



Environmental Protection through Expanding Lemon grass growing and Education in Uganda

Activity 1.4 and 1.5: Parish based training of women and youth in lemon grass growing and environmental protection

Location (Venues): Kabubu parish and Lusiba Parish

Introduction

With support from Japanese Fund for Global Environment (JFGE) and Global Bridge Network (GBN), SORAK Development Agency was able to conduct parish-based training of women (2times) and youth (2times) in lemon grass growing and environmental protection.

Purpose/ Objective of the parish-based trainings

The purpose of the trainings was to discuss the possible ways of lemon grass growing as a measure to fight environmental degradation in the two parishes.

Participants

The parish-based trainings were attended by a total of 161 participants. These parish-based trainings were held at the respective selected parishes as below

no	date	Parish	category	Participants reached
1	10/5/2018	Kabubu parish	women	40
2	14/5/2018	Lusiba parish	women	41
3	17/5/2018	Kabubu parish	youth	40
4	24/5/2018	Lusiba parish	youth	40

Number of individuals reached

Name of Activity	Participants		Total
	Male	Female	
“Parish based training of women and youth in lemon grass growing and environmental protection“	43	118	161

Facilitators

The parish-based trainings were led by a team of parish focal persons 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) and the project**. He emphasized that the parish-based trainings were made possible with support from JFGE.
2. **Parish based leaders** were responsible to present to the participants the following;
 - The extent of environmental degradation in their respective parishes.
 - The parish based- laws put in place to protect the environment.

Activities

The executive Director- SORAK talked about the following

1. Need to engage the youth and women in lemon grass growing
2. Need for a strong desire towards environmental conservation by- laws
3. The need for the participants to know their current role in protecting the environment.
4. Importance of lemongrass growing

In giving a brief about the project, the Executive Director found it necessary to increase project understanding by the strong and energetic women and youth. He also encouraged the participants to actively participate in environmental protection.

He emphasized that deforestation which is the cutting down of trees to make way for more homes and industries and wetland encroachment are the major causes of environmental degradation. Apart from that, use of forest land for agriculture, animal grazing, harvest for fuel wood and logging is some of the other causes of deforestation. Deforestation contributes to global warming as decreased forest size puts carbon back into the environment.

Participants were trained to grow lemon grass along the edge of the garden to prevent soil erosion. This took the form of practical demonstration by sharing with them pictures of lemon grass grown by some members in order to control soil erosion.

Participants were also informed of the following uses and importance of lemon grass;

- Garden borders to prevent erosion: Because lemongrass clumps, it's a very useful plant to have on the edge of garden beds. The clumping action will mean that the roots are grabbing all the soil and preventing it from washing away.
- Garden borders to prevent insects: The other great benefit of putting lemongrass around the garden is that its strong scent repels many plant pests.
- Medicinal tea for better health
- The tangy, refreshing fragrance of lemongrass can relieve symptoms related to stress, nervous exhaustion, headaches, and jetlag

- Essential oil from lemon grass acts a tonic for the entire body and can help to boost the parasympathetic nervous system, which is necessary when you are recovering from a sickness. It also revitalizes the glandular secretions
- Lemongrass oil is good for treating respiratory infections like fever, laryngitis, and sore throats. It also stops the spreading of disease
- This essential oil is often used to treat gastroenteritis, indigestion, and colitis
- Lemongrass oil can tone the tissues and muscles, relieve pain in the muscles by making the muscles more flexible. It also improves the blood circulation and acts an insect repellent
- This oil is used to keep pets free of lice, ticks, and fleas
- Lemongrass oil is used for treating acne and for clearing up oily skin. It also treats athlete's foot, and stops excessive perspiration
- Lemongrass has a calming effect and can relieve stress and insomnia
- When lemongrass is mixed with pepper, it is said to relieve nausea and menstrual problems
- When consumed as tea, lemongrass is an effective diuretic
- The spent grass can be used as animal feeds when mixed with molasses
- Spent grass can also be used and manure
- When planted in ridges, lemon grass plants can effectively control water run-off in coffee and banana plantations.



SORAK Executive Director discussing the importance of lemon grass growing as a measure to environmental protection



One of the training participants informing her fellow women how lemon grass can help them raise money to start up small businesses after being bought by SORAK



Parish based women representative responding to participants questions about environmental protection laws.



The youth participants of Lusiba Parish attentively take notes during the training on the importance of lemon grass growing



SORAK project staff takes women participants through participative training session



Youth participants of the lemon growing training in progress

Training results/outcomes and recommendations

- I. Participants thanked SORAK and her partners namely JFGE and Global Bridge Network (GBN) for this support. This is because they were now able to see for themselves practically the challenges facing the environment.
- II. They noted that the project had so far created impact as far as encouraging youth and women to take on lemon grass growing as well as other environmental conservation activities like tree planting. The trainings also tasked all parish-based leaders to keep on patrolling the environment to ensure that it's free from unsustainable farming activities and agriculture.
- III. They all emphasized putting in place harsh measures to those involved in forest encroachment like drainage and cutting down of trees.

And thus made the following recommendations;

- 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 parish-based leaders to actively follow up on agreed actions and also ensure that no more encroachment on environment happens.
- SORAK to continue follow-ups and increased resource mobilization to ensure that even the other parishes in the district are also reached in the near future.
- To interest youth and women in environmental conservation practices of tree planting, agro forestry, cover cropping including lemon grass growing among others.

In summary, parish-based leaders, the representatives of youth and women, were all praises for **SORAK together with her partners Global Bridge Network (GBN) and the Japanese fund for global environment (JFGE)** for conducting the parish-based trainings in lemon grass growing trainings to fight environmental degradation. It was noted that this would in future result into environmental conservation in Mubende district.

Therefore, the parish-based trainings were successfully conducted as they provided an opportunity to SORAK, and the participants to discuss pertinent issues that have led to the massive environmental degradation in their respective parishes. The trainings also provided opportunity to discover for themselves about environmental degradation vices and laws of protection throughout the respective parishes.