PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Sustain Rise: Building Resilient Communities

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Project Title: Sustain Rise: Building Resilient Communities

Implementing Organization: Maru Action Development Foundation (MADF)

Funding Organization: The Pollination Project

Project Duration: July – December 2024 (6 months)

Project Location: Central, Nyamwamba and Bulembia Divisions- Kasese Municipality, Kasese District, Western Uganda

Report Date: 21st December 2024.

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2. Executive Summary

The *Sustain Rise: Building Resilient Communities* project, implemented by **Maru Action Development Foundation (MADF)** with funding from **The Pollination Project**, addressed critical issues of climate vulnerability in Kasese District, Western Uganda.

The six-month project focused on disaster preparedness and response, climate-resilient agricultural practices, and environmental restoration. Specific activities included:

- Establishment of **Community-Based Early Warning Systems** in Nyamwamba and Bulembia Divisions.
- Training smallholder farmers on **climate-smart agricultural practices** and establishing demonstration plots.
- Planting **200 indigenous and fruit tree seedlings** to restore degraded areas.

The project directly impacted over **5000 households**, trained **30 community volunteers as Community Based Disaster Management Committees**, and enhanced ecosystem health through tree planting efforts.

This report highlights the achievements, lessons learned, and the transformative impact of the project on the local communities.

3. Introduction

Maru Action Development Foundation (MADF) is a grassroots-led nonprofit organization based in **Kasese District, Western Uganda**. Founded in **2022**, MADF envisions **just and climate-resilient communities** that proactively respond to their own needs through sustainable, low-cost, and high-impact initiatives.

The foundation empowers communities—particularly women, youth, and vulnerable groups—through community-led:

- Climate resilience initiatives.

- Environmental restoration and sustainable livelihoods.
- Disaster preparedness and response.

Since its inception in 2022, MADF has impacted over **20,000 people** in Kasese District through community-centered projects addressing the interconnectedness challenges as a result of climate crises while improving livelihoods.

4. Project Background and Rationale

Kasese District in the Rwenzori Sub-Region is one of Uganda's most climate-vulnerable district, experiencing **frequent floods, landslides, and extreme weather events**. Communities in Nyamwamba, Central and Bulembia Divisions in the Kasese Municipality are particularly affected, with devastating impacts on homes, livelihoods, and agricultural productivity.

The *Sustain Rise* project emerged to address three interconnected challenges which include:

a) **Lack of disaster preparedness** mechanisms to address flood and landslide risks.
b) **Food insecurity** due to unsustainable agricultural practices and unpredictable weather patterns.
c) **Environmental degradation**, resulting in soil erosion and reduced vegetation cover.

By combining **community-based solutions**, the project aimed to build the resilience of vulnerable populations while promoting sustainable environmental and agricultural practices.

6. Project Objectives

Overall Objective

To build climate-resilient communities in the Nyamwamba, Central and Bulembia Divisions of Kasese Municipality through disaster preparedness, climate-smart agriculture, and environmental restoration by December 2024.

Specific Objectives

1. Establish and strengthen community-based early warning systems of 3 Municipal Divisions to address flood and landslides risks.
2. Promote climate-resilient agricultural practices to ensure food security for smallholder farmers.
3. Restore degraded landscapes through community-led tree planting initiatives.

6. Implementation Process

6.1 Activity 1: Establishment of Community-Based Early Warning Systems

- Conducted **2 sensitization sessions** for over 100 households on disaster risk reduction in Central and Bulembia Divisions.
- Trained **20 community volunteers** on community early warning communication protocols in all 3 Divisions.
- Distributed **5 megaphones, 3 radios, and 2 mobile phones** to enhance community-level disaster communication- preparedness and response in Nyakabingo 2 and Kirembe Wards as well as Muhokya IDP camp.
- Established **flood monitoring teams** in the most vulnerable areas.

6.2 Activity 2: Promotion of Climate-Resilient Agricultural Practices

- Identified **30 smallholder farmers** and trained them in sustainable farming practices in 3 locations of Kirembe, Katadoba and Road-barrier cells.
- Established **2 demonstration plots** showcasing organic farming, mulching, and crop diversification in Kirembe and Katadoba.
- Distributed **30 sets of farm tools** and **indigenous tree seedlings** to support implementation.

6.3 Activity 3: Tree Planting and Restoration Efforts

- Conducted community sensitization workshops on reforestation benefits in all 3 Divisions.
- Planted over **500 indigenous and fruit tree seedlings** in vulnerable flood-prone areas.
- Engaged youth, women, and local leaders in planting and monitoring activities.

7. Achievements and Outputs

Activity	Planned Output	Achieved Output
Community sensitization on early warning systems.	100 households. 9 early warning gadgets.	Over 100 households sensitized. 3 megaphones, 3 mobile phones & 3 fm radios distributed.
Volunteers trained on disaster preparedness and response	20 volunteers	20 volunteers trained
Smallholder farmers trained	30 farmers. 6 farming tools.	30 farmers trained. 3 hoes & 3 pangas distributed.
Tree seedlings planted	100 seedlings	200 seedlings planted
Waste collection bins.	3 waste bins	3 waste bins distributed

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Methodology:

- Regular site visits to implementation areas.
- Community feedback sessions with beneficiaries.
- Tools: surveys, observation, and stakeholder interviews.

Findings:

- **Increased preparedness and response:** Households reached showed proactive response to flood warnings through their currently owned community early warning gadgets.
- **Agricultural productivity:** Farmers reported a **30% yield improvement** after adopting resilient and climate-smart practices.
- **Tree survival rate:** Estimated at **80%** due to active community monitoring.

9. Project Challenges and Mitigation

Challenge	Mitigation Strategy
Unpredictable weather	Adjusted timelines for trainings and planting
Resource constraints	Leveraged local partnerships and volunteers

10. Lessons Learned

i. **Community ownership** through community-led approaches ensures community active participation and project sustainability.

ii. **Simple tools** (megaphones, radios and mobile phones) can transform disaster communication-preparedness and response.

iii. Combining theory with **practical training** enhances farmer adoption rates.

11. Impact Assessment

- Over **5000 households** now receive timely disaster alerts across Kasese Municipality through the established Community Based Disaster Management Committees.
- Over **50 farmers** are applying climate-smart agriculture techniques through direct and multiplier effect interventions-beneficiaries reach within the Kasese Municipality.
- Over **200 trees** including indigenous and fruit trees planted, reducing soil erosion and improving the ecosystem.

12. Sustainability Plan

i. Volunteers empowered will continue disaster mitigation, preparedness and response awareness efforts.

ii. Farmers will maintain demonstration plots as learning hubs and replicate.

iii. Tree planting initiatives will be monitored by youth and local leaders.

13. Recommendations

i. Expand disaster preparedness and response tools to other high-risk areas within the Municipality and the District.

ii. Mobilize additional resources for scaling up tree planting and agriculture activities across the entire Municipality and the District at large.

14. Conclusion

The *Sustain Rise* project successfully built community resilience through disaster preparedness and response, enhanced sustainable agricultural practices, and

environmental restoration within the three Divisions of Kasese Municipality in Kasese District, Western Uganda. The collaboration of **Maru Action Development Foundation**, **The Pollination Project**, and the local communities within the Kasese Municipality demonstrates the power of grassroots solutions in addressing climate challenges, community and ecosystems vulnerability.

16. Photo Documentation

Picture 1: *Community volunteers receiving their sets of community early warning gadgets which included megaphones, fm radios, and mobile phones for disaster warnings as well as Tree Seedlings for planting..*

Picture 2: *Farmers attending a practical training session on climate-smart agricultural practices in Katadoba-Kasese Municipality.*

Picture 3: *Young people with a staff of Maru Action Development Foundation during one of the tree planting activities.*

Signed:

Fred Marule. Executive Director.

Maru Action Development Foundation. Website: https://marufoundation.org