

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015

SRI



SUSTAINABLE • RURAL • INITIATIVES



Background and introduction

Sustainable Rural Initiatives (SRI) is a non-governmental organisation registered as a non-profit making organization operating in Kadibo Division, Kisumu County, Kenya. The main aim of SRI is to develop community groups and social entrepreneurs, who are society's change agents, creators of innovations that disrupt the status quo and transform poor rural societies for the better. The desire of SRI is therefore to create a brighter future and meaningful change for underserved rural societies. Our ultimate goal is to inspire rural communities to take their future in their hands to enable them access the critical goods and services they need so that they can make choices for themselves and realize their own human potential. These goals are pursued through five program areas: (i) Agriculture & Environment; (ii) Community Health; (iii) Educational support; (iv) Skills Development & Entrepreneurship; and (v) Youth Activities. SRI maintains a Secretariat of core staff to support, coordinate and facilitate programs that aim at improving the quality of life for rural communities. The SRI headquarters are at Okana, some 12 kilometres away from Kisumu town. SRI's geographic focus is the larger Kadibo Division and extended Lake Victoria regions. Improving the quality of life and empowering the different sectors of this community is a key focus of SRI.

SRI is a visionary organization working to improve the quality of life for rural communities through an integrated approach to poverty reduction that impacts on different sectors and peoples in the target community. This is based on the understanding that addressing community challenges requires a multidimensional approach. We do this by leveraging our collective talents, resources, knowledge, capacities and networks to encourage societal transformations. SRI focuses on supporting community groups to benefit from their potentials and opportunities amidst them. We thus implement our innovative activities in collaboration with local communities, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), local and international institutions and partners. We mainly rely on knowledge exchanges, innovations and partnerships to transform rural societies in Western Kenya. SRI has developed a strategic plan to guide its activities and inform and adjust the thinking and action towards achieving its mission through a set of four goals for the next five years. The set goals for the current planned period are:

- (i) To equip rural society members with varied skills for economic empowerment, job creation and improved livelihoods.
- (ii) To support education in the community with the aim of developing a new generation of well-educated community members able to contribute to a sustainable future of the community.
- (iii) To contribute towards environmental sustainability for prosperous, productive and innovative individuals.
- (iv) To harness the capacity and creativity of rural populations to enable them live sustainable and self-reliance.
- (v) To work towards financial sustainability of SRI projects over time which would also enable SRI to sustainably achieve its goals.

For each of these goals key objectives have been set, which are tied to activities. The main factors affecting the ability of the SRI to achieve the strategic goals have also been identified and are being attended to.

Mission and vision

Our mission is to contribute to social transformations in rural villages in Western Kenya by investing in, supporting, connecting and celebrating community groups, social entrepreneurs and the innovators who help them solve chronic and pressing challenges.

Our aim is to develop community groups and social entrepreneurs, who are society's change agents, creators of innovations that disrupt the status quo and transform poor rural societies for the better. Our desire is to create a brighter future and meaningful change for underserved rural societies. Our ultimate goal is to inspire rural communities to take their future in their hands to enable them access the critical goods and services they need so that they can make choices for themselves and realize their own human potential.

Our vision is of a sustainable world devoid of poverty and suffering but with new possibilities and opportunities arising from local potential, partnerships, and knowledge application to local challenges

Management structure

SRI is registered as a Non-Governmental organization in Kenya by the NGOs Coordination Board. Its organization structure includes;

- (i) Management Board- The Management Board meets at least four times a year and is responsible for management and strategic decision making for the running of the organization. It is composed of six persons of whom 3 are female and another three are male. They bring to SRI diverse qualifications and experiences to SRI.
- (ii) Advisory Board- This is composed of 4 persons whose role is mainly to offer strategic advice to the board and also assist with fund raising.
- (iii) Secretariat- This is composed of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the organization and staff in the different departments. They are responsible for the daily running of the organization towards the achievement of the stated goals.
- (iv) Committees- The different activity areas are run by committees whose members are drawn from the relevant stakeholders and members of community groups. They help make decisions in the respective activity areas.
- (v) Members- SRI works with community members through their respective community groups which include schools, youth groups, women groups, farmers groups. The groups relate to SRI through the activities that correspond to their organizations.

Report on 2015 Activities

This section presents a summary of the main activities accomplished in 2015 within the respective activity areas of the organization.

Administrative capacity

During 2015, the administrative capacity of SRI was strengthened. Being a young organization, there was need to enhance the internal administrative capacity to enable the organization to realize its goals. To strengthen this internal capacity, the following actions were taken in 2015. There were five Board

meetings to plan and discuss the activities of the organization. The outcomes of the meetings were useful for the daily running of the organization. There were weekly management meetings held on every Saturday to ensure that activities of the week were accomplished and plan the activities of the following week. Monthly management meetings were held which discussed the monthly reports and made plans for the next month. Three new staff joined the organization to enhance performance of tasks. These included a second lead carpenter for the workshop, a grounds man and a support staff. An intern Diederik van der Valk from University of Twente, Netherlands also worked on different aspects to make the administration of the organization more efficient and effective.

Agriculture and environment

During 2015 some initiatives were undertaken within this program area. Five hundred (500) trees were planted in the compound of the organization. This was intended to make the environment of the organization better. A pilot tree nursery project was started. The aim is to promote tree planting amongst the stakeholders of SRI and also to undertake tree planting campaigns within the community. The tree nursery is also to be used for income generation. One acre of SRI land was put under maize and vegetables to subsidize the food needs of the organization. A pilot vegetable project was started for income generation and also to pilot on which crops would do well in the environment. 18 solar panels were installed to enable the organization start utilizing sustainable energy which is friendly to the environment. There are some challenges with this initiative which are being addressed.

Educational Support

In 2015, SRI continued to support the students supported in this program. These are bright but poor students from Okana who could have not afforded secondary school without SRI's support. Some of the students are supported by PowerED, a partner organization based in Canada. The students are as follows;

- Sharon Achieng - St. Francis Rangala Girls (Form 4)
- Caroline Onyango - Migingo Girls (Form 4)
- Philister Ondiek - Masogo Secondary School (Form 4)
- Iddah Akinyi - Migingo Girls (Form 3)
- Emmaculate Oliech - Masogo Secondary School (Form 3)
- Sarah Awuor - Ranjira Secondary School (Form 2)
- Stephen Otieno - Ranjira Secondary School (Form 3)
- Phidel Aduda - Lela Mixed Secondary School (Form 2)
- Felix Ayiabei - Moi University

Generally, the students are performing well. Three of them will sit for their K.C.S.E examinations in 2015 and should be able to post good results. Due to funding constraints, we did not manage to bring in new students in 2015 but will do so in 2016 when the three currently in form four have completed. Within Education, there are also plans at advanced stage to set up a resource centre to support education and other community activities. The resource centre will in addition comprise of a library, cyber café, meeting pavilions, some office spaces and information about the community. SRI also hosted Mr. Antony Wambua, a volunteer teacher from Moi University supported the teaching of Mathematics and Business Studies at Nyakakana secondary school for three months.

Skills Development and Entrepreneurship

The carpentry workshop continued with activities in 2015 with more income being recorded than in the previous year. The income sharing model was also adopted to ensure that the apprentices also got some income. There were very good improvements with the workshop. There was a lot of improvements too on the quality of products that also enabled the workshop to post better returns than in the previous year. A marketing plan was developed with the help of three interns (Bart, Katie and Dominique). The marketing plan was to enable the workshop establish new markets and increase sales of the products. There were also visits by Jan Wentink from Flying Carpenters, Netherlands to also help with some expertise in the workshop. A volunteer, Marko also spent some time in the workshop. In the same year, the workshop was also visited by Dr.Auma Obama of Sauti Kuu Foundation who inspired the lead carpenters and the apprentices.

Other developments

In addition to the above strategic activities, the following additional and important activities also took place at SRI in the year under review

Open House

SRI organized an *Open House* on 26th November 2016. This was an occasion during which the community and key stakeholders of SRI were invited to the SRI to be shown and explained to what activities SRI was engaging in. It was intended to increase the awareness of the community on what was taking place at SRI so that the community could also be more strongly involved and use the opportunities available at SRI. The open day was organized by SRI staff and students (Dominique Berck, Katie Froeling and Bart Smikens) from Delft University, Netherlands. It was also intended to give an opportunity for marketing of SRI carpentry workshop products.

Website and branding

Within 2015, the SRI website was revamped and enhanced to have additional features and information that would be useful for sharing with stakeholders. More information was added to different sections of the website (www.srikenya.org) which has made the site to be more informative. Some gaps still exist and are being attended to. In addition to this, SRI put some efforts in branding which included development of new logo, development of brochures for showcasing products, development of business cards for staff and painting of the gate to brand the organization. These were done in collaboration with our partner Students for Sustainability through the student interns sent to SRI.

Strategic Plan

A draft Strategic Plan for the next four years 2017- 2020 has been developed and is being finalized. It outlines the strategic objectives of SRI and aligns them with the strategic activities and the resources needed to accomplish those activities. Over the planned period, SRI is expected to grow from a newly established rural organization to a strong one mainly based on delivery on activities and accomplishment of the set goals. The overall outcomes should impact on the wider goal which is to enhance the living conditions of members of Okana community. It is expected that the plan will be launched at the end of 2016 and will be continually reviewed and aligned to changing contextual dynamics.

Business Plan for workshop

In 2015, a draft Business Plan for the SRI Carpentry workshop was developed. The aim of the business plan was to enable the development of a business model for the workshop. The workshop had been experiencing several challenges such as quality of products, marketing of products, obtaining orders, income sharing models, costing of products, management of the workshop and branding of products. The business plan will be completed in mid-2016 so that it can be used as the blue print for managing the carpentry workshop.

Internships

In 2015, there were several interns who spent some time at SRI helping with different projects. Ernst Schutte from Netherlands worked on installation of solar panels at SRI and also on a feasibility study on the community if they would need the extra solar panels to be connected to them at a cost. Diederik van der Valk from University of Twente, Netherlands volunteered on improving the management and communication strategies of SRI. Laura & Ellen Rouwendall who are architecture students from Delft University, Netherlands undertook a feasibility study on the establishment of a resource centre at SRI. Bart Smikens, Katie Froeling and Dominique Berck also from Delft University, Netherlands volunteered on the marketing plan and branding of the SRI carpentry workshop.

Accommodation

In 2015, a new permanent guest house was completed at SRI. It can accommodate six guests and would thus be useful in accommodating guests coming to SRI and some of the interns. This is in addition to the mud house that was completed in 2014 and where most of the interns have been staying.

Partnerships

In 2015 SRI continued to consolidate its partnerships. The different partners supported different activities. The main international partners of SRI are as below. They all focus on different activity areas.



SRI has also entered into partnerships with some local organizations working in the region where SRI is located.

Financial Report for 2015 (Attached)