

JOINT EFFORT TO SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT

Annual Report 2023



1993-2023



30 YEARS OF
COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION IN
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION,
WASH AND LIVELIHOOD
IMPROVEMENT

Joint Efforts to Save the Environment (Jese)

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Table of Contents

Acronyms	5
About Jese.....	6
Our Vision, Mission, and Core Values	6
Our Contribution to SDGs and NDP III.....	7
Uganda Vision 2040	7
The 3 rd National Development Plan	7
Local Government Development Plans.....	8
Where we worked and what we worked on.....	8
Our program portfolio in 2023	8
Message from the Chairperson	11
Message from the Executive Director	12
Highlight of the Jese@30 celebrations.....	13
Jese@30 Awards.....	20
Program Highlights for 2023	22
Achievements against Jese 2021-2026 Strategic plan	24
Milestone I: Buffer zone protection along Kiburara prison Mpanga River and successful development of Micro catchment plans in Mid and Downstream of River Mpanga:.....	25
Milestone II: Marketing of Agroforestry and Green Entrepreneurship Products with the Elephant Corridor of Uganda.....	27
Case study I: “Stakeholder Engagement on Buffer Zone Protection in Mpanga Catchment (Mpanga River Banks)”	29
Case Story I: The Impact of Energy-Saving Stoves on the Community of Kamrono Model Site	33
Milestone III: Acceleration of Vocational and Green Trades training	35
Milestone IV: To strengthen capacities of training providers and social-enterprises to become competent local skills training centres	36
Milestone V: Post training support to Learners.....	37
Case story II: My Heart Rocked with Excitement.....	39
Our contribution to Food Systems, Food security, incomes and Gender	41
Milestone VI: Agro ecological transition and adoption of sustainable farming practices, marketing and market system.	41
Milestone VII: Working with Young Boys and Girls in Primary Schools	41
Milestone VIII: Working with Households towards Integration of Livestock.....	42
Milestone IX: Engagement of Family Farmers in Participatory Action Research (PAR).	43
Milestone X: Our Work on Horticulture with Refugees and the youths.....	44
Case Story III: Behind the Success of a Happy Farmer.....	45
Case Story IV: Youth Empowerment through Urban Farming	46

Our contribution to safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Practices	48
Milestone XI: Optimising water, sanitation and Hygiene Initiatives for enhanced learning outcomes: Exploring the impact of WASH and Learn 3.0 on Educational environments in Bunyangabu District.....	48
Case study II: “Shaping a Hygienic Environment: A Case Study of Kinyampanika Primary School in Bunyangabu District”	51
Strategic Partnerships and coordination	54
Institutional and Capacity Development	54
Major setbacks experienced in 2023	55
Lesson Learnt	56
Financial Summary	56
Jese Team	58
Board Members	60
Appreciation	61

Acronyms

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
PAR	Participatory Action Research
NDP	National Development Plan
URSB	Uganda Registration Service Bureau
DRDIP	Development Response to Displaced Impact Project
FoW	Forests of the World
HH	House Hold
PCWR	Protection and Conservation of Water Resources
ODF	Open Defecation Free
JFW	Joint for Water
JEFACO	Jese Farmers' Company
NYP	National Youth Policy
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
DIT	Directorate of Industrial Training
UVQF	Uganda Vocational Qualifications Framework
IFP	Integrated Farm Planning
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
NARO	National Agriculture Research Organisation
MHM	Menstrual Health Management
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
RWHT	Rain Water Harvesting Technology
CLTS	Community Led Total sanitation
CRP	Cost Recovery Planning
RA	Risk Analysis
ODF	Open Defecation Free
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UNBS	Uganda National Bureau of standards
AWMZ	Albertine Water Management Zone
NYP	National Youth Policy

About Jese

Jese is a Non-Governmental Organisation dedicated to reducing poverty amongst agriculture and natural resources-dependent communities through empowering smallholder farming groups to optimally engage in Sustainable Agriculture, Water and Sanitation and Integrated Natural Resources Management for socio-economic progress. Established in 1993, Jese celebrated 30 years of Existence this year under the theme; “Transforming communities through Conservation, WASH and Livelihood Improvement”.

Our Vision, Mission, and Core Values

Our Vision

We envision a community where people and nature flourish.

Our Mission

We facilitate people-centered innovative actions that foster equity, sustainable management of natural resources and livelihood improvement.

Our Values

Natural resources are free gifts of nature but we need to guard them carefully and share them equitably. In doing so, Jese is committed to the values of: Service above self, Environmental Stewardship, Transparency, and Teamwork, Integrity, Neutrality and Gender Equity (**SETTING**). These values are a key component of the Jese Family culture.

Our Target

- Farming Households.
- Communities Adjacent to Natural Resources.
- Collaborative Forest Management Groups.
- Farmer organisations.
- Farmer Cooperatives.

How we work

At Jese we work Through;

- **Partnerships** with; Government, other like-minded Organisations in the same sectors of work and Community organisations/structures.
- **Networking** with other organisations with the same focus on development.
- **Linkages** with the Private Sector Actors.
- **Knowledge Management**, Sharing and Learning.

Our Approaches

Jese is currently implementing a 10 Year Programme guided by the following approaches;

- Agro ecology.
- Integrated Farm Planning.
- Agroforestry.
- Research and Innovation.
- Partnership and Collaboration.
- Advocacy and Policy Influencing.
- Watershed management.
- Agribusiness development.
- Participatory Action Research (PAR).
- Farmer Field Schools.
- Rights-based Approach.

Our Contribution to SDGs and NDP III

As always, Jese work in communities continued to contribute to the 2030 global development framework, and the following the SDGs; #1, #2, #5, #6, #7, #8, #12, #13 and #15. All these SDGs are aligned to the Jese 2021-2026 strategic plan.



Uganda Vision 2040

As always, Jese aligns her strategic programming with the national strategic objectives of achieving:

- Universal access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.
- Green and clean environment, conserving the flora and fauna, restoring and adding value to the ecosystems.
- Restoration of degraded wetlands, hilltops, rangelands and other fragile ecosystems through the implementation of catchment-based schemes, gazettement of vital wetlands for increased protection and sustainable use, monitoring and inspecting restoration of ecosystems (wetlands, forests, catchments).
- Reforestation and afforestation on public land, promoting participation of the population in tree planting on both private and public lands.
- Enhance food security and improved livelihoods for low-income groups.
- Functional agriculture system to increase access to information, knowledge and technologies among target farming communities.

The 3rd National Development Plan

The 3rd National Development Plan ((2020/21 – 2024/25) was unveiled in July 2020 by the National Planning Authority, highlighting the key challenges that impede the county's development path. One key challenge that's central to Jese mission is the *"Severe reduction in the forest cover, wetland degradation and encroachment leading to increased vulnerability of the country to climate change"*.

In view of the above, Jese program portfolio localises the NDP III focus within its mainstream programming to enhance productivity in the agricultural sector, sustainable exploitation of natural resources, stop, reduce and reverse environmental degradation and the adverse effects of climate change.

Local Government Development Plans

Jese works to complement and address development priorities and delivery of services to the communities as enshrined in District Development plans at the local level.

Where we worked and what we worked on

In 2023, Jese implemented numerous projects and Programs in the following districts in Uganda; Agago, Buliisa, Hoima, Kikuube, Kabarole, Kasese, Kyenjojo, Kagadi-Kibaale, Bunyangabu, Kamwenge, Kitagwenda, Ibanda, Isingiro and Kyegegwa.

Our program portfolio in 2023

In this reporting period, Jese implemented the following projects:

PROJECTS	LOCATION	DEVELOPMENT PARTNER
Equitable Access to safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.	Bunyangabu, Agago.	SIMAVI.
Engaging Farmers in the restoration of the Elephant Corridor.	Kyenjojo	Forests of the World.
Gender Equity, women participation and nutrition.	Kyegegwa, Bunyangabu, Kyenjojo, Kamwenge.	CARE International in Uganda.
Agriculture and market linkages for; Cocoa, Vanilla and Maize.	Kyenjojo, Kyegegwa, and Kamwenge.	Forests of the world, IDP, BD.
Green Entrepreneurship.	Kyenjojo .	Forests of the World.
Sustainable Family Farming Development II.	Kamwenge and Fort-Portal City.	Broderlyjkdelen.
Protecting and Conserving Water resources and Forests Ecosystems in Mpanga and Semuliki Catchments- MYP5.	Kamwenge, Kitagwenda and Ntoroko.	Join for Water.

PROJECTS	LOCATION	DEVELOPMENT PARTNER
Development Response to Displaced Impact Project.	Hoima, Kikuube, Kiryadongo, Kyegegwa and Isingiro Districts.	Office of the prime minister (OPM.)
Ripening of Cocoa and Vanilla/-DGBP	Kyenjojo.	Forests of the World.
Enhancing resilience and productivity of small holder coffee farms.	Kitagwenda and Kamwenge	HereWeGrow.
Restore Africa project.	Kamwenge, Kyenjojo, Bunyangabu, Ibanda, Kyegegwa, and Kitagwenda.	CARE International in Uganda, and CRS.
Mpanga Super Farmers Program 2 (SIA2)	Fort portal city, Kamwenge	Iles de Paix
Skill up project	Fort portal city, Kyenjojo town council, and Kabarole.	Welthunger Hilfe, BMZ
WASH and Learn 3.0	Bunyangabu	SIMAVI
Fill the Nutrition Gap (FNG) project – phase 1	Kyegegwa	CARE International in Uganda
Common ground project	Bunyangabu	ISSD Uganda and Wageningen University Environmental Research (WENR).
Expansion of green collages	Kasese, Fort Portal and Kabarole	Welthunger Hilfe, BMZ
Scaling up Farmer Field Business Schools (SUFFBS)	Kyenjojo and Kyegegwa	CARE International in Uganda
The Bright project	Kasese and Bunyangabu	IFDC

WHERE WE ARE IN UGANDA



Message from the Chairperson



Greetings to you all.

I thank the Lord for his grace and faithfulness.

I send you all warm greetings from the Jese Board. This has indeed been an exciting year for us here at Jese. I wish to thank all the board members, Management and Staff for their unwavering spirit to take this organisation to another level. Indeed, I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate you all for your active participation in marking the 30 years' anniversary. This celebration did put Jese on another pedestal. The hosting of the 1st Fort-Portal climate summit at the celebration did certainly show that Jese had matured and legible to tackle some of the globe's challenges like Climate change uncompromisingly.

I also wish to thank the management and technical team for their hard work in serving and diligently implementing programs, which has contributed to achievement of results presented in this report. I have been personally impressed by the impact they have had on the environment, social and economic welfare of communities. The results in this report speak for themselves and I invite you to spare some time and read about what has been achieved.

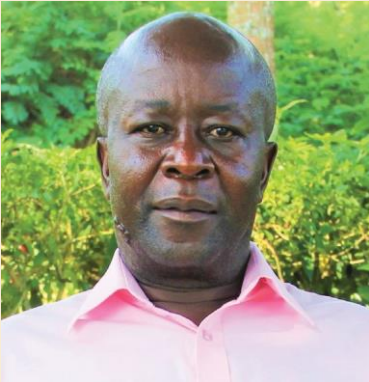
I also know that globally there are overwhelming challenges that impact our work, namely; the negative climate change effects like floods, wildfires and heat waves. There is also political instability within the European region where most of our funding comes from. The wars in Ukraine, Palestine and Sudan all have drawn the attention of our supporting partners. Our promise is that we shall continue to work with Management to remain frugal with the limited financial envelope but also achieve more results.

It's at this point that I continue to thank our development partners for the support that you have provided and continue to provide for Jese to deliver on her strategic goals. Certainly, without your support, we would not be proudly presenting the results here in this report.

I wish you a nice reading.

Mrs. Grace Waako Katuramu,
Chairperson Board, JESE

Message from the Executive Director



Welcome yet again to another exciting year. A year when we celebrate 30 years of our work and existence. We have indeed come from far, lots of challenges but the achievements on this journey inspire us.

We are grateful to God the Almighty that we have been able to come this far and see this organisation grow to serve the people of this region and the country at large. We had lots of fun during the celebrations, connecting with people, organisations and corporate companies that we have walked this journey together. We had a wonderful Climate Summit not only to mark this celebration but also to present to the world, people of this region and Uganda about the need for joint effort to address challenges of climate change.

We came up with a powerful communique that we also take the opportunity to publish here in this report for your further reflection.

Now, besides the 30th anniversary celebrations, a lot more happened this year as we continued to serve the people of this region and Uganda as a whole. We have witnessed amazing transformation in the lives of people and actual conservation work going on. We would like to invite you to read and see the impact that we continue to make.

Interesting of all, is the economic transformation that we continue to witness. People are adding value to their products and indeed are making money. We would arguably say, "Green money". We have throughout the year delivered programs and activities that are intended to green the rural economy and therefore doing much more to protect and conserve the environment in which we live and thrive.

We are happy to report that Farmers in Kyenjojo are not only working hard to protect the only remaining tropical rainforests like Itwara, Matiri and Muhangi, but they have also made good use of the environment and matured their agroforestry systems. This is the same for farmers in Kabambiro sub-county, in Kamwenge who were previously more focused on mono-cropping, have now fully embraced agroecology, alongside developing their agro enterprises into profitable agribusinesses. Also, about 250,000 trees were planted this year inspired by the 1 million tree planting campaign for the Jese@30 celebrations and about 85 hectares of Mpanga river protected through actual demarcation. The youth in our skilling programs are starting to be self-employed or are being employed by someone else. Recent studies have shown that about 60% of the trained youth under Jese programming have decent employment.

In the area of water and Sanitation, we present to you overwhelming results from the WASH AND LEARN Project that was implemented in Bunyangabu. Here a lot of social transformation has taken place not only in the schools where the program was implemented but also the communities that are changing lifestyles for a better and cleaner environment.

It's at this point that I once again wish to thank our development partners that have continued to support our work. We would not be sharing these results if it was not because of relentless and diligent support for the common good of the people of this region and Uganda as a whole.

I thank you.

Patrick Baguma,

Executive Director, Jese.

Highlight of the Jese@30 celebrations

The Jese@30 celebrations were the hallmark of the year. It was all funfair across the region and final activities were held in Fort-Portal climaxing with the 1st Fort-Portal Climate Summit. Representatives at the celebration activities travelled from nearly all the districts where Jese programs are implemented to participate and also give testimony of Jese work and how it has impacted the lives of many people. To mark the event, a one million tree planting campaign was launched at St. Charles Lwanga in Fort-Portal City as a means of combating climate change. By the time of the launch, about 150,000 trees had already been planted across the region from the time the campaign was first launched on May 20th 2022 and to the celebration week in May 2023.

The closing event for the celebration was the 1st Climate summit held in Fort-Portal City, the first of its kind ever. The event was presided over by the Minister of Water and Environment, Hon. Sam Cheptoris who was represented by the director of Environmental affairs. Held under the theme of “**localising the global climate agenda**”, the summit was attended by over 1,000 participants both physically and online. The summit highlighted some of the most critical climate concerns at regional level and also made recommendations for national and international climate governance platforms, namely; COP and others.

The summit was also used to award people who not only contributed to the growth of Jese, but also the climate, conservation and development agenda of the organisation over the last 30 years of its existence.



The Board Chair giving her Opening Remarks at the Summit.



Jese Executive Director, Mr. Baguma Patrick giving his opening remarks at the Summit.



The Director, Environmental Affairs, Mr. Mugabi Steven David, Ministry of Water and Environment- Represented the Minister, Hon. Sam Cheptoris.

A communique of the 1st Fort-Portal Climate Summit

The 1st Fort-Portal Climate Summit was organised in Joint Collaboration with the Ministry of Water and Environment as an event to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Joint Effort to Save the Environment (Jese). The summit was attended by Government representatives, development partners, Civil Society Organisations drawn from across the country, women, men and youth, and children from Primary Schools around Fort-Portal City.

The summit was hybrid in nature with participants both online and in physical attendance. The two days' event was attended by over 1000 participants.

The Fort-Portal Climate Summit communique

Well aware of the rampaging and catastrophic impacts of climate change such as; flooding, prolonged droughts, food insecurity and likely threats on humankind, infrastructure and the environment;

While the global effects of climate change are affecting us all, some communities have and continue to suffer more than others. Paradoxically and painfully so, these climate injustices have been imposed by the developed countries that continue to set stringent conditions on accessing climate financing. It's the people in low developing countries in Africa and Uganda in particular who have contributed very little to global warming that are suffering the most.

Recognizing the high poverty levels in Uganda, and high population growth rates at 3% per annum, natural resources across the country remain at risk of being depleted at a supersonic speed.

Recognizing that Uganda has many good policies and laws, some of these policies particularly in the agricultural sector contradict globally acceptable and eco-friendly practices like agroecology and organic agriculture- that seek to promote climate resilience.

That; the risks posed by climate change to people and ecosystems are not limited to aggravating existing economic, environmental, geopolitical, health and societal threats, but they are equally generating new ones. These risks increase disproportionately as the temperature increases; thus, many systems are already at risk from climate change.

That; responding to these climatic challenges will require deploying the full breadth of human talent and innovations. In this regard, creative policy interventions and novel eco-technological solutions need to be fostered and applied across Government, Universities and Civil society organisation levels. This will require a sustained commitment and providing resources into research, green development, promotion of eco-entrepreneurship, education, and good management of public resources.

That; to safeguard the legitimacy of our ecosystems and the services they provide, requires collective action to be taken now, by governments, private sector players, individuals, businesses, local communities, NGOs and public institutions to tackle this global challenge, deliver the required cuts in emissions, and take maximum advantage of the available opportunities and additional benefits.

The 1st Fort-Portal Climate Summit therefore agreed as follows;

- 1) This summit made an urgent call to the government of Uganda to localise COP decisions and simplify them for local-level implementation and action.
- 2) The Summit further made an urgent call to the international actors to ease the conditions on climate financing and carbon credit.

- 3) The summit made an urgent call to the government of Uganda to involve local governments in the development of proposals for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) before they are submitted to the UN.
- 4) The summit called on the Government of Uganda to fast track the concerns of her citizens on Loss and damage, and climate financing to support local initiatives on climate adaptation and mitigation.
- 5) The summit called upon the government of Uganda to support the Green Economy initiatives and prototypes by giving subsidies and incentives to green development models being developed at the local levels.
- 6) The summit appealed to the government of Uganda to urgently boost Investment in Research, data management infrastructure and training local personnel to collect, retrieve, interpret and use climate data for decision-making and local actions.
- 7) The summit appealed for increased partnerships with local Universities like the Mountains of the Moon University to enhance context- specific research and knowledge generation for local level decision making.
- 8) The summit further appealed to the urgent need for the mass mobilisation of Ugandans to adopt climate- smart interventions at the local and household levels.
- 9) The summit made an urgent call for the regulation of harmful agrochemicals that are currently on the Ugandan Markets.
- 10) The climate summit appealed for behavioral change in regard to environmental protection and the adoption of Climate Smart lifestyles among Ugandans.
- 11) The summit called upon the Government, Civil Society and the private sector to tap into indigenous knowledge as one way to contribute to the adaptation and mitigation efforts on climate change.
- 12) The summit called upon the government of Uganda and all the local governments to strictly enforce the existing laws and ordinances on environmental protection.
- 13) The summit appealed for the development of prototypes on adaptation and mitigation to climate change effects.
- 14) The summit further appealed to the Government of Uganda to resolve policy contradictions in the agricultural and environment sector.
- 15) The summit urged government and private sector players to develop gender-sensitive Climate- smart agricultural models for equity and equality at the household level.
- 16) The summit appealed for the involvement of learners in the fight for climate adaptation and mitigation at all levels- Primary, secondary and Tertiary institutions.
- 17) Last but not least, the summit appreciated the urgent need to generate agro-ecological business models that can spark economic opportunities and are attractive to the young generation.

Finally, participants at the climate summit agreed to convene the Fort-Portal Climate Summit each year to continue deliberating on Climate change and possible solutions.



Tree planting to mark the Jese 30th anniversary in Fort-Portal City.



AWMZ Partners exhibited at the Jese@30 anniversary.



Summit participants interact with Jese staff on the Mpanga Falls Model.



Some of the products by Jese beneficiaries.



Some of the Jese staff at the climate summit event to mark 30 years.



Participants cutting the 30th Anniversary Cake.

Jese@30 Awards



Ms. Jane Nabunya receives her award for serving as a former Board Chairperson.



Mr. Murungi Samuel- one of the longest- serving staff receives his award from Kristian the CD WHH in Uganda.



Ms. Siima Salome Bulaaya- receives an award for the longest- serving staff member.

Program Highlights for 2023

Total # HHs reached

38,153 additional households reached.

Natural Resources and Energy



We supported and plated over 250,000 trees across the region and other areas where we worked.



255 people accessed Clean Cooking Energy. 51 biogas systems were installed each with 16 cubic liter capacity installed. These were supported by the DRDIP Program as an experiment.

- UGX41,606,000 Vanilla and cocoa sales as agroforestry products for 2 Cooperatives in Kyenjojo.
- 900+ Participated in agroforestry systems
- 549 (54% male and 36% females) agroforestry farmers received an extension in AF, IFP, and ecosystem services protection and development of micro catchment plans in Kyenjojo, Kitagwenda, and Kamwenge.
- Active participation of 45% of Women and 55% of Men in the management of Eco-System Services.
- 28.6 hectares of Agroforestry planted in Mpanga (Mid and downstream Mpanga).
- 56.4 hectares of Buffer Zone Protection was also achieved in Mid and downstream Mpanga.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- We improved the health, study environment and quality education for 6,377 pupils, particularly girls in Bunyangabu District.
- 1,200 pupils accessing clean water and sanitation facilities at Bunoga Primary School- Kamwenge District.
- 322 beneficiaries (200 females, 122 Male) sensitised on Sanitation and Hygiene practices in the villages of Miyora 1, Miyora 2, Rwebikwato 2, Bunoga A.
- Improved knowledge and attitude for 2160 community members, 4,217 pupils and teachers on desirable hygiene practices and environmental sanitation.



Agriculture and Livelihood improvement

- 246 households in Kabarole District reached on the integration of livestock within the crop farming system.
- 1,200 refugee households in Kyaka reached with interventions on improved nutrition.
- 1,250 households reached with agroecology transition and sustainable farming practices.
- 4,125 people received gender messaging with a focus on household joint planning and decision making, access and control over production resources.
- Estimated farm income=UGX 122,000 per month and UGX 1,464,000 for 2023 compared with UGX 1,104,313 in 2022.



- Supported added value to the maize value chain in Kabambiro sub-county.
- **58% adoption of agroecology and Integrated Farm Planning practices on the farm.**



Youth Skilling and Entrepreneurship Development.

- 120 youths completed training and were awarded Workers' PAS certificates by DIT.
- 396 youths (203 males and 193 females) were enrolled and trained in the TVET and also equipped with skills to participate in the money economy in their communities.
- 157 youths (84 males, 73 Females) were supported with business starter kits and 109 youths are in business thus enabling them to earn extra incomes.
- 122 TOT (82 females and 40 males) in non-formal and formal adult learning, mentorship and coaching. The instructors were able to deliver quality training using standardised ATPs and following the CBET plans and manuals.
- 184(97 87 females) participated in our business mentorship program and covered trades; tailoring, hairdressing, carpentry & joinery, welding, and mechanics.
- 140 ecopreneurs were mentored in business planning, and cost-benefit analysis.
- 7 of the group enterprises in Kyenjojo were supported and registered at URSB (Uganda Registration Services Bureau) level.



Achievements against Jese 2021-2026 Strategic plan

The sections below provide a detailed account for each and every milestone that was achieved in 2023. These have been presented and organised per sector in the Jese Program Strategic Objectives (2021-2026).

Our contribution to the Natural Resources, Natural Resource Governance and Energy sector

Context: Environmental degradation in the form of wetlands and forest encroachment in the region (Tooro/Rwenzori) still goes on unabated. This is so because there is a severe lack of enforcement of environmental laws. Farmers go on encroaching fragile ecosystems without reprimand. Globally, Climate change continues to take a toll on development activities in the form of change in weather patterns due to global warming effects accelerated by Co2 emissions. Local climates are changing- rainy and dry seasons have become longer and negatively impact the livelihoods of communities that are inherently dependent on natural assets. Natural resource governance is seen to be a solution to some of these challenges but it's yet to be fully appreciated and integrated in natural resources management and Jese is taking a step in its implementation.

The milestones achieved here under contributed to the Jese Strategic area on Natural Resources, governance and Energy. In this reporting period, there were 4 programs running and each one of them contributed to the restoration of degraded areas, particularly targeting specific hotspots and micro catchments in Western and Northern Uganda. Overall, the milestone contributed to Sustainable Development Goals; #13 -Climate Action and #15- Life on Land as well as Goal #7- Affordable and Clean Energy, #1- No Poverty, #8- Decent Work and Economic Growth.



Cut and burn activities and destruction of natural forests in the Mpanga River Landscape.

Milestone I: *Buffer zone protection along Kiburara prison Mpanga River and successful development of Micro catchment plans in Mid and Downstream of River Mpanga:*



Field meeting with stakeholders in preparation for the buffer zone demarcation in the area of Kiburara Prisons in Ibanda District.

Context: Over the last 15+ years, the flow and water quality of River Mpanga have been severely impacted by human activity. The buffer zone of River Mpanga stretching 250 Kilometres into Lake George has for a long time been degraded by anthropological activities, namely; through traditional farming techniques and blatant clearing of biomass along the buffer zone for charcoal and timber. This eventually led to interference in the quality and quantity of ecosystem services available to the communities surrounding these ecosystems. For example, due to the silting of the River Mpanga, power production was reduced from 18 megawatts to 11 megawatts. Certainly, these anthropological activities also involved large government institutions like the Kiburara Prisons that grow a lot of maize along the river banks downstream Mpanga. The solution to this challenge lies in stakeholder engagement to find long-lasting solutions like buffer zone protection and therefore the achievement of sustainable ecosystem restoration and conservation to resuscitate regeneration of and access to ecosystem services for adjacent communities.

What we achieved

Through stakeholder engagement, commitment to protect the buffer zone along the Mpanga River by Kiburara prison authorities was successfully achieved. The Kiburara prison leadership committed with immediate effect to vacate the buffer zone and permitted the demarcation of the 100 meters from the river with concrete pillars.

We also achieved successful development of comprehensive and inclusive micro catchment/restoration plans for Busiriba-Kahunge, Kabujogera-Kikondo, and Kabambiro. These plans serve as guiding documents for the protection and conservation of ecosystems along the mid and downstream River Mpanga.

Serengeti Energy one of the development partners responsible for power generation at the Mpanga Falls has reported an increase of power generated from 11 megawatts in 2014/18 to 15-18 Megawatts starting 2020. This is partly attributed to the efforts that have been put in over the years to restore and protect buffer zones of the river.

What we did

To achieve successful stakeholder engagement on buffer zone protection activities along the Mpanga River, a series of strategic actions were undertaken. Firstly, extensive coordination and collaboration were established with key stakeholders from Kitagwenda, Kamwenge, and Ibanda district local governments, the Ministry of Water and Environment, AWMZ Fort Portal, Jese, NRD, and Join for Water. This involved regular meetings, consultations, and joint planning sessions to align objectives and strategies. Additionally, proactive communication and information sharing were maintained to ensure all parties were well-informed and engaged throughout the process. The agreement with Kiburara prison to vacate the buffer zones and accept demarcation using concrete pillars was a result of persistent negotiations and mutual understanding. We also involved the media that further amplified the project's visibility and impact and raising awareness among the broader community.

In the achievement of developing micro catchment/restoration plans for the Busiriba-Kahunge, Kabujogera-Kikondo, and Kabambiro areas under the PCWR Program, a series of steps were taken. Firstly, stakeholder engagement was conducted to gather input and feedback from local communities, government officials, and other relevant parties. This ensured that the plans were tailored to the specific needs and priorities of each area. The process was guided by the AWMZ-Fort portal for quality assurance, ensuring that the plans met the necessary standards and requirements. Jese, as the implementing partner, facilitated the process through conducting meetings, workshops, and consultations with stakeholders. Join for Water, the funder of the program, provided technical support and capacity building to Jese staff, enabling them to fine-tune the plans and ensure they were comprehensive and effective.

Generally, the achievement of developing these plans was a collaborative effort involving multiple stakeholders, each playing a crucial role in the process. The plans were eventually approved by the ministry, demonstrating their quality and alignment with national priorities and guidelines.

Where we failed and why?

One area where we may have fallen short was in ensuring comprehensive community involvement and consultation in the decision-making process regarding buffer zone protection. While key stakeholders were engaged, broader community input and participation could have been more actively sought to ensure a more inclusive approach. This oversight may have limited the depth of community buy-in and potentially impacted the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the buffer zone protection activities.

Another area where we failed during the stakeholders' engagement process was in effectively incorporating the feedback and input from all relevant parties. There may have been instances where certain stakeholders' perspectives or concerns were not adequately considered or addressed in the development of the micro catchment/restoration plans. This lack of comprehensive stakeholder engagement could have led to gaps or oversights in the plans, impacting their overall effectiveness and sustainability.

Milestone II: *Marketing of Agroforestry and Green Entrepreneurship Products with the Elephant Corridor of Uganda.*

Context: Since 2019, Jese with the funding support from Forests of the World launched a protracted restoration program in the elephant corridor in Western Uganda. This program was in response to the relentless deforestation in the only existing tropical rain forests in this region and the associated climate change impact on the environment. Now, 6 years down the road, the effort is paying off in terms of adaptation to climate change through the adoption of agroforestry systems. Farmers have since started to walk with their heads high and smiling to the bank or mobile money agents to ripe economic benefits derived from their agroforestry systems.



Some of the agroforestry farms promoted by JESE in the elephant corridor



Farmers in the elephant corridor sorting red-eye bird chili collected from their agroforestry systems.

What we achieved?

Jese supported market linkages of agroforestry-based value chains like cocoa, vanilla and red-eye bird chili within the landscape. The support was through supporting the development and growth of 2 cooperatives, namely Kyenjojo and KIFECA. It is these cooperatives that did collective bulking, market information sharing and quality control for cocoa, coffee and vanilla harvesting. As a result, total revenue of Ushs 41,606,000 was collected through the sale of Vanilla and cocoa agroforestry products. That is; 1,800Kgs of Vanilla was sold through local and international markets fetching a total revenue of Ushs 40, 160,000 and a total of 374 Kgs of vanilla was sold to social vanilla (international market) bonus pay of UGX 2,524,500 given to farmers as premium/bonus payment. 1205kgs of cocoa generating UGX 14, 460,000.



Participants displaying ecopreneurship products produced in the Elephant corridor. On display here are craft shoes made from car tyres and Jelly impregnated by repellents collected from the protected forests in Kyenjojo.



A total of 140 people supported. Out of the 140 people, 15 individual entrepreneurs were mentored in business planning, cost-benefit analysis and each group and individual has adopted marketing strategies and plans. A total of seven (7) group enterprises were supported and registered at URSB (Uganda Registration Services Bureau), which allows for local registration and tax payment. However, the effort to reach national and international markets has been hindered by a relatively high annual fee for Uganda national bureau of standards (UNBS) certification, which

at this level does not seem sustainable. The



entrepreneurs are continuously being supported by project staff as well as three business mentors supporting the entrepreneurs on a voluntary basis. The start-ups have managed to attract additional start-up capital investments of USD 1,866 and have over the period of reporting accumulative turnover of UGX 18 million (USD 4,762).

None of the businesses have reached international or national value chains yet, but 11 enterprises are efficiently engaging in local value chains. In general, there is a noted increase in income among ecopreneurs derived from the production and sales of eco products. The realised accumulative income translates into 18 FTE jobs (130,000 UGX/month) created (53% women and 80% youths).

What we did

Jese facilitated the development and strengthening of the market systems by creating market linkages for local and international players controlling the quality of the products through awareness creation.

Women and youth are proportionately favoured by the focus on business development coupled with direct access to land. The concept of gender equity and equality highly informed the mobilisation and selection criteria of the beneficiaries. The women/youth dominated the entrepreneurship groups and were given a high priority within the project.

Where we failed and why

There was no other option created to meet the anticipated prospects to mitigate price fluctuations, where we could have done for example value addition.

The efforts to reach national and international markets has been hindered by a relatively high annual fee for UNBS certification, which at this level does not seem sustainable.

Case study I: “Stakeholder Engagement on Buffer Zone Protection in Mpanga Catchment (Mpanga River Banks)”

Project Title: <i>Protection and Conservation of water resources</i>
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Overview
The case study examines the stakeholder engagement strategies in protecting buffer zones along the Mpanga River banks within the Mpanga catchment area. This initiative is part of Jese’s interventions under the “Protection and Conservation of Water Resources (PCWR),” program funded by Join for Water, a Belgian international organization, and implemented by Jese. The PCWR project aims to enhance environmental sustainability, promoting community involvement, and strengthening water resource management practices in the region.
Setting
The project is implemented in the Mid and Down-stream of the Mpanga catchment area, focusing on safeguarding buffer zones along the Mpanga River and the protection of adjacent ecosystems. Being implemented by Jese with funding from JFW, the PCWR program aims at improving environmental sustainability, through involvement of local communities in conservation endeavours, and enhancement of water resource management practices within the region. Through stakeholder engagement and strategic conservation measures, the program seeks to foster a more sustainable and resilient ecosystem along the Mpanga River banks.

Purpose of project

The program's overall purpose is to protect the ecosystem in the Mid and Down-stream areas of the Mpanga catchment by safeguarding buffer zones along the Mpanga River banks. It addresses challenges such as environmental degradation and inadequate water resource management. The program aims to enhance environmental sustainability, engage local communities in conservation efforts, and improve water resource management practices in the region. By involving stakeholders and implementing strategic conservation measures, the program seeks to create a more sustainable and resilient ecosystem along the Mpanga River banks, contributing to long-term environmental health and community well-being.

Description of the project

The project "Protection and Conservation of Water Resources began in 2022 and is scheduled to run until 2026 in the Mid and Down-stream areas of the Mpanga catchment, specifically focusing on protecting buffer zones along the Mpanga River banks to preserve the ecosystem. This is the 3rd phase of the program. The 1st phase was implemented in 2017. The program is funded by Join for Water, a Belgian international organisation, and Jese is taking the lead in implementation in downstream Mpanga. Other components of the Program have been implemented in Upstream of River Mpanga by other partners like NRD and HEWASA. In its activities to protect and conserve the downstream of the river, Jese collaborates with local communities, stakeholders, and environmental experts to enhance environmental sustainability, promote conservation efforts, and improve water resource management practices in the region. The program also benefits from additional resources like volunteers, local staff, and potential partnerships with other organizations for expertise, or support if needed.

Why this approach was taken?

The approach of engaging local communities, stakeholders, and environmental experts in the "Protection and Conservation of Water Resources" project was taken to ensure a holistic and locally driven sustainable conservation agenda setting. The collaboration and engagement of various stakeholders is fundamental for sustainable and effective ecosystem preservation. This participatory approach is based on evidence that involving local communities in conservation efforts creates a sense of ownership, thus building program sustainability. Additionally, engaging environmental experts helps ensure that conservation measures are based on sound scientific principles. Furthermore, the project's design aligns with recognized best practices in conservation and community engagement, aiming to foster enduring positive impacts on the ecosystem while promoting local ownership and resource management.

Who took part?

During the stakeholder engagement for buffer zone protection, a diverse range of stakeholders participated, including; technical and political staff from Ibanda, Kitagwenda, and Kamwenge districts, local governments, Jese program staff, Join for Water staff, NRD program staff, media representatives, Ministry of Water and Environment representative from the AWMZ, and the Officer in Charge of Kiburara prison. Participants included men and women of various ethnicities and age groups with varying levels of expertise related to water resource management and environmental conservation. They were invited to be part of this process based on their leadership roles in conservation, governance, or community development. Motives for participation included; expression of their commitment to sustainable natural resource management, the desire to contribute to environmental conservation efforts, and as part of their professional mandate.

How was data collected for this case study?

Data for this case study was collected from field reports by Jese program staff, interviews with project stakeholders in the landscape where the project is implemented and Serengeti- the power generating company at the Mpanga Falls, and generally through a synthesis of monitoring and evaluation reports at Jese and results from external evaluation of the program.

Project impact and outcomes

The engagement of stakeholders in the “Protection and Conservation of Water Resources” project has led to significant changes and impacts. The project facilitated a collaborative effort among diverse stakeholders, resulting in a shared commitment to protect the ecosystem and secure agreements to preserve the buffer zone. This has strengthened relationships between the involved stakeholders and fostered a sense of collective ownership and responsibility towards conservation efforts. The program’s emphasis on community involvement and scientific expertise has led to more effective conservation measures based on sound principles. The program has also raised awareness within the wider community about the importance of ecosystem preservation and sustainable natural resource management.

There are tangible outcomes from the program, such as reports, guidelines, or agreements outlining conservation strategies and commitments. These resources can serve as valuable tools for ongoing conservation efforts and community engagement. Unexpected positive outcomes include increased collaboration among stakeholders, heightened community engagement in conservation activities, or the emergence of new partnerships for environmental protection.

Most importantly, Serengeti Energy, the company responsible for power generation at Mpanga Falls has reported an increase in power production. In the early days of its establishment in 2014/18 the dam generated below its production capacity of 18 megawatts and produced only 11 megawatts. However, in 2020, the power plant started to step up its production capacity and to date, it can generate at its full capacity, especially in the rainy season and about 15 megawatts in the dry season. The power company attributes this increase to growing conservation efforts within the landscape which also includes the work of Jese and other development partners.

Negative outcomes are possible, such as challenges in implementing agreed-upon measures, conflicts of interest among stakeholders-especially politicians who keep diverting and interrupting project activities, and unforeseen environmental impacts like overwhelming water flow leading to destruction of water services infrastructure.

Enablers and barriers

The “Protection and Conservation of Water Resources” project has had several enablers and barriers that have influenced its success. Enablers that have supported the project and led to positive outcomes include the financial support from development partners which has enabled systematic program implementation. Additionally, the collaboration with local communities, stakeholders, and environmental experts has enriched the project with diverse perspectives, expertise, and local knowledge, enhancing efforts for effective conservation. The involvement of volunteers and efforts of the Jese staff have significantly contributed to the success of the restoration program agenda.

However, program implementation has equally been faced with a number of hindrances that have slowed down the rate of achieving certain milestones in terms of achievements during this implementation phase. Challenges related to funding, such as the amount and duration of financial support, could impact the program’s long-term sustainability and ability to achieve

its objectives. Factors like changing weather patterns, conflicts and self-centered individuals, or limited enthusiasm from some community participants could impede progress and hinder the program's overall impact.

Despite these barriers, the program's collaboration with various stakeholders and organizations, combined with the support of Join for Water and local resources, have played a vital role in driving positive outcomes and advancing conservation efforts in the Mpanga catchment. Addressing the identified barriers and building on the enablers will help enhance the program's success and sustainability over time.

Key learning

Key learning: One of the most outstanding learning is that engaging stakeholders at all levels builds a strong foundation for the success and sustainability of conservation efforts, particularly in buffer zone protection.

Key advice: When starting a similar program, prioritise building strong relationships with stakeholders, including local communities, organisations, and experts, to ensure diverse perspectives, resources and support.

Focus on securing stable funding sources, fostering community participation, and addressing potential challenges early enough to enhance project effectiveness and longevity. Regular monitoring and evaluation are essential for tracking progress, documentation of best practices and scale up of adopted strategies.

Next steps and sustainability

The "Protection and Conservation of Water Resources" program has shown promise due to strong enablers like available financial support and collaboration with local stakeholders including communities and government. However, challenges like funding uncertainty and limited participant engagement could affect sustainability. To ensure the program's continuity, strategies should be put in place to ensure funding stability, enhancing holistic stakeholder engagements especially at community level. Long-term plans should focus on securing sustainable funding sources, strengthening partnerships, and implementing robust monitoring mechanisms. By leveraging on existing strengths and addressing barriers effectively, the project can enhance its impact and potential for long-term sustainability.



RDC Kamwenge Handing over 2 school eco-san units valued at UGX 94M at Bunoga Primary school in Kamwenge as part of incentivising buffer zone protection.

Case Story I: The Impact of Energy-Saving Stoves on the Community of Kamrono Model Site

Meet Auma Colline, aged 32 years old from Kamrono village, Biwang Parish, Lira Sub County, Agago District. She is married with two children. Auma studied up to primary seven.

“I have been involved with JESE interventions since 2020 when IWRM and WASH activities commenced.” Auma shares. My challenge then was firewood and I would trek long distances to search for it.” She continues.

In October 2023, Jese mobilized the Makitich group to which I am a member for a three-days training in making local energy stoves. The training focused on environmental conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. As participants, we were also trained on how to make energy cooking stoves using locally available materials within our community.

“With the help of the trainer, I established a Lorena Ronena (RL) stove in my kitchen and since then, I have been able to use less fuel for cooking. The training also equipped me with knowledge and skills to make briquettes, which I currently use as an alternative to wood fuel”, She remarked.

This initiative has saved me time to attend to home chores like; washing utensils, bathing children, gardening and cleaning my home.

“My husband and children now support me in cooking since the energy stove is smoke-free hence saving us from diseases.” Said Auma. “We are safe from the Karamojong warriors who hide in the bush where people collect firewood.” She adds.

This intervention has supported the fight to combat the high deforestation rate for charcoal production and heavy fuel wood utilization which is among the major contributors to climate change negative effects. I am surely a living example to my fellow community members. I am among the 06 trainers of trainees and I have helped 11 households to establish energy-saving stoves in my group since the training.

“I sincerely convey my gratitude to the Jese team and all the funders. I pledge my usual commitment to any other future intervention.”



Training of Makitich group members in making energy-saving stoves



Auma Colline in her kitchen with a functional stove

Life skills, Vocational Training and Employability of the Youth



Context: The milestones achieved here are a direct contribution to the Jese Strategic area focusing on; **Life skills, Vocational Training and descent Employability, and certainly to Sustainable Development Goals, namely; #8 Decent Work and Economic Growth as well as Goal # 4 Quality Education.**

Jese with support from partners (FoW & WHH) has continued to equip youth with the skills and knowledge needed to gain resilience amidst uncertainties and challenges and most importantly orient the youth to the needs of the local labour market thus improving household incomes.

The successes under this theme were enabled through the Government of Uganda's policies that stress the provision of quality education and the National Youth Policy (NYP). These have been the spring board and a vehicle for accelerating vocational Skilling at Jese while achieving the goals under the National skilling strategy.

We continued to work with partners specialised in this area of training, namely; *Nyabyeya Forestry college and the Directorate of Industrial Training and several Green colleges in the region.*

Milestone III: *Acceleration of Vocational and Green Trades training*



Joash Masereka a Solar installation, repair, and maintenance trainee installing a solar panel in Kasese.

With funding support from Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and BMZ, a total of 396 young men and women (203 males and 193 females) youth were enrolled and trained in the TVET. Youth were equipped with skills to enable them participate in the money economy in their communities and supported with start-up kits in line with their respective trades to facilitate their entry into the job market.

What we achieved?

Jese enrolled 276 (152 Females, 124 males) for skills training under the expansion of Green colleges in 07 green occupations of solar installation and repair, vegetable growing and processing, Beekeeping and honey processing, Artisans and crafts, eco-tourism, Hotel and catering services, and Fish Farming. Equally 120 project participants under skill up, 114 (67 Females, 47 males) underwent training in the trades of Carpentry, Domestic electrical installations and repairs, Plumbing, Tailoring, Hairdressing, Motorcycle mechanics and Welding. The above skilled youth were assessed by the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) under the Ministry of Education and Sports for the offer of Workers PAS certifying competencies in the respective trades.

What did we do?

Youth Skills training and development was conducted in the districts of Kabarole, Kyenjojo, Bunyangabu, Kasese and Fort Portal City. Jese Management and Leadership of WHH provided support, direction, resources and capacity building to effectively deliver skills transfer using non-formal adult learning approach.

To make the skills development meaningful and transform those young men and women into potential workers, a great deal of training in Life-Skills and Entrepreneur was conducted creating awareness regarding environmental stewardship and responsible youth contributions in their localities. All the training was practical, conducted in the business environment, exposing youth to real-life and market dynamics. There was a good investment in training resources/ materials, Personal Protective

Equipment (PPEs), youths were insured and training centers supported to effectively meet the training needs for the respective labour market demands. Jese also supported Youth peer to peer learning by way of learning from each other and therefore, exposure visits, internship / industrial training and participation in regional market exhibitions were supported for this purpose.

Jese also made good efforts in involving local government leadership and other stakeholders throughout the period but also follow ups on the trainees and getting feedback from trainers and trainees. Equally life skills, entrepreneurship and capacity -building training for trainers on mentorship and coaching and use of pedagogy and didactic methodologies.

Where did we fail and why?

In terms of employability and marketability, 37 % of the skilled youth according to the trace studies and youth profiling reports are not in the market and have no businesses. This is attributed to the current economic crisis in Uganda but also the lack of YET (Youth Employment Taskforce) that has not been established in the region. When it came to starter up kits, the team could not give to everyone because the cost of some equipment was too high. Although all youth received their training materials, PPE and equipment, there was some bit of delayed procurement.

Milestone IV: *To strengthen capacities of training providers and social-enterprises to become competent local skills training Centres*



ToT session on Pedagogical skills being conducted in Fort-Portal by WHH.

Context: Jese with support from WHH has been delivering organisation and technical capacity building to partner training providers (TVETs and Socio-enterprises) in the region. During the period in review, Jese focused on improving andragogical and pedagogy learning principles. Furthermore, an Adult Education Model was developed and popularised enabling our training provider to easily and effectively conduct non-formal skills training. Therefore, the Jese Skills Department organised training programs around human capital training demands, anticipated labour market needs, digital searching and marketing needs and skills transfer methods.

What was achieved?

Conducted Capacity building training and attracted 122 participants (82 females and 40 males) through ToTs in formal and informal training methods, mentorship and coaching. Instructors were able to deliver quality training using standardised ATPs and following the CBET plans and manuals.

Prior to the commencement of youth skills trainings, training needs assessment of training providers was conducted. Jese through Training of Trainers (ToTs) enhanced capacities of training providers in Andragogical skills, Mentorship and Coaching, Life-skills and Entrepreneur. Tailored TOT and business mentorship programs were organised in two folds. Firstly, focusing on technical content in line with the selected vocational trades and secondly the training methods.

Midway the training period, refresher TOTs were organised that enabled the exchange of experience and further improvements made in methods for delivering technical training. Jese through capability building assisted 47 training centers to be accredited and obtain DIT assessment certification.

What we achieved

Jese provided structured training planners and Assessment Training Packages (ATPs). These are very simplified content with elaborate guides currently used by Social- Enterprises and some Skill Up! to attract more youth who could not read or write to enroll in skills training. Jese was able to facilitate training centres to apply and obtain accreditation and certificates as a DIT assessment centre. The certification processes enabled training centres to improve occupation offers and quality of delivery of training. Jese equally facilitated 6 training providers to advance in their qualifications, building the capacities for better services delivery.

Jese also provided ToTs in working / training environment management improving efficiency and effectiveness in terms of resources usage, arrangement of materials and tools in workshops, improved approaches to health and safety of trainees and trainers and minimising waste generation and pollution.

The project conducted a needs assessment to ascertain the gaps in the skills to be trained in but also labour market studies and DACUM development and reviews as well as skills sector study contributed to the ideal situation on what is desirable on the market.

Milestone V: *Post training support to Learners.*



Jese and WHH team meeting with Female Carpenter who received and is using Tools for business.

Context: More often than not, most training programs effectively deliver the training outcomes to learners but learners fail to take off on their own unless supported. Most of these learners are vulnerable and are not able to generate quick capital of their own. Therefore, many are trained but remain unable to utilise their acquired skills.



The Bunyangabu LCV Chairperson Mr. Ategeka James Mugarama, handing over tools to skilled youth under Skill Up! project.

What was achieved

- Provision of starter-up kits to 157 youth, out of which, 109 youth are in business. JESE equally conducted tracer studies for the graduates of the two projects (Green College initiative and Skill Up) where over 85% of the skilled youth were physically visited in their communities. A database for skilled youth has been established for further youth engagement, and reference in terms of post-training support, networking, and business linkages.
- A youth hub was established in Fort Portal tourism city. The hub provides a dedicated space for young people to gather, collaborate, and engage in sharing ideas that promote their personal and professional development. The space has empowered the youth through availing a platform to express their ideas, explore their interests, and contribute to their household and community development. Through this platform, many youths have acquired entrepreneurship and innovative skills for self-development. It also offers resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities for aspiring young entrepreneurs to start their own businesses or social enterprises. By nurturing young talent and creativity, youth hubs contribute to economic growth and social innovation within communities.
- Provided business mentorship programs to 184 (97 males and 87 females) youths selected in various trades, including; tailoring, hairdressing, carpentry & joinery, welding, and mechanics. The mentorship exercise was done by experts who are successful in different business occupations. This helped the youth to remain resilient, nurturing and guiding them into employment and free interaction within the work environment to help them gain confidence to operate in the communities they serve.

What we did to reach these achievements

The project team did a lot of youth profiling and follow-ups. This involved business site visits and joint monitoring with training providers and the local council leadership to explore ways of networking with the private sector and business linkages. Jese also established a youth hub as an incubation centre, business mentorship and coaching to create opportunities that empower them to turn their

innovative ideas into successful ventures. By leveraging on business networks, expertise of training socio enterprises and the private sector, youth were able to receive guidance, support and access to potential employers.

After profiling all the trained and skilled youth in their communities, the young men and women who were found engaged and practicing their respective trades (either employed or had started their own businesses) received tools and or machines to continue practicing based on acquired skills. The selection and distribution of starter kits to skilled graduate youths' approach was extended to institutions and artisans. This model empowered vulnerable skilled young adults to establish their own workshops for sustainable income generation. The beneficiaries of those tools are now able to produce various products and services demanded on the local market in their communities and beyond. Certainly, they have equally trained fellow youth in Identifying new stakeholders, building strategic partnerships and continue nurturing our current engagements with the view of growing the skills development, especially in digital and e-marketing innovations.

Starter kits were distributed to youth according to trade demands; youth skilled in Hairdressing were given a range of items including Hair dryers, saloon chairs, mirrors and beauty products. Those skilled in Tailoring received Sewing machines, Welders in small groups of 4s received welding plans, compressor machines and other assorted items. Carpenters received planning machines, hack saws, claw arms and assorted tools. All mechanics, plumbers and electricians received tool-kits for their respective works.

Where we failed and why?

Although the mentorship package was delivered to trainees, the time frame of 3 months was too short to deliver a sustainable program. It would have been better if the mentorship period had lasted for at least six months. This of course is a shortcoming on the project time frame that Jese alone has no control over.

Case story II: *My Heart Rocked with Excitement*

Mbabazi Beatrice from Rwimi town council, in Bunyangabu District is one of the beneficiaries from the JESE Youth skilling program. ***"I was born in a family with a very humble background. My family practices peasantry farming and we produce mainly for home consumption."*** Mbabazi shares. Among eight siblings, I was fortunate to test secondary education but only to senior 3 due to financial constraints. This forced me to drop out of school, though my dream was to become an Enrolled Nurse.

One afternoon as I was thinking how my life would turn out; I heard a radio announcement on Voice of Toro inviting youths to apply for a skilling program at Joint Efforts to Save the Environment (JESE).

" I went to the Community Development Officer at Rwimi Town Council to try my luck and I was among the lucky few to be admitted to the program for hairdressing." Mbabazi remarked.

The training was good, though I had to regularly go back home to check on my child. Jese and WHH were very thoughtful to us. We were given a daily lunch allowance during the training. With a dream to own a beauty shop, I saved up my lunch allowance that would in turn become starting capital immediately after the training.

Following assessment by the Directorate of Industrial Training, I was among the best and graduated. We were profiled and promised starter kits. While waiting for the kits to be delivered by Jese and WHH, I camped at my trainer's salon to gain additional skills and save more money to enable me to start my salon.

“ My heart rocked with excitement when a Jese Officer called to inform me that the kits were procured.” Said Mbabazi. The kits which included; a sitting dryer with its chair, a trolley, a mirror, and a sink were handed over to us at a colorful ceremony at Bunyangabu District.



Mbabazi in her salon in Rwimi Town Council

Being excited to start my salon where I would be my own boss was rather pleasing, though at the same time challenging as I would sit for long waiting to receive my first customer to serve. I received my first customer after two weeks and I have never looked back!

“ I can now pay for my rent conveniently and also provide for my personal needs and those of my child.”

Our contribution to Food Systems, Food security, incomes and Gender

It is urged that Uganda's Food systems are complex. They involve many actors and stakeholders, many of whom have an influence on how the system works to meet people's needs. These needs include; nutrition, income and how it meets the well-being of women, men, youth and children. What is told below is a story of how Jese in 2023 continued to interact with the food systems and the milestones that accrued.

Milestone VI: *Agro ecological transition and adoption of sustainable farming practices, marketing and market system.*

Context: The context in which the Agricultural and Enterprise development program is implemented relates to the wider framework of environmental degradation and unsustainable agricultural practices on the farm. Commercialisation of agriculture and the pressure to enter the money economy equally led to unsustainable farming systems, namely; mono-cropping and intensive use of agrochemicals. In the end, this significantly impacted the local food systems and severely impacted on the health of people and more so children. The latter are malnourished due to poor intake of micronutrients in their diets. Also inherent in the food system, are gender disparities among men and women that continue to impact positive changes that are urgently required.

In this reporting period, Jese worked with 1,250 farmers on agroecological transition and adoption of sustainable farming practices, marketing and market system strengthening, gender inclusion and participation of women, financial inclusion, nutrition and food security and evidence-based generation.

Milestone VII: *Working with Young Boys and Girls in Primary Schools*

Jese worked with 05 primary schools in Fort Portal City to create awareness on nutrition, safe food and environment. These primary schools include; Kahinju, Buhinga, Kagote, Nyakagongo and St. Peter and Paul. This intervention approach has been through working with school farming clubs with support of school patrons. The interventions directly influenced 552 members of school farming clubs, 4,454 other school pupils, 10 school patrons and other school teaching staff in the target 05 primary schools. It created opportunities to engage young boys and girls, patrons in the primary schools to ensure the school environment supports both health, wellbeing and learning about safe food production and consumption. This intervention has increased the children's nutrition knowledge, attitude and practices to optimise their healthy lifestyle by encouraging them to eat healthily and stay physically active, demonstrating practices for safe production and pupils' interaction and discussion on nutrition and safe foods through school gardening, debates and tree planting. Some pupils (51%) are cascading the information/knowledge at the household level – taking vegetable seedlings from the nurseries at schools to practice at their homes.



The initiative has created opportunities, especially in the revised government curriculum by linking the theory and practical lessons using the set demonstrations/school gardens. The science teachers are using the set school gardens to offer practical lessons.

Milestone VIII: *Working with Households towards Integration of Livestock.*



In 2023 Joint Effort to Save the Environment (Jese) under Mpanga Super Farmers Program (MSFP) worked with 450 households in Kicwamba to foster agro ecological transition at household level. The key highlight was the support towards integration of livestock by households into their farming systems. During the year, a total of 246 households were supported to realise this dream. The support focused on provision of small animals including goats, pigs, chicken and rabbits as well as the improvement/construction of animal structures for improved animal welfare and management on a zero grazing. Due to challenges of space for grazing and limited access to animal feeds, the program further supported these households to establish animal fodder around their farm through provision of seedlings for different fodder species including Napier and Calliandra.



The intervention created tremendous results at the household level. With good housing, farmers say they are finding it easy to manage the hygiene of their animals, and this comfort has led to increased farm productivity. The households say “it’s now easier to collect manure which is being used to improve soil fertility, ultimately leading to increased crop productivity for bananas and vegetables. The fodder plants are being used as livestock feeds, while chicken dough is used as mulches in the plantation (soil and water conservation). Overall, these two practices have built resilience of farms

and increased productivity. The farmers are able to easily access feeds for their animals because it's on the farm and the improved well managed soils are able to resist shocks of climate change.



Milestone IX: *Engagement of Family Farmers in Participatory Action Research (PAR).*

During the year, we embarked on the Participatory Action Research (PAR) process to generate evidence for advocacy to promote agroecology alongside building capacity of family farmers in research and problem solving. With technical support by a scientist from the National Agriculture Research Organisation (NARO), we were able to prioritise research topics and set up 10 trial gardens (05 for maize, and 05 for beans) to investigate the effect of organic manure (chicken manure) on crop yields. The results from the PAR trials showed a clear effect of chicken manure on the biomass and yield of maize and beans. The results triggered the family farmers and enticed them to embrace soil feeding practices. We realised increased appreciation of agroecology by family farmers, political leaders and technocrats in the area of operation. Notable, there is evidence of increased adoption to sustainable and diversified farming practices on the farm, production volumes and accelerated food security at household level.

In 2023, PAR was a great learning opportunity for family farmers. There was generation of practical knowledge and innovative solutions around bio rations and organic manure that has contributed to the promotion and scaling-up of agroecology as a transformative pathway towards sustainable agriculture. It also provided much- practical evidence for other stakeholders including the Sub County and District. PAR improved collaboration between the program and NARO due to the process support activities.

Milestone X: *Our Work on Horticulture with Refugees and the youths.*



Jese worked with refugee households in Kyaka II refugee settlement to improve incomes, food and nutrition security. Currently, Jese is engaging 1,200 refugee households in horticulture using the keyhole method.

Jese supported vulnerable youth in horticulture through urban farming to create employment for the youths, improving livelihoods and strengthening sustainable food systems. During the year in review, Jese supported 200 vulnerable youth in Fort Portal city to use small spaces in growing and management of horticultural products including sukuma wiki, onions, cabbages, spinach, zucchini, beetroot and amaranthus among others.

What we did to reach these achievements

Jese relentlessly;

- Increased linkages with government extension workers created leverage for interventions through provision of technical support especially during demonstrations. Their role and ownership are important since there are recommendations that require upscaling beyond our scope.
- The increased adoption of sustainable and diversified farming practices, along with effective post-harvest handling management made a significant contribution to increased food security at the household level.
- The intensification of livestock integration among farming households within the crop farming systems has been a game changer in agroecology transitioning.

Case Story III: Behind the Success of a Happy Farmer

Mr. Asaba Besweri is a 67-year-old Mpanga Super Farmers beneficiary whose current success is credited to the program interventions in Kicwamba Sub County. The program is funded by Iles De Paix and implemented by Joint Effort to Save the Environment. He is a member of Buhara B Bwato Farmers group, one of the 17 groups of MSFP in Kicwamba Sub County. He narrates his story on the current stride to improve His Agriculture.

“Before Jese came in, I had lost courage in my journey for agriculture. However, the program came in, it opened my eyes and encouraged me and now my farm has changed for the better.” Said Ashaba. Jese first worked on our mind-set change and before the technical training which has transformed me and other farmers. The trainings on VSLA, general agronomy for the different crops especially bananas and the continuous extension and support visits have helped me a lot to improve and transform my farm.

The program trained farmers on Integrated Farm Planning (IFP) approach where all the household members visualise and plan together. ***“Before, my household used not to plan for our farm but currently we plan together as a household and all the members contribute to the overall household plan. We even go ahead to implement the planned activities together.” He continues.*** The household plan encourages us daily to implement different activities pushing us for more day after day. I have now planned well for all my land which was not the case before.

The program trained us on the good agronomic practices for bananas which is the major food and cash crop in the area and took us for an exchange learning visit on the same. ***“Since then, I have been improving my banana plantation by adding manure which I compost, regular weeding, putting in the trenches, reducing the number of banana plants in the garden and removing corms.” Ashaba added.***

Production has greatly increased both quantitative and quality than ever before. ***“I am now planting varieties which are highly demanded on market and fetch better incomes”.*** I now have the local variety (kitika) of bananas (Matooke) but I am slowly changing to Kibuzi and Mutulya varieties. I have learned aspects of integration where I now integrate local bean varieties. I have also planted pastures on the trenches in the banana plantation which also help to conserve soil and water which works as mulches.

I am also improving my chicken house and have started on the project of guinea pigs. As a household, we used to buy vegetables on almost a daily basis but through my engagement in program activities, I have picked an interest in growing different indigenous varieties to promote diversity and good nutrition. Currently, I am growing over 15 different local varieties of vegetables and crops. ***“I have observed a lot of benefits with these varieties of high productive yields, disease resistant, drought tolerant, nutritional quality and taste. I am now being approached by other members of the community with high demands to access such varieties.”*** I now have enough vegetables to eat at home and we even sell the surplus to the market and this has enhanced household income.

The program also supported me with 13 bee hives on my farm. I am doing all this to ensure farm diversification and interaction of the different enterprises on the farm. I am now able to process honey by packing and started adding value to some vegetable products by processing it into powder form for increased shelf life.

The program has also trained us in the Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) methodology, where group members are able to save and borrow money on a weekly basis for household developmental projects. I have personally developed a saving culture just like other group members and now we save for a purpose. As a group, this has built the spirit of togetherness, where we share

knowledge and experiences on a wide range of farm management practices. We are now planning on how to start collective marketing of our products especially bananas to sell collectively and earn more income. We are doing this for the common good of and progress of everyone to minimise exploitation by middlemen.

“The regular monitoring by the Program officers has given us courage and morale to improve our farm, but also the program extension workers are always available when needed. Even other households that are not direct program beneficiaries are copying from us and replicating some of the practices on the farm.” Asaba concludes.

Case Story IV: Youth Empowerment through Urban Farming

Kihumuro Pius is a 22-year-old youth and a member of Mwibale ward in Fort Portal city staying with his grandfather. He joined Mpanga Super Farmers Program (MSFP) in 2022 after dropping out of school due to lack of school fees. Together with other youth, Pius was trained on the integrated Farm Planning approach under the program. Together with his household, they drew and finished their integrated farm plan which he presented during group training meetings for possible improvements. After fine-tuning the drawing of his plan, he embarked on implementation.



Pius tending his vegetable garden.

“After the training, I used part of the money which had been given to me as transport refund to buy vegetable seeds since they were cheap and affordable June 2023. I grew vegetables, harvested, sold to the neighbours and earned UGX 100,000 by the end of the season.” Pius Shares. Some vegetables were eaten by the household which provided a cheap source of food to supplement bananas from an already existing plantation.

“I used the money from the sales of vegetables to buy a pair of rabbits at UGX. 20,000, other vegetable seeds (carrots, spinach and Sukuma wiki) and to construct a simple structure for my rabbits using locally available materials”. The rabbits kept on producing, and I sold 20 rabbits at UGX 400,000 and bought 2 goats and three ducks. Through this program, my farm has been diversified with rabbits, goats, chicken and vegetables which was not the case before.

The program has supported me to construct improved structures for goats, rabbits as well as providing me with a water tank for water harvesting and a shed net for constructing a greenhouse to enable continuous production of his vegetables. This has facilitated easy manure collection from the goats and rabbit unit as well as continuous vegetable production for income generation. ***“I am currently earning an average of UGX. 20,000 from sales of vegetables per day. On average, I also sell 10 young rabbits for UGX. 100,000 per month.” He continues.*** The IFP approach has in the shortest time helped us to build a strong bond, good commitment and collaboration as a family in the implementation of the plan.



Pius with his goats in the shed.

The goats, ducks and rabbits are already providing manure to be applied in the vegetable gardens and vegetable leaves are being fed to rabbits. The integration on farm has enabled sustainable farm production, contributing to food security and increasing incomes. The use of manure has reduced costs of production by saving money which would have been spent on buying inputs to enhance soil fertility to meeting other family social needs. I have been exposed to new and better innovations through the exchange learnings and other exhibitions. This has inspired me and other youths supported under this program. As a family we are very grateful to Jese and IDP for material support and regular advisory services given which has and continuing to change their lives.

Our contribution to safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Practices

Strategic area contribution: **Equitable access & use of safe water, sanitation and hygiene services-**

Milestone XI: *Optimising water, sanitation and Hygiene Initiatives for enhanced learning outcomes: Exploring the impact of WASH and Learn 3.0 on educational environments in Bunyangabu District.*

Context: In 2023, Jese continued to facilitate communities in Agago, Bunyangabu and Kitagwenda districts to improve access to inclusive water, sanitation and hygiene services. In these rural districts, access to clean water, adequate sanitation facilities, and hygiene education have long been critical components of community health and development. However, despite concerted efforts to improve WASH infrastructure and practices, significant challenges persist, particularly within institutions such as schools and healthcare facilities.

These communities, like many rural areas in Uganda, face multifaceted obstacles in ensuring access to safe water, hygienic sanitation facilities, and comprehensive hygiene education in schools. Limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and competing priorities often hinder progress in WASH initiatives. In primary schools particularly, students frequently encounter unsanitary conditions that compromise their health and impede their ability to fully engage in the learning process.



Hand washing is among the key milestones that the project achieved for all school children in the areas where W&L 3.0 was implemented.

Against this backdrop, Jese implemented 3 WASH programs in 2023 including WASH and Learn in Bunyangabu district, the WASH SDG Innovation Fund in 4 health centers in Agago District, the WASH SDG program in Agago District and the Protection and Conservation of Water Resources (PCWR) project in Kitagwenda District that aimed at addressing these critical WASH challenges. These Jese programs embraced the introduction of innovative and inclusive WASH technologies, community engagement strategies, and evidence-based interventions to enhance effectiveness and sustainability of WASH initiatives at institutions and community levels.

Key achievements

In this Financial Year 2023, Jese improved access to and use of WASH facilities for 9,350 pupils and teachers in 6 primary schools, enhanced access to WASH services in 10 health centers in Agago District (benefiting over 1,200 in and out-patients) as well as improved access to water and sanitation services to 11,550 members of the community in Kitagwenda and Bunyangabu Districts. This was achieved by constructing VIP emptyable latrine facilities for the female pupils with provisions of bathrooms aimed at supporting them manage their menstrual health in a dignified manner. Certainly, the intervention improved retention rate of the girl children in schools, rehabilitation of 6 community point water sources and extension of piped water in 9 communities.

Additionally, we registered improved knowledge and attitude for 17,000 community members, 9,350 pupils and teachers on desirable hygiene practices and environmental sanitation, through our community WASH awareness and extension approaches. Jese trained household cluster leaders, sanitation champions, Village Health Team members, school health clubs, health Unit Management Committees and local council leaders in basic principles of inclusive WASH promotion.

To integrate WASH and environmental sustainability, Jese facilitated communities in Kamrono and Geregere in Agago district to establish community woodlots to support the regeneration of the green cover. In Geregere, Jese in collaboration with Agago District LG supported the community to establish and manage 2.5 kilometers of flood control trenches which greatly enhanced control of flood that were hitherto destroying both crops and household property.

In 2023, Menstrual Health Management (MHM) and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) education continued to be a priority in the targeted schools and communities. A total of over 8,100 young girls and boys from 16 primary schools in Agago and Bunyangabu districts were trained in MHM and SRHR. Hands-on trainings in the making of reusable menstrual pads was also provided to learners in supported schools during the 2023 implementation period. Jese played an integral role in cascading out of school girls and Women in MHM training manual. At school level, Jese supported the school senior teachers to sensitise the girls that within the menstrual cycle years to understand more about menstrual health. This was aimed at fighting stigma among young adolescents.



RWHT connection to active Gravity Flow Scheme at Karungaya Primary School.

In the 2023 community sanitation interventions, Jese using her community extension approaches like community led total sanitation (CLTS) facilitated 16 villages to attain open defecation-free status as assessed and declared by the respective district health departments. Over 516 households moved up in the sanitation ladders from un-improved/ no latrine to improved latrine status. Further support was also towards improved access to clean and safe water facilities with in the communities of service, in the districts of Bunyangabu, Kitagwenda, Kamwenge and Agago. Under this initiative, Jese capitalised on either making major repairs of already existing water point sources or investing in rain water harvesting technologies at both institution and community levels.

What did we do?

Jese built the capacity of school management, parents and student leaders from 16 primary schools in cost recovery planning (CRP) and risk assessment (RA). Cost recovery planning is a process where stakeholders undertake to analyse operation and maintenance costs of a WASH investment as well as potential incomes sources to meet those costs. When applied by the stakeholders the cost recovery planning tool helps them identify the costs and revenue from a WASH investment as well as maintaining and sustaining it and the gap between the two. In each of the primary schools, a CRP/ RA plan was developed and is being used as a tool to realise funding for WASH needs.

Jese supported Karugaya primary school to connect a 1,500-liter Rainwater Harvesting Tank to the gravity follow scheme. This extension of piped water into the school compound gave an increase

of 7500 liters of safe water to the school every week. Meaning that whether it is the dry season or

rainy season, the school can still have access to clean water for drinking by children, teachers and the surrounding community.

At the community level, Jese supported Kateebwa 1 village to rehabilitate 4 protected spring water point sources. Each of the rehabilitated water points provides access to over 30 households with an estimated 5 people in her household. This translates into over 600 people having access to clean water daily. On average, if each person uses 15 liters of water daily, it then means that the 4 water points that were rehabilitated are in position to provide at least 9,000 liters of safe water to the local population on a daily basis.

At Kinyampanika primary school, Jese finalized the construction of the RWHT and established the talking walls of the RWHT with WASH messages. The talking walls aim at further sensitising the community and all water users to safe water usage to avoid water -related disease.

At Bunoiga P/S, Jese facilitated construction of two eco-san units that are providing access to inclusive and environmentally friendly sanitation service to 650 pupils and teachers combined. In Kamrono model village and Geregere community, Jese constructed 14 demo flood resistant latrines to facilitate the community's adoption to affordable and sustainable household latrine technologies. As a result, 25 households have adopted and constructed the flood -resistant latrines on their own.

With the active participation of community members, we were able to attain Open Defecation Free Status in 16 villages in Bunyangabu and Agago districts.



Masika protected spring in Kateebwa 1 village, Kateebwa Sub County, Bunyangabu District.

Where did we fail and why?

Sustaining ODF status is still a challenge especially for communities in Agago district that are prone to flooding during episodes of heavy rains that wash away constructed latrines. In many schools prioritising Menstrual Hygiene Management is still a big challenge and thus despite our efforts in this front. Schools do not have adequate budget from universal Primary education (UPE) grants to

support MHM plans developed in the schools.



Case study II: “Shaping a Hygienic Environment: A Case Study of Kinyampanika Primary School in Bunyangabu District”

Overview

This case study examines the transformation of sanitation and hygiene practices at Kinyampanika Primary School. Through proactive measures such as the construction of latrine facilities, handwashing stations, woodlot establishment, hygiene education programs, and school community involvement, the school has successfully fostered a clean and healthy environment for its students. The case study underscores the pivotal role of local partnerships and sustainable infrastructure in promoting hygiene and well-being in educational settings.

Situated in Bukara Sub County, Bunyangabu District, the school serves as a cornerstone of education for the rural community in Bukara. Despite its dedication to imparting knowledge and skills to learners, the school faced challenges in maintaining adequate sanitation and hygiene standards, which negatively impacted student’s health and well-being. With financial support from SIMAVI, Jese used a holistic approach through collaboration with local stakeholders to implement sustainable projects addressing societal needs, especially in line with poor sanitation and hygiene. In partnership with local authorities and community members, Jese played a critical role in fostering measures for adoption of better hygiene and sanitation practices for a cleaner and healthier environment.

Purpose of project

Through the WASH and Learn project, Jese in collaboration with the school administration and management committees worked to address the pressing challenge of inadequate sanitation and hygiene facilities, which hindered student well-being and academic performance. By integrating Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) interventions, the project sought to instill lifelong hygiene habits among students while improving access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities. Other project objectives were; to promote handwashing practices, construct functional latrines, and create awareness about the importance of good sanitation and hygiene. Ultimately, the project strived to create a conducive learning environment that prioritises the health and dignity of students, empowering them to thrive academically and socially.

Description of the project

The SIMAVI supported project was implemented from 2019 to 2023, targeting six schools in Bunyangabu District, notably Kinyampanika, Kateebwa sc; Karugaya, Kateebwa SDA, Butyooka SDA, Bunaiga PS and Bukara Primary school. It aimed to improve Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) practices. Project target participants included; school administrators, health club members, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA), School Management Committee members, district, sub-county officials, and parents. The project’s major funding came from SIMAVI, with additional support from local school contributions through cost recovery plans, ensuring sustainability and community ownership of WASH interventions. Through infrastructure development, hygiene education, and community engagement, the project fostered a healthier environment for learning and growth.

Why the approach was taken?

The WASH and Learn project was designed to address the pressing need to improve Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) practices in schools and communities within Bunyangabu District, aligning with evidence-based approaches to enhance student health and better learning outcomes. Drawing on theories of change, emphasis on the importance of community involvement and sustainable infrastructure development, the project engaged various stakeholders, including school administrators, parents, and local officials, to ensure holistic implementation and intervention sustainability. Additionally, the incorporation of cost recovery plans leveraged local resources, promoting ownership and accountability among beneficiaries. By integrating evidence-based strategies with community-driven approaches, the project aimed to create lasting positive change in WASH practices within the target schools and communities.

Who took part?

The project engaged various stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members, totaling approximately to 500 individuals in Kinyampanika Primary School alone. Their motives for participation varied, with some driven by a desire to improve the health and well-being of students, community development goals, and seeking to address specific sanitation and hygiene challenges within their schools and communities. The parents of the school children had long endeavored to construct a suitable latrine facility, yet faced had little funds to meet this cost. Upon Jese intervention, their enthusiasm for participation surged. Previously, the sole existing latrine block comprising three stances, served 900 pupils, underscoring the pressing need for community involvement and highlighting the significance of the project.

How was data collected for this case study?

At the end of the three and a half years of implementation, the WASH and Learn Project underwent evaluation, with data collected to assess its effectiveness. An external consultant from Makerere University's Department of Research conducted the evaluation. Data collected included quantitative and qualitative information on changes in sanitation and hygiene practices, infrastructure improvements, and community perceptions. Through surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. The consultant analysed the project's outcomes. Ultimately, the evaluation determined that the project achieved its intended objectives by 87%, indicating its significant impact on improving WASH practices in the target schools and communities.

Project impact and outcomes

The WASH and Learn project brought out significant changes and positive impacts across various stakeholders. Participants, including school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members, have reported improved sanitation and hygiene practices, leading to better health outcomes and a better learning environment. The wider community benefited from increased awareness and access to clean water and sanitation facilities, contributing to overall public health improvements. For Jese, the project demonstrated our capacity to effectively implement community-driven initiatives, fostering partnerships and promoting sustainable development.

While the project primarily yielded positive outcomes, some unexpected challenges such as logistical constraints and resistance to behavioural change were encountered. Additionally, negative outcomes, such as initial scepticism or resistance from certain community members, were addressed through ongoing engagement and education efforts. Overall, the positivity of this project impact has been overwhelmingly transformative to community participants and created a potential for collaborative WASH interventions in the future.

Enablers and barriers

The WASH and Learn project flourished due to several key factors. Firstly, stable funding from SIMAVI provided the project with the financial resources necessary for its implementation, ensuring consistent progress and impact realisation. This stable funding enabled the procurement of essential supplies, the hiring of qualified staff, service providers and the timely execution of various interventions aimed at improving water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices.

Additionally, local contributions by schools through cost recovery plans reinforced the project's sustainability alongside community engagements. By involving schools in financial contributions, the project has fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility within the community, leading to increased participation and support for WASH initiatives. These contributions not only supplemented external funding but also demonstrated a commitment to the project's long-term success.

However, despite these supportive factors, several challenges hindered the project from reaching its full potential. One such challenge was fluctuation of the Uganda shilling against the dollar, a currency through which funding was valued.

Additionally, while local contributions from schools have been beneficial, there may be limitations to their financial capacity or willingness to sustain these contributions in the long term. Economic constraints or competing priorities within schools could undermine the effectiveness of the cost recovery plan, affecting the project's sustainability and scalability.

Key learning

The most important lesson learned from the WASH and Learn project is the significance of sustainable funding and community engagement. Ensuring stable financial support and actively involving local communities, such as cost recovery plans, are crucial for long-term success and impact.

For others starting a similar project, our key advice would be:

- Prioritise securing stable funding sources to ensure continuity and effectiveness of project interventions.
- Engage with local communities from the project's inception, involving them in decision-making processes and empowering them to take ownership of project initiatives.
- Adapt project interventions to suit the specific needs, culture, and context of the target community, ensuring relevance and effectiveness.
- Collaborate with local organisations, government agencies, and other stakeholders to leverage resources, expertise, and networks for greater impact.
- Implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, identify challenges, and make informed decisions for continuous improvement.

Next steps and sustainability

The project's sustainability hinges on several factors, including; ongoing funding, community involvement, and institutional support. Continued financial backing, especially the implementation of the Cost recovery plan will enable the schools to have a sustainable revenue source to cater for WASH facilities and services.

Strategic Partnerships and coordination

Jese in 2023 galvanised its relationship with the Mountains of the Moon University. While this relationship took some time, it was finally sealing with signing of a partnership agreement for the University to support Jese in delivering the Research and Knowledge agenda under the PCWR Program. In this same year, Jese and MMU entered in partnership together with IHE to deliver research agendas on agroecology and climate resilience.



Photo: Jese, Join for Water, NRDl and MMU staff after a meeting at JESE offices.

Institutional and Capacity Development

Funding: New funding was available from the following organisations; Forest of the World-DGBP, IHE, WHH (Green Colleges Expansion project, Fill Nutrition Gap Project in Kyaka funded by CARE, Common Ground project funded by ISSD, BRIGHT project funded by IFDC, HWG and Restore Africa Funded by CARE/CRS. The total value of these and others is included in the financial report.

Staffing: In this reporting period, the number of Jese technical staff reached **60 Staff members** deployed in the different areas of our work. This team has grown from **50 members of staff** in 2022. The increase in the number of staff was attributed to fundraising efforts under the AED and WASH Department both of which brought on board 9 staff and 1 engineer was added on the Natural resources team. These new programs also came along with new capacity building areas through which all the new staff were trained and deployed. Additional training was also provided to 02 Jese staff as national master trainers on RHR and MHM under the WASH Program.

Jese Investments namely; JEFACO and Makoroigo - Umoja Eco-Farm: The installation of the coffee huller at Jefaco was completed by the government of Uganda through the local government of Kyenjojo. Coffee processing is expected to start in 2024. The Umoja Eco-Farm at Makoroigo continues to go through natural regeneration and rehabilitation of the coffee system on the farm.



Motor vehicles and machinery: During the year in review, Jese acquired a vehicle (Prado TX) for Green College Expansion project, 1 New pickup double cabin and 1 New Photocopying machine.

Major setbacks experienced in 2023

- The rebel insurgencies in the neighbouring areas of Kibale National Park interfered with most of Jese's programs and activities in Kamwenge, Kitagwenda and Kyenjojo. Strict security guidelines had to be followed and adhered to. Often, we were required to inform security about all our community activities in these districts and also not to go beyond 5pm.
- Reduction in crop prices due to bumper harvest led to a reduction in the farmers' incomes. The price of maize per kilo dropped from Ush 1500 to Ush 500 per kilo. Generally, the drop in the vanilla prices per kilo was a huge setback to vanilla farmers as well. Vanilla prices dropped from an average of Ush 40,000 per Kilo in 2022 to Ush 6000 per kilo in 2023. The vanilla market in Uganda is hugely dependent on the supply or scarcity of Madagascar vanilla on the world market. Equally, global inflation impacted global buyers, some of whom pulled out of the market to save their capital and these included buyers that had been contacted by Jese.
- For our skills development program, youths are often discouraged to work with acquired skills due to lack of start-up kits and lack of financing.
- Poor Quality products on the market; more often than not, materials that they need to start their business on the market are of poor quality which impact products they produce.

Lesson Learnt

- The increased adoption of sustainable and diversified farming practices, along with effective post-harvest handling by program beneficiaries has contributed much to increased food security at household level.
- Linkage with government extension workers creates leverage for the program through provision of technical support especially on demonstrations. Their role and ownership are important since there are recommendations that require upscaling beyond the program target areas.
- With the government withdrawal of extension service grants, the direct involvement of government extension workers will go a long way in making these services available to farmers. This will certainly further improve program sustainability.
- There is a need to intensify households' involvement in animal integration. Due to limited incomes and prioritisation, the majority of the households focus much on crops yet integration of animals in the farming systems is important in agroecology transition.

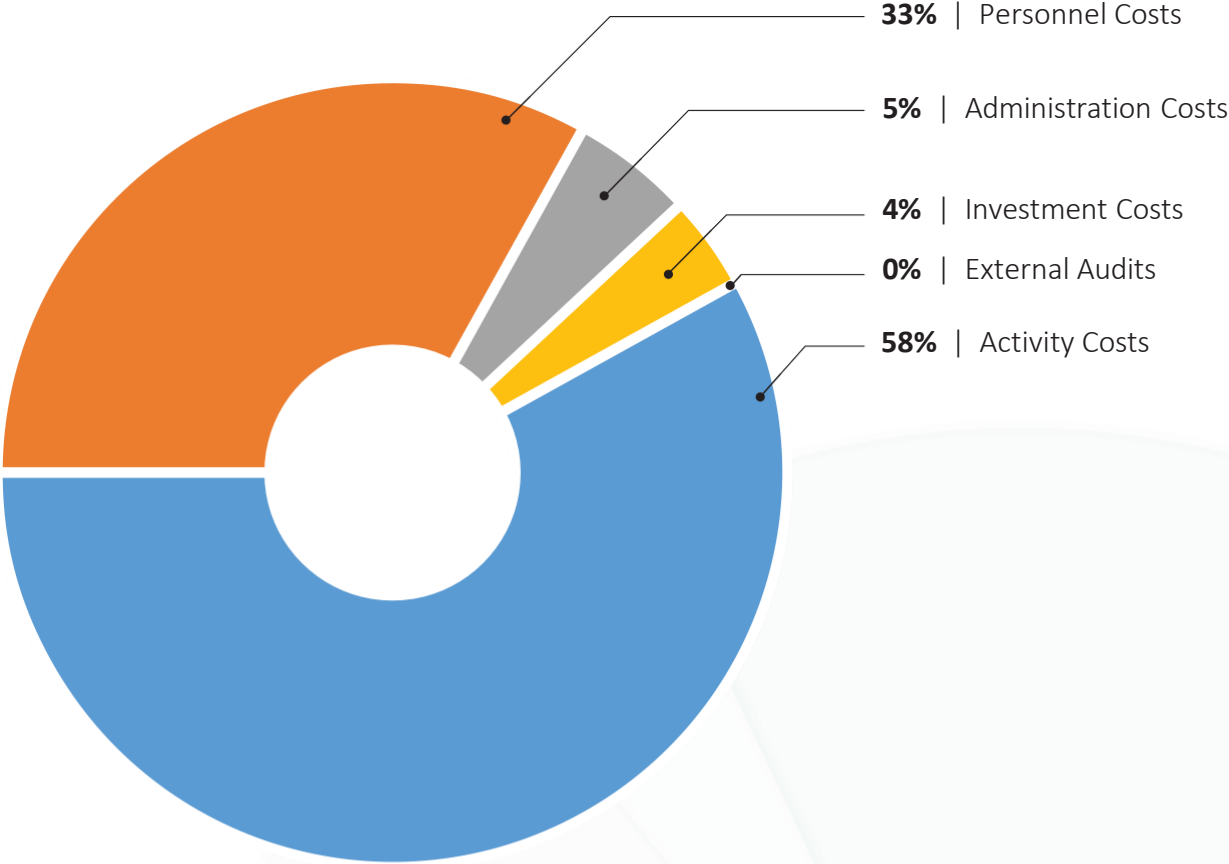
Financial Summary

In the financial year 2023, we realised a total operational budget of Ushs 7,222,945,276 from Ushs 6,087,971,317 in 2022. A total of Ushs 6,894,136,183 was mobilised from our partners/funders and Ushs 328,809,093 was balance carried forward from 2022.

FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT
WELT HUNGER HILFE	1,433,907,025
CARE INTERNATIONAL IN UGANDA	1,205,698,698
FORESTS OF THE WORLD	1,083,976,261
IDP	752,440,050
JOIN FOR WATER	774,924,195
BD	335,500,135
SIMAVI	345,225,459
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER - BIOGAS	382,157,739
ISSD	230,465,931
OXFAM	163,805,905
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER - TREE PLANTING	57,761,557
IFDC	69,742,037
OWN FUNDS	58,531,191
TOTAL FUND RECEIVED	6,894,136,183
OPENING BALANCE 2022	328,809,093
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	7,222,945,276

Expenditure in 2023

Below, is a graphical highlight of our expenditure in 2023



Jese Team



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RUGUMAYO Godfrey - Deputy ED/Head of Department, Water and Sanitation

AKIDI Shalom

ANGUMYE Rebecca

OKULU Haron

TWESIGE Jude

ALITUHA Richard

AMANYA William - Head of Department, Agriculture and Enterprise Development

KUGONZA Fred

MURUNGI Samuel

TUMUSIIME Collin

KOBUGABE Consulate

MWESIGWA Dennis - Project Coordinator

MWANGUHYA Sam

KIIZA Felix - Program Officer

KUGONZA Keneth

NUWAGABA Rogers

MWEBEMBEZI Alex

TWINOMUGISHA Lucky

NAMARA Esther - *Project Officer*

KENTE Catherine - *Project Officer*

MUGORE Ritah - *Project Officer*

KAGABA Julius - *Project Officer*

ORISHABA Davis - *Project Officer*

KISEMBO Timothy - *Project Officer*

BWAMBALE Godwin - *Project Officer*

NUWAHABWE Caleb - *Project Officer*

KICONCO Prima - *Project Officer*

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NYESIGAMUKAMA Alex - *Training Fund Coordinator*

TUSIIME Kate - *VSLA and Entrepreneurship Coordinator*

Wamara Bright Raymond-*Project Coordinator Skill Up!*

Karungi Phiona - *Project Officer*

Baguma Derrick - *Project Officer*

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KATURAMU Sandra-*Accountant*

KIMARA Betty - *Admin*

KIIZA Stuart - *Driver*

MUGGA Billy - *Driver*

MUGAMBWA Keneth - *Driver*

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SAGULA Festo-MEAL - *Officer*

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NYAKOOJO Sam - *Program Manager - Forest Program*

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MUTEGEKI Cyprian - *Program Officer*

TUSUBIRA Faith - *Program Officer*

MUGISA Gabriel - *Program Officer*

Board Members



Mrs. Grace **WAAKO KATURAMU**
Chairperson



Ms. Ellen K. **BAJENJA**
Vice Chairperson



MUGUME Sam Koojo (Phd)
Member



Mr. KATURAMU Albert NYAKAHUMA
Member



Ms. TUHAIRWE Gertrude
Member



Mr. MAGEZI Charles
Member



Ms. KABAKAMA Jane
Treasurer



Mr. MUBIRU Vincent
Member

Appreciation

Jese wishes to thank all the development partners who financially enabled us to implement our program interventions in 2023.

We are grateful for the good working relations with the Local Governments of; Kabarole, Bunyangabu, Buliisa, Agago, Buliisa, Hoima, Kikuube, Kamwenge, Kyenjojo and Kyegegwa and the involvement of the Local Government technical staff in the planning, implementation and ensuring that there is quality assurance of the interventions throughout 2023.





Jese staff after a meeting with WHH Country Director, Kristian in Kampala.

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