

School Gardens , the Key to community transformation

SNV

Background

SNV Uganda is implementing the school garden programme in 750 primary schools in Uganda targeting 75,000 parents and 300,000 school children, in partnership with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, UNICEF and eight district local governments (Arua, Nebbi, Nwoya, Arua, Nebbi, Nwoya, Kasese, Kyenjojo, Bundibugyo). The model has proved to be inclusive, sustainable and cost-effective given the school as an infrastructure makes it possible to engage a wide array of stakeholders including school-going children, parents, school administration, other community members, different government ministries, research institutions and the private sector.



Impact of the school garden programme



- 145,000 pupils in 500 primary schools, representing 31% of total school enrolment of 470,000 pupils in 680 who used to go hungry all day at school now enjoy mid-day meals at school.

- 42,000 parents participated in cluster farming which is aimed at moving the programme from the school to the community by organising households into learning clusters for easy extension support; and 25,000 parents participated in school garden activities in 711 communities.
- 25,500 parents (approximately 13,000 households) have adopted at least one new good agriculture practice and realised better farm productivity.
- 28,000 parents reported improvement in their household food security as a result of increased food production. School gardens made it easy to mobilise parents to provide mid-day meals for their school-going children.
- Through the school garden programme, communities and schools have been linked to private sector actors like major retail supermarkets –Uchumi and Nile Breweries (a member of SAB Millers) who are buying vegetables and sorghum directly from the communities thereby providing direct market for the communities produce. SNV has also been able to link the communities and schools to seed companies like Equator Seed, Victoria Seed Company and Grow More Seeds that provide improved seed varieties to the parents and buy their seeds during harvest, thus addressing the issue of quality planting seeds.

**What stakeholders are saying about the school garden programme
(quotes from the CEP Review in Soroti and Lira May 2014)**

All schools in Soroti should take up the school garden programme

"Since I started working with government I have never seen a programme that is well packaged and innovative like the community empowerment programme, especially the school garden programme that has a huge multiplier effect. It is possible for us to feed our children using the available land and resources that we have by adopting the SNV school garden approach. It is therefore my recommendation that all schools in Soroti take up school gardens because this is a good programme that should be scaled up." **Dr. Tom Gidudu Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Soroti District**

Children are staying in school for afternoon classes

"Because we were doing well in the school garden an NGO Emmaus started giving our school food and now we have 100% school feeding. Now the primary one and primary two pupils because they have lunch are not interested in going back home after lunch and join primary 3 class." **Head Teacher, Okolodong Primary School Soroti District**

The school garden programme has brought parents back to school

"The school garden programme has brought parents back to school. Now parents are involved in their children's education which is a good motivation to the teachers as well. Parents have realised the importance of feeding their children at school and are also adopting good agricultural practices in the homes. Our plan now is to link these communities to our NAADs initiatives so that the communities can access farming inputs from NAADs." **George Obia, Sub-County Chief Lira**

Parental participation in schools has improved

"What makes me proud is the improved parental participation. Before, you would go to a parents teachers association/ school meeting and the parents would not be there and the meetings would not take off. But now we go for meetings and you can find upto 100 parents because of the CEP school garden programme." **Anyango Hellen Sub-County Chief Barr, Lira District**

The school garden programme has taught us to monitor school activities

"Before the school garden programme, we as school management committee members didn't know what we were supposed to do in the school. Because of CEP we came to know that we are supposed to monitor school activities. So we decided ourselves into pairs and each pair is allocated a day to monitor, we are able to monitor teacher attendance, teaching and we also check whether peoples books are

marked. In 2013 we got 3 first grades after having no first grades for the last four years." **Sophia Opio, Member School Management Committee in charge of Education, Abunga primary school Lira District**

Children have picked up interest in Agriculture

"My daughter Adong Monica picked interest in agriculture from her involvement in the school gardens. This morning, I left her planting cotton in her garden because she knows that if she plants cotton during this planting season she will be able to harvest her cotton by December in time to buy her Christmas dress." **Vincent Omony Chairman SMC Abunga Lira District**

School enrolment has increased

Before the CEP programme, our school enrolment was 300 pupils. With the introduction of the school garden programme and school feeding, our enrolment increased to 800 pupils." **Ogwal Sammy Head Teacher, Okile Primary School, Lira District**

Our eyes have opened

"Before SNV, our eyes were closed to the opportunity of using school gardens as entry places for learning given the numbers that collect in schools. With CEP our eyes have opened to the importance of using schools as learning centres and we are going to focus on schools as entry points for dissemination of agricultural technologies." **Dorcus Alum, Senior Agricultural Officer Lira district**

School performance has improved

"Since 1992 our school had never had children getting aggregate I. Children used to abscond from attending afternoon classes because we were not providing meals to children at school. With the introduction of the school garden programme, parents started coming back to school and getting involved in the school activities through their participation in the school gardens. Now parents appreciate the importance of feeding their children and a majority of the children are having mid-day meals while at school. This has increased on school enrolment and afternoon attendance. In 2013 two of our children passed in aggregate I and 16 in aggregate II." **Akidi Secondina Head Teacher Burlobo Rock View Primary school Lira district**