



## **MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **FACULTY OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES**

#### **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE LEARNING**

#### **STUDENT- COMMUNITY TWINNING PROJECT**

#### **ANNUAL REPORT (Academic Year 2017/2018)**

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### **1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Community engagement and service learning are fundamental to the education process designed for University students. A key aspect of community engagement and service learning is the opportunity for University students to interface with the community realities in their understanding of what is needed to transform livelihoods for a sustainable future. Informed by Mbarara University of Science and Technology's teaching philosophy of community engagement, the Student-Community Twinning Project is one of the authentic University – Community relations platforms promoted and implemented under the Department of Community Engagement and Service Learning at the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, Mbarara University of Science and Technology. The Student Community Twinning Project is a two-semester mandatory course for 2<sup>nd</sup> Year students drawn from Bachelor of Science in Planning and Community Development, Bachelor of Science in Gender and Applied Women Health and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students enlisted in the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Livelihoods and Farm Production. The students work closely with a team of academic staff at the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies who support the students to apply classroom knowledge to practice and offer guidance on how to address emerging issues as they accrue in the field. Each of the student groups formed is attached to a village with whom they are expected to interact, diagnose community need and collectively act to create a difference in the area.

### **1.1 General objective**

The Student-Community Twinning Project is categorized as a skilling strategy that is enshrined in the curriculum at the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies and aims at creating students as change agents with holistic practical skills for future employability and self-reliance.

### **1.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To gain an understanding of the community as a whole in order to develop a positive attitude towards the poor and marginalized communities
2. To support the community to appreciate the need for self-reliance; knowing that they are able to do the things that will sustain them in the future
3. To develop appropriate mechanisms that can assist the community transform their livelihoods

4. To enhance the potential of the community using their available resources, knowledge and skills
5. To create change agents that facilitate community transformation
6. To create a cadre of graduates that are practical, self-reliant in order to increase their employability

## 2.0 AREA OF OPERATION 2017/2018

For the academic year 2017/2018, the students worked with the peri-urban communities in Nyakayojo Division, specifically the wards of Rwakishakizi, Nyarubungo and Rukindo.

Ward	Community group/village	Enterprise identified
Rwakishakizi	1. Karama 1 Women's Fish Farming Group	Fish Farming
	2. Nyakasa village	Waste management (Composting and Organic manure production)
	3. Rucece	Mushroom growing
	4. Rucence	Piggery
Nyarubungo	1. Grape Farming Farmer Group	Wine making
	2. Katukuru	Self-supply water sources development
	3. Nyarubungo	Book making project
Rukindo	1. United Mothers Group	Piggery Project
	2. Nyakakoni B	Backyard vegetable gardens

## 3.0 PROCESS

For students of Interdisciplinary Studies, learning with and from the community provides an opportunity for understanding realities of one's immediate environment through exposure and participation. The STP learning platforms break classroom monotony which most of the university students have been used to since they were as little as two years old. It's a 'learning by exposure' student centered learning method which also brings the community on board. Students go to the community on a weekly basis (every Thursday) and spend four to five hours engaged with the community members. The engagement with the community is hinged on a systematic approach that is guided by a 6-phase structure through which students facilitate the communities they have been twinned with to identify, analyze and develop practical ways of collectively addressing the main problem in that community with a development agenda in mind.

#### 4.0 MILESTONES FOR THIS REPORTING PERIOD

Ward	Community group/village	Enterprise identified	Key achievement
Rwakishakizi	1. Karama 1 Women's Fish Farming Group	Fish Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers and students acquired skills and knowledge in site selection, water quality monitoring, maintenance of pond structure, fish feeding, pond fertilization, fish stocking, harvesting and drainage.</li> </ul>
	2. Nyakasa village	Waste management (Composting and Organic manure production)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members mobilized and engaged in organic manure production.</li> <li>• Application of the organic manure in the gardens but also offers the potential for income generation.</li> </ul>
	3. Rucece	Rucece Integrated Mushroom Growers Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members mobilized and exposed to a low cost enterprise that has both economic and food security benefits</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mother garden was constructed and stocked for the benefit of all group members</li> </ul>
	4. Rucence	Piggery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pig sty constructed and initial 2 piglets purchased by community members. This project offers potential for income generation and capacity to meet their daily needs.</li> <li>• The waste from the pig sty is being used as manure in their gardens</li> </ul>
Nyarubungo	5. Ibaare Community Grape Farmers' Group	Wine making project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisted farmers to manage their vine yards better by exposing them to agronomic practices such pruning and staking and mulching of gardens</li> <li>• Farmers and students acquired skills and knowledge in harvesting, sorting,</li> </ul>

			<p>crushing, filtering, pasteurization, packaging and marketing strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group was able to process their first product from 10kgs of grapes collected from their demonstration vineyard</li> </ul>
	6. Katukuru	Development of Self supply water sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground water tank constructed and used as demonstration for others to replicate at household level.</li> </ul>
	7. Nyarubungo Community Development Group	Book making project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community cohesion to achieve a self-financed project.</li> <li>• 25 books were produced.</li> <li>• Group constitution drafted, discussed and approved by group members</li> </ul>
Rukindo	8. Nyakakoni United Mothers Group	Piggery Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers and students gained practical skills in disease identification and treatment, feeding</li> </ul>

			<p>practices, breeding management, marketing and record keeping.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pig sty upgraded to match up with the required standards</li> </ul>
	9. Nyakakoni B	Backyard vegetable gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A total of 210 seedlings of eggplants, spinach and green pepper distributed among 14 group members</li> <li>• The 14 backyard vegetable gardens developed offer potential for income generation and improved nutrition benefits at household level.</li> </ul>

**5.0 MAIN CHALLENGES**

The community members have been conditioned to receive material support and refreshments from politicians and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) as part of their interaction. Therefore there was a high expectation that the student groups would be offering financial support or an equivalent as part of their engagement with the community. However, this was addressed by continuously clarifying to the community the objectives and norms of the Student – Community Twinning Project so that it is understood that this is a learning by exposure activity with the community being the ultimate beneficiary of the proceeds from the identified project.

Irregular attendance of the community members makes it difficult to achieve the required collective action for a particular intervention. The members who turn up for meetings are not consistent. In order to address this

issue, students were encouraged to personally engage in mobilization of community members with the assistance of the LC 1 Chairperson.

In some instances, as the project commences, communities that have been identified to participate in the project at the Division later on demonstrate the unwillingness to participate in the project and this creates setbacks in the implementation plan. By working very closely with the Community Development Officer, we were able to identify another committed group and students proceeded with the activities as scheduled.

## 6.0 NEXT STEPS

The following are specific action steps that are being proposed to help move this project forward successfully in view of what has been achieved but also for purposes of sustainability of projects established in Nyakayojo Division in the academic year 2017/2018.

1. Discussion with Nyakayojo Division about prospects of our community engagement programme in the academic year 2018/2019. This will not only assist to consolidate what has so far been achieved in the different villages but also create stronger community linkages between Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies and Nyakayojo Division.
2. The following projects need follow up and it is being proposed that some of the incoming batch of students (2018/2019) are allocated to these villages:
  - a. Self-supply water source development initiative in Katukuru (*the community may be assisted to develop improved self-supply water sources that may complement the existing public facilities*)
  - b. Book making project (*the community group may be assisted to interface with the neighboring primary school in a paper waste recycling project, so that they are able to recycle the waste paper and make books that they can then sell to the pupils=solves the problem of littered paper waste but also provides income for the group members*)
  - c. Wine making project (*The group may be assisted to upscale from their trial production using the 10kgs to larger volumes while continuing to assist the grape farmers in agronomic practices for improved grape production. It will also help the next batch of selected agriculture students to be exposed to management of vineyards*)
  - d. The piggery project in Rucence may also be taken over by selected agriculture students to assist the group to improve management practices. This will facilitate the replication of best practices from Nyakakoni A to Rucence.
  - e. The backyard vegetable gardens in Nyakakoni B may also be taken over by selected agriculture students to assist the group to improve management practices but also introduced new technologies for urban agriculture.
3. There is an opportunity for field supervisors to also benefit from publications of identified issues (scholarly articles) that would have emerged from their interface with these communities; for example,

one of the research questions that they could address themselves to: *how does the self-supply approach to water source development offer the potential for income generation, recouping investment and moving on to higher cost options like piped water?*

4. For purposes of improving record keeping, the student groups will be given a file in which all their records will be filed; these will include a) attendance lists of members at every visit clearly indicating male/female; b) completed field reports. These files will then be submitted to the STP Coordinator at the end of both Semester One and Two for evaluation purposes.
5. The individual assessment sheets will be the only forms submitted by the field supervisors to the STP Coordinator after every visit.