nabingoola sub county	40
3	6/10/2017	Kigando sub county	40
4	10/10/2017	Kasambya sub county	40

Number of individuals reached

Name of Activity	Participants		Total
	Male	Female	
“Sub county council debates on by laws of environmental protection”	112	48	200

Facilitators

The dialogue meetings were facilitated by the following persons playing the respective roles indicated here below.

1. **Muhammad Kyeyune- Executive Director-SORAK Development Agency** gave a brief background about SORAK, the Japanese Fund for Global Environment (JFGE), and the purpose of the meetings.
2. **Sub county chiefs** were responsible to present the Sub County by- laws for protecting the environment to the participants during the council debates.

Discussion and Contents covered

Muhammad, the Executive Director-SORAK Development Agency firstly thanked the sub county councils for attending the debates. He informed participants that the support has been possible due the funding from **Japan Fund for Global Environment of the Environmental Restoration and Conservation Agency**. He mentioned that the council deliberations will be of great importance to environmental protection and that it's through such debates that people come up with views towards an issue.

The sub county chiefs welcomed SORAK together with her partners the Japanese fund for global environment JFGE and GBN for having provided the necessary support that has enabled the sub counties to conduct the debates deliberating on the bylaws of environmental protection.

The sub county chief Kibalinga sub county Mr. Matovu Julius quoted the Uganda National environment Act enacted in 1995¹ as the frame work law on environment. It provides for sustainable environmental conservation measures.

The measures would include,

- Visiting all wetlands and water catchment areas and conduct village meetings to inform communities about the importance of such areas.
- Asking all community members who had been farming in wetlands to stop it with immediate effect.
- Asking communities to plant cover crops, practice soil conservation practices including planting of lemon grass.
- Arresting and punishing all offenders who would not comply to advice after community awareness raising meetings conducted by the sub-county leaders in collaboration with the district environmental office
- The district leadership conducts radio programmes on the dangers of wetland and environmental degradation.
- Encouraging school administrators to always talk about the dangers of environmental degradation to children during assemblies.
- Encouraging schools to plant more trees in their compounds. Tree would also act as windbreakers as well as making the schools conducive for learners.

¹An Act to provide for sustainable management of the environment which commenced May 1995

- prevent, stop or discontinue any act or omission deleterious to the environment;
- compel any public officer to take measures to prevent or to discontinue any act or omission deleterious to the environment;
- Require that any ongoing activity be subjected to an environmental audit in accordance with section 22²;of the National environment Act 1995
- Require that any ongoing activity be subjected to environmental monitoring in accordance with section 23³;
- Request a court order for the taking of other measures that would ensure that the environment does not suffer any significant damage.

The sub county chiefs presented to the participants a number of laws governing the environment in their respective sub counties.

It was however expressed by the participants the local community members were not aware of these laws that prohibit farming in wetlands.

It was also noted observed that the local politicians feared to stop communities from encroaching wetlands due to fear to loss support from their electorates. Also some farmers especially local leaders continued to encroach wetlands because they looked untouchable while others could pay bribes to environment officers and local technical leaders who are charged with the responsibility of implementing government regulations and laws.

In order to address the above challenges, the following recommendations were mad;

- SORAK and the sub-county as well as district leaders should continue sensitizing the general population about the dangers of degrading wetlands.
- The sub-county technical leaders were also encouraged to implement and enforce the laws governing the environment as stipulated in the National environment Act of 1995.
- The sub-county environmental committees were advised to step up their environment monitoring roles. This would ensure that no harmful human activities are done in wetlands.

The sub county chiefs all emphasized putting in place harsh measures to those involved in the cutting down of trees for charcoal burning and those degrading the environment. This is because forest cover had drastically declined from over 20% to 9% in Mubende district just in a space of 10 years. It is also estimated that over 98% of energy sources is charcoal and fuel wood⁴.The situation is further worsened by rapid population increase which is also accelerating land fragmentation.

² This refers to the necessary steps taken to check the likely impact of a project on environment before an activity or project is authorized.

³ This refers to continuous check on the activity planned or project to ensure that it does not impact the environment

⁴ Mubende district Development Plan 2014/15-

It was also noted that the tax levied on a sack of charcoal could also serve to limit tree felling for charcoal. Participants also asked informers of National Forestry Authority of be vigilant and keep on monitoring and reporting illegal tree cutting. It was also noted that communities that cut trees for arable farming must be given the alternative of planting trees at least on their farms boundaries.

The sub county chiefs agreed to adhere to laws put in place. This included ensuring vigilance among law enforcers and implementers to arrest on site all illegal wetland and forest encroachers. This would be achieved through collaborated effort with Uganda Police force-environment protection unit. Participants inclusive the political and technical leaders agreed main stream environmental protection and promotion activities in their respective sub-county work plans. They also promised to keep the respective sub-county environmental committees active in playing roles of monitoring the implementation of the national environmental Act of 1995.

Muhammad talked about lemon grass growing as a measure to restore the once green environment of Mubende district. He emphasized the grass as one that can prevent the soils from running water as well as provide the true green color the environment. Therefore, he encouraged the sub counties councilors to involve their communities in lemongrass growing in order to protect the environment from degradation and improve on their livelihood.

The sub county chiefs welcomed the new measure brought by SORAK and JFGE (lemon grass growing) as one of the best ways of protecting the soils from erosion hence conserving the environment. The sub-county chiefs and the community welcomed lemon grass growing as a good idea. And that they would be eager to receive planting tufts and take on the activity. They also asked SORAK to provide them with trees seedlings in addition to lemon grass planting tufts. All the sub-county chiefs promised to support SORAK including providing linkage to tree planting material supply to communities. This would supplement their already ongoing effort by the district natural resources department that is encouraging tree planting. The district is also following close monitoring and stopping wetland encroachment.

Muhammad gave the closing remarks in the four meetings. In his closing remarks, he thanked the partnership and support provided by the donor, local leadership towards environmental restoration in Mubende district.

The sub county chiefs thanked SORAK and JFGE for having supported such meetings that opened their eyes on how to protect the environment through lemon grass growing.

Summary

In conclusion therefore, the debates were successfully conducted as they provided an opportunity to SORAK, the sub county council team to discuss pertinent issues that have led to the massive environmental degradation in their respective sub counties. The meetings also provided a new direction to the leaders as it served to inform them about

environmental degradation vices and laws of protection throughout the entire sub counties.



Above: Chairman Kibalinga sub-county council addresses participants during environmental protection by-laws formulation meeting.



Caught in the act: some of the instances of environmental degradation through wetland landfilling decampaigned by SORAK under this project-Lusalira village – Kibalinga sub-county –Mubende district.



Left: extent of environmental degradation through open space dumping of used sanitary pads at Bagezza Seed secondary school- Kibalinga sub-county, visited by sub county council members to assess the situation and need to institute environmental protection and promotion by-laws. Right Members of sub county council-Nabingoola sub county after council meeting –group photo.



Top left: SORAK Executive Director Kiyuni sub-county and district joint council meeting to discuss wetlands by-laws that came into charcoal ordinance