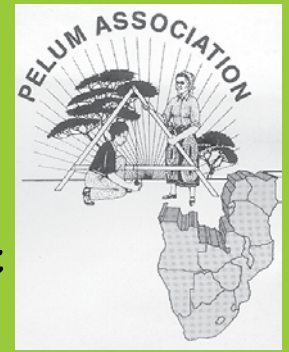


PELUM Uganda Newsletter

Participatory Ecological Land Use Management

December 2008 Issue.



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The Deputy Mayor Mukono Town Council planting a tree during the World Environment Day (WED)

Dear reader,

Welcome to the December, 2008 issue of the PELUM Uganda E-Newsletter. We sincerely hope that you will find it interesting and informative. This particular issue is focusing on “sharing experiences, good practices and lessons learnt from the field by the member organizations and farmers.”

PELUM Uganda has been working together with Member Organizations to ensure that the livelihoods of rural communities are improved through building the capacity of Member Organizations in promoting Sustainable Agriculture, networking, research, advocacy, gender and participatory approaches. These efforts have had successes and challenges some of which are highlighted in this publication.

Farmers’ experiences and practices are important and farmers are capable of expressing themselves and making their experiences/ practices explicit. Farmers also consider information to be a valuable resource. The successful interventions need to be exploited and scaled to other areas for more communities to learn from.

The publication will provide insight on the impact, challenges faced by the various Member organizations (MOs) in their interventions and the lessons learnt.

In this issue you will read about, an ESAFF farmer who shares her experience on how farming has positively transformed her life with support from one member organization. UEEF also shares their experiences on the 2008 World Environment Day (WED) celebrations in Mukono District of which they were the organizers. We hope that the lessons generated and shared in this issue shall reflect upon your experiences and needs of your organization.

For comments or compliments on this letter please write to PELUM Uganda country Desk on pelumuganda@utlonline.co.ug

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FROM CHALK TO HOE: A GOLDEN DECISION.

As told by Mrs. Beatrice Twayaga.



Mrs. Twayaga (Extreme left) with colleagues after attending a capacity building workshop for ESAFF in Kenya.

When we left home every morning for the school where I worked, and the college where my husband worked, it had become routine but little did we know that one day, this would change and we would adjust to a completely new life. We lived in a spacious four- bedroom partly furnished Government house at the college campus in Kabale where my husband worked as a lecturer and our 11 children had been so used to campus life that they called it their home.

In 1999, Africa 2000 Network selected me among farmers to attend a weeklong training in Organic Farming, which took place in Kyotera, Rakai District. “You will be expected to emulate the technologies that you will be exposed to, as part of accountability for this training”, counseled the late Polly Mubangizi, Project Coordinator during the briefing to participants. It was after this training that our life changed. As salary income earners, our source of food was the nearby shops and supermarkets in Kabale town. It was after the organic farming training that I realized that the land around our house could change this way of living.

Using the knowledge and skills gained from the training, I recalled the words of the late Polly Mubangizi and set out to account for the training. I started making compost manure and opened a backyard basket gardening and used liquid manure as a substitute for pesticide. My immediate neighbors noticed the changes around our home with mixed feelings. While a few admired the new technologies, others thought it was a show off of affluence and a waste of resources.

When avocado and apple growing was introduced in Kabale in 2000, I agreed with my husband that we give these new crops a try. However, we realized that these were high value crops, which took a few years to harvest. This is how we conceived the idea to acquire land of our own outside the college where my husband worked. This was the beginning of our journey to transform our lives. At first, we purchased a one (1) acre plot of land, which we gradually expanded to current two (2) acres. We started by planting 5 apple trees and 5 avocado trees. At flowering, the apples withered and the flowers dropped before producing fruits. This tempted us to cut down the trees but we were saved by a fellow farmer, who encouraged us to continue.

Since 2000, we have expanded the size of our orchard and can now harvest a total of 600 fruits of apples and 7 bags of avocado per season, realizing an income of US\$3,000,000 per annum.

In 2002, Africa 2000 Network supported us with a heifer and this helped us to generate a lot of organic manure, which we used to improve the land around our new home. The land acquired had been used as a sand pit, but the new treasure helped us to make it productive. We are now able to use the land to grow not only apples and avocados, but also onions, green paper and other crops which we sell to the nearby Kabale town. In 2005, we received an award from Africa 2000 Network for promoting sustainable agricultural technologies in an urban environment and this motivated us to continue.

We have since left college quarters and constructed a home of our own next to our orchard and zero grazing units. At first we lived in a small semi-permanent structure but have since constructed a permanent house enough to accommodate our family of 15 members. Using saving from the farm, we were able to pay fees and our children have completed school and some of them are now working. My husband who has since

retired from his profession as a lecturer started an apiary project next to the orchard and produces 50 kg of honey per year. 1kg of honey costs US\$5.000 in local markets in Kabale town.

As a result of high demand for apples, we have expanded our small orchard to 100 trees, which include Anna and winter banana varieties. One well-managed apple tree produces between 200-300 fruits and each fruit costs US\$5.000 in the supermarkets in Kabale town. One apple tree can therefore generate Ug shs. 1,500,000 per season and there are 2 seasons in a year.

The neighbors who laughed at us when we moved from the classroom to the garden have now realized that ours was a “golden decision”. The heifer we received from Africa 2000 Network has since produced 6 off springs

and we maintain 3 of these. We realized an income of US\$2,000,000 from the heifer and 2 bulls, which we sold to buy roofing materials for our new house. Our milk production is 50 litres per day.

The journey from chalk to the hoe has been an inspiration to others, especially members of the group, to which we subscribe. The 40 group members use our small farm for learning the technologies, which we promote and at least 50% of the members are doing something in their homes. As an Africa 2000 Network farmer trainer, I also take time to visit their farms to demonstrate some of the technologies and although land in the urban area is a limitation, our group has become a model for others to emulate. The group is registered with NAADS and has benefited from several programs.

Mukono district celebrates World Environment Day and Clean up week

By Wako M. Joel

Information officer

Uganda Environmental Education Foundation

5th June is marked the World Environment Day (WED) every year. WED is considered as one of the most important events on the environmental calendar celebrated internationally by more than 100 countries. Therefore WED is one of the practical channels through which the UN member states stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances both individual and political attention of the various stakeholders. The day's agenda is to give a human face to environmental issues, empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development. The day is also geared towards promoting an understanding that communities are fundamental to changing attitudes towards environmental issues and advocate partnership which will ensure that all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future.

On that note, Uganda Environmental Education Foundation (UEEF) together with Mukono district Environment department, Mukono Town Council, and The East African Communities' Organisation for the

Management of Lake Victoria Resources (ECOVIC) organized a World Environment Day celebration and a clean up exercise on the 18th July 2008 at Kati Primary School in Kyungu and Kikooza respectively.

The main objective was to; enable selected schools, policy makers and advocates; and the general public to become aware of the effects of climate change caused by carbon emissions.

The WED district theme was “Combat Climate Change: Through Education and Tree planting”.

The main activities were; marching along Kampala-Jinja highway to Kikooza, tree planting, clean up which included sweeping and collecting garbage from the grubby and filthy slum and trading center of Kikooza. Children recited poems and sang songs about safeguarding the environment through tree planting.

Other players and partners in this endeavour of marking and celebrating WED; Century Bottling Company, Rocky Industries Limited, Uganda Coalition for



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Sustainable Development (UCSD), Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM Uganda) and Agency for Environment and Wetlands (AEW) made it memorable and colourful.

The celebrations were flagged off from Mukono Town council grounds with a match led by a brass band through the streets of Mukono Town. Schools which participated were; Bishops' East Primary School, Bishops' West Primary School, Kati Primary School, Katikolo Primary School and Community Fellowship International Primary School. They were donning in blue T-shirts with a slogan "A waste free Lake: Our future belongs" whereas Century Bottling Company's slogan was "Combat Climate Change".

Fruit trees were planted at the schools which participated in marking and celebrating WED. Other tree seedlings were planted in Kikooza, proposed re-cycling plant site at Kyungu and along the stretch leading to the proposed site and at Kati Primary School which hosted the function and others were planted along streets in Mukono Town Council on request by Mukono Town Council. Therefore, this gives a clear picture that indeed this year's WED was to "Kick the Habit: Towards a Low Carbon Economy".

In their speeches the LC.1 Chairperson Kyungu, Mr. Makayi Alex, said his area is being robbed off its natural resources mainly the existing tree cover due to ignorance and poverty. He said trees are cut to make charcoal and called upon UEEF and Mukono district to support and sensitize people about tree planting.

The councilor of Katikolo, Kyungu and Nsube, Mukasa Henry said that people in his area people have cut trees for charcoal and that they do not replant others. Astonishingly, he said that people have now resorted to cutting Jackfruit trees and other fruit trees denying their children enough fruits to feed on thereby making them malnourished. He therefore called upon UEEF, Mukono District Environment Department and NEMA to plan out a programme to sensitize and train people about the benefits of maintaining the natural diversity.

Headmaster Kati Primary School Mr. Kagwa Isaac said that though his school is on small piece of land, they managed to plant a given number of tree seedlings given to them by UEEF through Century Bottling Company. He said that Kati Primary School, UEEF and Mukono District Environment department needs to work together with them to bring about attitude change about the importance of trees in Kyungu.

The Executive Director UEEF Mr. Ssenyonjo Nicholas showed appreciation of the Deputy Mayor, Town Clerk, Mukono Town Council councilors, Mukono district Environment department through Mukono District Council, Headmaster of Kati Primary School, Century Bottling Company, ECOVIC, Rocky Industries Limited and everyone who participated in the event. He thanked his team led by yours truly Wako Joel and Ssemakula Stephen who worked tirelessly and steered towards the WED in Mukono. He said in future a lot has to be made as to create awareness about the effects of climate change thereby involving every citizen in the struggle to contend with climate change.

A match led by a brass band through the streets of Mukono Town. Schools



The Town Clerk – Mukono Town Council Mrs. Nanyonga Alex, said that ‘environment belongs to us thereby defining environment as “man and his surroundings”, and therefore, everyone is accountable for a better environment. She further said that “we should not be environmental destructors, but contributors in terms of general cleanliness through tree planting and the like”.

Minister of Gender and Community Development – Mukono Town Council, Mrs. Jessica Kalema was grateful for such endeavour of marking WED in Mukono. She said that “teachers should encourage their pupils to practice tree planting exercise because the future belongs to them and that tree planting along side the roads should be encouraged just as it is Rwanda to beautify and make Uganda green”.



The Town Clerk - Mukono Town Council Mrs. Nanyonga Alex, planting a tree.



The Executive Director UEEF Mr. Ssenyonjo Nicholas during the 2008, World Environment Day celebrations in Mukono.

The guest of honour, Hajji Issah Ssebunya thanked the organizers and said that Kyungu’s environment is to be changed in the future and that that is why the World Bank through NEMA donated US \$ 300,000 to construct a recycling plant, procure skips, Lorries and tractors. He noted that “there were 10 towns in Uganda which were selected to benefit from World Bank’s donation and Mukono was ranked number 2. He also said that residents of satellite towns like Seeta, Bweyogere and Lugazi will benefit through employment and selling recyclable waste to the plant.

He concluded by urging everyone to guard against bad practices towards the destruction of the environment. He latter planted a tree in commemoration of the World Environment Day of 2008.

CALL FOR ARTICLES

Please submit articles to:
Email: pelumuganda@utlonline.co.ug
before 10th March, 2009.

Under the theme:
‘Value Addition as a vehicle to access markets.’

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