

Project Update: April 2019

The activities "Friends of nature" conservation clubs continued across all the target schools. The trained facilitators have been very productive and up to speed in ensuring the progress of the programme in their respective schools. Members of the project team have been visiting the schools on their respective clubs and society days to keep track of activities, progress, and give advice where need be.

Project's milestone

1. All conservation topics highlighted in the proposal have been strictly followed. Students and pupils have been taught in both class and field settings. Most recently, students were taught the importance of birds and other animals to humans and the environment. Thereafter, students were taken out and exposed to the rudiments of field observation using binoculars. They were able to identify birds and other animals around them.
2. With the strong support and presentation prowess of two of the team members, Mr Samson Da'an and Mr Mundi Francis, an afforestation programme was introduced with more emphasis on the planting of trees. The tree planting campaign was first launched in Lere, followed by other communities. Some seedlings were distributed to the students, class by class for direct planting, while nursery beds were constructed in three different schools that serve as centres for raising the seeds to seedlings. The ultimate goal is to have these seedlings distributed to neighbouring communities. Over 10,000 seeds were planted in the first phase; the seeds included nymph, moringa, cashew, pear and mangoes. Each school takes care of the nursery beds by watering them using watering cans. At present, some of the seeds have germinated but are not yet mature for transplanting to permanent sites.
3. Students have been very much involved in sharing what they learnt from their respective clubs with family and friends. Results of these have been evident as many parents have contacted the schools to appreciate the initiative. Parents have been particularly convinced to adopt environmental friendly lifestyles that would help reduce desertification, which is a common phenomenon in most areas within the state.
4. In another visit to the hunters' association who were again gathered through the hunters' associations leaders, an expert (resource person) in animal husbandry and animal rearing was invited to teach the hunters how to raise chickens, rabbits, and catfishes (even in their backyards).

The community conservation orientation and support outreach enabled us to reach out to different groups of hunters who were happy to hear about the environment and how hunting is affecting biodiversity and leading to the extinction of most local species. They learnt about the disappearance of vultures, hares, antelopes etc. that previously had existed in the communities. The hunters gave rapt attention to talks and asked very interesting questions. We emphasised and encouraged hunters to take up alternative means of livelihood that are not detrimental to wildlife. We invited animal husbandry

experts to teach the hunters how to start and maintain poultry farms, fish farms, beekeeping etc.

Each of the groups was taught for 2 days and in the end, most of them shared what they gained in the programme. The programme has had a positive impact on the views and thoughts of the hunters. It has especially shaped their thoughts on how to live sustainably with their environment.

5. We have distributed and monitored seeds planting in different communities. Once seeds develop into seedlings, they will be transplanted to permanent locations.
6. Another programme for women on alternative use of energy efficient cooking was carried out successfully. The women were gathered at different meeting centres and in some communities, meetings held in the village heads' compounds. One hundred energy efficient stoves were purchased. The stoves use sawdust and two small pieces of wood. It is fast in cooking as the energy from the saw-ust is converted to heat energy supporting the two sticks of wood. The wood do not burn out easily as the sawdust burns freely. The stove is made in such a way that the energy burnt is conserved and utilised in heating the food in such a way that energy loss is reduced. A resource person (a woman who has been using the stove for a long time) was invited to teach the women on how to effectively use the stoves for cooking. In a simple public experimental effort, the same quantity of water were placed on the traditional cooking stones with plenty firewood and the other was placed on the energy efficient cooking stove with only two twigs or sticks of woods. It was observed that the water on the energy efficient cooking stove boiled in just half the time taken by the traditional stone cooking method. More so, the wood used by the traditional cooking method burnt plenty of wood before boiling the water boiled while the energy efficient stove introduced to them, did not burn half of the two sticks of wood used before the water boiled. The people were convinced that the energy efficient stoves introduced to them were far better and faster in cooking than the traditional cooking methods which have been burning a lot of woods that they have been using.

The programme ended with the distribution of the stoves to the women. Due to the mammoth crowd of women that came out for the programme in some of the communities, it was not all of them that got the stove that were available for distributions, however we liaised with a blacksmith who can produce the stoves locally to produce many at a more subsidised prices to whoever wants to purchase one personally. It was observed that, because of the knowledge gained on how to use the stoves and why women needed to use it, many women purchased the stoves from the blacksmith. The women appealed to us for more of such programmes in the different communities. Most of them confessed that they heard about climate change linked with deforestation and human activities for the first time. Others said they only heard about it in the radio but they did not get the opportunity to ask questions and got immediate responses as they got during the programme we organised and undertook with them.

NEXT PROGRAMME OF ACTION

1. We plan to teach the community members how to make the energy efficient stoves.
2. We have launched the, "Save a Species" initiative in which we asked the students in different communities to choose different animals or plants that they feel are threatened in the communities and come up with plans to save them. With the weekly conservation lessons and field experience the students got from the programme, they have demonstrated good understanding of practical conservation required in their communities. Most of them became interested in becoming conservationists as they had asked different questions on how to become bio-conservationists to save more plants and animals from extinction. The contest of the 'safe a species' was accepted among them with more zeal and sense of dedication. We are expecting to see the effort the students will put in the protection of local species in the environment.
3. Seedlings distribution: The many seedlings being raised in three schools that serve as the centres for raising the seeds to seedlings will be distributed during the rainy season which shall start next month and fully in May 2019. The sharing of the plants to different schools and communities is planned to take place in the rainy season so that the plants shall not lack sufficient water for their development and growth. We intend to do this in collaboration with the conservation clubs' facilitators and the school principals. While the village heads, youth leaders, and women leaders would be involved in the sharing of the seeds in different communities.
4. More interactions with hunters and women are on the way to consolidate on the impact made on them in our last meetings.
5. A large conservation programme for students to meet with all the schools covered in this programme to interact, debate and have quizzes on conservation matters is on the way. They will also gain more knowledge from different experts and stakeholders who are already involved and supporting the programme.



Left: A club facilitator and I guiding students during field observation. Right: A facilitator Mr Gideon guiding students during Club's field observation.



Left: Club facilitator showing common birds to students in Government Secondary school. Right: Friends of the Nature club members during outdoor learning.



Left: Friends of the nature club members, facilitators and team members after conservation programme in GDSS Lere. Right: Mr Gideon Meshak a facilitator guiding Friends of the Natures club members on use of bird's field guide.



Left: Friends of the Nature's club members watering Nursery beds of tree seeds in their school. Right: Club facilitator also watering plants after mulching.



Left: Friends of the nature's group members working on their biological tree raising garden. Right: Students watering the Friends of the Natures Biological garden in GSSS Nankun.



Left: Demonstrating the planting of Nymph and Moringa seeds on a nursery bed to students of Government Secondary school Nankun. Right: Demonstrating the planting of seeds to students during club day.



Left: Students working making Nursery beds for planting seeds of different trees in Government Secondary School. Right: Students watering the Friends of the Natures Nursery beds of tree planting project in their school.



Left: Students paused for a picture after working on the tree raising Nursery beds in their school. Right: Students of Government Secondary school Nankul during field Ornithology outing.



Left: Students of Government Day secondary school Lere during conservation club programme. Right: Field outing with Government secondary school students.



Left: Guiding students on identification of common bird species in the community in Government Secondary school. Right: Mr Mundi Francis a team member guiding students on the use of African birds field guide book in GDSS Lere.



Left: Mr Samson Da'an a team member presenting during Friends of the Nature's programme in GDSS Lere. Right: Mr Williams's guiding students of Government Day Senior Secondary school Lere on use of Binocular in the field.



Left: Mr Williams Michael Manja and a resource person during safer cooking programme. Right: Mrs Meshak a resource person demonstrating the use of Energy efficient stoves in Tokum Community.



Left: Oldest woman asking question during programme on contributing to the safety of the environment in a village head's compound. Right: Resource person demonstrating the use of energy efficient stove in Tokum community.



Left: Demonstration of cooking using Energy Efficient stove. Right: Energy efficient stoves made by a blacksmith for subsidised distribution to women.



Left: Mrs Meshak teaching women how to cook using the energy efficient stove. Right: Resource person teaching section of hunter's association Tafawa-balewa on alternative livelihoods.