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## **SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

**WORDS:** 1119

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Environmental degradation has become a major concern these days. This is mainly due to various un-ecological human practices that lead to pollution and soil erosion, to mention but a few. In recent years, however, measures have been put in place for the conservation of the environment to create an environmentally sustainable world. In Lugulu Girls' High School, sustainability of the environment is being done in various ways.

First, organic farming is one such way of sustaining the environment. In organic farming, agricultural chemicals are not utilized. It is an environmentally friendly way of sustaining the environment. This method of farming is slowly being embraced in the school. In the school farm, organic manure that is made up of animal waste, mainly cow dung, plant remains are used instead of fertilizers. This practice is very economical and healthy since the materials are readily available in the school and therefore the money is used for other activities, for example, purchasing more cows to produce more dung. The manure promotes soil and water conservation. *According to KLB Agriculture book 3*, manure builds a soil structure that can't be eroded easily and which also has a high water holding capacity hence bringing about ecological sustainability. This has resulted into health products from the farm.



**Fig 1: Cabbages Grown Using Organic Manure**

The food products obtained from this type of farming are very healthy and nutritious. This is because they are free from chemical contaminants that come from fertilizers. Therefore, people don't contract diseases from eating these foods. It is one effective way of social sustainability. The manure is also used in the growth of Napier grass for animal consumption. When animals are fed on this, they produce more milk

which is of good quality. The agricultural products produced in the farm, for example cabbages and kales, are used as food by the students and teachers thus reducing the amount of money that goes towards the purchase of food. Organic farming is widely practiced in the country. Mostly by small scale farmers who can't afford to buy agro-chemicals, but the results are rewarding. This practice saves them a lot of money.



**Fig 2: Cows Grazing on the School Farm**

Secondly, planting of trees is also a way of sustaining the environment. And not only trees, but also flowers and grass. These help in preventing soil erosion. Their roots spread out deeper into the soil thus holding the soil firmly. Grass acts as a cover preventing soil erosion. This is ecological sustainability. Other than preventing soil erosion, trees also act as windbreaks. Since last year, we've had two prominent people visiting our school and planting trees. These were Her Excellency Rachael Ruto, Lady Justice Philomena Mwilu and Cabinet Secretary of Education Ambassador Amina Mohammed. This goes to show how important trees are in the ecology. If such important people value trees, what about us?



**Fig 3: Trees, Grass and Flowerbeds in the School Environment**

In school, we are taught the importance of trees. Other organizations can sustain the environment this way by afforestation and re-afforestation. Wherever there are no trees, they can be planted and in a case where a tree has to be cut down, two should be planted to replace it, although the latter case is rare due to the ban placed on felling trees. Anyone found cutting down trees without a license stands a chance of being jailed. Trees are important mainly because they attract rain and provide fresh air to animals and people. Trees and flowers in our school also create a beautiful environment which lures parents to enrol students to the school, thus enabling the school earn money in form of fees.

Thirdly, there are numerous tanks in school meant for storage of rain water. Drain pipes are connected from buildings to underground tanks. This reduces the budget of the school by lowering the water bills. Although not fit for drinking, this water is utilized in many other different ways. First, it is used in washing; both clothes and animals. The pigs in the piggery are washed using this water. It is also used in bathing by the student population. Currently, a construction project is in progress in the school and a lot of water is used, therefore rain water comes in handy. In other places, people can adopt this method of collecting water but if it's expensive for them, other methods can be used, for example, collecting water in buckets and jerry cans. This practice helps conserve water and save money. Below is an underground tank for collection of rain water within the school.



**Fig 4: An Underground Water tank in the School**

In Lugulu Girls', recycling is also encouraged. The main recycled things are metallic materials. Instead of disposing them off and polluting soil and water, they are made into other useful materials. The bins, for example, are made from recycled metal and then painted to give it a newer look. These bins are used in storage of waste. This keeps the environment clean. In addition to that is a message written on the bin encouraging the students to keep the school clean. Therefore, creating awareness is also a way of sustaining the environment. In some organizations, plastic bottles and papers are recycled and moulded into better things, for instance, some toys in the market are made from recycled plastics. This is a source of employment to jobless people since it helps them earn money. The bins are painted green giving the environment its green look as displayed below.



**Fig 5: The Bin with a Message on Keeping the School Clean**

## **CONCLUSION**

Sustainability of the environment is a practice that needs people's cooperation and unity in order to completely pull it off. If this happens, the world will certainly be a better place to live.

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