

Project Title: Community Empowerment for Improved Food Security and Income in West Nile.

Environmental Alert (EA) is a Ugandan Non-Governmental Organization, founded in 1988, that promotes sustainable agriculture and natural resources management for sustainable livelihoods in Uganda through supporting community development and policy lobbying and advocacy. EA envisions, *'resilient and dignified communities, managing their environment and natural resources sustainably.'* The EA's mission is to, *'advocate for an enabling environment, sustainable natural resource management and food security frameworks for targeted communities through empowerment and policy engagement.'* EA is also a 1st prize winner of the Energy globe award for environmental sustainability-2005 under the category, earth.

Environmental Alert (EA) is working with communities of West Nile (Moyo, Yumbe, and Adjumani Districts) to implement three year project funded by Bread for the World (BfdW) i.e., *'Community Empowerment for Improved Food Security and Income in West Nile.'* The implementation period of the project is from October 2013 – September 2017.

Key challenges which the project is addressing:

- a. High rate of food insecurity and poverty in West Nile (Yumbe, Adjumani and Moyo Districts);
- b. Soil fertility depletion and degradation leading to limited access of productive land;
- c. Degradation of natural resources in search of arable land for agriculture. This has led to Encroachment on the natural resources including River Nile Banks, wetlands, forest degradation and deforestation;
- d. Weak adaptation capacity for climate change and variability; leading to low agricultural productivity and remain food insecure (floods, prolonged agricultural and hydrological droughts);
- e. Weak food security regulatory mechanisms at the district or sub-county levels;
- f. Farmers in West Nile depend on rain fed agriculture and provide a livelihood for about 98% of the total population yet communities continue to face a number of related challenges which limits their production and livelihood security;
- g. Poor farming methods/practices/technologies/detrimental farming practices, which deplete the nutrient stock stored in the topsoil (0-20cm depth);
- h. Low income levels of the communities in West Nile;
- i. Inadequate capacity of communities, farmer groups and community based organizations to effectively and continuously demand for accountability from government in form of improved service delivery. *High rates of household food insecurity and poverty among farming communities;*
- j. Inadequate nutrition and health.

The objectives of the project are:

- I. The Organizational capacity of 40 community organizations in the Albertine Nile region developed to become people centred organizations by December 2017;
- II. Enabling national and local government policies and programs for sustainable livelihoods of the natural resource dependent communities in the Albertine Nile region by December 2017;
- III. Food security of 1,200 natural resource dependent households in the Albertine Nile region improved by 20% by December 2017.

Project Partners

The project is implemented by Environmental Alert in partnership with Moyo District (Aliba and Metu Sub County), Adjumani District (Itirikwa and Pachara Sub counties) and Yumbe Districts (Kei Sub County). It's funded by BfdW to the tune of 400000 Euros over a period of 4 years.

Expected outputs of the Project are:

- a. At least 200 leaders from 40 community organizations have acquired knowledge and skills



Figure 1. Farmers trained on water and soil conservation on the farm in Adjumani District, Photo by Alabi Noel

in people owned processes (POP) and are applying the knowledge and skills by developing and implementing at least 40 development projects.

- b. 40 community organizations implementing their action plans based on the PoP approach and principals;
- c. Organisational management, leadership and administration capacity of 40 CBOs strengthened;
- d. Food security related Bylaws adoption in two sub counties;
- e. At least 30 community organizations benefiting from government agriculture and livelihoods related program;
- f. Five National level policy engagements to address community concerns at the local and national levels;
- g. At least 25% of each of the 40 farmer groups equipped with knowledge and skills in agribusiness management;
- h. Knowledge and skills in climate adaptation and mitigation acquired;
- i. Modalities for co-management of Zoka and Kei forest community management initiated;
- j. 900 Households with at least 20% increase in food production;
- k. 900 households with at least 20% increase in income from agriculture;
- l. Number of Climate change adaptation actions (2 types of Forest based enterprises, two signed collaborative forest management agreements).



Figure 2. Mifiako C farmer group in Aliba Sub County receiving improved Cassava stalk for multiplication: Photo by Noel Alabi

The expected Outcome and Impact

The project has been designed with aim of empowering natural resource dependent communities in three districts (Moyo, Yumbe, Adjumani districts.) in the Albertine Nile region for sustainable livelihoods. The majority of rural communities in the three districts, as in most of Uganda, depend on natural resources like natural soil fertility, indigenous crop varieties and livestock breeds, forests and trees, natural pastures, wetlands and climate for their livelihoods (Food, income, medicine, fiber, fuel, poles, etc). They can also be called 'peasants'.

Possible unintended (positive and negative) outcomes or impacts of the project

- a. Ordinances and bylaws for food security will be replicated in other sub-counties and districts in the Albert Nile Region of Northern Uganda and the rest of Uganda hence bringing benefits to many more communities.
- b. Increased civic expression and community empowerment may result into many of the beneficiaries becoming politicians, campaigning for election at the coming election in 2016 and winning.
- c. Increased food production in the area will create additional employment in trade.

Key achievements to-date:

A) Established 40 demonstration sites for 40 farmer groups that acted and continue to serve as multiplication and learning centres for transfer of technologies (*improved seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides*) and practices (*field layout and design, timely planting, weed management, soil and water conservation, pests and disease management and general agronomy*). In addition, Divine Mercy farmer group is practising pig husbandry and management.

B) Supported the Community of Zoka to develop and submitted an application to NFA Adjumani office for Collaborative Forest Management for Zoka Central Forest Reserve. The application was forwarded to NFA head office for concurrence and approval by the technical department incharge of Collaborative Forest Management initiatives. As a result EA developed a case study about the



Figure 3. Participants for the PoP training at Multi- Purpose training centre, Moyo. Photo by Sekate Moses

experiences with initiating Collaborative forest management initiative for Zoka community.

C) Equipped 40 farmer groups with information on government agriculture and livelihood related programmes on Youth livelihoods, Community Demand Driven (CDD) and Operation wealth creation programs). For example Ozungo Youth Farmers Association in Itirikwa, Adjumani District received 7 million.

D) Mobilized and sensitized 165 (53 females and 112 males), farmers, sub county political leaders (Councilors, LCIIIs secretaries of production, LCIII chairperson), community developemnt officers, agricultural extension staff, sub county chief about people empowerment and self help.

E) Equipped **80 (48M, 32F) master trainers** with knowledge and skills about People owned Process. As result of training and raising awareness on PoP farmers are increasing demanding for services from duty bearers at the local level. For example, Ozugo youth group recieved 50 orange seedlings and Amazo farmers group recieved 40 orange seedlings and 10 mango seedlings (Itirikwa sub county, Adjumani district) from the government Operation wealth Creation programme. In addition Ozugo Youth group lobbied and recieved 150 Bee hives under the Youth Livelihood Project also a government programme.

F) Information about PoP and its application has been simplified into formats that can easily be understood by both rights holders and duty bearers. For instance, an illustrative poster on PoP methodology and aplication was developed and 2000 copies of the poster were published, both in english and the local language, respectively.

G) Developed social action plans for 40 farmer groups and 40 development projects are being implemented at group level. In addition also some individual members developed household plans. For example, members of Amazo farmer group in Itirikwa Sub County spearheaded a bylaw to limit on alcohol drinking in their village and its being implemented by the sub county. This is intended to address food security concerns at household as well as community levels.



H) The Community knowledge centre (CKC) was established in Yumbe sub county and operational with skilled staff supporting farmers to access information on agriculture, food security, nutrition, ENR, and other aspects of community members and other stakeholders.



Contact:

Dr. Joshua Zake (PhD), Executive Director-
Environmental Alert
Plot 475/523 Sonko Lane, Kabalagala
Off Ggaba Road;
P.O. Box 11259 Kampala, Uganda;

Tel: 256-414-510547 or 510215

Email: ed@envalert.org or joszake@gmail.com

Website: www.envalert.org

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