

The UNA Eastbourne- Naigaga Foundation Trust partnership 2023

The newly established Naigaga Foundation Trust partnership with United Nations Eastbourne in April 2023, marks an exciting collaborative venture, where the common interest in ecological sustainability is reinforced. To mark this event in April, UNA Eastbourne delivered 2,300 seedling and saplings to the Naigaga Ethnobotanical Garden (the new living plant museum) located in Namutumba, Busoga. Naigaga Foundation Trust aims to champion biodiversity through ethnobotany, contributing to ecosystem services in an agro-ecosystem.

Naigaga Foundation Trust aims to create proactive stakeholder engagements to source seeds focusing on traditional medicinal flora and fauna. This concept of a sustainable ethnobotanical garden housing food and traditional remedies for families is under threat.

There is a deep-rooted system of agriculture which favours cash crops at the detriment of diverse species. Pre-Covid 19, communities in this area of Busoga had switched from planting food crops to planting sugarcane as a cash crop. Historical factors show that Busoga Kingdom was a centre for cotton as a cash crop during Uganda's colonial period and for most of the years after independence. Busoga region had also been a major area for the remarkable Mvule tree (*M. excelsa*). This species has however been heavily exploited since the early 20th Century and is now in urgent need of restoration, together with the companion species *Terminalia* and *Musizi*.

The Mvule Tri-Species programme of the UNA Eastbourne fits in well with the further aims of the Naigaga Foundation, as it provides the springboard for its outreach programme helping to sensitize the local communities to the value of trees in an ethnobotanical setting.

Attaining Sustainable Development Goals

We intend to provide key aspects where citizen science and ethnobotany might be directly applicable for supporting implementation of several SDGs.

Food Security -SDG2 - *End Hunger, Achieve Food Security And Improved Nutrition And Promote Sustainable Agriculture*. Planting an ethnobotanical garden will provide hitherto uncoded data on traditional, sustainable agriculture. Additionally, in territories with a shortage of baseline data, public participation through citizen science activities by observations might provide data on the change in the environment.

Education and Culture - SDG 4.7 - *By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development*. Naigaga Foundation Trust understands that inhabitants of any community have a shared material and non-material heritage, which has been accumulated in creative work that has lasted for centuries. Here the cooperation with local communities through ethnobotany can support the documentation of the existing practices and knowledge on plant use.

SDG 15.1 - *“Ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements...”*. Local, national, and international cultural, socio-political, economic and legal parameters inform Naigaga's participatory ethnobotanical garden initiatives in respect of natural resource management strategies.

Creating Value from Values.

Ethnobotany inhabits a crucial position of Busoga's cultural discourse to supplement livelihoods while reducing the burden on more technical Health facilities. Contributing to public health Naigaga Ethnobotanical Garden will rely on accessing, recording, collecting and conserving diversity of flora and fauna. We have already compiled a list of medicinal plant species with traditional knowledge based on clans. Traditional medicine and therapies are a valuable resource, significant to stakeholders and wider pharmaceutical industry in showcasing variety of organic cultural medicinal plant species.

Regrettably, both plant species and cultural expertise are endangered as information is stored orally. Medicinal plant and animal species are threatened with extinction because of poverty, ignorance, and disease within Bantu communities. Other causes include the loss of habitat through deforestation, human and animal population pressure, and structural adjustment programs. Naigaga Foundation Trust will follow Sustainable Development Goals and Conventions such as CITES designed to protect species from extinction. The delegation of environment and natural resources in our projects will be designed to counter development interests of the present generation without endangering those of future ones.

Paul Henry Kayuki
Founder and Chair of Trustees
Naigaga Foundation Trust