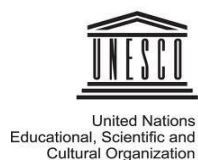


THEME:

“ENHANCING COLLABORATION ACROSS GEOGRAPHIC, KNOWLEDGE AND SECTORAL BOUNDARIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EASTERN UGANDA”

Prepared by Dr. Edward Andama



COVER PHOTOS:

Top: A group photograph taken during the launch of GEURCE in front of the administrative building at Busitema University main campus.

Left: A map of Uganda showing the location and areas covered by GEURCE

Right: The Busitema University administrative office block located at Busitema Campus

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BSE:	Bachelor of Science Education
BU:	Busitema University
CSOs:	Civil Society Organisations
DESD:	Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
ESD:	Education for Sustainable Development
GEURCE:	Greater Eastern Uganda Regional Center of Expertise
GMRCE:	Greater Mbarara Regional Centre of Expertise
ICEAM:	International Conference on East African Mountains
IPCC:	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUIU:	Islamic University In Uganda
MDGs.	Millennium Development Goals
MESA:	Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability into African Universities
MU:	Makerere University
MUST:	Mbarara University of Science & Technology
NCHE:	National Council for Higher Education
NDP:	National Development Programme
NEMA:	National Environment Management Authority
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organization
RCE:	Regional Centre of Expertise
SD:	Sustainable Development
UNDESD:	UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
UNEP:	United Nations Environment Programme
UNATCOM:	Uganda National Commission for UNESCO
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UWA:	Uganda Wildlife Authority

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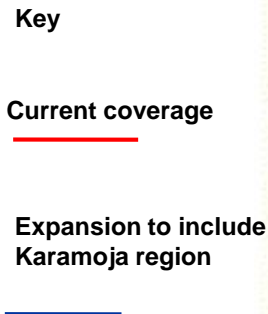
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Monday 22nd July 2013 Greater Eastern Uganda Regional Center of Expertise (GEURCE) was officially launched during a workshop officiated by the State Minister for Higher Education, Honorable Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo at Busitema University main campus, Busia District. The official launch was aimed at (i) consolidating the RCE initiative to lay foundations to kick-start the proposed activities (ii) reawaken the interest of stakeholders to take charge and ownership of the future activities and (iii) make action plan to implement proposed activities of GEURCE. The workshop was attended by participants (see appendix 2) from various stakeholder institutions such as private sector (Bank managers, private sector representatives at district and regional levels, local industries), Civil Society Organization (CSO) representatives such as cultural institution leaders, NGOs e.g. World Vision, Plan Uganda, Mifumi which operate in the region. Local Government representatives (over 20 different districts represented by environment officers, Local Council Five chairpersons), educational institutions (all four key Universities represented by their leaders such as Vice-Chancellors, Deans of Faculties, other tertiary institutions, National Teacher Colleges, Primary Teacher Colleges, Nursing and Midwifery health personnel training institutions etc, Secondary and Primary school representatives also attended), central government departments responsible for sustainable development (NEMA) and inter-government institutions were also represented among other key stakeholder partners. The workshop outlined the key challenges of the region such as; low levels of sensitization on ESD, poor Agricultural systems, poor land management, health related burden e.g. high infection levels rates of HIV/AIDS, malaria among others, high malnutrition, unsustainably high population growth rates, unplanned urbanization resulting in poor waste management, climate change related impacts e.g. unreliable rainfall patterns, landslides and heavy floods among others. The proposed RCE activities to address the challenges included continued sensitization, establishing community outreach centres, building collaboration and partnership opportunities with the District local governments to develop joint projects, institutional curricula review for among many activities to address the challenges. Key messages from the workshop included: (i) need to undertake research to gather more information on the issues affecting the region, (ii) sensitization of the communities and the general public on ESD and RCE activities, (iii) promoting coordination and collaboration with the key stakeholders, (iv) develop proposal for community based projects to benefit the region, (v) continued sensitizing and lobbying to get in more stakeholders. The district chairpersons were tasked to play key role in sensitizing their community on the sustainable life styles. Following were agreed as a way forward from the workshop: (i) To link up with Mbale district and get more information on the territorial approach to climate change project and disseminate to benefit all stakeholders, (ii) Secretariat to organize a follow-up meeting to kick-start some of the proposed activities in the action plan. (iii) All stakeholders to submit their inputs into the action plan and contribute to support implementation of the proposed activities. During the closing remark the stakeholder representatives appreciated Busitema University management for nurturing and hosting the GEURCE initiative and they expressed their commitment to support the initiative and move forward as a team so as to attain sustainable development in the region.

LOCATION OF GEURCE



Greater Eastern Uganda Regional Center of Expertise (GEURCE) area Coverage



The Acknowledged Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs) across Africa

VISION, MISSION STATEMENT, STRATEGY AND MOTTO

VISION

A community working together to promote education for sustainable development principles and practices and contributing to sustainable livelihoods and regional development.

MISSION STATEMENT

To be a center of excellence in advancing public knowledge, skills, change community attitude and improve management capacity through networks, partnerships, collaborations and collective decision-making beyond the constraints of bureaucratic organisations, and across geographic, knowledge and sectoral boundaries to promote sustainable development.

STRATEGY:

- *Articulating common challenges and agenda,*
- *Focus on collective responsibility and decisions,*
- *Building networks, partnerships and collaborations*
- *Promoting synergy and innovations*
- *Resource mobilization for effective impact*
- *Research outputs for decision making*
- *Communicating clearly and effectively,*
- *Sharing benefits across partnerships and collaborations*

MOTTO:

“WORKING TOGETHER WE WILL ACHIEVE MUCH MORE”.

WORKSHOP THEME:

“ENHANCING COLLABORATION ACROSS GEOGRAPHIC, KNOWLEDGE AND SECTORAL BOUNDARIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EASTERN UGANDA”

1. BACKGROUND, COVERAGE, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

1.1 Background

On September 7th 2011 the first workshop to initiate the establishment of Greater Eastern Uganda Regional Centre of Expertise (GEURCE).was organised by National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) at Busitema University (BU). The key outcomes of the workshop were (i) the formation of a steering committee to develop and submit a proposal to the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies and (ii) establishment of an institutional structure to coordinate RCE development activities. The steering committee team worked tirelessly and the fruit of their effort was the official acknowledgement of GEURCE by the Global RCE Service Centre at United Nations University (UNU) in December 2012. This was a great achievement to Uganda and to all stakeholders of GEURCE. The steering committee for GEURCE therefore organized the official launch of RCE initiative. This was to match with the kick starting of the proposed RCE activities. Note that GEURCE is the second of such initiative recognized in Uganda after the Greater Mbarara Regional Centre of Expertise (GMRCE) which is hosted at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST). GEURCE is coordinated at Busitema University and run by a steering committee composed of different stakeholders from various stakeholder institutions in Eastern Uganda Region.

As a launch pad, a one day stakeholder workshop was organized to officially launch GEURCE initiative on 22nd July 2013 at Busitema University main campus. The Chief Guest was the State Minister for Higher Education Honorable Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo (Figure 1).



Figure 1.The State Minister for Higher Education Honorable Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo officiating at the launch of GEURCE at Busitema University main campus on 22nd July 2013

1.2 Area covered by GEURCE

The GEURCE consists of parts of Lake Victoria crescent, areas south-eastern to Lake Kyoga basin, Jinja-Mbale agro-ecological zones and Mount Elgon zones (figure 2). with a population density ranging from 129 to 800 persons per square kilometre. The area currently covered by the Greater Eastern Uganda Regional Centre of Expertise (GEURCE) consists of the districts in former:

- ❖ Busoga sub-region,
- ❖ Bukedi sub-region,
- ❖ Teso sub-region region,
- ❖ Bugisu and Sebei sub-region,

The above administrative divisions since 1970s continued to be fragmented politically into smaller districts which are currently more than 30. At the initial stage GEURCE will cover some of the current key districts to consolidate the initiative. These districts include Bududa, Bugiri, Bulambuli, Busia, Buteleja, Iganga, Kaliro, Jinja, Kamuli, Kapchorwa, Manafwa, Mbale, Pallisa, Sironko, Amuria, Bukedea, Kumi, Kapchorwa, Katakwi, Soroti, and Tororo. GEURCE is located adjacent to the RCE Kakamega which is in western Kenya and to the far western part of Uganda is the Greater Mbarara Regional Centre of Expertise. The proximity to the existing two RCEs enables sharing of experiences and to learn from each other in terms of programme implementation and management (through exchange visits) which is a strength to the upcoming GEURCE.

The steering committee has recommended to expand the GEURCE to cover Karamoja sub-region as indicated in Figure 2. This is because Karamoja sub-region shares common boundary with the current GEURCE location and the ecosystems are interlinked.

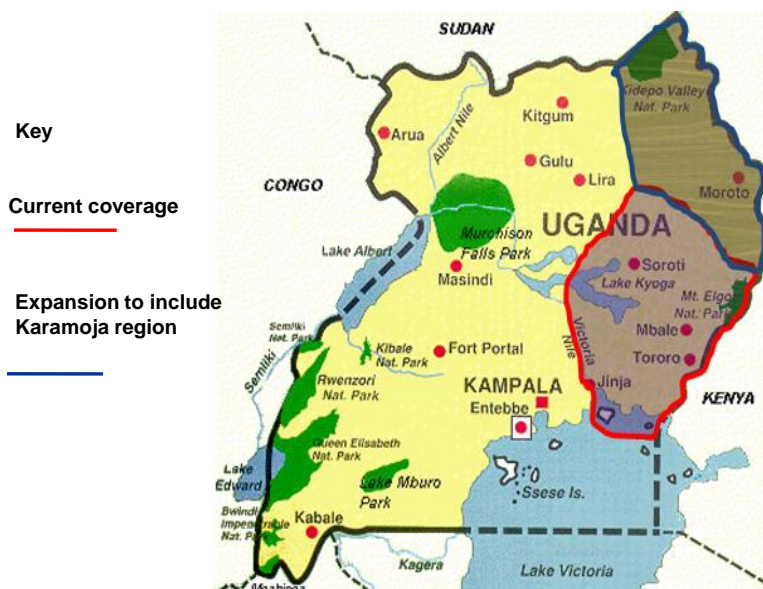


Figure 2. The area covered by GEURCE and the proposed expansion to cover Karamoja sub region

1.2 Objectives of GEURCE:

1.2.1 General objectives of GEURCE:

- (i) Increase public knowledge and skills on sustainable development (ESD), targeting leaders in local government, business, religion, cultural, academic institutions, etc.
- (ii) Promote activities and policies supporting achievement of sustainable education, MDGs, Uganda's National Development Programme (NDP) in the region.
- (iii) Strengthen the capacity of the region to address key challenges such as climate change impacts, urban waste management, HIV/AIDS, land degradation, poor academic performance, among others.
- (iv) Document and scale up best practices for land management, sustainable agriculture, health and small-scale business to the local community.

1.2.2 Short term objectives

- (i) Promote knowledge and application of education for sustainable development (ESD) practices within academic, civil society, local government and community.
- (ii) Build the local government and community capacity to address key issues such as climate change, urban waste management, HIV/AIDS, land degradation, poor academic performance, among others.
- (iii) Promote knowledge and technologies to support sustainable development e.g. in agriculture, health and small-scale business to the local community, tourism among other areas.
- (iv) Promote collaboration, networking, linkages for sharing of information and technology to accelerate sustainable development

1.2.3 Long term Objectives:

- (i) Establish regional information systems to document and disseminate best practice for sustainable agriculture, health and business development and deliver ESD to the local community.
- (ii) Improve the livelihood of the poor communities in both urban slums and the rural settings
- (iii) To promote healthy and productive population through strengthening integrated support systems, information for improved health care service delivery.

1.3. Strategies:

RCE Eastern Uganda will employ a number of strategies to achieve its objectives and thus overall goal. These strategies will include:

- a) **Collaboration and networking:** this strategy is vital for involving all stakeholders and other key players in activities of the RCE. The collaboration and networking, at regional, national and global scales will be utilized maximally to realize synergy for the sustainable development of the region.
- b) **Awareness, Advocacy and Dialogue:** these will be used to promote public awareness on ESD and to advance the ideals of ESD in the region and to solicit for commitment from the stakeholders.

- c) **Multi-disciplinary research:** this is meant to generate practical and relevant research information that will be applied to address the common problems in our communities and hence foster sustainable development.
- d) **Partnership building and community action**, facilitating cooperation between formal and non-formal learning institutions, civil society and private sector organizations for priority issues such as soil fertility improvements, urban waste management, poverty, income generation, sound environmental management and stewardship among others.
- e) **Use of community empowerment** approach with emphasis giving knowledge and skills to support community participation in order to achieve socio- economic development
- f) Identification of **best practices and scaling up and replicating** innovations in ESD in formal and non –formal learning institutions.
- g) **Monitoring and evaluating** of the ESD learning and action programs in the region.

1.4 Aim and objectives of the workshop

The overall aim of the workshop was to consolidate GEURCE initiative and to draw together the support of the key stakeholders to kick-start the proposed activities.

The workshop was specifically to:

- (i) launch the second RCE in Uganda
- (ii) serve as an inaugural meeting for kick- starting the planned activities

2. OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY

The programme schedule for the launch is attached in the in Appendix 1 and the list of participants is in the Appendix 2. After the national anthem was sung, a prayer was said by Mrs. Suubi Margret Ujeyo a staff of Busitema University.

2.1 Welcome remarks by the Vice-Chancellor of Busitema University

The Vice Chancellor of Busitema University Professor J. N. Okwakol started by welcoming the participants to the University and in particular the Chief Guest the State Minister for Higher Education Honourable Dr. John Chrysostom Musingo to the official launch of the Greater Eastern Uganda Regional Centre Of Expertise (GEURCE) at Busitema University (Figure 3). She stated that Busitema University had a tradition of valuing and practicing sustainable development as is part of the University mission, which states; *“to provide high standard training, engage in quality research and outreach for socio-economic transformation and sustainable development”*. In addition environment was a cross cutting issue in all plans and programmes of Busitema University. She reiterated the fact that Busitema University was actively participating in the ESD and RCE activities. For example Busitema University International Training Programme (ITP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Higher Education Change Project 2011/2012 was rated among the five outstanding innovative Projects in the world by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It was a showcase at the official launch of the Global University Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES) in June 2012 in Shanghai China. Through the project the University had built capacity and expertise to implement Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) activities in the region. The university had also participated in organizing international conference on East African Mountains (ICEAM) in collaboration with Makerere University (MU) and Islamic University In Uganda (IUIU) to address key challenges facing the fragile mountain Elgon ecosystem.



Figure 3. The Vice Chancellor of Busitema University Prof. J. N. Okwakol giving key note address during the official opening of GEURCE on 22nd July 2013 at Busitema university main campus..

The ICEAM was to contribute to addressing the issue that affects mountain Elgon regions with special focus on landslides and floods. Busitema University research efforts included: integrated assessment of landslides at mountain Elgon Region: risks, consequences and opportunities. This was being undertaken in collaboration with Catholic University in Leuven, Belgium, NEMA, UWA and Local Governments, NGOs and Farmer organizations. She was pleased to note that the RCE coordination team formed in September 2010 workshop had made a great achievement which resulted in the acknowledgment of the GEURCE in December 2012. And that it was now an opportunity for building a platform to bring together different stakeholders across *“geographical, knowledge and sectoral boundaries in eastern Uganda for promoting sustainable development”* The forum is mandated to chart way forward and develop projects to promote sustainable development activities in Eastern Uganda.

She called upon private sector, local governments, civil society organizations, tertiary and other academic institutions to partner and promote sustainable development in the region and beyond. She thanked NEMA and Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (UNATCOM) for spearheading the activities of ESD and RCE in the country and for the initiation of GEURCE. She also thanked the team that developed the GEURCE proposal headed by Dr. Edward Andama, the Dean Faculty of Science and Education Busitema University. She also stated that BU was the first multi-campus public university in Uganda and was established by the Act of Parliament in the year 2007. Busitema University was the only University in Uganda with unique programmes such as Bachelor of Agricultural Mechanization and Irrigation Engineering, Bachelor of Science in Agro-processing Engineering, Bachelor of Science in Textile Engineering, Bachelor of Science in Mining Engineering, Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Economics, among others. The University had seven campuses and currently four were fully operational. Each campus focuses on a specific study discipline with; Busitema campus for Engineering, Nagongera campus for Science and Education, Namasagali campus for Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, and Arapai campus for Agriculture and Animal Sciences. The Mable campus for Health Sciences was scheduled to start in September 2013. The remaining two campuses that would be launched in a phased manner include Pallisa campus for Management Sciences, and Kaliro campus for Vocational Education.

In conclusion she appreciated the organizing committee that made the workshop to become reality. She also appreciated the funding from UNATCOM towards the workshop. Lastly she wished the participants a fruitful workshop and pleasant stay in Busitema and safe journey back home.

2.2 Remarks and official opening by the Chief Guest

The Chief Guest State Minister for Higher Education Honourable Dr. John Chrysostom Musingo appreciated the historic workshop during which he was launching the second Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) in Uganda after the Greater Mbarara RCE (GMRCE). He appreciated NEMA, UNATCOM, Universities in Eastern Uganda and other stakeholders for spearheading the establishment of this initiative in Eastern Uganda. He also appreciated involvement of various institutions in eastern Uganda in the RCE initiative. He reiterated that this was an important platform to bring together various stakeholders to address environmental management, development and livelihood enhancement issues in Uganda. And was happy to note that the RCE coupled with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was already taking root in Uganda and the government of Uganda was therefore committed to ensuring the principles and practices of sustainable living and future are incorporated in all development programmes and activities. He noted that Uganda's vision 2040 fully captures ESD as a cross-cutting issue which envisions the formulation of an ESD policy for the country and the longer plan was to reorient the curricula at all levels to address ESD concerns. He further emphasized that environmental issues had been elevated to the level of the constitution, giving every person

the right to a clean and healthy environment. He indicated that in order to attain sustainable development, the government of Uganda had ratified several international and regional conventions and domesticated them to suit local needs. Of importance to this workshop was the fact that local government authorities were required to play their rightful role with respect to environmental management and improving livelihoods of the community. The government has developed the education for sustainable development implementation strategy which presents an opportunity for all stakeholders to take responsibility for development that is sustainable. The three pillars of sustainable development, namely environment, society and economy were pertinent to achieving a sustainable future for Uganda. He outlined environmental issues that were increasingly affecting the livelihood of the communities in Eastern Uganda to include: land degradation, climate change, landslide and poor waste management. Social issues included; high and unmanageable population growth, security, corruption, HIV/AIDS and urbanization. Economic issues included poverty eradication, economic development and its ramifications, consumerism and effects of globalization. Through the ESD and particularly the RCE initiative public awareness and understanding of the concept of sustainable development would be enhanced leading to a population that is actively practicing sustainable lifestyle and responsible citizenship. He emphasized to the participants that the way to go in addressing the community challenges was through partnerships and collaborations. He called upon the private sector, local governments, the civil society organisations, cultural institutions and academic institutions to partner with Universities in the region to engage in collaborative programmes to promote sustainable development initiatives in the region and beyond to address regional and national issues that affect the country. He appreciated large turn-up of the stakeholders in the workshop which was an indication that GEURCE was in a journey to successful partnership building. He challenged the GEURCE initiative to succeed and benefit the local community in the eastern region and the nation at large. He finally thanked all stakeholder institutions and particularly the universities that provided leadership for this initiative. He thanked Busitema University management and in particular Professor J. N. Mary Okwakol who had taken the lead to provide the first secretariat for coordination of GEURCE activities and hoped that other universities in the region will follow suit. He encouraged GEURCE to become one of the strongest RCEs in Uganda and pledged to provide full support to ensure success of this initiative so that it becomes a model for the country in future. He commended the initiators of the GEURCE initiative for providing the direction to promote RCE as a champion of sustainable development in the region. He appreciated the collaboration among the key stakeholders and recommended that it was important to share local and individual experiences so as to realize a brighter future and sustainable common destiny. He then officially launched the Greater Eastern Uganda Regional Centre of Expertise and wished the initiative a prosperous future.

3 PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Presentation by Dr. Daniel Babikwa

- Dr. Babikwa presented on the concept and evolution of RCEs. He described An RCE as a network of existing formal, non-formal and informal education organizations, mobilized to deliver education for sustainable development to local and regional communities. It is a network that designed to strengthen the collaboration for ESD among regional and local actors. The localized network is voluntary, flexible and inclusive.
- It may be created in an area where people have solidarity in economic, social, cultural and environmental terms, and can get together in a relatively easy manner.
- That RCE was one of the strategies suggested in the Johannesburg scheme for the implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD).
- A network of partners including universities, colleges, schools, business enterprises, industry, chambers of commerce, municipalities, urban councils, civil society, media and research institutions who come together to explore sustainable development issues in their context and work together to develop and implement home grown solutions to those problems.
- He indicated that an RCE was a global learning space not necessarily a physical but a professional alliance/partnership which pools the available resources and makes use of synergies to respond to sustainability challenges in a particular region through educational activities.

He outlined Core Elements of RCEs as:

- Governance - To address issues of RCE management and leadership
- Collaboration - of actors from all levels of formal, non-formal and informal education in RCE activities.
- Research and development – relating research to development processes through practical collaborative problem solving activities
- Transformative Education - transformation of the current education and training systems to achieve sustainable living and livelihoods.

Goals of the RCE as:

- to adequately integrate science, technology and other SD components, such as traditional knowledge, ethics and values etc., into educational curricula;
- to strengthen communication, coordination and collaboration among different stakeholders who have been conducting their activities on ESD separately without good communication with each other; and to mitigate gaps in accessibility to latest information and knowledge in different parts of the world.
- RCEs aspire to achieve the goals of the DESD by translating its global objectives into the context of regional areas in which it operates:
- Improve access to quality basic education and re-orient existing education curriculum to address sustainable development issues.
- Develop public understanding and awareness; and provide training programs for all sectors of private and civil society.

- To create a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from quality education and learn the values, behavior and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transition (global learning space).

Expected achievements of RCEs:

- the RCE is expected to give a further stimulus to those actors that are already developing RCE-type activities and
- it is meant to provide models of cooperation and for joint projects to those who are looking for these

Underlying assumptions for RCEs:

- There is a link between global and regional/local problems.
- Sustainable solutions to local problems can be generated locally through partnerships with likeminded stakeholders.
- That Universities are centres of expert knowledge and have a leadership role to play in solving local problems and empowering other stakeholders to play their rightful roles;
- That multiple potentials locked within the institutions, organisations and agencies have to be transformed into meaningful sustainable development outputs.
- Partnerships can provide opportunities for academics to directly and practically interact with the realities outside the institutional walls.
- That student can get the necessary hands on experience in dealing with problems within their context and also develop the necessary values and ethics to promote sustainable development.
- That RCE activities will be defined by regional/local conditions.
- Links to be strengthened between different levels of educational institutions (refers to the Vertical Links in the Figure 4).
- Between educational organizations of the same level, for example, schools in a community (refers to the Horizontal Links. Between educational organizations and other organizations that are not part of the formal education, contribute to the promotion of ESD (refers to the Lateral Links in the Figure 4).

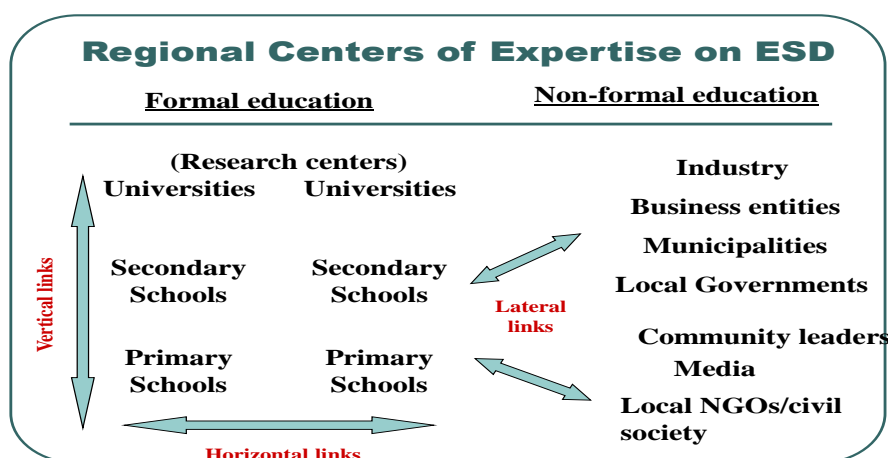


Figure 4. Relationship between institutions forming RCEs

International linkages:

- RCE was originally promoted by the United Nations through the United Nations University as one of the avenues for ensuring the implementation of the UN DESD.
- Now a global network of RCEs exists to address global and local concerns in specific contexts

Justification for RCEs:

- It can be an instrument of mobilization and integration of different streams of thinking and learning
- It provides opportunity for the translation of global agenda into local realities
- It can be used as effective instrument for social learning

Key challenges in Uganda that RCEs can address

- Rapid changes in the quality of the Environment (degradation);
- Rapid population growth not sustained with service provision
- Rapid expansion of the urban centres and irresponsible human behavior of garbage and rubbish littering
- Increasing number of academic institutions with limited or no direct practical link with the world of work and the necessary problem-solving orientation

RCE experience in Africa:

- Greater Mbarara RCE
- Greater Eastern Uganda RCE
- Greater Nairobi RCE
- Kwazulu Natal Umgeni Valley RCE
- Greater Makana Municipality/Rhodes University RCE
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology RCE

Potential RCEs in Uganda include:

- Greater Kampala RCE
- Greater West Nile RCE
- Greater Masaka RCE
- Greater North RCE (Gulu, Lira, Kitgum)

3.2 Presentation by Mr. Augustine-Omare-Okurut

- Mr. Augustine-Omare-Okurut the Secretary General of UNATCOM made a presentation on the background to RCEs. He mentioned that it was the initiative of United Nations University in 2004 in response to DESD(2005-2014)
- A network of formal, non-formal and informal education and learning-related institutions who are mobilizes to promote ESD at regional(sub-national) and local levels.
- RCE aspire to achieve the goals of DESD by translating its global objectives into context of regional-local areas, in which they operate.
- He mentioned that RCEs are needed for equitable partnership between the combined expertise of communities, professions, NGOs and governments
- Need for an innovative platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue- a platform that enables diverse groups to interact, learn collaboratively and take collective decisions towards SD.

- Developing innovative ways of collaboration among higher education institutions, primary and secondary educational systems, local governments, and other regional ESD stakeholders;
- Creating regional/local knowledge base.
- vertical alignment of curriculum from primary through university education and with linking formal and non-formal sectors of the education community
- He outlined the expectations from RCEs as follows:
- developing innovative ways of collaboration among higher education institutions, primary and secondary educational systems, local governments, and other regional ESD stakeholders;

Global Themes for RCE Networks as:

- Sustainable Production and consumption; emphasis: food
- Health
- Biodiversity
- Teacher training
- Youth and E-learning

The illustrated using case Studies

- RCEs provide a framework for strategic thinking and action on sustainability by creating diverse partnerships among educators, researchers, policymakers, scientists, youth, and leaders within indigenous communities and throughout the public, private and non-governmental sectors.
- The strengths of RCE network lies in the diversity of people involved i.e. school teachers, professors, NGO workers, scientists, researchers, government officials etc.
- Health is both a resource as well as an outcome of sustainable development. The goals of sustainable development cannot be achieved when there is a high prevalence of illness and poverty.
- Environmental degradation, mismanagement of natural resources, and unhealthy consumption patterns and lifestyles impact health. Health in turn hampers poverty alleviation and economic development.

Vision of thematic network on health:

- To contribute towards development of an integrated and holistic health system that is effective, indiscriminative and accessible.

Objectives:

- (i) To utilize ESD principles to improve education in the health system
- (ii) To facilitate collaboration with International organisations dealing with capacity development for health professionals and local communities
- (iii) To contribute to capacity development at different levels in creating an enabling environment at institutional and organizational levels.

Activities:

- (i) Three RCEs located in Asia namely RCE Penang(Malaysia), RCE Cebu(Philippines) and RCE Yokohama(Japan)discussed the role of Universities in sustainable health and possible linkage programmes for ESD human resource development. They agreed to carry out activities on the following topics:
- (ii) Health, nutrition, food and lifestyles
- (iii) Linking traditional knowledge with modern medicine and health care

(iv) Education and training of health professionals

Achievements

- The three RCEs, and three Universities in the area are running summer student exchange programmes focusing on Environment, Health and sustainability.
- Discussion of traditional medicine and health to integrate existing traditional medical resources in selected RCEs has led to the development of sustainable health care.
- Joint proposals have been developed to address the needs of the community as far as health is concerned

RCE s in Japan

- Japan is a home to more than 6 RCEs.
- The RCEs vary in their sustainability challenges, thematic focus, educational and learning needs etc let alone in their governance and management structures.
- Japanese RCEs demonstrate that RCEs are shaped by local needs and priorities.
- RCEs individually and collectively aspire to contribute to the goals of the DESD by embracing diversity within and across them

(i) RCE Greater Sendai

- Central theme: Sustainable food production and consumption
- Covers 4 sub regions: metropolitan Sendai, aiming at a recycling-based city; coastal Kesen-numa, focusing on promoting school-based ESD; rural Osaki-Tajiri, focusing on rice-paddy ecosystems and biodiversity; and Shiraishi-Schichikashuku region focusing on reservoir area conservation.
- The RCE includes one teacher education Institution, Miyagi University of Education.
- The Secretariat is hosted by this institution which produces the majority of school teachers and superintendents for the region.

(ii) RCE Yokohama

- City of Yokohama has 29 Universities which carry out diverse environmental activities
- Platform to support ESD activities of youth, especially University students
- RCE Yokohama regularly organises a networking event called University Student Eco-Networking café.
- They also organise capacity building sessions for University students who take part in environmental club activities
- City of Yokohama has 29 Universities which carry out diverse environmental activities
- Platform to support ESD activities of youth, especially University students
- RCE Yokohama regularly organises a networking event called University Student Eco-Networking café.
- They also organise capacity building sessions for University students who take part in environmental club activities
- In these sessions, students learn skills and methods to enhance their voluntary ESD –related activities.
- Universities in the city of Yokohama also engage in a joint environmental action on a designated day of the year to raise awareness about ESD.
- The Secretariat is hosted by the city of Yokohama.

Linking RCEs in Africa

- (i) All RCE in Africa are linked to MESA(Mainstreaming Environment ad Sustainability into African Universities)Partnership led by UNEP
- (ii) Expansion of RCEs clearly indicated in the plans of MESA Phase 2(2008-2010) &(2011-2014)
- (iii) African RCEs are also contributing to the African Union Agenda
- (iv) To revitalise Higher Education in Africa
- (v) To ensure that universities are able to work closely with their communities
- (vi) ESD is a holistic approach in the SADC region.

Achievements

- (i) Education system is oriented towards sustainability and attainment of quality education
- (ii) Teacher training programmes towards sustainability and quality education
- (iii) Education programmes that inspire youth for service delivery
- (iv) Meetings and conferences are underway to review ESD initiatives in the region and new initiatives for the Post decade agenda
- (v) Coordination centre at Rhodes University in South Africa

Lessons learned

- (i) Communication between RCEs lead to the formation of cross-RCE projects and action plans and bigger projects can be developed such as the one million Euro project among 12 RCEs from Europe, Asia, North and South America on ESD Community Based Research on Local-International Production systems.
- (ii) The theme of Health and traditional Medicine which focuses on sustainable livelihoods is more suited for developing countries like Uganda
- (iii) RCE activities are driven by the needs of the community.
- (iv) RCE initiatives promote national and international cooperation in ESD
- (v) Many RCEs in the world are established around higher education institutions like universities.

(vi) Conclusions:

- GEURCE should identify their needs and priorities, Establish clear management structures
- Build the networks around Busitema University and establish a vital RCE, Publish activities
- Source for funding locally

3.3 Presentation by Eng. Wilfred Odogola

Engineer Odogola gave presentation on key characteristic and challenges in the area covered by GEURCE. He outlined the objectives and area coverage of GEURCE. He stated that currently, 88 percent of Ugandans and in particular those in the eastern Uganda live in rural areas where land and natural resources are central to their livelihoods. In eastern Uganda three of the ecosystems had been identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as most vulnerable to climate change and these included; (i) Drylands- Teso, Karamoja areas (ii) water-basins - lake Kyoga areas, Bukedi and Busoga and (iii) mountain ranges- Elgon (Bugisu/Sebei-). He stated that the most fragile ecosystems in eastern Uganda were the drylands of eastern Karamoja and the Mount Elgon watershed.

He outlined the key challenges facing GEURCE as illustrated in Figure 5:

- Rapidly growing populations, 3.4% pa: challenge to overall economic development efforts

- Rapid degradation of land resources, affecting agriculture (leading low crop and livestock production, dwindling of fish) productivity and livelihoods
- Land tenure systems: impacting on land management, utilization and investment.
- Poor exploitation of natural resources affecting biodiversity, ecological systems, environment, pollution in urban areas
- Recurrent occurrence of landslides in steep hills, and floods in flat planes resulting in loss of infrastructure, resources, human lives. Also prolonged droughts
- There was generally low rainfall distribution and reliability in Teso and Karamoja Regions
- Frequent landslides, due to erratic and heavy rains and high population densities typical of Mount Elgon watershed.
- Landslides, on virtually a yearly basis, affect some 490,000 out of the 1,330,000.
- While the lower regions e.g. Bukedi and Teso suffer from floods from higher elevations.

Devastation by Landslides



Devastation by floods



Figure 5. Some of the typical disasters that affect GEURCE region every year.

He also stated the major challenges in managing urban wastes as follows:

- Uganda has 75 urban centers, housing 12% of the country's population, growing at 3.8% pa
- Massive urban wastes (organic/inorganic/non-degradable) due to rapid populations, changing food habits, unplanned industries, & inadequate skills/investments to managing wastes
- Poor waste disposals: a menace to the environment through (pollution) and to health resulting in diseases (cholera, typhoid, dysentery, worms, inhalable diseases)



Figure 6. Garbage management status in urban centres of Eastern Uganda

Climate change related challenges:

- The African Initiative on Climate Change (CIGI 2007) identified Uganda among the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change impacts.
- Any negative climate change impacts will have lots of effects on livelihoods especially of vulnerable rural communes
- Temperatures in Uganda are expected to increase by 0.7-1.5% by 2020,
- Rainfall patterns have already notably changed (droughts/floods)
- Landslide incidences on a rise, affecting 490,000 out of the 1,330,000 people living in the heavily populated Elgon area .
- In the Mount Elgon watershed, frequent landslides are an emerging issue due to erratic and heavy rains and high population densities (NEMA, 2008). Inappropriate land use, including cultivation of steep slopes and lack of contour ploughing and terracing aggravate climate change impacts.
- In Butaleja, in March 2010, floods submerged crop fields and vital infrastructure including roads, schools and houses (OCHA, 2010).
- In March 2010, following unusually heavy rains, landslides occurred in the Bududa district. Landslides buried three whole villages and caused numerous deaths. Hundreds of households were displaced, a number of primary schools were destroyed and the main health centre serving the area was severely damaged. The recent being the Kasese floods of April 2013.
- **Education in Science and Technology:** Key GoU Policies and Strategies (NDP, Vision 2040 among others) are hinged on using Science and Technology to develop & modernize the economy, create wealth and improve livelihoods.

Factors contributing to low use of Science & Technology:

- Low levels of education among a wide population of Ugandans.
- Little attention given to appreciation of teaching/learning S/T.
- Low S/T attitude has also contributed to low enrolment of children especially Girls in S/T related programmes and professions.
- UNESCO statistics on tertiary schools graduates in S/T as follows: 21% in 1999; 17% in 2000; and 11% in 2002 and 17.9% in 2004.

Health and sanitation:

- Eastern Uganda in particular experiencing a double burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, malaria, sleeping sickness and diarrhea, causing high rates of mortality and morbidity among mothers and children.
- Inadequate access to health facilities and clean water resources, poor hygiene, poor nutrition, etc are among the limiting factors.

Socio-Economic challenges:

- In Eastern and Northern Uganda, the features of rural poverty are multi-dimensional and include food shortages, malnutrition, frequent illness with high rates of HIV/AIDS and malaria, widespread illiteracy, etc.
- The regions also receive very little investment in terms of ecosystem services, and unemployment is very high.
- Households depending on subsistence agriculture are still well over 80% of the populations
- Despite the reported 6% GDP growth, poverty is still rampant among the populations

3.4 Presentation by Dr. Edward Andama

Dr. Edward Andama presented on the proposed activities of GEURCE. He outlined various proposed activities as illustrated below and some of these are ongoing:

- Development and promotion of entrepreneurial culture among students and rural communities through workshops, public lectures, and other forms of lifelong learning
- Organizing science camps for promoting basic and applied sciences targeting the rural youth.
- Promotion of mentorship skills for promoting science education among the youth.
- Developing career guidance services for pupils, students with focus on applied sciences.
- Investment in innovative educational, research and library resources (e-learning materials, ICT facilities, data bases).
- Undertake in-service training for primary & secondary school teachers and laboratory staff.

He outlined some of the ongoing activities as follows:

- (i) Sensitization to continue through workshop, seminars, public talks, radio and print media opportunities on education for sustainable development. One case was a regional workshop on RCE and ESD conducted in mark 2013 (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Participants during Institutional seminar on ESD and RCE organized by GEURCE in March 2012 at Rock Classis Hotel Tororo Municipality.

(ii) He indicated that organizing the International Conference on East Africa on Mountains (ICEAM) in 2011 at Mbale focusing on the Mountain Elgon Ecosystem.

(iii) Mentorship and career guidance activities from Faculties to the schools at all levels: As illustrated by university community based support to secondary level students (Figure 8).



Figure 8. BSE student of Faculty of Science and Education Busitema University giving career guidance to a group of students at Petta Community Secondary School in Tororo District in March 2013 outreach event.

(iv) Establishing community outreach centres for skill-based short courses.

For example Busitema University Tororo Study centre which has trained over 100 local communities in computer applications and computer repair and maintenance and networking skills (Figure 9).



Figure 9. The pioneer students of the skill-based certificate course in computer applications and Computer repair, maintenance and networking programmes based at Tororo Center being passed out on 15th June 2013.

(v) Research collaboration among Universities NGOs and Tororo district (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Researchers from three institutions during fieldwork to study the distribution, community perspective on medicinal values and conservation of Aloe tororaona (Reynolds) a locally endemic herbal plant species.

(vi) Regular curricula review to re-orient and streamline education for sustainable development into the curriculum at universities and other tertiary institutions (figure 11).



Figure 11. Curricula review team at Busitema University Faculty of Science and Education.

(vii) **Tree planting at individual institutions la levels.**

At Busitema where the land is available there is effort to plant new trees as carbon sequestration and to supply the needed wood materials for human use (figure 12).



Figure 12. Tree planting efforts at Busitema University Nagongera Campus

Other areas of interventions include:

- Training in technical skills such as agro-forestry nursery establishment and extension, well construction and maintenance, irrigation system among others.

Collaborative community capacity development through partnership with the NGOs and districts to building skills of the community to become more self resilient to economic shocks, climate change impacts among other unpredictable events and calamities.

He concluded by giving key messages to the participants as follows:

- RCEs have become an important tool in regional development initiatives across the world.
- It is where best practices are scaled up for local community and world consumption and replication.
- In many developed countries, Universities partnership and collaboration with the private sector and civil society actors has proved fruitful.
- The partnership should thrive on shared value of the opportunity to collaborate in addressing society's pressing needs such as contributing to the implementation of poverty reduction strategies and charting way forward for sustainable development initiatives.
- And that the partners bring to the table important, relevant and necessary expertise and resources which are essential to achieve the overall goals of sustainable development of the community.
- This philosophy is being championed by the government of Uganda as envisioned in the National Development Programme (NDP) and Vision 2025 for Uganda.
- The benefit to the local governments, businesses, civil society and educational systems in joining hands in this partnership is the opportunity to reconnect the organisation/company institutional success with social progress.
- This approach is based on believe expressed in the motto "*working together we will achieve much more*".
- The shared value is not only a social responsibility or philanthropy but a new way to achieve economic success shared by all stakeholders.

GEURCE Partnership Strategic Focus

- Mobilizing resources effectively and efficiently
- Maintaining flexibility and adaptability of the partnership as conditions change.
- Achieving short-term and medium term goals to reach long-range ones.
- Forming communities of practice and sharing lessons and experiences learned.

3.5 Question and answer session

Inquiry1:

A member wanted to know more about the governance, collaborations and research components of the RCE.

Response:

That there was an established institutional structure for operation of the GEURCE. Each participating institution was represented in the committee. And it is through the representative that issues from the institutions/stakeholders are presented and disseminated. The institutional structure of GEURCE is shown in the Figure 13.

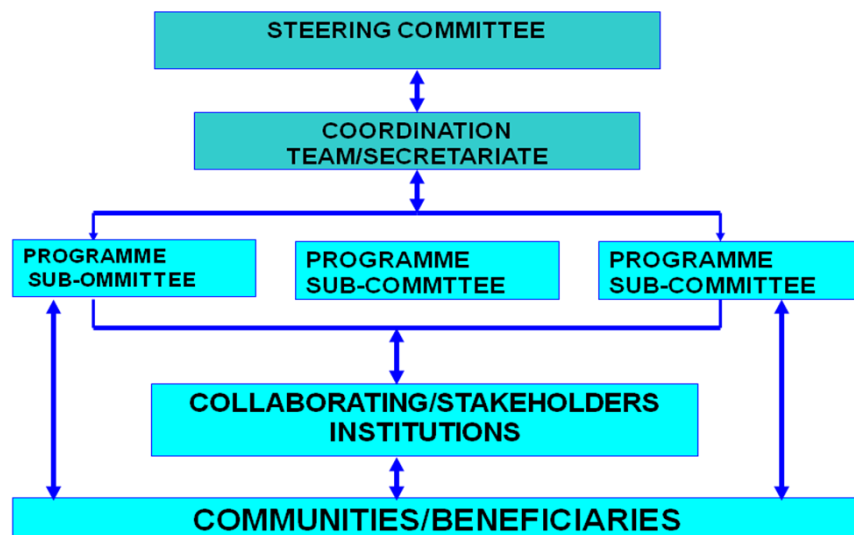


Figure 13. Institutional structure of GEURCE

Compliment 2. A participant appreciated the workshop for educating the stakeholders on how to live sustainably and noted the challenge of convincing other partners to join the crusade, especially the private sector who mainly care about their profit than the environmental challenges.

Response: It was the responsibility of everybody and stakeholder in this workshop to talk to the unconverted individuals, institutions, and communities to spread the message and convert them to accept the facts and change their attitude and lifestyles to become more sustainable.

Inquiry 3: One participant inquired about efforts being made by Busitema University in areas of reforestation among other initiatives.

Response: Tree planting and other Environment activities are part and parcel of Busitema University academic and outreach programmes. Each of the campuses undertakes environment and natural resource management activities such as tree planting, waste management, research among others.

Request 4: A participant requested to get a hand out of the presentations.

Response: The compiled presentations and workshop report will be distributed to all participants in soft copy format.

complement 5: A participant proposed to improve the way the vision of GEURCE was framed.

Response: Improving the stating of the vision of GEURCE is an excellent contribution. Kindly submit your input to the secretariat.

Information: A participant provided information on the climate change project called “Territorial Approach to Climate Change Project” with offices in Mbale town and operates in the districts surrounding mountain Elgon. He stated that there was a lot of information collected by the project in the Elgon region which could be shared and therefore invited the GEURCE secretariat team to visit the project managers at their Mbale town office.

Request: Another participant requested the climate change project based in Mbale town to share their experiences and information with the other neighbouring districts that are currently not involved so that they too can benefit from the knowledge and the opportunities that accrue from the project.

Response: It was agreed that GEURCE will be the platform to share all experiences and information from the sister districts and stakeholders. This was the strength of coming together and learning from one another. It was important to train all districts on disaster coping mechanisms since most disasters equally affect districts in one way or another.

Proposal: A participant proposed that every person and stakeholder present here should go back to their workplace, community and educate the communities on ESD and particularly to change community attitude towards sustainable lifestyle.

Complain: A participant complained that NEMA which coordinates all national environmental issues was not doing enough to address the challenges especially at district level. He outlined some key challenges faced at the district local government level which included wetland degradation and poor waste management in most parts of the country and towns which was resulting in floods, diseases in lowland areas.

Response: NEMA's role is to coordinate environment and natural issues at national level. It was the responsibility of Local governments under the decentralized management system to manage the environment and local resources at district and even at sub county government levels. NEMA only undertakes supervisory role. Another challenge faced by NEMA was resulting from the insufficient funding and fewer personnel to undertake the planned supervisory activities which are constraining the achievement of the objectives and responsibilities of the authority.

Concern: One participant noted that many programmes and projects start like the GEURCE initiative and within shortest time the initiatives die and the projects are closed before intended impacts are realized. Secondly, it is hoped that other institutions will be brought on board such as judiciary. Third the national core values and principles should be upheld. And lastly more focus should be on the children and the young generation if we are to succeed in future.

Response: It was everyone's responsibility to promote GEURCE initiative. We need to involve all stakeholders including children and the youth to own the initiative and promote its core values and activities so that it succeeds. The initiative is inclusive and thus we need to bring everybody on board, including the judiciary so that we benefit from their professional knowledge and skills in bringing about sustainable development. We have developed core values which we need to uphold and promote. The national values and principles are part of our society and should be promoted. To have a long term change and impact the younger generations are our focus. Therefore institutions such as schools and academic institutions at all levels are included in the partnership arrangement.

Compliment: The last participant applauded the GEURCE initiative and commented that this will foster sustainable development in the region.

4. ACTION PLAN, WAY FORWARD AND CLOSING REMARKS

4.1 The development of action plan for GEURCE.

Development of action plan was led by Ms. Agoi Rosie the Assistant Secretary General of UNATCOM. She illustrated to the participant how they will fill the action plan template (as indicated in the Appendix 3). Due to the time constraint the participants agreed to fill in the action plan template and send to all responses using e-mail address to the GEURCE secretariat within one week. And every participant was requested to provide e-mail address for easy communication.

4.2 Way forward

The following issues were agreed to be undertaken from the time of the workshop:

1. To link up with Mbale district and get more information from the Territorial Approach to Climate Change Project which can be shared by the GEURCE stakeholders.
2. The secretariat to send to all participants the template for action plan and make a summary for presentation in the next meeting.
3. Secretariat to organize a meeting to start some of the proposed initiative in the action plan.
4. Monitoring of activities by NEMA, UNATCOM and other stakeholders.

4.3 Closing remarks

The closing remarks were given by the LCV Chairpersons for Mbale and Busia. In their communication they thanked the management of Busitema University for hosting the initiative which provides a platform that has brought all local government and stakeholders in the Eastern Uganda. This was the first time they had been gathered for common and crosscutting issues that affect the region. They expressed the commitment on behalf of the local governments they serve to support the initiative and move forward so as to attain sustainable development in the Eastern Uganda Region.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Workshop programme

Programme for the Workshop to Launch GEURCE Scheduled for 22nd July 2013, at Busitema University Main Campus Hall

TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
8.00 am	Arrival and Registration	Secretariat
8.30 am	Welcome Remarks	V/Chancellor- Busitema University
9.00-9.30am	Background to RCEs	Dr. Babikwa-NEMA
9.30-10.00am	Key proposed activities for GEURCE	Dr. Edward Andama/ Eng. W. Odogola
10.00-10.30am	The responsibilities of stakeholders in successful RCE activity implementation	Executive Director NEMA
10.30-11.00 am	Case study of successful RCEs across the world and lessons learnt	Secretary General UNATCOM
11.00-11.30 am	Discussion of the presentations.	Adam Alli-Dean Faculty of Science IUIU.
11.30 am	HEALTH BREAK	Secretariat
11.45 am	Speech by Chief Guest and official launch	Minister of State for Higher education
12.30pm	Group work guidelines (Development of Action Plan)	Ms. Rosie Agoi
12:45 pm	Group photo with the Chief Guest	Secretariat
1.00 pm	LUNCH BREAK	Secretariat
2.00 pm	Group discussions	Ms. Rosie Agoi
2.30 pm	Plenary	Ms. Rosie Agoi
3.00 pm	Action plan/Way forward	Secretariat
3.30 pm	Official Closure	LCV Chairperson Busia District

Appendix 3. List of participants

	NAME	INSTITUTION/ ORGANIZATION	DISTRICT	E-MAIL	PHONE No.
1	Benard E. M. Mujasi	Mbale Local Government	Mbale	bmujasi@yahoo.com	0772 399 800
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Appendix 3. Action plan template

Proposed Action Plan for GEURCE 2013-2015

SN	ISSUES	ACTION STEPS (What/How)	TIME FRAME (When)	RESPONSIBLE PERSON (Who)	RESOURCES
	ENVIRON- MENT				
	SOCIETY i.e. Health,				
	ECONOMY				