



Rwanda

Rubaya: The Sustainable Village

Background

People's livelihood in Rwanda is highly dependent on natural resources that are under increasing pressure from unsustainable use. In Kabeza village in the Rubaya sector of the Northern District of Gicumbi, a set of technologies ranging from rainwater harvesting and biogas systems to terracing and tree planting have been adopted under the lead of a female headed cooperative. The use of the technologies has improved the quality of life and enhanced environmental sustainability in Rubaya.

Tackling poverty, gender issues and environmental sustainability

As a result of introducing rainwater harvesting systems, the use of biogas residue as a fertilizer, tree planting and terracing, food security for the community has increased and excess production is being sold in the market. Terracing has helped to reduce landslides on the slopes which used to cause damage to property and in extreme cases loss of lives. From the sale of milk and fertilizer the cooperative has an annual income of \$26,000 supporting the livelihoods of the families.



The biogas generated through the system is distributed to households for cooking and lighting. This has reduced the dependency on firewood and thus decreased the deforestation rate. An estimated 14 Ha of forest has been saved. Owing to the use of biogas plants, the community has a clean, nontoxic fuel source thereby reducing health issues related to the inhalation of smoke from firewood.

Women and children used to walk about five kilometers down the hill to fetch water and spend significant amounts of time collecting firewood. Having water closer to hand and biogas for cooking has saved significant time, and women and children can now spend their time on more productive activities including school work.



Replicating the sustainable village

The Rubaya demonstration project provides an excellent example of how investing in more sustainable environment and natural resource management can reduce poverty and improve broader human well-being. This community run project has benefited 200 people (62 % are women) by reducing poverty, enhancing the sustainable use of environment and natural resources, and increasing resilience and adaptability to climate change.

The female led cooperative has been successfully managing the initiative since 2010 demonstrating the sustainability of the project and highlighting how the community, and in particular women, has been empowered to take the lead on local sustainable development planning.

The demonstration village has generated immense interest and has been part of south-south exchange programmes involving government representatives from Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Malawi.

The Rubaya success is further being replicated in Muhanga district, with support from REMA, UNDP Rwanda and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Further, the Ministry of Local Government has in the 2014/2015 fiscal year requested all districts to establish at least one demonstration village based on the best practices from Rubaya.

© UNDP-UNEP PEI 2014.

For more Information:
Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI)

Email: facility.unpei@unpei.org

Website:

<http://www.unpei.org/what-we-do/pei-countries/rwanda>

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Government of Rwanda, UNDP or UNEP



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency



US Department of State