

# **Project Report Submitted to Generation Restoration by Youth Initiative for Community Empowerment (YICE)**



## **Summary**

**Title:** Piloting Sack gardening for refugee households with small pieces of Land

**Location:** Nakivale Refugee Settlement

**Target:** 20 Refugee Households (120 beneficiaries)

**Total Budget:** EUR 1000

**Donor:** Generation Restoration

## Background

Youth Initiative for Community Empowerment (YICE) is a social Organisation that promotes regenerative farming for smallholder women and refugee farmers in Uganda. YICE's intervention disrupts the unsustainable traditional food aid system by building the capacity of refugees and host communities to transition from reliance on freely distributed food to self-reliant access to food. YICE implements a sustainable and regenerative whole systems approach to food, based on traditional and permaculture farming practices.

Our model builds capacity of vulnerable women and youth to sustainably achieve food security, improve their health, restore soils and water and become economically resilient. Our intervention brings together local community stakeholders, including agricultural organizations, the local government, and community members to participate in tailored practical trainings in regenerative farming and climate change awareness, followed up by ongoing direct support to establish traditional food gardens and fruit tree plantings to strengthen community's climate adaptation and resilience.

Since June 2021, YICE has been piloting regenerative farming activities with the beneficiary groups in Nakivale. We worked with 323 refugees to establish permaculture gardens, fruit tree planting and making of organic fertilizers. this initiative helps us to scale this work. By working with the beneficiary groups, we have modified and innovated new ways of promoting food security, regenerating the soils and improving incomes.

## Introduction to the Pilot Project, goals and objectives

Following the visit of Generation Restoration Team Leader to YICE's work in Uganda – in the first quarter of 2023, YICE Received flexible funding from Generation Restoration. The funds were used to pilot sack gardening for 20 refugee households headed by women, directly impacting 150 individuals in the households and refugee communities.

This project was based on YICE's experience working with refugee households – where the organization identified that some of the households that they worked with did not sufficient land on which to carry out their agricultural activities – and these were not able to grow nutritious food for their households. This project was therefore designed to address this need by:

- Mobilizing 20 female refugee headed households to start sack farming
- Delivering actionable training to the target beneficiaries on sack gardening, crop management, and pest and disease control
- Offering on-garden support, water harvesting and organic manure training

### **The key project activities included:**

1. Training of target beneficiaries in sack gardening – following regenerative and permaculture principles. Trainings were conducted by trained permaculture trainers hired from within the refugee settlement.
2. Gathering and collecting of sacks in which the gardens were set up. At first, we engaged the beneficiaries to identify their own sacks, but we had to engage other volunteers in the community that collected sacks with in the settlement's bin areas. These sacks were the ones that we turned into gardens.
3. Establishment of a sack garden demonstration site – where other target farmers learned from.
4. Supporting of individual households to establish sack gardens in their homes and offering on-farm support and guidance.
5. Purchase and distribution of indigenous high quality vegetable seeds to the target farmers involved in the project.
6. Monitoring of gardens established and offering support, guidance especially on water harvesting, use of manures and others.

### **Key results and achievements.**

- A total of 20 household members (all female) were trained in sack gardening and helped to establish their sack gardens in the small spaces of land they had in their homes. Most of these created the gardens around their homes – and in front their houses.
- The established gardens directly benefited 150 community members including households' members, and other community people that benefited from these gardens.
- 5 of the target households reported that they have sold the food from the gardens – and earned between \$10 - \$20 per month for the last three months. The gardens continue producing food, and we hope these will continue earning an income.
- Through the gardens, households have improved their food security – with the 20 households involved eating at least 2 meals per day, and having a nutritious meal.
- We are observed that by implementing sack gardens that we picked from within the community, we improved the general environment of the community. Over 400 sacks were picked from the community. Each of the 5 volunteers who supported in picking them earned an income of between \$20 - \$30 in the three weeks they supported.

## Challenges faced and next steps

- The main challenge we faced was climate change effects. Our gardens were hit by strong sunshine – yet access to water in Nakivale is a huge problem. Households participating in the project did not have access to enough water to water their gardens – which affected some of them. However, the garden was designed to hold / keep water in the soil and also households that participated in water harvesting were able to continue watering their crops. Since the gardens are permanent, when it rained, we planted again and farmers are now able to harvest.
- Because most of the gardens were set up in and around the farmer homes – the gardens were normally attached by animals and children would destroy them. We discussed a number of approaches how farmers could protect their gardens including setting up simple fences. These conversations reduced the rate at which gardens were destroyed.

In terms of next steps, we have made a decision that YICE will incorporate sack gardening in its regenerative farming program – to ensure that farmers with no or little access to land are also involved in regenerative farming activities so as to provide food, incomes and nutrition for their households. We continue to engage the farmers we worked with – and ensure that they maintain the gardens, while we will enroll more new farmers into the program.

## Beneficiary stories:

**Name:** Aline Katamba

**Age:** 25

**Country of Origin:** Burundi

**Members in Household:** 2 adults, 3 Children

Aline has been in Nakivale Refugee Settlement for the last 6 years. She only has a small house – and no land for farming. Aline used her yard space to practice sack gardening supported by YICE's program.



*"I received training on how to set up these gardens by the YICE trainer in my community. She also helped me to mix the soil properly and provided the seeds for me". Says Aline.*

She indicated that, she set up this garden to provide food for her household – but also show other refugees with no land that they can use the smallest pieces of land they have to set up gardens for their households. Aline plans to secure a bigger piece of land to practice regenerative farming

– and earn an income through this. Her future aspiration is to be able to take care of her children and ensure they live a happier life.

**Name:** Maria Uzeimana

**Age:** 37

**Country of Origin:** Rwanda

**Members in Household:** 1 adult, 5 Children

*"I thought the food from my garden would not be enough for my household. However, am surprised that we eat, and have surplus to sell. Last week I earned 10,000 UGX – through sell of vegetables from this small garden of mine".*  
Says Maria.



Maria is one of the 20 beneficiaries from the project. She fled Rwanda in 2000 and settled in Nakivale. When her husband died, she lost the land that had been given to her by the government to the local community members. She then remained with a very small piece of land, on which she was trained to set up sack gardens. Maria is one of the 5 beneficiaries that have started earning an income through the sack garden project.

### Summary of how the project funds were used:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost - EUR</b>
Cost for indigenous seeds	246
Volunteer pay for collecting sacks	150
Trainer pay and facilitation	385
Training refreshments	174
Field visit support	200
Water harvesting training	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>1205</b>