



Environmental Protection through Expanding Lemon grass growing and Education in Uganda

Name of activity: Activity 2-3 Support 4 Sub-county leaders on carrying out field monitoring so as to fight wetland encroachment

Location (Venues): Sub county headquarters and with follow up visits to degraded sites

Introduction

With support from Japanese Fund for Global Environment (JFGE) and Global Bridge Network (GBN), SORAK Development Agency was able to support 4 sub counties to carry out field monitoring to fight wetland encroachment.

Purpose/ Objective of the monitoring meetings and site visits

The purpose of the field monitoring visits was to discuss the possible ways of fighting wetland encroachment in the four sub counties with in Mubende district.

Monitoring was also intended to make note of the current situation and extent of the damage done on wetlands in the project supported sub counties.

Participants

The field monitoring visits were attended by a total of 600 participants. These monitoring visits were held at the respective sub county headquarters as in the table below

no	date	Sub county	Participants reached
1	15/12/2017	Kibalinga sub county	168
2	15/12/2017	Nabingoola sub county	144
3	16/12/2017	Kiyuni sub county	144
4	17/12/2017	Kasambya sub county	144

Number of individuals reached

Name of Activity	Participants		Total
	Male	Female	
“Sub county field monitoring visits to fight wetland encroachment “	290	310	600

Facilitators The field monitoring visits were led by a team of Sub County and SORAK technical staff who played their 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)**. He emphasized that the support for the monitoring visits was from JFGE.
2. **Sub county chiefs** were responsible to present to the participants the following;
 - The extent to which wetlands have been encroached on in their respective sub counties.
 - Mubende district ordinance or laws concerning wetlands.
 - The Sub County by- laws put in place to protect wetlands.
 - Quantify and map the extent of human activities on wetlands.

Monitoring Visits to degraded Wetlands

This activity took place in the sub-counties of Kibalinga, Nabingoola, Kigando, Kitenga, Myanzi, Nalutuntu in Mubende district.

It involved the participation of SORAK programme staff, sub-county leaders (sub-county and parish chiefs, and district natural resource officer).



Above are degraded wetlands visited by SORAK and sub-county team in Kibalinga sub-county.

Some factors leading to environmental degradation

Monitoring visits that involved physical visits to degraded sites discovered the following;

- 1- Environmental degradation through burning



Uncontrolled wetland vegetation burning; Myanzi and Kitenga sub-counties- Mubende district.



Uncontrolled bush burning in Nabingoola sub-county

2- Wetland encroachment arising through landfilling



Wetland land filling in Lusalira village –Kibalinga sub-county.

3- Wetland reclamation caused by arable farming



Drainage channel constructed to reclaim land from a wetland, in Kiyita village Nabingoola sub-county

4- Indiscriminate waste dumping in wetlands



Indiscriminate wetland dumping –Kakungube Nalutuntu sub-county- Mubende district

Recommendations/ Action undertaken

During the monitoring, some of the participants came up with some solutions to the ongoing problems and action undertaken after monitoring.

- 1- Carryout out regular site visits to stop further encroachment and degradation
- 2- Sensitize community members about the dangers of wetland degradation and vegetation burning
- 3- Arrest and punish encroachers
- 4- Carryout wetland boundary marking and demarcation. This has been implemented in a month that followed the monitoring visits and meetings; see photo below;



The Mubende district natural resources officer-makes measurements to mark wetland boundary in order to prevent further damage-Lusalira Village, Kibalinga Sub-county Mubende district.

Monitoring feedback meetings

After conducting physical field visits to degraded wetlands areas, meetings were then convened to discuss the findings and lay plans of overcoming the problems facing the area in terms of environmental degradation.

The monitoring feedback meetings discussed and mentioned on the following;

- I. Participants thanked SORAK and her partners namely JFGE and GBN for this support. This is because they were now able to see for themselves practically the challenges facing the district environment.
- II. The noted that the project had so far created awareness among women and youth and they had during the previous rain season planted fruit trees namely; eucalyptus, avocado and citrus trees.
- III. It was noted that even schools had started planting trees in their compound because of this project.
- IV. They also noted that this project had created further awareness to the district that helped in the process of speeding up the passing of a charcoal ordinance-(this is

- a district made law that prohibits and controls unplanned cutting of trees for charcoal.
- V. The meetings also tasked all sub county chiefs and their respective sub county environmental committees to keep on watch to all remaining wetlands are free from unsustainable farming activities.
- VI. Participants declared and resolved that all wetlands must be protected as they act as source of water and can help solve uncertainties such as drought.
- VII. They all emphasized putting in place harsh measures to those involved in wetland and forest encroachment like drainage and cutting down of trees. Such measures will include;
- Prompt arrest of encroachers
 - Demolishing all illegal activities like crops and buildings in wetlands
 - With immediate effect stopping sand and clay mining in key wetlands which serve as water catchment areas for Lake Victoria.
 - Educating the wetland neighboring communities in the alternative and sustainable wetland use activities like fish farming, ecotourism and apiary/bee keeping among others.
 - The political leaders made concrete pledges to actively follow up on agreed actions and also ensure that no more encroachment on wetlands happens.
 - SORAK programmes manager promised continued follow-ups and increased resource mobilization to ensure that even the other more than 14 unreached sub counties in the district are also reached in the near future.
 - The sub counties agreed to enforce strong policies and laws on wetland encroachment.
 - Participants agreed to encourage and interest children, youth and women in environmental conservation practices of tree planting, agro forestry, cover cropping including lemon grass growing among others.
 - This is exemplified by what one sub county chief said, ' *With this intervention and the awareness so far created, 'Mubende ever green environment will be restored"*.

In summary, sub county chiefs were all praises for **SORAK together with her partners the Japanese fund for global environment (JFGE) and GBN** for supporting them to conduct the monitoring visits to fight wetland encroachment and overall environmental degradation. It was noted that this would in future result into environmental conservation in Mubende district.



Monitoring and by-making sessions on wetland degradation Kasambya Sub-county



Left top: chairman Nabingoola sub-county seated, and sub-county speaker, right SORAK Executive Director, Bottom left and rights residents and community leaders discussing solutions to wetland degradation



Left: Monitoring meeting Kiyuni and Kibalinga sub-counties respectively

In conclusion therefore, the monitoring visits were successfully conducted as they provided an opportunity to SORAK, the sub county technical team to discuss pertinent issues that have led to the massive environmental degradation in their respective sub counties. The meetings also provided opportunity to see for themselves about environmental degradation vices and laws of protection throughout the entire sub counties.