



Energy Globe Award Winner

Amplifying visibility of the Energy Globe Award to promote environmental and livelihood sustainability



Environmental Alert is a 1st prize winner of one of the most prestigious awards for environmental sustainability in the world, **The Energy Globe Award**.

In March 2006 Environmental Alert (EA) was presented with the Energy Globe Award 2005 in Vancouver, Canada, having emerged winner under the Earth category. The 2005 contest has been among over 700 projects world-wide. The Energy Globe award is one of the most prestigious awards for environmental sustainability in the world.

The award is mainly in recognition of the Environmental Alert's Integrated Nutrient Management to Attain Sustainable Productivity (INMASP) project's whose impact on food security and community livelihoods through use of simple appropriate techniques to overcome soil fertility depletion has been exceptional.

In 2002 when EA mobilised farmers in Lukwanga Parish, Wakiso district to develop appropriate solutions to address the problem of land degradation, it was an attempt to combat the high levels of land and soil degradation in Wakiso district.

The process, which lasted 2 years, involved identifying, testing and evaluating several technologies, before they could adopt any of them. Over the two-year period, technologies were devised, tested, work plans developed and a centrally located plot identified to be used for technology experimentation. A Farmer Field School (FFS) approach was employed. Two FFSs were set up: the Alinyikira Farmer Field School and the Nabukalu Demonstration Farm School at which for the last two years, integrated nutrient management technologies were tested and evaluated and, based on a participatory needs assessment and farmers trained in specific aspects of integrated soil and nutrient management.

Consequently farmers' crop yields have improved dramatically and farmers are now fired to advance the agenda for popularizing farmer field extension and farmer field schools as a tested and working service delivery mechanism in the agriculture and natural resources sectors. This inspiration and vivid transformation among the target community is a critical aspect of Environmental Alert's strategy of modelling replicable interventions as a basis for policy engagement and social transformation.

Develop and Conserve

Q&A on the Global Award

A short discussion was held with Mr. Fred Kafeero, Executive Director of Environmental Alert about the Global Award.

Q: what have you got to say about this award?

A: For over 15 years we have worked with and supported several farming communities in the country to develop own approaches and local intervention strategies that enhance land productivity. As such this award comes as a motivation and recognition of our effectiveness and innovativeness of our approaches.

Q: What is unique in your way of work?

A: We acknowledge that farmers have a wealth of local knowledge which has evolved over generations and as such we always act as facilitators who help them appreciate the knowledge they have and enable them to access scientific knowledge from our technical staff and partners in research. This combination of knowledge, coupled with strengthening farmer organizations in the community is the reason why the farmers get committed to achieving their desired situation and own their processes and product.

Q: What are your plans around this achievement?

A: One of our priorities is to promote wider replication of the best practices from the Wakiso farmers. We have already shared ideas with the government officials and CSOs (a number of whom already apply the farmer field school approaches in their work on what could be done this direction. Most important we shall continue to lobby for institutionalization of these innovative approaches in government and academic institutions. We will continue highlighting the key lessons from working with farming communities as we engage in the policy making activities around the soil policy and land policy that are now going on in Uganda.

Mr. John Kalule Sewaali, former Commissioner, Farm Development Department Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries made some remarks on the Energy Global Award.

Q: What are the implications of land degradation from the ministries point of view?

A: The threat of land degradation to agricultural productivity be it crops or animals is enormous. There is no way we can fight poverty, food insecurity and hunger without addressing the big problems associated with land degradation including soil erosion, soil mining, deforestation soil compaction etc. in the ministry we have put up a strategy which has as one of its priorities addressing land degradation, advocating for an integrated organic farming system that uses low external inputs, and increasing awareness on the real threat posed by land degradation.

Q: What strategies exist in the ministry for promotion and / or replicating best practices of land management among communities?

A: The case of Lukwnga farmers in Wakiso District and a number of others that the ministry initiated in the past are clear testimonies that small scale initiatives can work well. Research scientist have in the past overlooked the importance of indigenous knowledge in solving land degradation problems, but now with the coming in to being the national Agricultural Research systems (NARS), all key stakeholders are being brought on board to promote farmers' innovation and integrate it with scientific research. This approach will enhance sharing of research information and knowledge and that way foster wider replication of best practices.

Q: What inspirations do you draw from the award that Environmental Alert won?

A: This is a clear indication that the ministry and relevant government programmes like NAADS Can benefit and learn a lot from partnership with NGOs because they are innovative and work in flexible ways. The Award is a big recognition for all of us in the country.