



THE CLIMATE CAFÉ JAZ

EVENTS REPORT 2023



Generating Indigenous Knowledge on Climate Change, Human Behaviour and experiences to inform local Climate Actions

1.0 Summary.

To protect the environment in the wake of climate change crisis in Kasese district, the Rwenzori region and the whole Uganda, Maru Action Development Foundation dedicated its self to documenting centering Indigenous and Local Knowledge as Solutions in trying to address Climate Impacts and Vulnerabilities among communities in the Rwenzori sub region. In November the organization reached out to Force of Nature for a possible support to its budget towards organizing community led 'Climate Café Jaz' as a platform where community members especially youth gather to brainstorm, share experience and propose solutions to the climate crisis. The aim of the Climate Café Jaz is involving young people, indigenous and not only in the search for innovative solutions to combat climate change, but also to support their participation in influencing local government in developing policies that protect the environment.

Three climate café Jaz were organized by Maru Action Development foundation in partnership with local climate actors like Young Agro-Green Africa Network-YAGANET among others. The café jaz consisted of presentations and discussions on perspectives from the Rwenzori region and Kasese in particular under the Theme; Generating Indigenous knowledge on Climate disruption, Human behaviour and experiences to inform Local Climate Actions that addresses climate impacts and vulnerabilities. We proposed to focus on three aspects relevant to indigenous and local knowledge, and in each of the event day, we focused on one aspect and these included; Livelihoods of indigenous communities amidst climate change; Observing and understanding impacts of climate change, including disastrous events (floods, landslides and harsh drought); and finally Mobilizing indigenous and local knowledge and experience for Kasese district climate change adaptation actions.

2.0 Introduction

Maru Action Development Foundation (MADF) is a non-for-profit Community Based Organization located in Central Division, Kasese Municipality, Kasese District, Rwenzori Region, Western Uganda.

We envision; Just and climate resilient communities responding to their needs, through Co-creation and implementation of inclusive community-led innovations through promotion of sustainable eco-friendly low cost-high impact initiatives for improved lives and livelihoods of women, youths and children.

Being aware of the basic needs for a vulnerable community, the need for an inclusive better future, a peaceful environment, a healthy and poverty free society, believing that working together with all the entire community without discrimination, respecting each other's rights, and advocate for skills development towards a just society especially among the less privileged categories of people, MADF interventions target to benefit the highly vulnerable categories of people i.e., Women, Youth and Children, including People with Disabilities among others.

Maru Action Development Foundation has been and will still continue to provide tools, resources, partnerships and support to its beneficiaries, empowering them to gain the voice, ability, and problem-solving capacity to realize their full potential. MADF has and will keep welcoming and serve all women, youth and children and focus its most efforts on the less privileged young women especially single mothers, people with disabilities, youth and children who live in low-income households and communities much more those disrupted by natural and man-made disasters.

Leveraging on such has and or will help our beneficiaries engage in designing and implementing inclusive tailored community-led innovations that fosters empowerment of underserved women, people with disabilities, youth and children, through promotion of sustainable socio-economic low cost and high impact approaches that does not only transform lives and improving their livelihoods, but also thrives their living in environment and mother nature.

2.1 Our approach while delivering on our programs.

Leveraging on community needs and challenges with integration of indigenous knowledge and practices through a community-led approach while informing actions that are locally adaptive, improving lives and livelihoods.

This helps sustain our projects and programs with served populations and communities, as beneficiaries play a big role and always keeping at the centre point of whatever we do.

When communities need and challenges are discussed in a very welcoming and conducive environment where local people feel given the whole space, they give out their minds, opinions, ideas, suggestions and insights to what affects them while guiding on priorities. This then forms actions which are people and or community-led and full, inclusive participation and programs sustainability are guaranteed.

3.0 Background;

The adoption of the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2015 has created an important opportunity to apply indigenous and local knowledge, in synergy with science and policy making, to the specific challenges of climate change and adaptation to its impacts.

The Paris Agreement marks a unique and historic milestone as it holds together a cluster of human needs brought about by climate change into a bundle of rights and obligations of different stakeholders, while promoting pathways for adaptation to the changes that are already occurring.

The impact of climate change on Uganda's infrastructure particularly roads, bridges, historical buildings serving as tourist sites/attractions due to exposure to damaging flooding, deep potholes, erosion, excessive heat and other extreme events are very devastating. The exacerbation of desertification by changes in rainfall and intensified land use poses a serious threat to land resources. The destruction of power dams during floods and also extensive sunny seasons shows high sensitivity to variations in runoff and periods of drought as evidenced by critically low levels, threatening hydropower generation and industrial activity, which endangers Government's effort in ensuring growth through the private sector. The trend effects of flood that have hit the District of Kasese since 2013 to date have revealed the nations vulnerability.

The Rwenzori sub region knows much about the economic and environmental challenges posed by climate change. The sub region is unique in its cultural diversity, with layers of indigenous civilizations, the flora and fauna along the national parks, the Rwenzori mountain and liberation, and diverse migration from all parts of the country caused by Kilembe mining. Together, the diverse geography and heritage of the mountains have facilitated a flourishing of local cultures, knowledge systems which has allowed people to establish niches within the natural environment to achieve economic development. In the context of the current environmental crisis, the region is now faced with the challenge of navigating an unpredictable future while drawing on its cultural and natural resources, and most evidently, its intellectual capacity for problem solving and adaptation.

In March 2023, with financial support from Force of Nature, MADF officially launched the Climate Café Jaz in Kasese municipality, Kasese district, Western Uganda. Four events were carried out, characterized by moments of promoting domestic coffee consumption while setting pace that encourages climate discussions extraordinarily on current local climate issues, but also networking, experience and opportunity sharing between the actors present and the young participants.

3.1 The Climate Café Jaz Event;



The Climate Café Jaz, is a project of MADF, its intentions are clear, we provide a framework for reflection, action and the promotion of initiatives to fight against climate change. We involve young people from the Rwenzori region and most especially Kasese rural and urban communities in local actions to combat climate change.

We organized three local climate café events, they were participatory in nature, conducted in an interactive format that attracted over 65 people in total and most especially youths from different disciplines and background and from all corners of the district and so the region.

The climate café Jaz created valuable opportunity for young climate actors and local organisations including local leaders to come together to share their understanding and response to climate change. The participants came from all walks of life including from communities affected by the impact of climate change in Kasese district.

The events demonstrated that the Kasese district is rich in eco-systems, and that there is interest by all partners and community members to develop further understanding and take more actions in restoration, conservations of those eco-systems and increase on the tree cover in the district. It highlighted the relevance that using indigenous local knowledge can contribute a lot to food security and economic innovations for local climate adaptation strategies.

The participants of the Climate Café Jaz emphasized the need for capacity building of communities and climate activist in conservation and movement building. The future of cooperation between indigenous peoples and local communities.

3.2 Kasese experience of climate change.



The Rwenzori region especially Kasese district, just like any other district in the region, is already feeling the impacts of climate change, including more extreme weather events with more frequent natural disasters, translating into severe floods, landslides, droughts in Kasese town, decreasing snow cap on Mountain Rwenzori, soil erosion, siltation of drinking water, and death and other ecosystems and biological impacts.

The recent most destructive on record was the river floods of May 2020 and also the recently hit and deadly Mudslides that happened September 2022 all in Kasese district. These disasters contributed to the loss of many lives and establishments of IDP Camps in the district. These communities conducted traditional small-scale farming and managed their customary lands in the savannah or in their customary forests in the Rwenzori eco-zones. The contribution of these communities was key to the preservation of the region's unique biodiversity, particularly in areas that host high levels of endemic species.

As the Kasese local governments grapple with the impacts of climate change in the area, the voices of indigenous peoples and local communities through the Climate Café Jaz are now providing insights into what environmental actions are needed to foster resilience across their communities (for example; the recommendation that MADF should lead the Action 2 Million Trees campaign). Despite this, there had not been any opportunity for a major platform where holders of Indigenous knowledge

can share their views on the potential in contributing to co-production of knowledge that can enhance climate local action, the climate café jaz has therefore, broken the barriers of leveraging on local knowledge towards climate change adaptations in Kasese district.

Addressing Climate Impacts and Vulnerabilities, a Perspective from the local communities was to articulate how their experiences have the potential to boost social and ecological resilience, and be mobilized for climate change adaptation, planning and recovery after environmental hazards.

4.0 Key ideas and concepts generated from the events;



Indigenous and local community members, as well as climate service actors, joined four Climate Café Jaz events in Kasese- Uganda to generate local knowledge on climate disruption, human behavior and experiences to inform local climate actions in relation to changes in climate, and its impacts on human populations. The sharing majorly focused on indigenous peoples and local communities, who are often dependent on nature and its resources to thrive.

Participants remarked that such a platform of sharing of experiences and solutions, by people of different knowledge systems, was necessary for mutual enrichment and provided great movement building potential towards what was needed, namely the best available indigenous knowledge that were needed to guide climate change adaptation actions.

Climate and weather changes were signaled as major impacts on the district, including droughts impacting farmer's crops. Participants also shared their concerns about how the impacts of natural disasters are addressed after the events, as insurance payments to farmers can also constitute a threat, if those are invested in non-traditional crops or methods.

There was urgent need to reflect on how conservational development interventions should be articulated to traditional practices was among key issues raised by climate café jaz participants where turning climate anxiety into agency was highly recommended as one way to reduce on the current climate crisis and its impacts on humanity and biodiversity.

Other threats to community-based farming have been less visible but certainly not less serious, such as the replacement of traditional crops by monocrop cultivations for the tourism industry or for animal fodder. These practices result in the degradation of the soil, pesticide pollution, environmental degradation and the loss of diversity and traditional knowledge, leading to changes in social patterns that are no longer based on families and economies of solidarity

A pictorial view in regard to our Climate Café Jaz hosting and discussions.









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