MAIN STREAMING ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC AND NON ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES THROUGH RCES: THE CASE OF GREATER EASTERN UGANDA-RCE

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Presentation outline

- About Greater Eastern Uganda RCE
- RCE activities main streamed in University programmes
- Non academic programmes
- Key community engagement activities
- Key achievements
- Success factors
- Recommendations
- Conclusion
Whole Institution approach that promote RCE-ESD are:

- Ensuring that sustainable development issues are main streamed in University activities, plans and policies.
- Student involvement to the lead of activities as champions.
- Continuing professional development in ESD through research and capacity development.
Issues main-streamed in University academic programmes and mandate:

- University has three functions- teaching, research and Community outreach- All are relevant to RCE activities
- SD is incorporated in the Busitema university MISSION
- “To provide high standard training, engage in quality research and outreach for Socio-economic Transformation and Sustainable Development”
- Cross-cutting course on ESD was developed for alll programmes Diploma, bachelors, Masters.
  - A student group formed to spearhead campus sustainability activities and community engagement;
  - Collaboration /Outreach activities - Linkages established with the neighbouring communities and institutions - town council, local governments and surrounding schools and started joint ESD activities within communities.
- Sensitization
Expansion and extension of RCE /ESD activities

- Collaborations and linkages established for promoting ESD activities e.g. with stakeholders such as Nature Uganda, Grassroots Innovations Uganda, and local government.
- The public talks and sensitization sessions with staff, student and other stakeholders became regular and part of the University/faculty calendar.
- Enabling environment for students - Two student based ESD groups / associations formed to spearhead campus sustainability activities and community engagement.
- Strong linkage established between ESD and Greater Eastern Uganda Regional Center of expertise (RCE) in undertaking ESD activities.
1. School outreach - Sensitization and awareness raising

- benefits of education
- sanitation and hygiene, HIV/AIDS.

- promoting science education
- girl child education.
- career guidance,
- guidance and counseling.
5. Other activities so far done

- A total of 5 schools visited and follow ups made at least once a semester to each school.
- Girls are skilled on how to make sanitary towels using local materials.
- School administration has been fully engaged for sustainability of the programs.
- On environmental campaigns, students in visited schools now save their pocket money to buy tree seedlings to go and plant in their homes every holiday.
- Charcoal briquettes made from charcoal ash, agricultural residues, mud stoves to reduce deforestation.
Future plans for student community activities

☐ Every course offered at the University/faculty to contribute to ESD help attain the mission.

☐ Example chemistry; micro experiments, extraction of chemicals from ash, purification of water- sand filter, provide alternative to glass ware.

☐ Other subjects are to be engaged.

☐ Extending ESD to other campuses and communities across eastern Uganda.
Challenges

- Low funding to increase on the number of activities
- Low membership enrollment
- Few equipments
Support to ESD

- Faculty of science and Education

More support request from:
- The university
- Nature Uganda
- The district
- Local government
- All well wishers of the association
Some key achievements so far:

**Economic outcomes**

- Savings from reduced water consumption (by having gardens rather than lawns and through using stored water for garden use).

- Savings from reduced amount of waste sent to landfill (using fewer commercial skips).

- Savings from reduced power consumption (through a “lights off” competition).

- The sell of the vegetables produced in the vegetable garden and trees planted.
Educational outcomes

- Students are actively involved in learning about the environment and sustainable development.
- Students learning has been enhanced through an action based cross curricula project.
- There is a richer curriculum/programme with hands on activities across all Key Learning Areas.
- Students have been involved in data collection, mapping and tabulation, as well as refining of scientific analysis, evaluation and testing techniques.
- Students have opportunities to become aware, passionate and enthusiastic about the environment. And sustainable development
- Improved student presentation skills.
- Improved student leadership skill
Educational outcomes

- The students are excited and motivated by the program.
- The students and communities have positive towards analyzing development challenges and issues.
- Education for Sustainable Development has been incorporated across the university curriculum and programmes.
- Students have learned the skills to plant plants properly and have engaged in community plantings.
- The local nature reserves are being created into school programs.
Environmental outcomes

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Social outcomes

- Students, staff, community and experts have been involved in the program and have ownership of it.
- Partnerships have been developed with the community, such as links with local Governments, schools NU, UWA etc.
- Increased student leadership and social responsibility, self esteem, a sense of belonging and ownership.
- Students are more confident and enjoy group work in the garden (building social capital).
- Students have positions of responsibility and have become community environmental watchdogs (e.g. monitoring household garden watering against restrictions)
- Mentoring of young students.
- The whole schools, campus, the community have gained pride in the way activities are being implemented.
Success factors

- Broad ownership of and engagement with Sustainable Schools across the school.
- Support of the university and partners institution leadership team.
- Enthusiastic and committed staff.
- The university outreach functions and responsibilities made it easy to implement activities.
- Integrating sustainability into institutional operations and across the curriculum.
- The availability of funds to enable the development of visible
Recommendations for promoting RCE initiatives

- Developing a university wide policy on ESD/RCE as part of the outreach.
- There is need to build a robust research to provide information and guide ESDRCE activity implementation.
- There is also need to create professional development programs on ESD for teacher educators at national and regional levels as a strategy for capacity development.
- Using RCE platform to dialogue with national university programme accreditation body i.e. National Council For Higher Education (NCHE), to include ESD as criterion for accreditation of new and reviewed academic program.
- The higher institutions of learning need to dedicate leadership positions, offices and centres to coordinate and ensure a strong focus on the university community partnerships through RCE platform.
Conclusion

- RCEs can play significant role in the development agenda of their communities by becoming a dynamic nucleus and a hub for lifelong learning and practice for sustainable development.