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**BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO
CLIMATE CHANGE TO IMPROVE FOOD
SECURITY AND HOUSEHOLD INCOMES**

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Project Background



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ActionAid in its strategic plan 2018 to 2022 makes a strong commitment to support communities to build their resilience to Climate Change to safeguard food security and improve incomes. It is doing this through empowering disadvantaged women and youth unable to meet basic needs to harness their capabilities, take advantage of available opportunities and better their lives.

ActionAid through **Busiiki Local Rights Programme** in its commitment towards supporting young people and women as a core constituency because of their central position in turning around the fight against poverty, were mobilized to come together and identify opportunities at their disposal for economic empowerment and ensure inclusion in leadership and decision making spaces within the district.

One of the objectives of this project is to mobilize, support and organize women and young people to undertake economic empowerment activities through **Climate Resilience Livelihoods** taking advantage of kitchen gardens as a key driver for food security.

Secondly to empower young people and women to be able to harness their social and economic potential to fight against all forms of oppression including gender based violence which is an offshoot of the power relations in the homes. This is to enable them take decisions because of being economically empowered and occupy spaces of leadership that can enable them take advantage of opportunities in government, political spaces and in resource allocation in the district. Since we started this project, we have seen an overwhelming interest from young people and women most of whom don't own land but can access small pieces within their family backyard. We discovered that when we use the backyard or kitchen garden as an entry point, it was possible for them to negotiate to use this land and transform it through planting short term horticulture crops and vegetables which would easily find market locally and ensure they have opportunity to earn income and better their lives economically.

Implementation

We targeted the entire Namutumba district, but we started with the urban population of mainly unemployed housewives largely dependent on the men as the sole bread winners of the home. Interventions were then rolled out to include youth in Ivukula and Nangonde sub counties.

The trainings which were conducted after the mobilizations of young people were, first around the concept of backyard gardens/ kitchen gardens giving the trainees practical skills in setting up different forms of vegetable gardens using simple but efficient agronomic practices.

The second training was to mentor the women and young people to build confidence, believe in themselves and harness their leadership skills to be able to come together and support each other in economic empowerment and social inclusion.

So far, we have trained fifty women within the town council and over a hundred other young people in the target sub counties and reached more through the farmer champions.

The first cohorts of trainees have continued to become trainers of trainees and are supporting others willing to adopt the kitchen garden model. We have also seen young people expanding to new enterprises including setting up fish farming. Currently five fishponds have been set up by the youth in Nangonde sub county. This will help the youth diversify their incomes.

After training ActionAid gave them initial seed capital in form of seeds and other farm inputs namely wheelbarrows, drums, spary pumps, watering cans and the pioneer farmers set up the first kitchen gardens and the rest learnt from them. About forty-five youths have adopted this practice and the number is increasing. They have taken it upon themselves to improve the model and some are already adapting the key hole gardens which uses smaller spaces but highly productive.

The trained youth have acquired land where all of them are able to plant the different vegetables to increase their incomes and through this they are able to learn from each other. This also serves as a reflection space for sharing ideas and experiences.

ActionAid believes in diversification of livelihoods as part of the resilience agenda against climate change and diversification to fish farming is testament to the success of this model.

In fishing, ActionAid has linked these groups to the district technical officials who are supporting them with agriculture advisory and extension services. The Resident District Commissioner has pledged to ensure that these groups are capitalized by government programmes.

Since the project was rolled out, the numbers of people who have adopted this model have increased exponentially. Currently many families now have a

steady supply of nutritious food from the vegetables.

We have seen food security at household level which has enabled these women and young men to save some money.

Young people working in groups have increased including those adopting the new technologies making this an important source of livelihood for the beneficiaries. This has enabled them meet basic necessities.

What has also been critical is that this project has enabled these young people and women to build confidence. They empower each other and it has built leadership skills among them. Now we see these projects giving them confidence to approach the district local government for support. ActionAid has started influencing the process of connecting them to get technical support from the district. They are now playing a key role in demanding for accountability and influencing resource allocation which improves service delivery.

Women who have directly benefited from kitchen gardens are 50 but each of them has made a commitment to train and mentor three other women. We project that in the next few months 150 young people will be actively involved in the kitchen garden model because of the successes of the pioneers. The young people of Ivukula and Nangonde are about 100 and many more are taking up the initiatives.

The fishpond project will earn about 10 Million a year showing that there is an economy growing out of this and there is real income and food security to be harnessed by these groups.

We recognize the fact that even if women may not own land, they have access over bits of land outside the back yard. This was an entry point to turn around these small pieces of land to make money which would be at their disposal making them less dependent on men.

The women have now been empowered and are able to have a say on how their families are run and participate fully in decision making. This has significantly reduced incidences of gender based violence and promoted harmony. Women now have a voice in the community and at home.

The biggest challenge facing these groups is accessing agriculture extension services to enable them to expand their enterprises or diversify. However, ActionAid is working to ensure that they are linked to the appropriate technical officials.

Acceptance of women and youth in spaces of decision making is still a challenge mainly because of ignorance of their rights. More empowerment and sensitization campaigns will help reduce this.



An example of a Kitchen garden

Way Forward

ActionAid remains committed to expanding the work that we have started in this region and beyond by continuing to support these groups to reach out to new sets of people to adopt the kitchen garden model because we have seen it works. We also hope to support them as they adopt diverse livelihoods in order to be resilient to climate change and be able to build their lives.

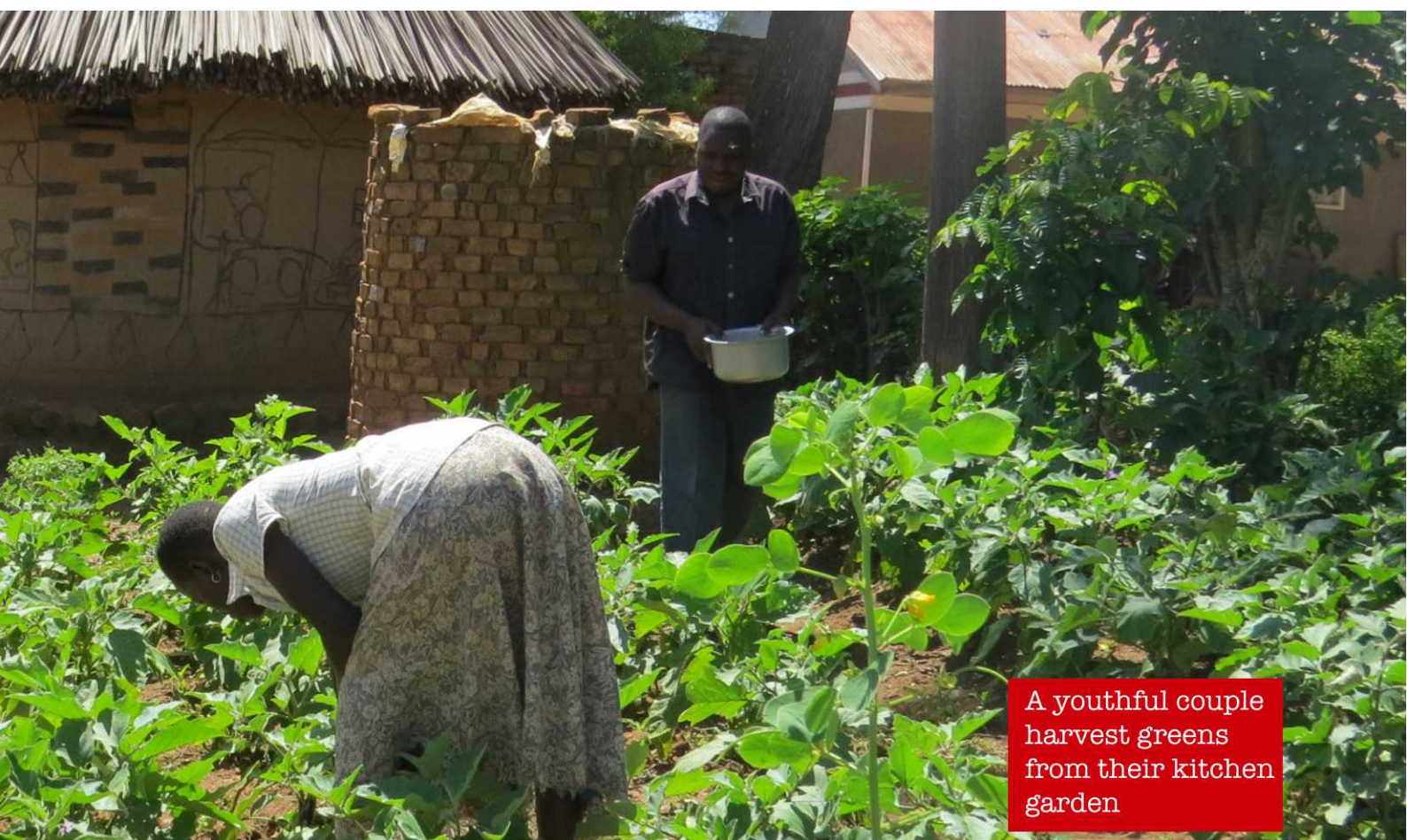
We hope to continue to harness the potential of these groups through trainings and ensuring that they take up leadership positions to expand the horizons and transform the lives of women and fellow young people because they are able to take decisions at the highest levels.

We plan to increase spaces for young people and women to interface, discuss their issues and come up with solutions especially those that touch on empowerment, power relations at household level to reduce incidences of gender based violence.



A bumper harvest of egg plants from one of the youth gardens

Backyard/ Kitchen Gardens



A youthful couple harvest greens from their kitchen garden

The patriarchal nature of the society that women live in ensures that they have very limited access, ownership and use of land as a factor of production. However, they can access limited pieces of land in their backyard. The training aimed showing women how to use these pieces of land to contribute to earn income.

50 women from Namutumba town council and 100 youth from Ivukula and Nangonde sub counties were trained on the concept of setting up backyard gardens commonly known as kitchen gardens. They were given practical skills in setting up different types of gardens and planting a variety of vegetables to improve incomes and promote nutrition in homes.

After the training, these groups were given the initial seed capital in form of seeds and the pioneer trainees have set up demonstration gardens and most have kitchen gardens at their homes.



Specioza Athieno of Namutumba Town Council, one of the beneficiaries of the training watering her kitchen garden.

Specioza Athieno from Namutumba town council is one of the beneficiaries of the training. She has been transformed from a simple housewife with no skills living in an urban Centre and fully dependent on her husband into a very resourceful woman contributing fully to the growth of her family. She has used the skills got from the training to transform her backyard into a productive vegetable garden with a variety of crops.

"We were trained in May 2019 on how to grow vegetables, fruits, onions and tomatoes utilizing small pieces of land given that we live in towns. We were trained to have these projects so that as women we can be financially independent, have our own means of earning income so that we can have a voice at home. This promotes peace because I am also contributing to the welfare of the family.

After the training, I set about transforming my backyard into a flourishing garden planting different variety of vegetables in sacks, buckets, basins and others. Last season I planted vegetables, sold and bought a goat, then I planted tomatoes which I sold and bought another goat. Since I started this project, my family always has vegetables which have promoted nutrition and we can afford other basic necessities. Every time I harvest and sell vegetables, I save some money but use little to meet home needs.

Before, I used to always quarrel with my husband but now there is peace because our household is doing well"

Being an enterprising woman, Specioza has also started a goat rearing project and keeping ducks. She is optimistic that gains from her efforts combined with the support of her husband will ensure that the family lives a relatively comfortable life.

"I have learnt that as a woman there is so much, I can do that is why I have started the ducks and goat projects to diversify my livelihoods and earn from different sources. I am happy because all three of my projects are doing very well. I hope to expand my projects so that I increase my earning potential. I advise women in urban centres to ensure that they have a kitchen garden because it needs very little space and the benefits are huge. I also hope to increase production and buy a cow"



Specioza feeding her goats which she bought after earning from vegetables.

Kawa Mutesi, also from the municipality used to sit at home all day waiting for the husband to vend for the family just like many other women in her area. However immediately after the training, she set up her own kitchen garden and the benefits to the family have been tangible.

"I used to sit at home waiting for my husband to bring something in the evening just like many other women in my area. But since we started growing vegetables, now women are better off because we are earning our own money and as a result, homes are developing, and children are healthy because of eating a balanced diet. We used to depend on our husbands even for simple things like scholastic materials but having some side income has solved this. We are even able to take care of those health emergencies when they occur. I have also managed to diversify and started a poultry and goat rearing projects. Because of my achievements, I am now training other women to also have their own enterprises and be able to contribute to the decision-making process at home and in their community. I hope to expand the poultry project and grow more vegetables. My advice to fellow women is to put more energy so that we can alleviate poverty. This project has done a lot for us because we learnt that on our own, we can change the lives of our families"



Mutesi Kawa a resident of North ward weeds her vegetable garden



Kawa Poses for a photo with her goats



Sarah Nakasita of Namutumba Municipality watering her egg plants kitchen garden.

"I thank ActionAid so much because it has greatly uplifted me from being a nobody to somebody. The training we got from ActionAid, has ensured that in every home of a member there is food. I used the money I got from selling vegetables to buy household items like utensils; I also bought a goat and it has already produced. The challenge I faced is diseases and pests affecting the vegetables. I want to be a model farmer in my area and train other women to be self-reliant and have their own means of earning income. As I speak, I have trained five women who now have their own kitchen gardens"



Youth engaging in Vegetable Growing



Forty youth from Ivukula subcounty Namutumba district cleared about one acre of land and started preparing their demonstration garden that will act as a learning centre for them to transfer the same knowledge to their homes. They have prepared proper nursery beds for crops like tomatoes, onions and different types of vegetables among others. All these inside a well erected fence as part of the good agronomic practices they learnt.



Youth group planting Vegetables

We have been practicing horticulture farming, we grow vegetables e.g. egg plants, green paper, onions, sukuma wiki and many others.

We started this project because we saw that young people in this area were living in poverty. We developed an idea on how best we can overcome poverty and we decided on a project that would be giving us daily income. When ActionAid trained us, the skills we got enabled us to actualize this dream. The knowledge we got made us change our mindset from being idlers, beggars to starting up our own projects project. The content of the training was on economic empowerment and poverty eradication among young people. They taught us about how to practice climate resilient sustainable agriculture by depending on local means of farming like use of organic fertilizers and pesticide for high yields.

Our vegetables are on one acre piece of land and the first season we planted egg plants, onions and tomatoes and sukumawiki but despite the effect of hailstorms, we got four hundred thousand shillings. We used this money to rent 2 acres of land for two years for expansion of these projects.

We are expecting better production for the second season because the weather has been very favorable. We hope to grow water melon, onions and add on more varieties to meet the current demand.

- Our dream is to see that each member of the group is able to have and access daily income at his home.
- We want to see members build permanent homes/ houses.
- Each member should be able to give their children quality education and each member replicates what is being done here in their homes i.e. have model gardens in their homes.



David Luke Wakairiya
Chairperson Ivukula Youth group

"Before this project we the youth were very idle, and we used to pass time by gambling and drinking. However, I thank ActionAid so much for giving us skills to be able to fend for ourselves. We are optimistic that when our vegetable growing project takes off, we shall be able to save and educate our children and meet basic needs like food and medical care.

Before the project the youth were idle, gambling and begging but this project has made them change their lives



Carol – Youth Beneficiary

"This garden has benefitted us because in our homes we no longer buy vegetables and my parents have been using income got from selling them to buy for me books and I have also gotten skills on how to practice vegetable growing. The Challenge we are facing is, too much sunshine we request for a greenhouse and generator for irrigation"



Medrine one of the youth beneficiaries

Youth starting kitchen gardens at home

Majority of the youth have also used the same knowledge and skills to start up their own kitchen gardens. They sell some of the vegetables and save money with their VSLA group and some of it is used for home consumption which has promoted nutrition

"Together with my husband we joined the group and we got knowledge and we came and started our own kitchen garden. Now we have egg plants – I sell and get some money which I use to buy milk. I would put my husband on pressure to provide for the family but growing hot culture has reduced some of the pressure because now we buy what we need because we can afford.

Before we got this knowledge life was very hard for us women. We were just at home idle but having this kitchen garden project has kept us busy.



Sylvia together with her husband cutting egg plants from their garden.



Youths weeding their vegetable nursery bed



Some of the beneficiaries display vegetables from their garden

Fish Farming



Fishpond set up by youth in Nangonde sub county.

Empowerment of the youth and success of their vegetable growing has enabled them to diversify their livelihoods and take up fish farming. Using the knowledge they got from the training, they realized that they would earn some income from this project and they have set up five fishponds in the sub county of Nangonde.

We were trained by ActionAid under Busiki Local Rights Programme and to fight poverty and change the narrative about the youth as the idle people through economic empowerment. We were advised to start economic ventures like fish farming, and we bought the idea. Our group comprises of sixty youth with 40 females and twenty males.

"We started this fish project on the 1st of January 2019 after a member donated the piece of land. We dug the fishpond of 6 feet depth. The reason we started this project is that we saw that people around here were moving long distances to get fish, so we saw potential market within the community and developed the idea of starting this project".

We bought 421 lung fish fingerlings each costing 400 shillings. We are expecting to harvest these after three months with each costing a minimum of 5000 shillings and money got will help us set up more fishponds.

As members, we expect to benefit from this project through acquiring skills and experience on fish farming which we hope to pass on to others and the money we shall earn will be put in our savings group. This will enable members to access in form of loans at subsidized interest rates which will increase our incomes and ultimately the standards of living at household level.

This was our dream as a group, and we are expecting each member to own a fishpond at his/her respective place to show that it is moving forward, and that the idea is being embraced. From this fishpond alone, we hope to earn over eight million every year because we shall be harvesting every three months. We hope to have eight fishponds by next year owned by the group because we have already secured the land.

However, we face the challenge of lack of capital to buy more fingerlings and the challenge of fencing off the fishponds to secure the place. We also lack a pipe to act as a water outlet and we need a generator for pumping the water.

The vision of this group is that by 2025 we want to be one of the big and most modern farming groups within Busoga region. We want to be trainers in fish farming within the locality and in the district by setting up a research institute in fish farming.

"We hope that when this fish is mature, we will be able to get them to the market, sell and get money to help us meet our household needs. These will also enable the young couples especially the wives to be self-reliant because they will also be working and earning their own money to meet certain basic household needs"



Namuganza Edinah
Youth Beneficiary

Some of the 421 fingerlings feeding in one of the ponds set up by the youth group





Namuganza Edinah,
one of the youth
beneficiary proudly
holds green paper
harvested from
their garden



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