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**INCREASING ENVIRONMENTALLY
FRIENDLY PRODUCTION AMONG
SELECTED SCHOOLS, PRISONS AND
HOUSEHOLDS IN WAKISO AND MPIGI
DISTRICTS, UGANDA**

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AGENCY FOR INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Project background

AFIRD introduced the Permaculture approach in schools in 2014 have drawn several lessons from the previously implemented school projects since 2006. Some of the lessons included; the necessity to tackle school challenges in a more holistic manner were the community in empowered to find solutions for its problems, the need to find a system that employs low cost solutions to both environment challenges and food insecurity. Furthermore, we needed to broaden our scope of supporting the youths from schools only to the prisons.

Therefore, in 2020, a new project *“increasing environmentally friendly production among selected schools, prisons and households in Wakiso and Mpigi districts, Uganda”* was introduced with financial support from Bread for the World.

Project Rationale

The project seeks to address environmental illiteracy, which is a common challenge in schools, prisons and communities in the project area. Environmental illiteracy is the inability of individuals and communities to appreciate how ecosystems and human systems are interdependent. Consequently, school pathways are not demarcated and trampling of the school compound causes loss of vegetation. Massive bare grounds cause soil erosion and reduction of soil fertility. Infertile land leads to low productivity (yields). Bare land also causes dust pollution and heated environment hence reducing classroom air quality and increasing classroom temperature. This

undermines the concentration of learners and leads to poor academic performance.

Environmental illiteracy causes disengagement of communities from nature. Schools poorly manage waste. In most cases, decomposable waste that could transform into organic manure is mixed with non-decomposable wastes such as plastic and polythene. Plastic waste (such as bottles and bags) that could be used to raise seedlings in nursery beds are dumped into the soil and water bodies. In soil, plastic wastes reduce percolation, aeration and tillage; they pollute and damage aquatic life in water bodies such as rivers, lakes and seas leading to lost biodiversity.

Target groups

The project *directly targets* 275 people in 8 primary schools and 3 prisons. The 8 schools and 1 prison are in Mpigi District and two prisons are in Wakiso District. The direct target groups include 32 teachers, 24 parents, 120 pupils (boys and girls), 90 inmates and 9 prison officers.

Eighteen (18) of the 90 inmates are supported to reintegrated with their communities by enabling them to establish permaculture modal centres henceforth looked at as a regenerative force other than ex-prisoners!

- 120 Pupils (50% girls) enrolled in upper primary (classes 4 to 6) from 8 schools directly benefit through hands-on training on permaculture and environment conservation. They are exposed to the permaculture practices and a conducive learning micro-environment.

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- 32 teachers (at least 50% female) underwent a Permaculture Design Course/ILUD. Teachers are becoming school-based facilitators of permaculture and environment conservation, including redesigning the school environments.
- 24 farming parents (50% women) with pupils in the 8 selected schools also underwent a Permaculture Design Course/ILUD.
- 90 inmates (at least 50% women), 30 from each of the 3 prisons, in the ages of 18–40 years serving their final year will undergo a Permaculture Design Course/ILUD and life skills training. These will be peer educators of the 12,400 inmates estimated to be in the 3 prisons. The prisoners will be exposed to a farming system that is based on appreciation of the environment.
- 18 ex-prisoners (at least 50% females) from the 3 prisons will be followed up to provide backstopping and re-integration support. The project will support ex-prisoners to reintegrate into their communities economically and psychologically by providing them inputs to establish permaculture learning centres and counselling. This will make them valuable in the eyes of other community members.
- 9 prison staff (at least 5 women) will undergo a permaculture Design Course/ILUD and Life skills training. They will be prison-based facilitators of permaculture and environment conservation and will help in redesigning prison environments to increase production diversity.

Furthermore, the project *indirectly targets* 4,689 people from the 8 schools and 3 prisons. These include 48 teachers, 36 prison officers, 1,176 parents, 2280 pupils and 1,149 inmates.

- Pupils are exposed to the observable permaculture practices in the schools and receive permaculture information from peer trainers (trained pupils). They will also benefit from the vegies, fruits, herbs and spices.
- Every teacher exposed to the observable permaculture practices installed on school land-this acts as a living laboratory for practical teaching and learning. The teachers too will benefit from the fruits, vegies, herbs and spices.
- Parents will be exposed to permaculture practices and environmental management through school open and visitation days. The school permaculture projects will act as multiplication centre for the scarce indigenous planting materials. The parents will receive tree seedlings from the school tree nurseries through their children.
- Prison officers will be exposed to the permaculture practices installed on prison land. Furthermore, they will receive environmental education from the trained officers. They will use the permaculture concept to help in rehabilitating the prisoners through Agriculture as a viable livelihood option other than a form of punishment
- Inmates will be exposed to the permaculture practices installed on prison land. They will receive environmental education from the trained inmates and officers.

Project Development goal

Increased sustainability of social and ecological systems in Mpigi and Wakiso Districts’.

Project overall objective

Increase uptake of Permaculture principles and practices by individuals in the target schools, prisons and communities in Mpigi and Wakiso districts.

Expected Project effects

- Enhanced practical learning in schools.
- Improved pupil academic performance.
- Increase pupil enrolment due to attractive physical environment and cooperation between school administration and parents.
- Increase in the number of youths in agriculture
- Increased dietary diversity in food
- Improvement in health of teachers, pupils, prison officers and inmates

Project strategy

To address environmental illiteracy and its negative effects, AFIRD so it necessary to use schools and prisons as vehicles of change. It’s in these communities that the young people (children and youths) are commonly found. Furthermore, schools and prisons possess chunks of land which is a good case for showcasing sustainable land use to farming communities.

AFIRD uses the Permaculture science that is rooted in Ecology, Sustainable agriculture, cooperative economics, appropriate technology and indigenous knowledge. Permaculture is an ecological design science that outlines an approach to living, which takes its inspiration from nature. Its goal is to feed, house and create economic opportunities in an inspiring and environmentally responsible way.

Furthermore, AFIRD uses the Integrated Land Use Design (ILUD) as a tool to implement permaculture among the school, household and prisons. ILUD process was informed by thinking from a number of contemporary theories and techniques such as: Holistic management Participatory methodology and Practical rural appraisal. Therefore, all stakeholders in schools and prisons work together in finding low cost and sustainable solutions to both environment and nutritional challenges.

In order to facilitate the target groups attain the intended project objective, AFIRD employs number of methods including: Community capacity building, Permaculture demo sites around schools, households and prisons and exposure visits to potent examples of permaculture.

Compiled by the project team:

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