



Environmental Protection through Expanding Lemon grass growing and Education in Uganda

Activity 3.6: Establish a briquette charcoal production unit

Date and Location:

No	Date	Location
1	25 th and 28 th March 2019	Lusalira –SORAK Essential Oils factory space

Introduction:

SORAK undertook to produce briquette charcoal after learning of the wastage of lemon grass after extraction of oil. Making briquette would also help in achieving sustainable crop waste management in the area served by SORAK. Residents of cities no longer have access to free firewood. That is because we will target charcoal users such as hotels, schools, town residents and a trading centre for our sales of briquette charcoal. This activity would also help SORAK to earn revenue thereby being able to sustain its interventions even after the end of this project.

Purpose/ Objective of training/ activity:

The purpose of this activity/ training was to equip SORAK staff and selected 7 youths from the briquette charcoal production unit of sub county of Kibalinga with skills of briquette charcoal production. The activity was also intended to make use of lemon grass after extraction of oil as well as other crop waste like maize stalk and other organic domestic waste. This would enable SORAK to achieve sustainable cooking energy which is also essential in saving that trees that are cut in search of wood charcoal and firewood.

Participants:

Location		Male	Females	Total
Lusalira–SORAK Essential Oils factory space	Selected Youths	3	4	16
	SORAK staffs	7	2	

Facilitators:

The activity was facilitated by consultants drawn from Global Bio Energy (GBE)¹ and they included the following persons;

1. Mr Zziwa Harlington- Advisor and trainer of marketing
2. Mr Enoth Tumwesigye - Production Manager

¹ Green Bio Energy (GBE) is a Kampala-based socially-oriented business whose primary focus is the promotion of green energy through innovative and self-sustaining solutions aimed at continuously improving the local population's quality of life.
<https://greenbioenergy.org/>

Activities:

The following activities constituted the overall activity of establishing briquette charcoal production unit.

1. Conducting a feasibility study. GBE team visited community in Mubende to investigate if raw materials for making good briquette were available and also visited selected hotels and restaurants to learn their perceptions on the use of briquette and whether they would be willing to buy it in their future
2. Transportation of briquette production machines which were made by GBE from Capital city Kampala to Mubende and its installation.
3. Conducting building material procurement and collection of materials such as poles, nails, wire mesh, and solar tarpaulin
4. Constructing the briquette charcoal making shade
5. Constructing the briquette charcoal drying rake
6. Installing parts of the production unit and conducting production tests.
7. Training staff on the marketing and promotion of briquette charcoal



Loading Briquette production machines at GBE offices -Kampala,ED SORAK and team



Preparing the ground for drier construction at SORAK near lemon oil factory



Drier construction in Progress



Constructing Briquette drying rake



Setting Machines



Mr. Ziwa Harlington facilitating the training on marketing of Briquettes

Outcomes:

1. Obtained a briquette production and related business training manual
2. Created opportunities for youths who are involved in the routine production and sales of briquette to the community and other consumers.
3. Introduced monetarization of crop waste that farmers have been just wasting/burning but now SORAK collects them at a fee to the farmers.
4. More trees will be saved in the future as households would turn to use briquette for cooking instead of using fire wood/ wood charcoal.

Major challenges:

1. Some farmers are unwilling to allow SORAK to collect their crop waste because it needs to decompose in their garden and add manure.
2. The rainy season that affects proper drying process of the produced briquette
3. Some community members have negative reactions in using briquettes thinking that they are not as good as wood charcoal.

Recommendations:

1. It was recommended that SORAK should strengthen the marketing component of briquette charcoal in order to make the activity a viable one.
2. Conduct more sensitization to the community to inform them of the environmental and economic benefits of using briquette charcoal. This would take the form of village /community meetings, radio messages etc.
3. SORAK commenced with Briquette charcoal production thus having another revenue generation option to the organization. Potential customers are hotels, schools, town residents and a trading centre. SORAK needs to conduct marketing activities.

Conclusion:

In summary, the activity was successful though it took time to take off because we needed to wait to conduct until Maize crop was harvested and the maize corns were well dried. It is anticipated that it will contribute to both environment conservation through provision of alternative use of crop waste instead of burning and saving more trees from cutting for wood charcoal and firewood.