

BLOG POST!

Knowledge-sharing workshop in Kampala, Uganda: Locally-led climate change solutions by Cities Alliance partners

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Urbanisation and climate change

More than half the world's population today live in cities leading to an increase in the rate of urbanization. Population pressures subsequently cause urban centers to grow upwards and outwards, causing residents to seek affordable housing on increasingly inadequate land. This has resulted in developing informal settlements now home to multitudes in cities. As a result, residents are forced to settle near ecologically sensitive areas, public lands, riparian reserves, and railway reserves. Most informal settlements are on ecologically fragile land (riparian reserves), making the residents vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Climate change is a high-level discussion, often secluding the grassroots levels. The climate agenda is often biased toward rural-agricultural areas, yet urban experiences more effects, including; urban heat island effect, industrial and transport-related pollution, poor solid waste management, declining and polluted river riparian, and rising level of water bodies.

Knowledge sharing workshop

As a result, Cities Alliance partners organized a knowledge-sharing workshop in Kampala from the 27th to the 29th of September 2022. The workshop brought together community activists, practitioners, government officials, and experts in support of East African women and youth on effectively preparing for climate change impacts in informal settlements while improving livelihoods and strengthening local resilience for all.



Climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies by the Cities Alliance partners will aid in saving the future from the adverse climate change effects hence the need for financing locally-led climate change innovative solutions in urban areas. Some organizations supporting these initiatives in various African countries include Slum Dwellers International (SDI), Tree Adoption Uganda, AVSI, Hope Raisers Kenya, Spatial Collective, and Habitat for Humanity.

The three-day Cities Alliance workshop brought in rich, innovative information on climate change resilience by various organizations, including;

Earn as you learn model

The Earn as you Learn model in Uganda and Rwanda by AVSI is an apprenticeship model through which young people, especially the youth, generate their startup capital. Youth get the opportunity to learn the jobs related to smart agriculture to mitigate climate change by ensuring enough food supply. AVSI provides youth with the opportunity to earn as they learn different agricultural practices. It is quite evident that most youths are yet to fully explore the available opportunities around agriculture hence the need to change their mindset. The Earn as you learn model gives young people the opportunity to make money.

Digital story-telling

Hope Raiser's Kenya is a youth-based organization focusing on triggering conversations and understanding the community's perceptions of climate change. They use different art forms, such as paintings, murals, graffiti, etc., to advocate for community social change and design their city. According to Elizabeth, "Hope Raisers amplifies community voices for sustainable climate adaptation through digital storytelling. Through the Future Yetu Project, we seek to position digital storytelling as a simple and creative way for dialogue between community members and local government."

Evidence-based tree planting

Tree Adoption Uganda is also doing a commendable job on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as they major a lot in tree planting and adoption. To maintain this, they have developed an online application known as Tree Adoption Uganda to ensure there is evidence-based tree planting. Whenever they give seedlings for tree planting, they organize follow-ups as the APP has the GeoPoint location, the seedling picture, and the farmer's name. They monitor growth progress for two years to ensure that the trees don't get destroyed or uprooted. So far, Tree Adoption Uganda has planted over 200,675 indigenous trees in Uganda by 310 planters from different countries. They have so far planted 760 tree species.

Bio-fil Sewer system

Uganda and Tanzania use the bio-toilet sewer system. Due to the high water table, the system has enabled them to dig shallow toilets. The residents, therefore, use worms that convert excretion to the soil to be used by the community. The use of worms has helped reduce the contamination of the high water table. Slum Dwellers International-Uganda noted that they imported the first worms from South Africa. Since then, they are currently farming the worms and giving them out to residents with the bio-fil sewer system. The number of worms to be given per household depends on the household size; the greater the household size, the higher the number of worms to be given. This has been implemented in Kinawataka and Kosokoso informal settlements in Uganda.

Primary school climate champions

As a sustainable intervention, Uganda has established primary school climate champions and developed ten information education communication materials currently being used in schools. Furthermore, schools are encouraged to form environmental clubs to incorporate environmental education into their practices. This has been done mainly in schools in wetlands and informal settlements in Uganda, which are more vulnerable to climate change effects.

Ecosystem-based adaptation planning

Muungano wa wanavijiji and Slum Dwellers International-Kenya are currently working on the ecosystem adaptation planning in Mathare and Nairobi River, an informal settlement in Kenya. 52 groups along the river ecosystem have already been profiled, i.e., there are 21 groups located along the Nairobi River and 31 along Mathare River that are working to revitalize the river ecosystem through; Waste collection, segregation, and recycling, Urban agriculture, Rehabilitation of public spaces and Ecosystem greening. Active engagement in the above activities depicts the need to have these groups as our climate change champions.

The delegates visited three groups involved in climate-related activities in Kisinye and Bwaise informal settlements, to wrap up the knowledge-sharing workshop.

Plastic recycling



The delegates visited the Kamukamu Savings Group in Kisinye. The group comprises 40 members, and 10 of them are women. Delegates learned how the group sells plastics appropriate companies. The group is well established as it currently purchases plastic from the young people living in the settlement, enabling them to earn some money. They have rented space inside the settlement to store plastics owing to the numerous plastics they receive daily. The group also carries out urban farming.

Briquette making

In Bwaise informal settlement, we visited two groups, i.e., Baliseka Madda and Kyosimba Onaanya engaging in briquette making. It was interesting to see how the groups currently use an electrical and a manual machine to make briquettes. Members pointed out that using an electrical machine makes briquettes faster; and are able to dry out quicker. However, one issue stated was a lack of funds to purchase an electrical machine, so they had to borrow one from a nearby group.



In conclusion, the knowledge-sharing workshop was one of a kind. More can be organized often while looking to increase strides in addressing climate change through information. Knowledge sharing provides opportunity among various countries, organizations, groups, and individuals to cross-learn and encourage replication of best practices. In addition, countries should put emphasis on climate change financing and ensure these funds trickle down to the grassroots levels for easy accessibility by the groups undertaking positive climate actions.