

ACT

Action for Community
Transformation

ACTION FOR COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

Annual Report 2011

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Transforming Precious Lives for Sustainable Development

Sustainable rural development for schools and communities solutions

Supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, UNICEF, District Local Governments and SNV–Netherlands Development Organisation

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

Introduction

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Action For Community Transformation (ACT) is a Ugandan Community Based Organisation established in 2003. The mandate of organisation is to ensure that the poor and vulnerable are able to meet their basic needs. The organisation's programme focuses on its three (3) strategic sectors namely; Livelihood (Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources Management), Health (including HIV and WASH) and Education.

ACT has been contracted by SNV- Uganda with contract number: 2011/CEP-SG/WNR:001 to implement school garden component in 5 primary schools of Bongova, Ocoko, Ajia, Oci and Obaru in Ajia Sub County, Vurra County, Arua district. The agreement runs from 3rd October 2011 to 28th September 2012. This is intended to establish the school gardens as an entry point to achieving improved school performance, rejuvenation of school community partnerships and better agronomic practices.

We implemented the following activities in the Year 2011:

- Measurement and demarcation of school gardens in all the 5 primary schools in Ajia Sub County.
- Identification of 125 Community Model farmers living within the selected primary schools.
- In- depth training of School Garden Committees in all the 5 primary schools.
- Participatory planning of school garden activities for 2011 calendar year to be integrated in to School Development Plan.
- Mentorship for teachers and pupils in 2 primary schools.
- Organising Essay competition for all the 5 primary schools.
- Identification of extension workers in Ajia Sub County and integration of work plan and sharing.
- Trained farmers and pupils in good agronomic practices.
- Establishment of nursery bed in Bongova primary school.

The school garden implementation has included the actual set up of school gardens that will serve as an entry point for other interventions.

The 5 primary schools have been identified as a common place that can be utilised to achieve numerous and multifaceted outcomes. As an entry point the school gardens have rejuvenated stronger relationship between the community and the schools.

Background to CEP

The Community Empowerment Programme (CEP) is being implemented by SNV in partnership with Ugandan partners, UNICEF and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The programme is designed to support the objectives of the Uganda National Development Plan (NDP). The programme works closely with local government, communities, schools and other stakeholders. The programme focuses on building the capacity of target communities and their stakeholders to fulfil their existing roles more effectively, in transparent and accountable manner, using existing resources. These stakeholders have actively participated in the situation analysis, strategic planning, collaborative implementation and collective assessment of the solutions. This is expected to create a sense of ownership and empower them to learn, adapt and adopt new attitudes, good practices and therefore sustain results and impacts.

The Community Empowerment Programme (CEP) has the following objectives:

- Increased productivity and incomes at household level.
- Improved food security, availability and access to quality food.
- Increased access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene at community and household levels.
- Improved quality of education at primary level through effective participation of parents in school- gardens.

The introduction of gardens at schools acts as a transformation and social change centre for the improvement of the quality of education and community livelihoods.

LCBs have been involved in implementing the CEP by playing the following roles:

- Provide a detailed work plan to implement these activities.
- Implement assignment according to work plan.
- Prepare and submit reports.
- Collaborate with District Local Government and stakeholders.
- Monitoring and Evaluation.
- Document the initial process.

Sustainability of results:

The following principles will ensure sustainability of the results

- Work where the energy is, where schools and communities are motivated for their own development. This is critical because under this programme there is no facilitation.
- Focus on building the capacity of target communities and stakeholders to fulfil their existing roles more effectively, in a transparent and accountable manner, using existing resources.
- Use complete empowerment cycle: Communities and stakeholders will be involved and will actively participate in the situation analysis, strategic planning, collaborative implementation and collective assessment of the solutions which is expected to create a sense of ownership and empower them to learn, adapt and adopt new attitudes, good practices and therefore sustain results and impacts.
- Promote integration of activities in government work plans.
- Process documentation will provide a systematic way to capture what happens in the processes of change and how it happens, within the context of an explicit theory of change. Process documentation will be used for more and better socio-economic impacts by improving the process itself.

Context of area of operation

ACT is implementing the school garden component in 5 primary schools namely; Bongova, Ocoko, Oci, Ajia and Obaru. The school garden implementation will include the actual set up of school gardens that will serve as entry point for other interventions. The purpose of the garden at the school is to enable increase in food security through increased productivity and incomes at house hold level. The school garden will also lead to improved quality of education at primary school level through effective participation of parents in school activities.

Some of the issues that prevented the communities and schools to improve their own food security situation include:

- Limited or no provision of agricultural advisory services.
- Most households have very low household income hence entrenched poverty among parents.
- Unpredictable and erratic rainfall.
- Poor community attitude towards programmes/ projects that could improve their livelihoods.
- Limited access to quality information.
- Land encroachment leading to land disputes between the school and communities.
- Theft cases within the communities.
- Poor land tenure system.

"We have realised a significant increment in the enrolment of children in our school in 2012 because of ACT/SNV interventions in the school and surrounding communities".

Head Teacher, Obaru Primary School.

"Most visitors I have seen including our own politicians come to our village tell us to have bigger gardens and produce more but thereafter; they all do not help us to get market and we end up losing all the produce. Now ACT/SNV is talking of improving household food security and modernising agriculture but where will all this produce go? I feel we should wait to produce until markets are got. Then we can produce".

Parent, Bongova Primary School.

Quarterly Planned Outcomes

WNR School Garden objectives

- Result 1: 6600 children benefit from improved quality of primary education in 165 primary schools through structured parents' involvement in school activities.
- Result 2: 165 schools with parent-led school gardens used as community Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) promotion centres and contributing to improved livelihoods and quality of primary education.

Planned outcomes for 2012

| January – December, 2012 | |
|--|---|
| Outputs | Activity |
| OUTCOME 1: Increased community participation in school garden programme in 5 schools. | |
| Output 1: School Garden Committees established in 5 primary schools and their roles and responsibilities clarified. | 1.1- Identification of Community Model Farmers. |
| | 1.2 – In- depth training of School Garden Committees. |
| | 1.3- Participatory planning of school garden activities for 2012 calendar year to be integrated in to School Development Plan. |
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| | |
| | |
| OUTCOME 2: Improved primary school retention rate in 5 schools. | |
| Output 1: 10% improved primary school retention rates above the 2011 situation baseline. | 1.1- In – depth training of GEM and Health clubs. |
| | 1.2- Mentorship for teachers and pupils in 5 primary schools. |
| | 1.3- Organizing Essay Competition in 5 primary schools. |
| | |
| OUTCOME 3: Increased adoption of good agricultural practices and innovations in 5 schools. | |
| Output 1: 30% of the targeted schools adopting specific good agronomic practices (site selection, land opening, planting materials & spacing) and innovations in the communities. | 1.1- Measurement and demarcation of school gardens. |
| | 1.2- Soil sampling and analysis. |
| | 1.3- Train parents, teachers and pupils in good agronomic practices(site selection, land opening, planting materials & spacing). |
| OUTCOME 4: Improved community access to quality extension services in 5 schools. | |
| | |

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|---|---|
| Output 1: 30% increase of average number of visit – days from quality extension services to the 5 targeted communities compared to 2011 situation. | 1.1- Identification of extension workers in Ajia Sub County and integration of work plan and sharing. |
| | 1.2 – Carry out extension services i.e. provision of advisory services. |
| | |

Methodology

Action for Community Transformation (ACT) undertook literature review where applicable and informally engaged school garden stakeholders to develop a fair understanding of operational environment. The preliminary analysis helped ACT to develop useful tools for establishing the Institutional framework of school gardens and to provide relevant agricultural skills and practices which serve as demonstration centres for the Pupils, teachers and communities.

Other methodologies used by ACT in implementation of school garden activities in third quarter include:

- Brainstorming
- Lectures
- Open discussions
- Interviews
- Observations
- Practical demonstrations
- Field visits
- Use of Farmer Field School approach to enhance learning and transfer knowledge
- Conduct SWOT/SWOC(Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges) Analysis at school level
- Use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools, for problem identification, prioritization and suggestion of solutions

4.0 Key result areas contributing to outcomes (share indicators of results that show us we are moving towards the desired/undesired direction; planned and unplanned results. You are encouraged to use quotations/stakeholders' voices).

Outcome 1: Increased community participation in school garden programme in 5 schools.

| Out put | Activity | Indicator | Means of Verification |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.0 Community Model farmers identified. | Identifying community model farmers within the surrounding communities of the schools selected. | 125 (Male: 100, Female: 25) community model farmers identified and 127 (Male: 93, Female: 34) Model farmers trained in site selection, land opening, and planting techniques. | The list of farmers identified and trained available. |
| 2.0 Participatory plan in place. | Participatory planning of school garden activities for 2012 calendar year to be integrated in to school development plan. | 5 participatory planning meetings conducted in all the 5 primary schools attended by 60 participants (Male: 45, Female: 15). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance list - Copy of the plan - Minutes of the meeting - Signing in the visitor's book. |
| 3.0 School Garden Committees put in place | Training of School Garden Committees. | 45 (Male: 30, Female: 15) School Garden Committee members trained in their roles and responsibilities in all the 5 primary schools. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance list - Training report - Signing in the Visitor's book |
| | | | |
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| | | | |

Outcome 2: Improved primary school retention rate in 5 schools.

| Output | Activity | Indicator | Means of verification |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1.0 School retention plan in place in 5 primary schools. | 1.1 Participatory planning on school retention. | 5 Participatory planning meetings conducted in all the 5 primary schools attended by 45 participants (Male: 30, Female: 15). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Copy of invitation letters. - Copy of the plan. - Attendance list. |
| | 1.2 Verification of school retention data and dropout rates. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data on school retention verified. - Formation of school clubs like GEM club in all the 5 schools. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GEM clubs formed all the 5 schools. - Attendance lists. - Photos. |
| 2.0 Mentorship conducted | Mentoring of Teachers and pupils. | 100 (Male: 60, Female: 40) Teachers and pupils mentored in all the 5 primary schools. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copy of invitation letters. - Attendance list |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|
| 3.0 Essay competition conducted | Organise Essay competition | Essay competition Conducted in all the 5 primary schools. | -Copy of the essay topic or question. - Copies of the essay scripts. |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|

Outcome 3: Increased adoption of good agricultural practices and innovations in 5 schools.

| Output | Activities | Indicators | Means of verification |
|---|-------------------------------|--|--|
| School garden identified and opened ready for establishing demonstration plots. | 1.1 Primary land opening | Primary land opened in all the 5 primary schools. | - Evidence of primary land opened. - Photos |
| | 1.2 Secondary land opening | Secondary land opening done in Bongova and Ajia primary schools. | - Evidence of secondary land opened. - Photos |
| | 1.3 Nursery bed establishment | Nursery bed established in at Bongova primary school. | -Nursery bed established. |

4.1.4. Outcome 4: Improved community access to quality extension services in 5 schools.

| Output | Activities | Indicators | Means of Verification |
|--|--|---|---|
| Improvement in the quality of extension services | 1.1 Training in recommended agronomic practices. | 5 trainings conducted in all the 5 primary schools for parents, pupils and teachers. 130(Male: 90, Female: 40) participants attended the trainings. | -Training manual. - Attendance list. - Photos |
| | 1.2 Follow up field visits. | -12 follow up visits by ACT extension workers in all the 5 primary schools. - 4 technical field visits by Sub County extension workers. | - Photos - signing in visitors' book |
| | 1.3 Technical field visits. | - 6 technical field visits by Field Extension workers of Send A Cow to farmers around Bongova primary school. | - Photos - signing in visitors' book |

QUOTATIONS/STAKEHOLDERS' VOICES

*"We are ready to work with any organisations who are ready to support us financially or otherwise because we are ready for development, we want to be food secure and send our children to school" **Parent, Bongova Primary School.***

*"We want to thank Action For Community Transformation (ACT) for mobilising Ocoko Women Group to access funds from Send A Cow Uganda. This project intends to improve food security situation and alleviate poverty within the communities" **Extension Officer, Send a Cow.***

*"The school had school gardens before but with the UPE policy, the school was not implementing school garden projects and eventually the school started giving its land to teachers and for rent to the communities around. Now that ACT/SNV has enlightened us I will advocate that the school gets its land back for school garden" **SMC Chairperson, Oci Primary school.***

5.0 Emerging issues *(In this section we can share information under the 4 headings below).*

Major breakthroughs

The major breakthroughs that we encountered in the first quarter include the following:

- Development of school garden plans in all the 5 primary schools.
- Identification and working with the right influential community leaders like LCs, Elders, Opinion leaders and technocrats for effective community involvement and participation in CEP programme.
- Adequate community involvement and participation in all school garden activities.
- Identification and use of available local resources like land, labor, planting materials etc. for success of school garden programme.
- Gradual positive change of community attitude towards the CEP programme.
- Competence, team work and commitment among ACT staff.
- Timely documentation of field activities.
- Effective networking with other stakeholders like Send A Cow, Climate Change Action Network- Uganda, Local Government Arua district e. t. c.
- Effective commitment and cooperation of school administration in all the 5 primary schools.

Major innovations *(There may be some good methodologies your organization have got; please share in this section).*

Action For Community Transformation (ACT) devised the following good methodologies:

- Mobilizing local materials from within the communities e.g. ACT has managed to convince parents to contribute money to purchase farm inputs for the school gardens in all the 5 primary schools.
- Bongova primary school has began investing in an income generating project e.g. Apiary and cattle rearing to supplement on what the government gives to the school; through the technical advice of ACT staff.
- Most schools have begun to implement a strategy to adapt to the changing climate e.g. planting assorted fruit trees to abate the impact of climate change.
- ACT has encouraged the use of useful scientific indigenous knowledge in crop management e.g. in Pests and disease Management.

- Promotion of organic farming practices in all the 5 primary schools and surrounding communities to improve crop production and productivity.

Major high or low moments

During the implementation of the school garden component in third quarter, our high moments included the following:

- Completion of all third quarter planned activities successfully.
- Field visit by our Agriculture Adviser West Nile Portfolio.
- The LCIII chairperson of Ajia Sub County participating fully in the school garden activities at Ajia primary school as one of the model farmers.
- Successful formation and participation of School Garden Committees.
- Active participation of parents in school garden activities.
- School garden has brought about stronger relationship between the school and the community.
- ACT is using influential people to mobilize the parents for school garden activities.
- Positive community attitude towards school garden activities.

Our low moments included the following:

- The third quarter has seen school gardens opened, enterprise selected but the availability, variety and accessibility of planting materials remains unclear.
- Low household income of the parents hence entranced poverty to effectively support their children in school and school garden activities.

Observations and lessons learnt

- Changing the community attitude is a gradual process.
- The community has the idea of school garden but the biggest problem has been kick starting of the project.
- The community has indigenous knowledge that can be properly integrated in modern farming practices.
- Systematic entry to the community eventually leads to programme success.
- Use of local practices and farmers as a reference point increases the rate of adoption.
- There is need to lease school land, hence there will be no school-community land conflicts arising therefore giving way for a joint stakeholders participation in school development.
- Most parents of rural primary schools do not know that they have a role to play in improving the quality of education of their children.
- Most schools in Ajia Sub County are not implementing Education Ordinance hence, high school dropout, high absenteeism among pupils and teachers.

Relationship between actors and target groups

The relationship between Action For Community Transformation (ACT) staff and the target group is very good. This is because we have been able to effectively communicate CEP principles which brought about trust and eventually translated in high community participation in all the school garden activities and at the end of third quarter some community members were able to demonstrate that they are empowered through community involvement and participation in decision making.

Your LCB role and cooperation with SNV, District Local Government, other stakeholders, communities, resources etc.

| Stakeholder | Role/Responsibility |
|--------------------------------|--|
| LCB(ACT) | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a detailed work plan to implement school garden activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Implement assignment according to work plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare and submit reports. <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with DLG and other stakeholders. <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring and Evaluation of the programme. <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of the programme. |
| Arua District Local Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Support and commitment towards the programme. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide (technical) support to the schools and sub county. <input type="checkbox"/> Co- facilitates technical training. <input type="checkbox"/> Carry out supervision and monitoring. |
| SNV | <input type="checkbox"/> Engage and supervise the LCB (ACT). <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a Focal Advisor for the project. <input type="checkbox"/> Co- facilitate meetings and workshops. <input type="checkbox"/> Carry out overall process documentation. |
| Schools and Communities | <input type="checkbox"/> Offer information needed for the programme. <input type="checkbox"/> Willingness and commitment to improve their WASH situation. <input type="checkbox"/> Willingness to work closely together with the LCB and DLG. |

7.0 Conclusion

The School garden implementation in the 5 primary schools has served as an entry point for other interventions. The school garden has been used as an innovative teaching tool and strategy that lets educators incorporate hands- on activities in a diversity of interdisciplinary, standards based lessons. The garden engages pupils by providing a dynamic environment in which to observe, discover, experiment, nurture and learn. This underscores the need to give prominence to agriculture at school level as a means to improving agricultural practice skills and knowledge for children and parents (Communities). This would enable agriculture to be emphasized at rural households as the relevant and sustainable solution to their challenges of food security, nutrition and household incomes, among others.