

Suubi Center - Lubanda village, Kikenene

Running a popular community center in rural Uganda is not without challenges. But Suubi (*meaning Hope in Luganda*), is a thriving center providing sustainable information and delivery services- extension, health (with a health center), sustainable environment education and agriculture to a rural community in Lwengo district. Since their intervention in educating the community about the importance of wetlands, there has been reduced wetland encroachment. Instead, people have learnt to farm sustainably in wetlands. Crops like yams are grown while maintaining wetland endemic species like papyrus. One of the main wetlands that Suubi centre thrives to protect Kyoga wetland, which is an extension of the Namajuzzi wetland, a Ramsar site in Uganda. Namajuzzi wetland is the source of water supply for nearby townships and provides fish, clay, papyrus, medicine and game meat (Sitatunga).

http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-pubs-notes-annotated-ramsar-15873/main/ramsar/1-30-168%5E15873_4000_0

The center has facilitated environment awareness trainings partnering with many stakeholders including the Uganda Police Force. They have planted trees within the community and have established a greenhouse from which farmers obtain tree seedlings and vegetables.

How the papyrus from the wetland saved Suubi Center 6 million Uganda Shillings (approx. USD 2,400\$)

No community based organization will spend 2,400 US\$ purchasing plastic materials to construct a greenhouse when there is a more environmental friendly,

cheaper and easily available option. This option that saved Suubi Centre such money is papyrus!

Dadid Ssemwogerere the director of the center says they used papyrus to construct a greenhouse which is just as good as the costly polythene materials that required them to spend 6,000,000/= Uganda shillings. This is a huge saving for the center. Papyrus has been used in various ways including making crafts. This resource is available with n the community but it deserves to be protected. How should it be protected? By protecting its habitat- the wetland!

The journey is not yet smooth for Suubi center which integrates livestock farming, crop farming and sustainable environment practices at the center as a model for community learning. David is optimistic that if they could find development partners to fund their projects, they would support more schools in the central Buganda region through trainings in sustainable environment and improved farming skills.

**Nabajuzi Wetland System.15/09/06;
Masaka, Lwengo, Sembabule, Mpigi;
1,753 ha; 00°46'S 031°41'E.**

It is an important Bird Area. A long narrow stretch of swamp from the periphery of Masaka to the major Katonga River system. It provides a spawning ground for mudfish and lungfish, and supports globally threatened bird species and the endangered Sitatunga. The site lies in traditional Buddu county of Buganda

Kingdom, and some of the flora and fauna are closely associated with cultural norms and traditions, especially the totems.

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[\(http://www.hug.org.au/ blog/Suubi Update Blog/post/15-4-2013/\)](http://www.hug.org.au/blog/Suubi%20Update%20Blog/post/15-4-2013/)



Papyrus growing in a wetland (Photo by Suubi center)



Coffee tree seedlings in the greenhouse made out of papyrus (Photo by Suubi center)



Farmers at the greenhouse attending coffee seedlings (Photo by Suubi center)