

# LEARNING AND EMBRANCING THE REWARDS OF SOIL AND WATER TESTING AMONG FARMING SYSTEMS IN KASEJJERE VILLAGE



**PROFESSOR LEADING STUDENTS FROM COLOMBIA UNIVERSITY WITH KEA STAFF**

Local soil testing, is not available in most rural areas of Uganda, Kikandwa Environmental Association, A Growing Culture (AGC) and Colombia University bridges the gap of soil and water testing and soil testing by analyzes the use of organic and inorganic fertilizers in production of health foods. The use of inorganic fertilizers is seen the biggest hurdle for successful farming in Uganda.

The majority of the farmers in Kasejjere Village use minimal inorganic fertilizers, because of its prohibitive costs. Vital to our goal as Kikandwa Community was to produce health foods, educate farmers on the benefits of organic fertilizers, share knowledge from one generation to generation of crop growth and care for soils and environment.

In March 2017, group 3 students from Colombia University USA, and professor in partnership with community of Kikandwa recently travelled to Uganda, to carry out research on how crops can grow best in different soils that will help farmers to grow right crops, in time to answer the biggest challenge of hunger and poverty. The time was spent involving farmers field tests on soil and water PH, getting to experience the day-to-day life farming systems.

This unique programme allowed students from the University of Colombia, an opportunity to be immersed in the every daily life of our host communities in the developing of agricultural systems in Kasejjere Village. We got to experience what it are like to be a young person and their parents passing on knowledge from one generation to another generation. The community got to live the culture, the customs, witness the problems and was awarded the opportunity to interact



**SOIL TESTING AT KESEJJERE VILLAGE, KIKANDWA SUBCOUNTY IN UGANDA**

with local people in a very reliable and real way. We went to learn and for them to learn from us.

Throughout the community activities in the community, 15 farmer fields were visited to test the acidity, alkalinity and water moisture of the soil that support plant growth and having access to clean water and sanitary conditions bring health food to the farmer.. Many farmers were completely amazed by the work done on their fields. The farmers had rich knowledge on how their determine soil fertility, many farmers would grow different crops on the peace of land. The crop that would not do well the soils were left to rest for seasons to generate the fertility. The



common practice is mixed cropping; cereals like maize, sorghum, coffee, and banana were grown along with leguminous crops like beans, soya, etc. Terracing, mulching, agroforestry, green manuring, were some of the key activities on the farmers' fields this was such a brilliant experience with farmers

Many house families have received training in farming from the organization and saw how a little help in the right direction and how learning from one another, they have become self-sufficient and access to clean water. The community hard access to three clean water sources, mostly was used for domestic use since could take a farmer to walk about 10m- 2km to collect water in jerry cans that would cost a farmer to irrigate.



We had to walk through hills and forest – alone, unsupervised and guided by the professor on the water tests, it was found there was no siltation in the wells and was water contained no industrial chemicals, the students recommended the community continue boiling water since there were no bacterial tests taken.



It was really a unique opportunity to see how these communities live in contrast to our lives in US. They made every one of us feel welcome and accepted. What was interesting was that we learnt the same stuff just in very different ways. Saying goodbye was truly a difficult task. It's impossible to imagine the bonds we would create with these people in such a short space of time.

It took a lot of work for this project to happen and we'd like to thank everyone in the here today who helped make it a possibility. The university works with grass root communities and NGOs in USA. However, as a result of the very generous support we received during the visit to the community, the will continue with their water improvement and soil water tests mission in Kasejjere village

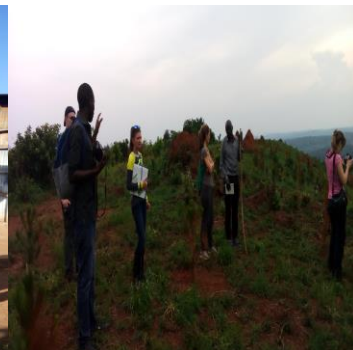
Because exceeded target, we could not be able to do a lot more KEA staff and few trained farmers were trained to use kits and other tests materials donated to the organization , protecting 3 wells as well as training three water user committees in continue improve water and sanitation for targeted village, and to train farming households on sustainable agriculture.

When we were there, we saw how simple measures to do with farming and water can make an enormous difference to the day-to-day lives of so many.



The students donated gifts to school something that rarely ever happens – to sharing stories about our own lives; we truly gained knowledge and an understanding about the community. The students were extremely warm and welcoming and put on a stunning performance demonstrating song, dance and culture. The children, aged between 5 and 12 were very forthcoming and friendly and were clearly very excited to see white people at their school

The longer we were there, the more obvious the problems became. However despite the difficulties people in Uganda face on a daily basis, the entire group of us from US were overwhelmed, shocked and even upset at the sheer happiness of every single person we met. There was no complaining, no jealousy, no bitterness, and no anger. Just happiness; everywhere we went. We were made feel so welcome



**Thank you again for all the support we receive from our donors through Global Giving #communityinnovationresourcecenter project (11176) and Help us build our school**