



ABSTRACT

REFUGEE PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSERVATION OF WETLANDS IN UGANDA: Kyaka II refugee settlement.

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It is widely recognized that wetlands provide several ecosystem services that contribute to human well-being. The participation of refugees in wetland conservation, determines the economic benefits that they receive from the wetlands, and assessed socioeconomic factors that affect reliance on wetlands.

JESE's has worked on environmental problems that have contributed to environmental degradation and increased competition for agricultural land, grazing land, water resources and forest resources, resulting in tension with host communities in Western Uganda posed by influx of refugees in Kyaka II. These have created global climate change which further impacts on agricultural productivity and creating exposure to drought and floods, erratic rains, strong winds and increased temperatures which settlement dwellers confirm to be experiencing.

JESE in collaboration with the district government and NEMA, has engaged in different interventions like sensitization and awareness meetings on wetland benefits and conservation, planting of trees in the Kakoni wetland buffer zone to decrease pollution, control erosion, and provide wildlife habitats, demarcation exercises, formation of a vibrant wetland management committee which has been facilitated to initiate formation of bye laws to support sustainable use of wetlands.

JESE has ensured building of co-existence of the refugees and nationals through a NEXUS approach which has enhanced participation and access to natural resources within wetlands as an essential for livelihood, security, cultural heritage and strong interest in being involved in wetland management.

JESE together with the district government and NEMA need to further enforce monitoring mechanisms such as refugees and hosts planting trees and taking care of them, strengthening of the wetland management committees and intense engagement of local leaders more so on the refugees' side to emphasis on the adoption of a community-based conservation approach.