

JESE-STRENPO SPECIAL EDITION ,2021

SPECIAL EDITION

STRENPO

ACHIEVEMENTS



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EDITOR'S NOTE

In this issue, we bring out the successes from the STRENPO project. In the different stories we get to see how the 4 year project has impacted the lives of people.

The project has impacted on the lives of the communities within Kyenjojo, Kyegegwa & Kyaka II settlement under the thematic areas of economic empowerment, natural resources governance and climate smart resilience.

When it comes to women empowerment , the VSLA saving groups have been trained extensively providing different ways on how to ensure households are financially stable. Women have also been trained in vegetable growing to improve household feeding as well as an economic activity to get some money for saving.

Enjoy your read

By: Nabakka Elizabeth

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT APPRECIATES JESE PROJECT

By: Sagula Festo

The STRENPO project has uplifted farmers' skills and knowledge on good agronomic practices of soil and water conservation, Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA), environmental restoration and conservation practices, household income enhancement through the VSLA approach, among others. The training on women leadership has been instrumental in inspiring and empowering women, thus many have now taken up leadership roles in VSLA groups, Council, sub-county environment conservation committees and at local council three executive committee. The visioning tool of the household land-use plan has been very instrumental in accelerating asset accumulation and IGA start-ups at the household level to attain individual household goals.

Following the numerous training in financial management, women have transformed their savings in VSLA into investments in family businesses, advancement of their children's education, and asset acquisition, based on the visioning. Joint decision-making at the household level and sensitization on GBV were cited as key drivers of development among target beneficiary communities. As part of the sustainability strategy given the STRENPO project exit, the Kyembogo sub-county leadership has integrated some of the community Adaptation Action Plans (CAAPs) into their planning and budgeting processes.

According to the Sub-count Administrative Secretary (SAS), a total of two million shillings was set aside for routine monitoring of farmers and provision of extension services by the Parish chief and the sub-county Agriculture officer. Another six million shillings budget was

allocated to procurement and distribution of high-quality seeds to farmers in the sub-county, aimed at enhancing farm productivity. Ngabirano added that JESE and CARE bridged the gap between farmers and the produce marketplace, through farmer linkage to Aponye, one of the companies dealing in produce.

The company has since supported farmers with maize and beans seeds of high quality for planting, while assured of the available market through contract farming. Through corroboration and involvement of local leaders during group training, the Kyembogo sub-county agricultural department team has acquired knowledge and skills on approaches employed in the STRENPO project interventions, thus assured the monitoring team of their continuous support to farmers beyond the project lifetime. The sub-county leadership revealed their plan to prioritize farmers who have adopted climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices for the government parish model support. It further plans to lobby for tree seedlings, to be distributed to farmers as part of the restoration process enhancement.



Meeting with Mr. Ngabirano Benon, the Kyembogo sub-county Administrative Secretary, at the subcounty headquarters

KAWARUJU FARMERS' ORGANISATION LOBBY FOR BETTER MARKET OPPORTUNITIES .



The monitoring team meets with executive members of the Kawaruju Farmer's Organisation to understand future plans and required areas of support. Below: The STRENPO project manager at Mr. Deusi's farm with integrated agronomic practices of water and soil conservation.

By: JESE Staff

Following the STRENPO project interventions in Matiri parish, Kyenjojo district, farmers under the different VSLA groups have mobilized themselves into a farmer organization in the name of "Kawaruju Farmer's Organisation". Under this arrangement, the maize growing farmer group hopes to achieve collective bulking of their produce, before the sale at a higher price.

Having acquired knowledge and skills in lobbying and negotiation, the 125 membership group has not only exploited the available opportunities to get fully registered at the district level but also influenced the government to offer construction of a maize store for the group in Matiri, to enhance post-harvest handling and bulking. Through lobbying and negotiation, the group has been able to partner with private sectors such as Aponye, a produce dealer company, to secure the market for their maize at agreeable price rates.

The STRENPO project intervention approach of household land-use planning and

joint decision making among group members has seen a reduction in the cases of GBV, enhanced household income, and amplified Income Generating Activity (IGA) start-up among members. Women empowerment as evidenced from the increased take-up of leadership role, participation in decision making on financial allocation, and asset ownership at the household level has also been achieved.

As part of the sustainability strategy, the farmer organization has developed a strategic development plan with proposed activities of a dairy farm establishment, Fish farming, produce value addition, in addition to the apiary farming, among others. However, group members still have limited technical expertise in records management and full implementation of the proposed development plan activities/projects.

They appealed to JESE and CARE to fill the gap before project closure, as a boost to their proposed sustainability plan. While addressing group executive committee members, the STRENPO project manager, Mr. Aggrey Ntakimanye, appreciated group members for the level of resilience built at the household level. He pledged to support the organization with maize shelling machines to enhance maize quality and high volume processing.



MATIRI NATURAL RESOURCE USERS AND COFFEE FARMER SACCO



The monitoring team meets with members of Matiri SACCO members to discuss sustainability strategies, STRENPO project interventions impact on household income, food security and environmental restoration

By :JESE Staff

Having started in 2017 with a membership of 21 people, the SACCO has now grown to 105 members as of August 2021, with the majority of members emerging from three VSLA groups. With the current savings of Ugx 17 million, SACCO members attribute this milestone to the acquired knowledge and skills in saving, financial management, record-keeping, gender equality, and women empowerment among others, through training by the STRENPO project field team. With its registration achieved at the district level, the SACCO management has already embarked on processes for securing a registration certificate at the national level. The low-interest rate of 3% charged on loans to SACCO members, with a gross period of between four to eight-month for loan repayment, has seen an increment in the number of loans taken by group members for investment in farming, assets acquisition, and

small business investments, among other. The above interventions have enhanced household income, built a stronger unity among families, lessened gender-based violence and the over-dependence on men for the provision of household basic needs in the family. The reduced demand pressure to men, by their wives and the increasing shared responsibility in meeting household needs, has generally lowered pressure on natural resources, which were previously seen as the immediate source of income; for instance commercial charcoal burning. The acquired knowledge on savings, financial management, household land-use planning, alongside joint household decision making, have helped women to prioritize their needs in the household. With the increased household income, the majority of women SACCO members have joined several saving groups to meet different priority needs at the household level, hence increased asset accumulation.

BUMPER HARVEST FROM GOOD AGRONOMIC PRACTICES



Mrs. Twinomujuni Allen explaining to the STRENPO project manager on how she has managed to enhance farm yields through adoption of good agronomic practices .

By: Sagula Festo

Twinomujuni Allen is one of the farmer-beneficiaries who have adopted good agronomic practices of water and soil conservation under the STRENPO project support interventions, in Kirindameni village, Rwibaale ward, Butundizi town council, Kyenjojo district. Alongside the water and soil conservation practices on her farm, Allen has adopted line planting, proper spacing, timely planting, mulching, and post-harvest management practices in her entire food chine management system. As part of the restoration and conservation aspect of the environment, the farmer has integrated agroforestry trees for shade and mitigate water loss from the soil. Having acquired knowledge of line planting, Allen has since seen an enhancement in farm yields from her beans garden as compared to the previous years before the acquisition and adoption of this knowledge. As evidence to the above, Allen planted 3 kilograms of beans on a quarter piece of land in season one of 2021, and harvested 80 kilograms in terms of yields. In the second season, the farmer has planted 6 kilograms and she hopes to harvest at least 150 kilograms. Having been opportune to go for a learning

exchange visit to one of the model farmers in Kabarole district, facilitated by the STRN-PO project in 2020, Allen has further applied the acquired knowledge from the exposure visit to enhance her farm yields. The farmer has integrated a wide range of enterprises on her farm, including piggery, poultry, bananas, and coffee among others. All these are well managed with climate-smart agriculture practices of soil and water conservation, trench excavation, mulching, and shade tree planting, among others. These interventions have largely seen an improvement in soil quality and subsequent farm yields.



Mrs. Twinomujuni Allen explaining to the STRENPO project manager on how she has managed to partly achieve her vision using the household land use planning tool

The household land-use planning tool, joint decision making with other members of the household, financial management skills, have been very instrumental in driving Allen's ambitions towards achieving her vision/ dream goals. As a member of the village saving and loan association (VSLA), Allen managed to accumulate her savings to a tune of one million shillings in the first cycle, by saving between Ugx 2000 and Ugx 4000 shillings per week. Because her priority need was buying a heifer for milk production, she borrowed another one million from the VSLA group and bought the cow-worthy Ugx 2 million shillings. Other items on her household land use plan were; house construction and child education, all of which have been largely achieved.

YOUTH LIVELIHOODS ENHANCED THROUGH VSLA ACTIVITIES



Mr. Tumukunde Arthur at his business premises with the STRENPO project manager, during the monitoring activity in Kidongo village, Kitalesa Parish, Hapuuyo sub-county, in Kyegegwa district

By: JESE Staff

Mr. Tumukunde Arthur is a 27 year old youth, and the chairperson of Emiti Emito VSLA Youth group in Kidongo village, Kitalesa Parish, Hapuuyo sub-county, in Kyegegwa district. Before the STRENPO project interventions in his community, Tumukunde was a youth with no vision to achieve. He used to waste time with other youth in trading centers, playing cards most of the time, and did not have a clear purpose to achieve in life. On the small piece of his family land, Tumukunde could cultivate food crops, using traditional approaches, which yielded poorly and there was always limited surplus to the sale for personal income gain. Following a sensitization drive by the STRENPO project team in his village in 2018, Tumukunde joined a VSLA group, where he and other members received training in savings, financial management, Income generating ac-

tivity selection, modern farming with good agronomic practice, among others. He started saving a weekly fee of Ugx 2,000 shillings in the VSLA, to establish an IGA, just like other group members who are now engaged in poultry farming, piggery, operating general merchandise shops, and farming, among others.

As part of the income-generating activity, Tumukunde is now a proud owner of a saloon and a general merchandise shop business all established with money from his accumulated VSLA savings. The adopted agronomic practices of water and soil conservation have since enhanced soil fertility and subsequent farm yields for both household food security and income. As the leader of 28 youth group members, Tumukunde plans to push for the group registration at sub-county and district levels as part of a sustainability strategy and attraction of more opportunities for the benefit of all members.

GOOD GOVERNANCE ENHANCES WETLAND RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS

By: Sagula Festo

Kyerenga wetland conservation Association is located in Kirindameni village, Butunduzi town council, Kyenjojo district. Having been established in July 2019, with the objective of environmental restoration and conservation, the association has now grown to a membership of 60 people, comprising of 15 male and 45 female. It's fully fledged management team comprises of nine executive committee members, chaired by Mr. Musinguzi Micheal Tiryabwe, alongside other female counterparts.

With support from the STRENPO project field team, association members were facilitated to undertake a field exposure and learning exchange visit to Kakoni wetland in Kyaka II refugee settlement, to gain more insight on restoration practices, boundary marker establishment and corroborative natural resources management approaches, among others. It was shortly following their visit, that the executive committee mobilized association members to undertake a wetland demarcation exercise, in July 2021, in corroboration with local community leaders, NEMA, Kyenjojo district environmental team and adjacent community members from both Kyenjojo and Kyegegwa districts' sides.

As part of the sustainability strategy, the association has under taken registration at sub-county and district levels, and developed a management plan, in which a wide range of environmentally friendly income generating activities have been proposed for implementation. Among the highlighted activities include; Fish farming, Apiary farming, Hand craft making, commercial irrigation system establishment, cocoa farming with good agro-



The Kyerenga Wetland Conservation Association chairperson, Mr. Musinguzi Micheal, briefing the monitoring team on interventions under taken and the group's development plan for sustainability, during the field monitoring visit at Kyelenga Wetland.

nomics practices, agroforestry and commercial nursery bed establishment, with a focus on indigenous tree species. All the above activities will directly contribute to wetland restoration and conservation efforts, and the subsequent sustainable utilization of natural resources among Kyerenga wetland adjacent community members. Committee members appealed to JESE and CARE STRENPO team for additional capacity building in hand craft making, water and soil conservation, and marketing of the products.

In his speech to the association executive committee members, the STRENPO project manager Mr. Ntakimanye Aggrey, applauded the team for the efforts geared towards conservation of the natural resource. He advised the committee to acquire a license to enable full user, access and benefit rights to all members of the association. This would also limit other people from illegally accessing the wetland and the subsequent use of its resources.

VSLA'S EMPOWERING WOMEN.



Katushabe Christina in front of her house which she was able to expand using her savings from VSLA

By: Kunihira Flavia

Katushabe Christina is a member of Rulemebo Twimukye Actors Group in Nkanja sub-county Kyaka II settlement. Before the STRENPO project, she had no idea on the importance of saving money. She used to engage in casual work in Kyaka II settlement and believed in the hand to mouth mantra hence no chance of saving. In 2019, she attended trainings and sensitization meetings on VSLA by JESE and CARE.

This way, she was inspired and knew that she didn't need a lot of money to achieve big dreams, instead she had to start small.

Katushabe was able to get employment as a Village Health Team member and was able to start saving 5000 shillings weekly. She was able

to share out 1,000,000 million shillings in the first cycle which she used to purchase livestock and also expand her house by adding a sitting room.

In the second cycle, Katushabe used her savings to acquire a piece of land on which she has established a banana plantation to provide food for her family and also sell the surplus in order to earn extra income.

As the savings for the 3rd cycle are on gong, she has planned with her husband to invest in the transport business by buying a motorcycle and expand their sources of income. She is grateful for the STRENPO project because it has changed her life in that she is now able to save, plan and invest her money wisely which wasn't the case before.

MANDELA GROUP

By: JESE Staff

In Kyaka II settlement, we were able to interact with members of Mandeleo group which started in 2018. The group is engaged in Village Savings and Loans Association, Climate Smart Agriculture (kitchen gardens) and Environmental Conservation activities like production of charcoal briquettes. Comprised of refugees, the group had nothing of their own and mainly depended on World Food Program to provide food and a few basic needs to survive. But with under the STRENPO project, the members of this group have learnt how to plan, save and invest in their money in different income generating activities and are able to provide for their families. In the first cycle, the share value for every member was 1,000/= and the group shared out 1,610,000 shillings with the highest person sharing out 110,000/= and the least 45,000/=. This encouraged the members to keep saving and borrowing loans from VSLA to invest in different income generating activities like poultry, piggery, kiosks among others. The share value was then raised to 4,000/= shillings given the value at-



Aggrey Ntakimanya , the CARE Initiative Manager visiting Mandeleo Group in Kakoni at the site where they constructed a kiln for burning charcoal briquettes.

tached to VSLA. Currently, the group has saved 4,300,000/=shillings and they hope to save up to 8,000,000/=shillings a=by the end of the year. The group has also benefitted from FFBS knowledge and skills equipped to them by JESE. Most of the farmers shared how they used to plant their seeds anyhow and harvesting low yields as compared to when they started constructing trenches in their gardens, line planting and mulching as practices learnt under Climate Smart Agriculture. The practices have been associated with increase in harvest yields hence enough food at home with surplus to sell and earn income. The group has engaged in collective marketing of beans and maize in order to get good prices for their produce. Under Environmental Conservation, members of Mandeleo confessed to how they were defaulters in Kakoni Wetland. They had gardens of cabbage, vegetables and other crops within the wetland and did not value trees. Through sensitizations and awareness creation by JESE, their mindsets have changed and they now respect the environment and value trees. They appreciate trees because they provide shade, help in rain formation, are a source of firewood, and act as wind brakes. The members also take the responsibility of reporting community members who destroy trees to concerned authorities.



Aggrey Ntakimanya , the CARE Initiative Manager demonstrating Alery Cropping to members of Mandeleo Savings Group in Kakoni.

KAKONI WETLAND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION



Aggrey Ntakmanywa the CARE Initiative Manager with Joseph Bakahirwa a STRENPO CBT inspecting the bamboo pilot site in Kakoni wetland Kyaka II settlement

By: JESE STAFF

This is a group which consists of both nationals and refugees which started in 2019 with the aim of promoting environmental conservation especially around Kakoni wetland. They also engage in VSLA and bee keeping activities. Kunesha Buheke, a refugee member testified on how the group has created a peaceful existence between the nationals and refugees. Before the group was formed, the nationals used to look at the refugees as foreigners with myths of eating people hence feared interacting with them. The refugees also feared the nationals because they always had cattle sticks and they thought they would be beaten if they crossed to the nationals' side. However, through sensitizations and awareness creation on environment conservation by JESE, the nationals and refugees were formed into

one group to support in the conservation of Kakoni wetland shared by the two parties. The group has been involved in the demarcation exercises, planting of bamboo as well as creating awareness on wetland protection in the villages. The members confessed to have noticed a difference in water levels after the restoration of the wetland. Before demarcation, the borehole at Kakoni wetland barely had water and one would use a lot of energy to pump and have one jerry can filled with water. But after the demarcation, the members are able to pump the borehole with ease and have a jerry can filled with water within a short period of time. The Chairperson Molly Tukahirwe thanked JESE and CARE for the trainings invested in them in conserving the environment because they are now aware of the economic value of the wetland to them as a community and have ventured into beekeeping activities.



Members of Kakoni Wetland Conservation Association having a session with Aggrey Ntakimanya where they shared their testimonies on the restoration of Kakoni wetland

A NON-PROJECT BENEFICIARY PRACTICING PROJECT INTERVENTIONS



Aggrey Ntakimanye the CARE Initiative Manager visiting Ingabira Angella who started up a kitchen garden as a result of knowledge and skills spread by JESE in Kakoni zone

By: JESE STAFF

Ingabira Angella is a refugee from Rwanda who stays in Kakoni zone. She used to depend on World Food Program for a living but the food was not enough. She later learnt about kitchen gardening from a neighbor who is a member in Ushirika VSLA a group under the STRENPO project. She was inspired to start growing carrots, betroot and onions at her small backyard. From her first harvest, she was able to have enough nutritious food for her family and also sold some. She used the money to buy clothes for her children since they had old ones. Ingabira went in for a new season and expanded her vegetable kitchen where she applies organic manure to boost the soil fertility. She is grateful for the knowledge and skills JESE has equipped the people of Kakoni with under Climate smart Agriculture because it has improved food security as well as improved nutrition at household level.



Some of the vegetables planted by Angella Ingabira which she sells to generate income and also improve nutrition in her family.

About us

Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE) is an indigenous non-government, service-providing organization registered as a company by guarantee NO 47579 and the NGO Bureau reg.No 55914/1019,and since its establishment in 1993, JESE, through her work in improved Agriculture Production and Natural Resources Management and long term development, has greatly contributed to improved livelihoods of target beneficiaries and provided opportunities for a better life especially for the rural poor households and communities adjacent to Natural Resources in the Rwenzori region of Uganda. Over the past two decades, the organization has grown substantially, in the number of programs, our staffing and budgets.

Our Vision

A community where people and nature flourish

Our Mission

To facilitate people centered innovative actions that foster equity,sustainable management of natural resources and livelihood improvement.

Our Core Values:

Acronym	Value	Value Statement
S	Service above self	Offering extra service for the benefit of humanity.
E	Environmental Stewardship	Respect and care for the environment ,living what we say we are.

T	Team Work	Value working together and acknowledging individual strengths.
T	Transparency	Openness on processes and procedures within JESE and accountable to the public.
I	Integrity	Adherence to a strict moral or ethical code of conduct.
N	Neutrality	Impartial, non-partisan, apolitical institution
G	Gender Equity	Promoting equal participation, access , control and governance of resources.

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