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YVID Assignment #4

Choose one or more of the targets for SDG 2. Discuss the current state of these targets in your host country as you see them, related obstacles, and your recommendations for achieving them.

SDG Goal Two: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Target 2.1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

Target 2.4: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.

The area I live in in Uganda is extremely lush and yet even here I notice that people live almost solely on three or four foods. In their homes people eat sweet potatoes and beans and in schools and workplaces people eat posho (a mixture of corn flour and water) and beans. Those who own their own land sometimes have avocado trees or other fruit trees but many of these fruits are sold for a profit rather than consumed by the farmers or their families. Agriculture is the main industry in Uganda. I have heard that as high as 82% of the working population is involved in the agriculture industry. How is it possible that such a high population of the country is directly involved in growing food and yet there is a lack of food security and many people are not getting the nutrients they need? I have chosen to discuss two targets that could, I believe, fairly easily be met in Uganda and desperately need to be met.

Target 2.1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

Currently in Uganda this target is not fully met. I have visited local schools and seen what children eat for lunch and I am sure that they do not have access to both nutritious and sufficient food. Many of the children I have met come to school for the meal that is provided yet the meal consists of watery posho porridge and that might have a couple beans added. Posho porridge is

simply corn flour and water. If I tried to subsist on solely porridge my stomach would be growling by day two. If this is what they are eating at school it seems unlikely that their younger siblings are eating more nutritious meals at home. Another issue that is relevant to the whole population here is the lack of food storage. From what I have seen wealthier families might keep a supply of beans and flour that could last them for a couple weeks but beyond that they rely on always being able to access what is in their field. Thankfully, as I mentioned earlier, this area has not been as affected by changing weather as many areas of Uganda have been. Unfortunately, that does not mean that the change is not still coming. With a less reliable rainy season every year it is becoming more and more important that families are able to store food for longer, and able to grow enough extra food in the growing seasons.

Target 2.4: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.

In Kabale, Uganda's changing weather is clearly making farming more difficult. Farmers here are accustomed to having four distinct seasons every year, two rainy and two dry. Unfortunately these seasons are becoming more and more difficult to predict. The rain doesn't always come when it is supposed to and the dry season is sometimes very wet. People are used to knowing almost the exact date when they need to plant their crops and so they continue to plant their crops when they always have. This is a pretty big issue because many crops have been ruined by too much or too little rain. Another issue that complicates farming productivity here is the parceling of land. Many farmers rent land, but even those who do not are often forced to buy small plots of land all across the region in which they live. So, rather than being able to weed all their fields at the same time they are forced to spend a large amount of their time traveling between their plots rather than working to grow more food. Another issue is that many people rent their land and therefore they are less interested in investing in sustainable agroforestry practices because they will not necessarily benefit from planting trees that take 5-15 years to grow.

Obstacles and Recommendations for Achieving Targets 2.1 and 2.4

The main obstacles to improving the situation here include high population density, unpredictable weather, land parceling and a lack of income that allows people to do anything with their crops other than sell them for profit as quickly as possible. I believe that the best way to reach these targets would be to educate people about the best times to plant and harvest and which crops can most easily be grown even with unpredictable weather. Some type of land consolidation could also greatly improve farmer's productivity, but this could also cause other major issues so it should be considered very carefully. It is also necessary to diversify the economy so that people are not relying solely on their own crops in order to feed their families and make an income. Subsistence farming will only become more difficult with climate change.