

UGANDA LANDCARE NETWORK (ULN)

A National Platform for Landcare Stewardship

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2019

Our Motto: Harnessing Natural Resources, Transforming Livelihoods.

WHY THE ULN STRATEGIC PLAN?

Entire humanity relies on natural resources in some way. Investing in protection and enhancement of the natural resources is therefore essential.

Amidst alarming land degradation levels across the country, documented literature on natural resource management gives an impression of some great changes in the area of land management. However, a lot is still missing and there is no such thing like free lunch. It requires big eyes and bigger ideas and collective action. Thus the registration of Uganda Land Care Network (ULN) and consequent consolidation of this Strategic Plan – presents a significant milestone. We applaud all efforts at secretariat level especially all those who have dedicated their time to reach where we are now.

Many policies, projects and programs have been implemented in Uganda with varying success. ULN aims to build on these successes and failures to add value. But it will require knowledge, commitment and capacity by all those involved... and sacrifice on the part of some.

But making a difference does not require complex technology/science. What is required is cultivating stewardship among actors on the land while catalyzing a collective action for greater impacts on livelihoods and landscapes. Once this has happened, the passion and motivation go higher - to achieve more and more. The ULN Strategic Plan provides the critical leverage point to plan ahead towards restoration and regeneration of degraded landscapes in Uganda

This Plan brings out the message clearly that Government, its people and its partners have a duty to address the natural resource management challenges and spur economic growth and make a significant difference to the quality of life of Ugandans in the long term.

Encourage everyone to invest in harnessing our natural resources for better livelihoods.

Francis Byekwaso (PhD)

Chairman – Uganda Landcare Network

1. INTRODUCTION

Uganda Landcare Network (ULN) is an association of individuals and institutions committed to the principles, philosophy and practice of Landcare in Uganda. ULN is registered as a trustee to champion Landcare activities nationwide. It is built on the global successes of Landcare including Australia where it was launched close to 30 years ago and has been adopted worldwide by communities and land managers dedicated to sustainable land management.

ULN has the mission of enhancing national recognition and adoption of the Landcare as a model for sustainable environmental and natural resource management, effective public-private partnerships and authentic stakeholder participation in community decision making and action. The Landcare model is based on values of community empowerment and collective action to develop innovative solutions to natural resource management challenges, especially focusing on managing land and water resources, conserving biodiversity and creating sustainable livelihoods for local people.

Background

The issue of natural resource degeneration and over-exploitation with no due consideration is still a major challenge. Lack of effective coordination of natural resource management interventions coupled with limited financing has further slowed down overall progress.

In general however, Government of Uganda (GOU) together with various partners has implemented different projects on natural resource management but since

2005, a more specific programme supported by ICRAF, ASARECA, AusAID and GOU started being implemented in highland areas of Kapchorwa and Kabale. Based on the encouraging successes and interest of the communities, more partners came in to support new projects in other districts viz. Masaka, Ntungamo, Masindi and Rakai as well as scaling out existing projects.

A national stakeholder workshop¹ attended by government officials, non-government and UN partners was held at Innovations Hotel Mukono in December 2014 to review and galvanize the achievements of Landcare projects in Uganda and provide direction for the next course of action. The workshop recognized the need to strengthen the achievements made and out scale the Landcare approach to other areas in Uganda. Weak coordination and networking was identified as a bottle neck and the workshop participants emphasized the importance of strengthening the ULN Secretariat to provide overall direction to Landcare activities as well as other natural resource management initiatives in the country.

The Uganda Landcare Strategic Plan is a key milestone toward realizing the recommendations of the stakeholder workshop as well the intention of GOU to have effective coordination of programmes for sustainable management of natural resources as detailed out in the National Development Plan and relevant sector plans.

¹*The stakeholder workshop was jointly funded the Uganda Landcare Network and Landcare International*

Concepts and Definitions

Landcare is widely defined as a movement, an approach, as body of knowledge and as an ethic (philosophy).

As a **MOVEMENT...** It is a movement of local people that share knowledge about sustainable and profitable agriculture while conserving the environment and natural resources.

As an **APPROACH ...** Landcare is an extension approach/method that rapidly and inexpensively disseminates sustainable farming practices among thousands of farmers based on the farmers' innate interest in learning and sharing knowledge about new technologies that earn more money and conserve natural resources. This embodies three basic cornerstones: appropriate technologies, partnership building and institution building.

As a **BODY OF KNOWLEDGE ...** Landcare is a set of appropriate land management practices to care for the land in a sustainable, economic and productive way.

As an **ETHIC, a PHILOSOPHY ...** Landcare is an ethic, a philosophy that enables individuals and communities to approach agriculture in a mature and nurturing way to improve livelihoods.

2. WHY NEED THE UGANDA LANDCARE NETWORK STRATEGIC PLAN?: THE RISKS TO ADDRESS

In Uganda, current trends indicate that the condition of our natural resources is declining in number of areas. ULN identifies 12 key risks to improving SLM in Uganda these are:

- i. Continuous land degradation across the country is seriously increasing as more pressure is put to land.
- ii. Minimal consideration for optimal land use by all sectors: crop farming, livestock, forestry, wildlife, wetlands, road reserves, etc.
- iii. Soil erosion continues to be a serious issue. This is because of a number of causal biological and physical factors but primarily the depletion land cover in addition to wide spread poor farming methods.
- iv. Vital ecosystems (forests, rivers, streams and lakes and wetlands)are being destroyed by human activities and natural calamities.
- v. Growing number of natural calamities (floods, fires, droughts, landslides and extreme storms) that burden society with great costs in terms of lives and money.
- vi. Climate change is now recognized as a significant risk that adds to the challenge of managing natural resources in Uganda (Adverse impacts of climate change)
- vii. Limited involvement of the youth and children in sustainable land management (SLM)/ Landcare activities
- viii. Using or altering natural resources beyond sustainable limits
- ix. Short-term nature of natural resources management interventions. As a country we don't have long term plans to manage the natural resources
- x. Interventions that are fragmented and not well coordinated, that is: (a) not effectively coordinated when holistic solutions are required, and (b)

developed without seeking to involve all individuals that affect or affected, use and manage those natural resources

- xi. Limited innovation, research and dissemination of farmer based SLM technologies
- xii. Under-utilization of, or insufficient community capacity for, managing natural resources
- xiii. Impacts of pest, disease and increasing threat from invasive species
- xiv. Poor solid waste management (urban)
- xv. Lack of environmental/cultural parks in urban areas

3. UGANDA LANDCARE NETWORK VISION AND GOALS

Motto:

Harnessing Natural Resources, Transforming Livelihoods.

Vision

Land resources sustainably managed to improve the quality of life

Mission

To provide a national platform for knowledge generation and sharing, capacity building and resource mobilization for sustainable land resource management.

Goals:

The ULN Strategic Plan establishes a longer- term view and provides key directions for natural resource management over the next five years under four major goals. These are:

Goal 1: *Improved knowledge management for natural resource management outcomes among communities, policy makers, technocrats and partners.*

Goal 2: *Capacity built for ULN members, Government officials, implementing partners and community leaders to improve their abilities to initiate, implement and supervise natural resource management/ Landcare projects in the communities. This will include capacity to develop and utilize modules and approaches for sustainable land use and management.*

Goal 3: *Institutional mechanisms developed for Landcare in Uganda.*

Goal 4: *Allies, development/conservation partners identified and linked directly to communities to start Natural Resource Management projects, focusing on the following themes:*

- *Improving land use and land management*
- *Landcare initiatives for special interest groups - schools (junior landcare), PWDs,*
- *Evergreen agriculture*
- *Tree planting*
- *Climate change mitigation and adaptation*
- *Solid waste management*
- *Environmental parks in urban areas: healthy parks healthy people*
- *Community engagement*

Goal 5: *Catalyse dialogue on Trans-border natural resource management issues in the EA region*

4. KEY DIRECTIONS

Goal 1: Improved knowledge management for natural resource management outcomes among communities, policy makers, technocrats and partners.

Three key ingredients are needed for more sustainable management of natural resources: ***knowledge, commitment and capacity are essential to underpin changes towards more sustainable systems of land, water and vegetation management at all scales.*** Knowledge is gained from experience. Our target is to maximize beneficial natural resource management outcomes, we need to include the range of experiences people have in the work that we do.

Our work in natural resource management is participatory, inclusive with a focus on a range of experiences, and hence knowledge, people have of their environment. In addition to cognitive knowledge based on formal structures or meetings, it will be valuable under ULN to start exploring and validating the importance of ideas around natural resources and try and place an equal value on the range of ‘experiential knowledge’ we use in or decision making processes.

There is a serious need to generate, gather and compile and disseminate information on natural resource management. Hence, our efforts are towards positive attributes shared for learning and the negatives are documented for

follow up. Uganda needs to invest in new natural resource management knowledge and make better use of what we already know to:

- To help land actors, businesses, industries and governments make better decisions at all levels of management and policy
- To energize the innovation process so that we can develop more sustainable land use and management systems and technologies
- To help communities and the nation as a whole to learn as we go along, so that we make best use of existing knowledge and past experience

What will be happening?

- Landcare information generation and dissemination (using different media: print, using radios, TV and social media)
- Carrying out research to inform policy makers, environmental leaders and conservation practitioners.
- Documentation and dissemination of Landcare success stories
- Organizing monthly, quarterly and annual stakeholders meetings
- Website development and maintenance
- Research and publications
- Participation in national, regional and international landcare meetings, conferences,
- Monitoring and evaluation activities

Goal 2: Capacity built for ULN members, Government officials, implementing partners and community leaders.

Capacity is one of the three key ingredients needed for more sustainable management of natural resources. ***Knowledge and commitment are enough to mitigate natural resource management challenges.*** Key officials involved need relevant and practical skills to turn knowledge into action – including policy makers in government, implementing partners, technocrats and community leaders. Continuous capacity needs assessments therefore need to be done to develop the capacity of all stakeholders and give them the ability to address natural resources issues from an informed point of view.

Of particular importance is the skilling of facilitators (change agents) in the community – volunteers or ‘foot soldiers’.

What will be happening?

- Liaison with relevant institutions to assemble/develop existing information/training materials
- Capacity building of ULN leadership, government officials, implementing partners and other stakeholders that are involved in the implementation of natural resource management activities
- Monitor adoption (application of skills acquired) and provide feedback into the knowledge management loop.

Goal 3: Institutional mechanisms developed for Landcare in Uganda.

ULN, being a network, is involved in consolidating and fortifying a vibrant learning platform for networking community Landcare initiatives. A very small Secretariat is maintained to steer the network while linking with international as well

national partners. The Secretariat is responsible for delivering on all the 4 Goals but the actual implementation of grassroots natural resource management projects remain the responsibility of communities themselves together with local partners.

In order for ULN to achieve its goals, the Secretariat has the obligation to build efficient systems, networks and adequate resources to ensure good performance including capacity building, strengthening landcare networks as well monitoring the implementation of community projects and programmes.

What will be happening?

- Day to day operations of ULN Secretariat
- Liaison with national and international level stakeholders (government, partners. NGOs, private sector) on issues of policy, advocacy, resource mobilisation, partnerships,etc.
- Support establishing landcare platforms andbuilding the capacity of the members
- Management Information System (MIS) for landcare activities
- Maintenance of a data base of experts/specialists in natural resource management and networking them with relevant

Goal 4: Allies, development/conservation partners identified and linked directly to communities to start Natural Resource Management initiatives.

ULN mandate is mainly networking various actors in natural resource management including but not limited to mobilization of resources for community natural resource management initiatives in different agro-ecological zones as well as trans-boundary issues affecting countries in the region.

ULN will use its national and international level connections to advocate for resources for its member community projects.

What will be happening?

- Facilitating landcare member organizations (chapters) to come up with fundable proposals
- Capacity building of the leadership of the landcare member organizations
- Backstopping landcare member organizations to dialogue on various pertinent issues at the local levels
- Supporting fundraising initiatives for landcare member organisations
- Backstopping landcare membership organisations to generate resources to sustain natural resource management initiatives in the long term (trust or endowment fund).

5. ULN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Guiding Principles in the ULN Strategic Plan guide the theory and implementation of sustainable natural resource management.

A. Entrepreneurship and financial sustainability underpin all ULN initiatives:

- i. Donations to be used as seed capital and not to propagate paternalism/ dependence
- ii. Explore innovative mechanisms to ensure long term financial independence
- iii. Efficiency and cost saving in all projects
- iv. Leveraging resources through partnerships and synergies in landcare projects

B. Our natural resources must be managed for long-term social, economic and environmental outcomes by ecosystems improvements:

- v. Win-Win - Ecologically sustainable development of natural resources underpins a sound economy while delivering contributing to delivering positive social and environmental outcomes.
- vi. Work within limits- the use of our natural resources in response d economic pressure must work with in ecologically sustainable limits to maintain their life supporting capacity.
- vii. Future Outlook - ecologically sustainable development of natural resources to protect their capacity to provide ecosystem services upon which current and future generations depend.
- viii. Use without losing- natural resources management must embrace that fundamental interdependence of economic productivity and ecologically sustainable use.
- ix. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts- Natural resources management optimizes using an ecosystems approach that recognizes

and integrates all components and processes of ecosystems and their use: and manages these at appropriate temporal and spatial scales

C. People's willingness and ability to contribute to sustainable natural resource management are critical to realizing the vision and goals.

- x. People are key- capable, connected towards effective natural resources management.
- xi. Work together- government, communities and other stakeholders must work together to integrate the management of natural resources
- xii. Knowledge is power- It is essential to develop and share knowledge and that the understanding of rural, Urban and scientific communities are sought and valued.
- xiii. Learn by doing- managing natural resources requires an adaptive approach that is continuously improving by testing and learning from actions in a purposeful, persistent, information rich, flexible and inclusive manner.
- xiv. Every ones responsibility- Everyone benefits from natural resources, and everyone must be responsible for their share of the costs to manage natural resources sustainably.

D. To fix natural resource management problems, manage the risks and capture the opportunities, we must learn from the past and think beyond the present

- xv. Think outside the box- The thinking that created our natural resource management problems cannot necessarily solve them: innovative thinking and brave decision making are required.
- xvi. Prevent rather than cure- Preventing the degradation of natural resources by dealing with causes is preferable than treating symptoms and/repairing damage.
- xvii. If it is broken, fix it- Repair of landscapes and sea/ 'lakes shores' will be needed to ensure that natural resources can continue to provide ecosystem services into the future.

6. UGANDA LANDCARE NETWORK: KEY LINKAGES AND STRATEGIC POSITIONING

- Uganda Landcare Network (ULN) is allied to the African Landcare Network, the Landcare International and has been represented in both regional and International Landcare conferences (Melborne Landcare conference, 2006, South African bi-annual Landcare conferences 2006, 2012, 2014)
- ULN hosted the East African Landcare Master Class in 2012 in Mbale
- The ULN member organizations (district level/community chapters) have worked closely and gained much support from the wealth of knowledge from ICRAF during the establishment and implementation of Landcare activities.

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