

"Community Action... Global Impact"

Environment and Sustainable Development Best Practice Knowledge Fair

The first Environmental and Sustainable Development Best Practice Knowledge Fair executed by SGP-Gambia took place from **11 – 13 March 2014** in the town of Basse in the Upper River Region. The event was staged in pursuit of the objective of enhancing capacities among Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as outlined in the GEF OP 5 Country Programme Strategy. The Environmental Best Practice Knowledge Fair was implemented by a grant to the Wuli and Sandu development Association (WASDA) with co-funding from Concern Universal-an international NGO based in The Gambia.



The purpose of the Environment and Sustainable Development Best Practice Knowledge Fair was to enable SGP grantees and other CSO stakeholders to network, share and showcase best practices, innovative technologies and lessons learned so as to promote the replication and scaling up of results for greater policy influence and transformational change; as well as to promote sustainability and the mobilization of additional resources for community-based sustainable development initiatives.

Specific objectives:

- Knowledge exchange between NGOs/CBOs working to address global environment issues in order to raise awareness and facilitate replication and scaling up of best practices and innovation.

- Improve awareness and strengthen understanding about the GEF focal areas and the GEF SGP Country Programme, its strategy and results.



- Promote and strengthen partnerships among all concerned stakeholders such as local communities, NGOs/CBOs/CSOs, government and local authorities, academic and research institutions, the private sector, international donors and development agencies.
- Influence the public policy agenda with the experience of SGP and other relevant CSO work.
- Promote the replication and scaling up of successful projects and best practices, including community based methodologies and technology, of SGP and other community-based and non-governmental entities.
- Create a wide and broad-based network of communities and CSOs -including their supporters- that can serve as an active constituency for positive dialogue with the government on sustainable development planning and policy making at the national level.

The Environmental Best Practice Knowledge Fair was organized through a grant awarded to The Wuli and Sandu Development Association (WASDA) – a local NGO based in The Upper River Region, The Gambia.

Planning for the workshop began in August 2013 with the signing of the MOA followed by a series of meetings between SGP, Concern Universal, WASDA and other partners.



Youth With a Mission (YWAM) – *“Promoting low-cost environmentally- friendly building technology in The Gambia”.*

Renewable Energy Association of The Gambia (REAGAM) – *“Promoting energy-efficient cooking stoves.”*

Association for the Advancement of Women and Children (ADWAC) - *“ADWAC’s experiences in mitigating climate change”.*

Women’s Initiative The Gambia – *“Plastic waste recycling”.*

US Peace Corps –*“Experiences in environmental management and gardening schemes in rural Gambia”.*

Freedom From Hunger Campaign – *“Experiences in Soil and water conservation interventions for food security”.*

Beakanyang Kafo – *“Climate Change mitigation at the grassroots level”.*

Green Tech Vision: *“Promoting groundnut shell briquettes among women fish smokers to curb land degradation in 3 fishing communities’.*

Kiang West Kumu Doku Kafo – *“Bee conservation as a strategy for biodiversity conservation and income generation – experiences from Kiang West District”.*

Wuli and Sandu Development Association – *“Experiences in agroforestry and dry season rice schemes in the Upper River Region”.*

FANDEMA –*“Promoting youth empowerment in The Gambia- experiences from a Spanish-support NGO”.*



The Knowledge Fair took the form of presentations to highlight experiences by organisations and exhibitions to showcase products to the general public. The majority of the presentations were done by past SGP grantees but there were a few by others working on their own whose achievements have been identified by the planning team. Seventeen (17) presentations were made by the following organisations:

GEF SGP-Gambia – *“The role of SGP in funding community-based environmental initiatives and Actions” (covering eligibility criteria, focal areas and proposal formats).*

Bee Cause Gambia – 2 presentations made: ((1). *“Promoting apiculture in rural Gambia”* and (2) *“Useful products from honey”*).

West African Bird study Association (WABSA) – *“Experiences on mangrove regeneration”.*



GAM SOLAR – “How to make a garden grow using solar technology – experiences from the private sector-local community partnership”.

University of The Gambia, Faculty of Agriculture – “Coping strategies not enough to avoid loss and damage from drought in The North Bank Region of The Gambia”. (Dr. Sidat Yaffa).

3 Drama presentations by cultural and Drama groups from the Upper River Region on selected environmental themes.



The event was officially opened by the Regional Governor of The Upper River Region and attended by The Head Chief on the Region, local authority representatives, government technical department representatives, school children and the media. The number of participants that registered stood at 206 but this number was far exceeded during the course of the 3 days due to good planning, clear guidelines provided and sustained publicity. A delegation from a Spanish fund (Catalan fund) operating the Southern Casamance Region of Senegal was also in attendance.



On the final day, an SGP-grantee network was launched to fulfill one of the key objectives of the Environment Best Practice Knowledge Fair. The network would provide a platform for information exchange, sharing of useful experiences, lobby for policy influence and financial resources mobilisation among SGP grantees, partners and donors. The network would also be opened to others who may wish to join at a later date.