

ACCELERATING RESTORATION ACTION THROUGH YOUTH AND WOMEN

WEBINAR SUMMARY REPORT



October 26, 2022

WEBINAR PARTNERS



KEY MESSAGES

- Restoration through youth, children, and women will ensure its sustainability.
- Policies that support the effective participation of youth and women (including older women) in decision-making around restoration and environmental governance in general at community and county levels are required. This will require, for example, their empowerment to understand planning processes and policy documents.
- Nature-based livelihood opportunities for economic empowerment, such as ecotourism, fish farming, tree nurseries operation, aloe vera value addition, beekeeping, etc., are essential to promote the participation of youth and women in restoration.
- The land tenure system must be strengthened to enhance women's and youth's access to and ownership of land.
- The engagement of youth and children in restoration requires Innovative approaches such as sports, art, clubs and competitions.
- Capacity building is necessary to engage youth, children and women in restoration. This requires the provision of age, gender and culturally appropriate training materials.

BACKGROUND

The inclusion of youth and women in restoration has been widely recognized as critical to the restoration movement, consequently, widespread calls for all actors in the restoration space to ensure their engagement/involvement. This webinar will therefore focus on showcasing models and approaches for their inclusion. It further explored how children can also be included as a means of contributing to raising the next generation of restoration champions. It also sought to address some challenges to their inclusion, specifically inadequate awareness, education, and capacity to engage in restoration.

The Accelerating Restoration Action through Youth and Women webinar was therefore organized to:

- Showcase the work of the youth and women inclusion in restoration action group and lessons learned from youth, children, and women engagement. This will involve showcasing models or approaches for youth and women's inclusion in restoration efforts.
- Explore opportunities for supporting the inclusion of children in restoration efforts, e.g., environmental clubs and wildlife clubs, etc., through influencing their curricula and capacity strengthening etc.
- Launch the youth and women in the restoration network.
- Launch the capacity strengthening programme for the youth, women, and faith actors involved in restoration.

The target audience for the webinar was all actors in the restoration space, that is, youth, women, faith actors, private sector actors, government agencies implementing restoration efforts, etc.

It took place on the **26th of October 2022**. It was organized by the secretariat of the Youth and Women Inclusion in Restoration Action Group specifically the Regreening Africa Programme, GLFx Nairobi, Maundu Maseo, Spice Warriors Volunteers, Resnet Kenya, Greener Communities Program, Laudato Si Movement, One Vision Kenya, Spring of the Arid and semi-arid lands (SASAL). The webinar brought together a total number of **394 participants**.

The webinar was divided into three main sessions or segments:

- Presentations from speakers with critical lessons on youth and women and children engagement. They will share models, opportunities, challenges, and essential lessons to be shared with actors in the restoration space.
- The launch of the Youth Restoration Network and Capacity Strengthening Programme.
- Group work to share engagement strategies and insights on youth, children, and women's inclusion, followed by a brief feedback session.

LESSONS LEARNT FROM WOMEN, YOUTH, AND CHILDREN ENGAGEMENT

- **WOMEN ENGAGEMENT**

Models/approaches used for engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Participatory action-oriented situational analysis as the basis for designing projects. This is complemented by ensuring active participation and support.● The formation of agriculture and environmental Clubs in schools and villages, e.g. ANGAZA Agriculture and Environmental Clubs.● Using participatory, interactive, and consultative methods to allow active participation, practice, and consensus building.● Ensuring gender sensitivity and provision of age-related information on environmental conservation/restoration-related matters. They must also be available in local languages to foster meaningful community engagement.● Group savings models.● Providing training on strategies and skills for better natural resources management and good farming practices. For example, Angaza CBOs develop training materials on the environment, biodiversity, and climate Smart Agriculture (CSA).● Adaptive research using participatory and collaborative models where they are involved in identifying their problems. Such collaboration ensures the sustainability of restoration

efforts as beneficiaries have a sense of ownership of the entire process.

Challenges

- Most older women are vulnerable because they are widowed and often care for orphaned grandchildren.
- They are often not involved in environmental decision-making.
- Many rural women are poor.
- Retrogressive culture. For example, cultural beliefs and traditions on land ownership prevent women from owning or inheriting land. And use does not accommodate women, making it difficult for them to use the available land for restoration activities.

Opportunities

- Introducing Energy saving jikos technology.
- Women are committed to climate mitigation interventions as they are among the groups most affected by the impacts of climate change.
- Developing value chains such as tree nurseries for commercial purposes, beekeeping, and aloe vera to generate income while undertaking restoration activities
- Public participation in knowing their rights. In the case of Laikipia, they are using community land for beehive keeping, and this is one opportunity many people can leverage in different communities.
- Using churches and chamas to mobilize more women to engage in restoration. Another option is partnering with local media stations to mobilize women, especially in rural areas where radio is widespread, cheap, and covers a wide range.
- Approaching political elites like MCAs and local chiefs to support mobilizing youth, women, and children in restoration.
- Conducting a needs assessment will inform the mobilization effort and draft strategic restoring plans and program activities.

Lessons learned

- Support for funding in tree nurseries establishment as an income generating activity.
- Use collaborative & participatory approaches towards decision making.
- Group savings enable women groups to flourish in environmental actions.
- Specific interventions, while environment-friendly, expensive, i.e., solar lamps.
- Minimal interventions from county governments further marginalize them.
- Working hand in hand with restoration actors instead of modelling solutions and imposing them to be more effective.
- Collaborating with other restoration organizations enables the impacts to be far-reaching and have a broader scale.

- Restoration action should be built on enforcing sustainability and self-reliance of the beneficiaries.

Key messages

- Lobby for the involvement of older women in environmental governance, i.e., county & community levels.
- Build trustworthy relationships with women.
- Women are more reliable in tree growing compared to their male counterparts.
- Consider other interventions (i.e. economic empowerment) to complement restoration efforts, such as tree nurseries to encourage the participation of women in restoration.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Models/approaches used for restoration

- The Regreening Africa programme, for example, has engaged youth across various initiatives in all the eight programme countries through activities such as:
 - Building capacity for technology use and monitoring via the Regreening Africa App
 - Learning exchanges and virtual workshops - Organizing field trips/ exchange visits for the youth (lead youth farmers) to see what restoration activities are carried out by youths in different parts of the country.
 - Restoration and value chain interventions.
 - Capacity building through training and information provision on tree nursery management.
 - Sharing tree planting manuals with the pupils and training them on tree planting and its importance in dealing with climate change.
 - Nursery establishment and management.
 - Supporting existing youth groups to promote land restoration.
 - Using sports (namely soccer) to promote farmer-managed natural regeneration (FMNR) and tree planting. This was done through organizing sports tournaments and sponsoring the tournaments (such as through branded t-shirts of the Regreening Africa project, footballs, etc.
 - Organizing art exhibition events and talent shows to showcase the work done by the youth (recycled materials, drawings, poetry, dance, music, etc.).
 - Partnering with community training experts, religious leaders, etc., to educate communities on the importance of land access and use by youth.

Examples of youth engagement under the programme in Kenya include:

- School cypress woodlot establishment - youth-led CBO in Elgeyo Marakwet.
- School fruit tree establishment for environmental clubs that earn an income by selling the fruits and improving their nutrition.
- Establishment of tree classrooms in schools (Homabay and Migori) where students learn under the trees planted by the project.
- Establishment of woodlots for fuelwood in schools.
- Introducing energy-saving initiatives such as jikos in schools.
- Supporting soccer tournaments where youth are sensitised on environmental conservation (CFAs donate trees instead of giving the winning team trophies and certificates).
- Trees for Goals school tree planting initiative in Nairobi.

Challenges

- The extensive engagement of the youth in various initiatives relating to climate change and the environment is hardly mentioned in mainstream media.
- Land tenure rights and issues.
- Socio-cultural issues.
- Some youth would rather avoid engaging in restoration action.

Opportunities

- Youth engagement in restoration through value chain development for income creation, such as tree nursery establishment, beekeeping, etc.
- Developing models for green businesses to incentivize and sustain the interest of youth in restoration.
- Adequate education and capacity building of relevant skills, including in digital communication.
- Reorienting socio-cultural norms to include all of society.
- Leveraging on young people's collective strengths and contributions to elevate their status as equal and valued partners in land and ecosystem restoration.
- Use of online platforms to mobilize youth for restoration as most of them use them.

Lessons learned

- To overcome the existing barriers to catalyzing energy, knowledge, and vibrancy of the youth for greater restoration outcomes, we need to ensure that restoration initiatives enhance and embrace the following:
 - Meaningful partnerships between the youth and state, local, national, and global partners.

- Intentional youth engagement in the project teams.
- Recognition of youth as community champions.
- Access to knowledge and technology.
- Income-generating restoration initiatives.

Key messages

- Effective promotion of youth in decision-making policies requires putting in place policies that support their participation.
- Youth need to be empowered to understand planning processes and policy documents.
- It is vital to introduce alternative, nature-based livelihood opportunities such as agribusiness, ecotourism, fish farming, beekeeping, etc.
- Ensure equal benefit-sharing mechanisms from the restoration.
- Land tenure system must be strengthened to enhance access and ownership by women and youth.
- Young people should capitalize on social media to document their work and showcase their success to increase visibility and attract funding.
- Financing, including bank loans, must be adjusted to suit the needs and constraints of women and youth.

CHILDREN ENGAGEMENT

Models/approaches for engagement

1. Africa Goal Organization (AGO) used sports for restoration education with children through:
 - **Green army environmental club** (*environment educative games, tree planting, community clean-ups, and fun*).
 - **Environment cup** (*competitive games, environment education, awareness creation, and tree planting*).
2. Wildlife Direct uses the Wildlife Warriors program, which involves setting up Wildlife Warriors Kids Clubs that empower children to be environmental stewards. The Wildlife Warriors program is a nationwide conservation education program targeting Kenyan children in public primary schools. The members of the clubs are taken through the following activities:
 - School club Teacher training & Conventions.
 - Field Trips and Excursions.
 - Annual expeditions.
 - Participation in Citizen Science Activities.

Wildlife Warriors have now launched the Kids Restoring Nature Challenge. Under this program, children take the lead in; identifying environmental challenges; documenting the cause of the problem; generating project ideas; documenting the impact, evaluating lessons learned, and listing the next steps.

Challenges

- Inadequate public open spaces where kids can access during holidays and conduct training.
- Inadequate human and financial resources.
- The negative mentality about sports among the community.
- Little or no support from professional sports players to motivate and inspire action among the young generation.
- Inadequate age-appropriate Information Education Communication (IEC) materials.
- The limited involvement of children with special needs in sports.
- Sport and culture have yet to be embraced as an economic venture to grow and develop our communities.
- Time constraints, particularly for children to participate in restoration activities. For initiatives organized outside the school, it becomes tough for children to participate because they are in school all week and sometimes even for remedial classes over the weekend.

Opportunities

- Expanding to other Clubs and schools (private and public) in the country.
- Explore the raw talent among the children available within the communities.
- Utilization of road reserves and along railway lines for tree planting .
- Federations must develop structures that can help address societal issues, e.g., environment.
- Introducing storytelling in schools whereby the children are given assignments to go and discuss with their caregivers.
- Writing compositions which can be marked, graded, and gifted.

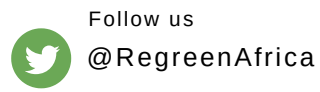
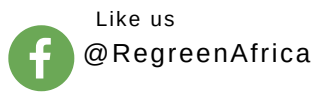
Lessons learned

- Children's participation from idea generation to project implementation promotes ownership.
- Securing funding such as micro-grants to schools is essential to boosting local environmental challenges.
- Children share restoration knowledge learned at home.
- Community participation and stakeholders' involvement is key to resource mobilization.

- Community-Based organizations have far-reaching networks in creating access to education and promoting environmental restoration.

Key messages

- Sports is the most natural way of engagement yet to be exploited; with purposeful and intentional involvement of children, it thus becomes the most powerful tool for transformation.
- No strategy, no future, and restoration through the young generation is the only way forward for sustainability.
- **"Every child can make a difference for nature."**



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