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# **Environmental Protection through Expanding Lemon Grass Growing and Education in Uganda**

Quarterly Performance Report

January –March 2020

**Prepared by**



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND.....	2
2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	2
3. PROJECT RESULTS AS PER ATIVITY.....	3
4. KEY CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION MEASURES UNDERTAKEN .....	7
5. LESSONS LEARNT .....	8

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

GBN	Global Bridge Network
JFGE	Japanese Fund for Global Environment
SORAK	Strategic Organization for Real Action –Kampala

## I. BACKGROUND

SORAK with funding from Japanese fund for Global Environment (JFGE) through partnership with Global Bridge Network (GBN) is implementing a 3 year project. This is an environment protection and promotion project with title: Environmental Protection through Expanding Lemon Grass Growing and Education in Uganda.

This report presents quarterly progress of activities implemented between January and March 2020. The report highlights results, outcomes, challenges faced in the third quarter and how SORAK has been able to overcome challenges.

## 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project in Mubende District, Uganda seeks to promote environmental protection and education through growth of lemon grass. This project is based on the lessons provided by the SORAK through the project, “Lemongrass for essential oils production and sales” funded by Common Wealth of Australia in 2013.

These lessons include;

-Encouraging rural people to grow the grass

-Advantages of growing the grass such as it grows rapidly, and the grass has a strong ability to protect the soil from agents of erosion

-The grass has many uses such as extraction of oil to being used as a mulch as well as controller of water runoff

-Planting tufts can be easily obtained now and it helps to grow the grass

-We have experiences of distilling essential oils and have been aware of oil yields per ton of withered grass.



SORAK is therefore, encouraging farming communities in Mubende and the neighboring Kyegegwa district grow lemon grass with emphasis to its environmental and livelihood improvement benefits. The grass puts waste and redundant and barren hill slop lands into productive use. Farmers are realizing the benefits of controlled water runoff while being able to meet their basic needs namely; medical care, scholastic materials, food, clothing among others.

The project is having environmental benefits of providing a permanent soil cover to the currently eroded bare grounds. It further helping in solid waste management when waste is collected and added to lemon grass spent grant for briquette charcoal making.

Further, SORAK is making use of spent grass after distilling essential oil in the production of briquette charcoal. Global Bio-Energy Uganda (GBE), Limited has provided all the necessary support to that enabled SORAK to establish a briquette charcoal production unit during the second project year 2018. This area also grows a lot of maize and cassava and that solid waste is now being used to make briquette charcoal. SORAK is using other organic waste to make briquette charcoal.

This project is accompanied with environmental education through both community and school based campaigns. This has raised prospects of women and youth sustainable livelihoods and mitigation of climate change effects. The project has overall contributed to environmental awareness and protection.

During this reporting period, SORAK has made research in product development and marketing that use essential oils as one of the raw materials. There has been raising hope for producing marketable quantities of mosquito repellent jelly.

### **3. PROJECT RESULTS AS PER ATIVITY**

#### **<Activity I >**

#### **Activity I.9 Conducting routine support supervision and monitoring of the project activities**

**Dates: 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020.**

**Locations:**

- Katabalanga and Kachwamango wetlands- Kigandosub county
- Lwensama-Kabutu wetlands in Kibalingasub counties.

**Activities:**

In order to ascertain progress of project activities, SORAK team comprising of Martin Mafabi and Muhammad Kyeyune, conducted monitoring visit to various project sites. This quarter, emphasis was put on visiting wetlands areas in the sub-counties of Kigando and Kibalinga.

**Outcomes:**

The aim of checking on these was to ascertain the effectiveness of the enacted laws of environmental conservation. It was realized that encroachers on wetlands are fewer in Kigando subcounty than before policy making meetings. Here in KigandoSub County; communities are effectively playing a positive role towards environmental conservation. SORAK, JFGE and GBN interventions are regarded by the community as the best towards restoring the degraded environment.

On the other hand the Lwensama –Kabutu wetlands in Nakanyansivillage, KibalingaSub County, were found ravaged. SORAK reported to the district environmental office via whatsapp platform. The district responded by sending law enforcers who came and arrested encroachers. They were stopped from further cultivation of the wetland.

Generally support from JFGE has positively impacted the environment.

<p>Lwensama wetland that was found cleared from trees and swamps</p>	<p>Kabutu Wetland extensively cleared /cut from trees and swamps</p>	<p>Kabutu wetland whose restoration needs to be encouraged</p>	<p>LusaliraNakanyansi where is a section of Kachwamanago main wetland dumped with soil and stream reduced to a small channel</p>

### Activity 1.10 Conducting monthly visits to 16 schools based environmental clubs

**Dates:** 24<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**Locations:** 5 schools clubs namely-Buwata, Kattambogo, Kabubu, Ntungamo public, Cawodisa and Kafundeezi Schools

#### Activities:

SORAK team and sub county officials further reached out to based clubs to monitor the progress of 5 selected schools participation in environmental protection. Monitoring was done to see how they were maintaining the trees planted by the environment clubs in the previous quarters. The monitoring team also wanted to see how the school based environmental clubs progressed on with their participation in environmental protection.

- SORAK monitoring team listened to some of the school songs which they had composed to use in encouragement and popularizing environmental protection and conservation.
- Checking on the progress of planted trees' growth
- Finding out any challenges facing school based environment clubs if any

#### Outcomes:

- It was realized that the activeness of school clubs has generally maintained the stable growth of trees planted in the school compounds with support from SORAK.
- Sub county officials were overwhelmed by the school based clubs formed by SORAK towards their role in restoring the ever green environment within Mubendedistrict. This was also mentioned in the environmental competition by the district Chief administrative officer when schools had competitions.

<p>One of the compound-school protection trees growing-but needed constant watering</p>	<p>Environment club members of Kibalinga p/s performs for the monitoring team</p>	<p>Martin –check the cause of slow growth of one planted tree- Ntungamo primary school</p>	<p>Buwata Primary school environmental club performs awareness song to monitoring officials.</p>



**Activity:1.11 Conduct 2 competitive interschool environmental promotion exhibition days–To be held on the world environmental day**

**Dates:** 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**Locations:** All the competitions took place at Ntungamo primary school play ground

**Participants:** 16 schools. Each school was represented by 40 children and 4 teachers hence a total of 640 children 64 teachers

**Activities:**

SORAK conducted 2 competitions of project schools. Each competition was attended by 8 schools per day for 2 days. Schools were separated in two groups because of time which could not be enough for all the 16 schools to make presentations and shows in one day.

Each school presented a song, a drama /play and a poem. All these had content in environmental awareness, Protection and conservation. Each individual school club members also showcased their other activities that they do to conserve the environment.

There were also speeches from stakeholders and government officials namely the district environment officer, the school inspector of schools, the district education officer and the chief administrative officer. These emphasized the importance in children involvement in environmental protection. All speakers thanked SORAK and other partners present for the work well done in supporting education initiatives with environmental protection among others.

There was also prize giving and recognizing of best schools and individual children. This was sponsored by learning for life –another partner promoting organic farming in schools.

**Outcomes:**

- Schools and children came out of the competition more energized to promote and protect the environment.
- The district officials made pledges continued support and collaboration to ensure that the supported schools have well protected school environment. They also indicated that they would encourage other schools to copy what happened in the competition. They also asked SORAK and other donors to continue and introduce related activities in all other schools in the entire district not yet reached by the project.





### <Activity 3>

#### Activity 3.10 Support women and youth to plant trees to provide wood fuel for distiller heating

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**Locations:**

- Kabubbu Parish Kibalinga sub county
- Kisujja parish –Bageza Sub-county

**Targets**

- Seven (7) Kabubbu SORAK youth group
- Seven (7) Women living with HIV/AIDS association

**Activities:**

- Talking to youth and women living with HIV and AIDS about the importance of tree planting.
- Guiding the youth on the available tree types for planting
- Providing tree seedlings (12000 eucalyptus trees)
- Visiting gardens of planted trees
- Checking on the tree planting methods

**Outcomes:**

- Youth understood and prepared to take on tree planting for both livelihood improvement and environmental protection.
- Youth and women advised on the best practices of tree planting/pitting, thinning and fire prevention <sup>1</sup>



Kabubbu youth group discussing tree planting plans-their leader points to a point selected for tree planting



Selected land for youth ready for planting-pits dug for planting eucalyptus.



Some of the eucalyptus planted and women expanding it this first rainy season.



The proud chairperson, Bagezza women group shows us trees planted

#### Activity 3.11 Establish supply chain management on exploitation cropping⇒distillation⇒merchandise sale, and continue above system

**Date:** January –March 2020

**Activities:**

SORAK is already distilling essential oils from lemon grass and put much effort towards development supply chain. And the supply chain developed and in existence now is that part of the distilled oil is sold to individual doing tea blending in Kampala. Other oil is maintained by SORAK and used as a perfuming agent as well as mosquito repellent a newly developed SORAK mosquito repellent jelly.

<sup>1</sup>Pitting means digging pits where to plant trees, Thining is the removal of unwanted trees that have not grown well and fire prevention is the practice of clearing around a planted forest or trees to ensure that wild fires do not attach the planted trees.

**Outcomes**

Our chain is now comprised of lemon grass growers⇒distillation⇒essential oils sale/use ⇒SORAK mosquito repellent jelly⇒ sale points in shops, saloons, school canteens etc

**Activity 3.12 Make Produce products that make use of oil and raw materials namely candles and oil perfumed chlorine bleach**

**Date:1<sup>st</sup> February to 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**Location:**

SORAK office for making, packaging

And then Kigandosub county headquarters, Lwawuna primary school and Kabubbu primary school for sales and marketing.

**Activities:**

- Going to Kampala to procure industrial materials namely candle wax, white jelly, coloring agent, packaging containers among others.
- Mobilizing staff to make jelly via boiling, mixing and later packaging and labeling
- Mobilizing communities for product information sharing and eventual sales

**Outcomes**

- A product called SORAK mosquito repellent jelly developed and tested on the market place
- Potential consumers showed willingness to use the product
- All testing output made sold in one day at 3 different venues

Making SORAK mosquito repellent jelly in progress	A ready product for sale.	Excited buyer – LwawunaNabingoolasub county	Excited buyers after a successful marketing talk



**4. KEY CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION MEASURES UNDERTAKEN**

The key challenges faced during this third quarter of the project implementation period included;

- Inconsistent rains during the month of February.This has limited fast growth of the planted trees. In order to mitigate this, SORAK consulted the environment officer who encouraged continued planting of trees and noted that consistent rains would come soon.

- Most youth do not own land where they would wish to plant trees. They have to wait until the death of their parents in order to inherit land. Two youth who had access land agreed to work with other fellow youth. These were hence selected for tree planting.

## 5. LESSONS LEARNT

- Children are very great change agents. These must be relied upon all the time if any project is to be impactful. Working with children also promotes sustainability of project interventions.
- Use of clubs makes school enjoyable and children learn important things and new ideas through incidental learning as they participate in day to day clubs activities.
- Use of competition in causing change is a huge motivator of participation. From adults to children in schools, the urge to win an environmental promotion competition keeps all at the top of practicing activities that protect the environment. All this is driven by the desire to win.
- Land shortage is still a huge challenge facing youth in Uganda. Government need to take broad steps in having a policy that give youth the opportunity to own land other than for them to keep waiting for donations from their parents. Land ownership can promote environmental protection via tree planting by young people.
- It takes a great deal of time and research to develop any product which is meant for human consumption. This is exemplified by the time taken to develop the SORAK mosquito repellent jelly.
- It is possible to develop a product and have it marketed for income generation. This has been observed with the SORAK mosquito repellent jelly.

## 6. ACHIEVEMENT/SUCCESS STORY OF THE QUARTER

### SORAK Mosquito repellent Jelly –a product to fight malaria

SORAK with funding from JFGE and support from GBN has been growing lemon grass for essential oil’s distillation for both sale and use for blending and development of marketable products.

We have over the years tried different products including but not limited to lemon oil blended tea, candles with lemon oil blend among others. In the past 3 years nothing has so far proved successful like the mosquito repellent jelly. This is a product which we have research on and developed in this quarter.

The results are so encouraging. SORAK has named it SORAK mosquito repellent jelly. This is because of the lemon oils ingredient that has mosquito repelling properties. With the available of funds, SORAK plans to going into mass production. This will call for inputs like; a boiling pan, a mixer, constant heat/fire supply, packaging and branding materials, means of delivery/transportation of the jelly, and retaining more staff in production and marketing

Overall SORAK is developing a min business plan that will outline mainly the production and marketing strategy of our product. We shall also see guidance from Uganda bureau of standards for certification. This is illustrated in the photographs below.



SORAK team brands our jelly



Happy buyers of our product