



RECONNECTING TO

NATURE

2021/2022 Annual Report





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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ms. Nagudi Irene, is a graduate of Environmental Sciences of Kyambogo University, Kampala, Uganda. She is very passionate about Conservation education with specific interest to soil conservation and climate change. This unmatched passion and the limited space for children in the conservation space propelled Ms. Nagudi to start up Kichini Gardeners; an initiative that empowers children (8-16yrs of age) and youth to become part of the solution to global challenges, specifically, Climate Action, Zero Hunger, Peace, Justice and strong Institutions and life on land, all of which are targets of the SDGs 2030 Agenda, SDG 13,2,16 and 15 respectively. The initiative aims to address these challenges through urban organic gardening. Her potential is backed up with several trainings she has had; 2021 Kofi Annan Changemaker, 2021 GYCN Climate Ambassador, Change agent Leadership Programs, Permaculture Graduate, Business Instructor, Earth Day and Uganda Youth Biodiversity Network programs volunteer Leadership. These various trainings have exposed her to arena that engineer problem-solving skills.

Ms. Nagudi Irene's backbone for the initiative is that "No one can survive without food and we cannot have food without Mother Nature." And children are key agents of change in our communities.

1.2 About Kichini Gardeners Initiative

Kichini Gardeners Initiative is a registered not-for-profit organization established in Uganda. The initiative works with children (8-16 years) and youth, connecting them to better food production systems and Mother Nature while educating them on climate action, all done through organic gardening. The initiative was founded in 2021 by Irene Nagudi who was moved after she met 11-year-old Sarah who used to go to school on empty stomach and at times even sleep hungry because her mother couldn't afford even one meal a day. While Irene Nagudi inquired further, Sarah explained that her mother always told her food prices were high so she couldn't afford buying food sometimes. Sarah's mother is a casual worker, moving from door to door washing clothes for a little income which sometimes isn't guaranteed; another empty-stomached day. In order to counter such 'low days' Sarah's mother collects plastic bottles and sells them for hope to feed. Also, during her series of interactions with children in her community, Irene discovered that they had negative attitude towards Nature and very low self-esteem for potential future leaders and stewards of Mother Earth. "This is not the life children should live while they can still learn to convert their environment for sustainable use" Irene thought to herself. Being a Programs Director of a youth-led 'Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN)– Uganda' by then, she realized more children just like Sarah are facing such hard times some even worse yet are left out on matters of biodiversity conservation and climate action, matters affect them the most. All of these crowned with Irene's passion and love for children birthed Kichini Gardeners; a home of empowerment to arm children against such miseries.



Vision

A platform for young people to showcase innovative and actionable solutions to food insecurity, climate and biodiversity crises towards peaceful communities through organic **urban** gardening.

Mission

To lead and showcase through on-ground actions and storytelling the power of gardening by children and youth to address biodiversity and climate crises as well as food security for sustainable and more resilient urban communities.

Values

In our work, **Practicality, Environmentalism, Teamwork, Godliness, Accountability** and **Stewardship** are at the heart of everything we do

Impact

As a young initiative, our work is measured through our influence on livelihoods among children and youth, at times parents, as evidenced by changes in their opinions, behavior and influence on their counterparts.

How we work

The Initiative works closely with partners from youth organizations, universities and primary schools along with the parents. Our work revolves around: Gardening, Story-telling, Intergenerational exchanges, children sending call-to-action messages to peers and drafting simplified reading materials for schools to engage on issues related to conservation of our planet. This was employed in our just concluded Gardening project 2021/2022 that was conducted in schools and communities within Kampala.

Our contribution to Sustainable Development Goals



Core areas of work in 2021/2022:

- Executing Kofi Annan Change makers Project
- Promoting organic gardening
- Introducing climate change literacy in primary schools and communities.
- Fronting young people
- Improving nutrition of young people and their mindset towards gardening.

Our activities take the form of:

- School projects
- Gardening of vegetables
- Fruit tree planting
- Story-telling
- Engaging young people in competitions

Our Tweet performance for the year 2021/2022

@KichiniGardener –now boasts of 1000 followers.



Kichini Gardeners
@GardenerKichin

The first week of march our team carried out an outreach at Kigata Primary School in partnership with EBaprenuer Solutions with support from Real Food system extending climate change awareness and urban gardening skills,we impacted a total of 150 students [#foodsecurity](#) [#gardening](#)



Kichini Gardeners
@GardenerKichin

On this [#EnvironmentDay](#) Composting in [#schoolgardens](#) not only teaches students about enriching soils but also reducing on their waste in classes.

It's an in-garden composting method.
[#gardening](#)
[@org_TGE](#) [@eei_ng](#)
[@newgreentimes](#)



Kichini Gardeners @Gard... · 05 Apr
[#Children](#) are so inquisitive & do realize what's happening today 🌍

These primary students, were eager to learn how [#gardening](#) & [#soils](#) can help in fighting the [#ClimateCrisis](#) & their [#voices](#) being heard towards [#Sustainability](#)

[#soils](#) [#SDGs](#) [#FridaysForFuture](#)
[#climatechange](#)



Kichini Gardeners @Gard... · 04 A
Mothers spend the largest % of time with children.

Empowering mothers in [#treeplantir](#) inspires the little ones to learn the relevance of [#Tree](#) when still young.

[#SDGs](#) [#Children](#) [#gardening](#) [#soils](#)
[#Togetherness](#)



KidsGardening and 3 others

Promote

2 20 56



Kichini Gardeners
@GardenerKichin

It's through Nature,
We connect, learn & Lead 🌱🌱🌱

A dialogue exchange between [#YOUTH](#) and [#Children](#) [@GardenerKichin](#) motivating their resilience in Nature conservation 🌱🌱🌱 through home gardens and tree planting [#ClimateAction](#) [@KofiAnnanFdn](#)



Kichini Gardeners
@GardenerKichin

Look at what used to be a home dumping site 🗑️, it's a vegetable 🥕🥦🌱 [#garden](#) now with beautiful 🌻🌺🌸 [#Flowers](#)

[#tuesdayvibe](#) [#gardening](#)
[#ClimateAction](#) [#Children](#)

[@KofiAnnanFdn](#) [@EdibleGarden1](#)



Kichini Gardeners @Ga... · 11 Aug 21
To build a responsible leader at an early age is not easy...
But what if we start a joint garden with them?

Max & Matt, used to pull out and step on the neighbor's veggies because they thought the garden didn't matter. But Today they are greatly enjoying the touch of soils



2. THE KOFI ANNAN CHANGEMAKERS.

In 2021, our founder Irene Nagudi was selected as a Kofi Annan Change maker during which she developed the project of engaging 200 children in organic gardening as recovery from Covid-19 to improve on the Nutrition of young people as well as foster their connection to Mother Nature.

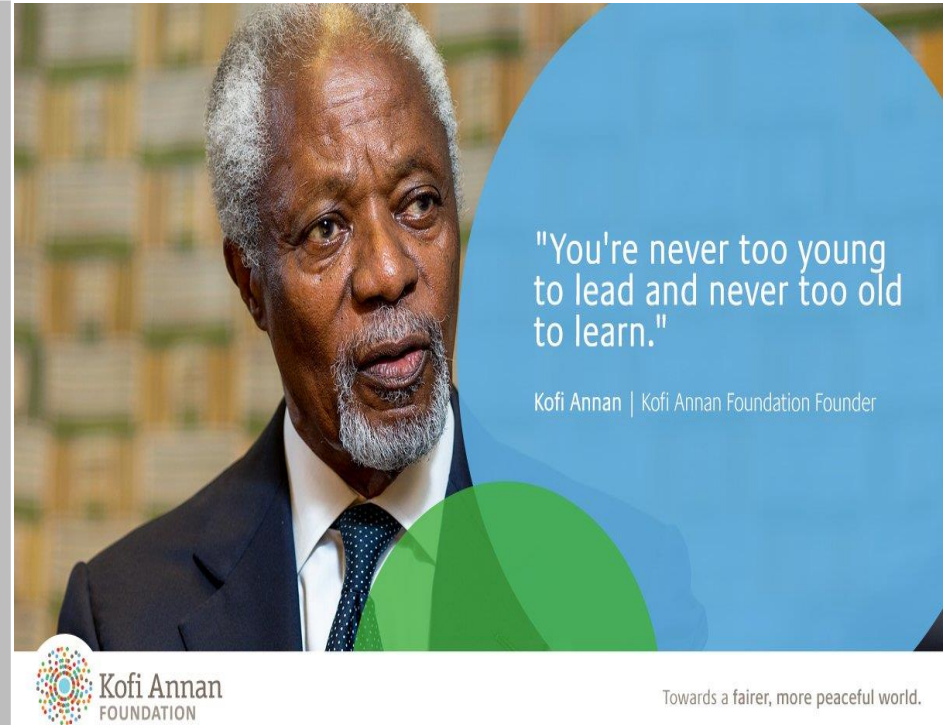
The six-month programme of intergenerational dialogue, training and mentorship exposes the Kofi Annan Change makers to the approaches and values that Kofi Annan embodies. They meet with officials working in many international organizations based in Geneva and gain access to experts in their field and build their networks. They interact with extraordinary leaders who share their own experiences of dealing with the most pressing challenges the world is facing today. They provide their own view of the challenges faced by their communities, resulting in mutual learning between the new generation of young leaders and experienced experts who worked closely with Kofi Annan and his Foundation. More about the Change makers at <https://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/kofi-annan-changemakers/kofi-annan-changemakers-intergenerational-dialogue-for-impact/>



3. CONNECTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Many youth have taken up the initiative to fight for their planet but majority especially the below 18 years of age, are less engaged and have limited knowledge on issues concerned to environment as they are always considered to be still young in mind and cannot do much. In order to bridge this gap, 3 schools were added our program and 10 homes were enrolled in the training and educational gardening program.

According to Kofi Annan's quote; "You're never too young to lead and never too old to learn." we are always inspired to share what we know with the young people so they be Change makers and lead on solutions that affect their communities. As these young people transition into adulthood they will proactively protect their planet.



4. DIVERSITY IN OUR WORK.

In connecting young people to their environment, we greatly embraced diversity; working with multicultural communities, including refugees. The gardening group comprised of Congolese, Sudanese and Somalis and Ugandans to embrace co-existence between Ugandan young people and refugees thereby preaching peace within Kisenyi community.



Our environment is our responsibility



5. VALUING TREES.

Trees are very vital in maintaining a balance in ecosystems. The importance of trees was enshrined in the education program. Our education program however opted for fruit tree planting. Of the 10 – 15 trees were planted during the home garden engagements and 3 trees within schools.

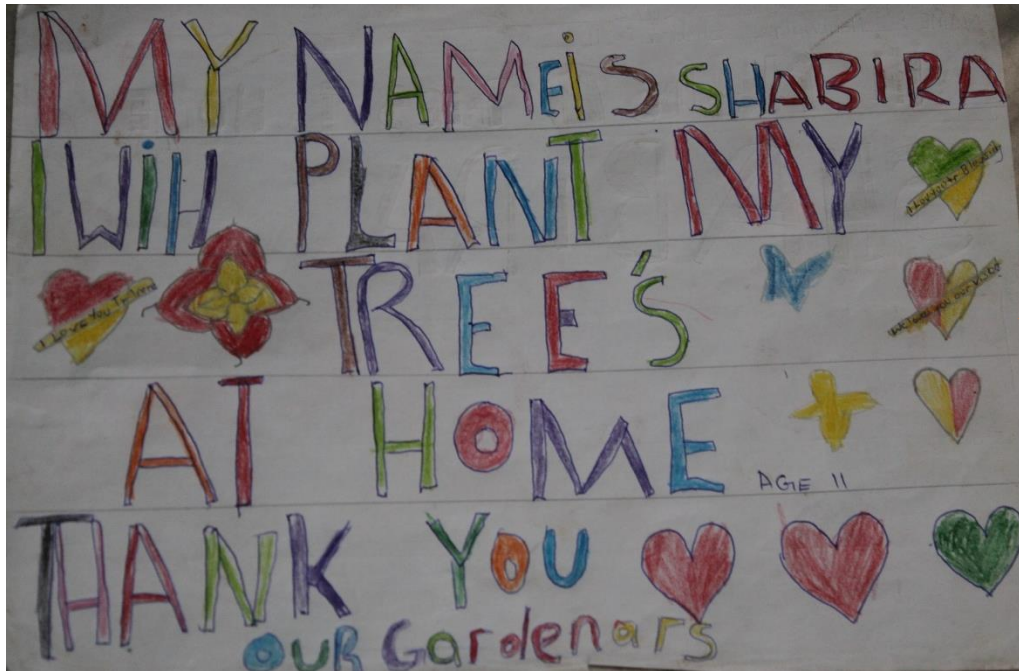


The girl-led group showing off their planted mango tree in the compound



6. YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITMENTS

During our outreaches, children were taught how to design call to action messages for some of the crises storming the world today. Some of the climate action messages are as below;



**Shabira's
commitment**



**Listen to
Deborah's
commitment**



7. RECONNECTING TO NATURE THROUGH PLASTICS

Prior to the implementation of the project, we piloted Kireka parish, one of the project sites out of which 2% of 20 respondents approached in an informal survey in 2021 practiced sorting of garbage before storage because they either have domestic animals that feed on the peelings and food leftovers or have friends who pick and take them to feed their animals. 40% paid young men who collect the garbage and dispose of with open dumping alongside roads or an open field, and 23% carry the polythene bags with garbage and leave them alongside roads.

An estimate of 40% - 50% of plastic bottles within the dumped garbage are picked by young people and women who collect and sell them back to the manufacturers for recycling but the rest of the plastic containers were left behind and none of the polythene bags were picked for recycling.

With information from the survey, about 84% of respondents had limited knowledge on environmental protection and how our practices today contribute to global status. As part of the program, we reused plastics and polythene bags as watering containers and garden beds respectively. This was meant to challenge the young people to adopt plastic and polythene innovation techniques in order to minimize on the solid waste crisis.



8. CALL-TO-ACTION MESSAGE



“Let’s all embrace home and school gardens to fight food insecurity and climate change”

Iqra -14years



9. INTRODUCING CLIMATE LITERACY IN SCHOOLS.

A number of school-going children and their teachers have limited knowledge on climate change owing to the fact that the topic in question is not incorporated in the lower institutions curriculum, yet at current state, children are more susceptible to the effects of climate change. In 2021, UNICEF shared, 2020 was the hottest year on record with Atmospheric carbon dioxide levels highest in at least 3.5 million years. In many parts of the world, people are facing multiple climate-related impacts such as severe drought and flooding, air pollution and water scarcity, leaving their children vulnerable to malnutrition and disease. Almost every child on earth is exposed to at least one of these climate and environmental hazards. Without urgent action, this number will go up. As such, we were able to develop simplified climate literacy reading materials for young people to understand this concept and therefore ably join the fight against climate change and its adverse impacts.



My Planet – Volume 1 book; Let us all understand how climate change comes about and what can we do to save our Planet and teach other children.



To curb on the number

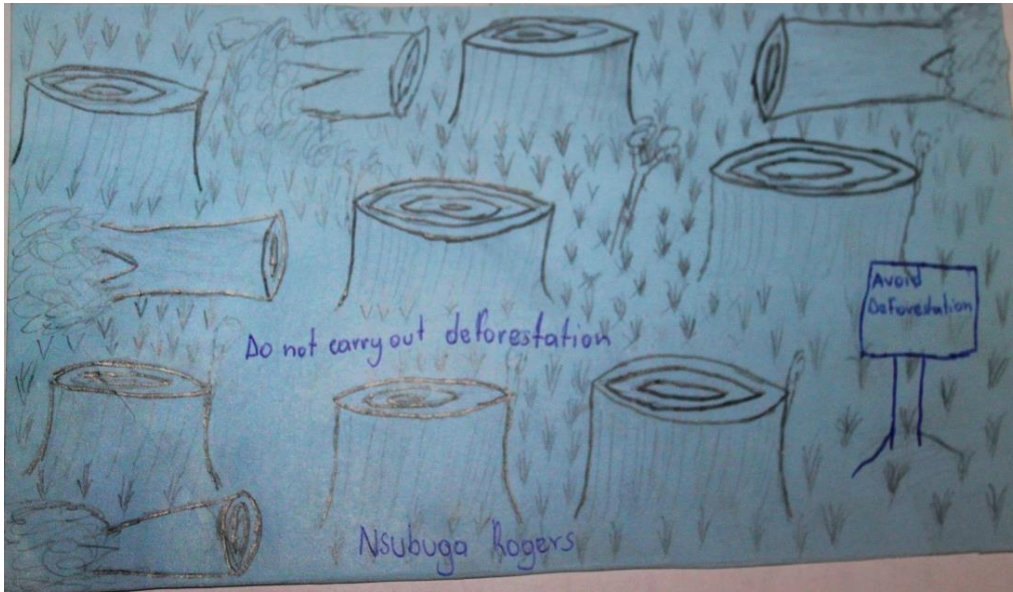
In 2022, we introduced climate change in its simplified form to students in schools and homes,

We related the topic to how gardens are affected by the impacts of climate change thus an effect on food security which would leave children vulnerable to malnutrition.

And giving them simplified booklets on climate change, its impacts and what they can do as children to adapt as well as mitigate to these impacts.

The participants we engaged in climate education were taught the relevance of tree planting and vegetable growing in fighting off climate change at micro level and its impacts on food security, health, water and biodiversity.

Young people shared their messages (poems, art illustrations) to the world.



Favor 9 years old, planted her first tree at school and this was an orange tree to fight global warming.





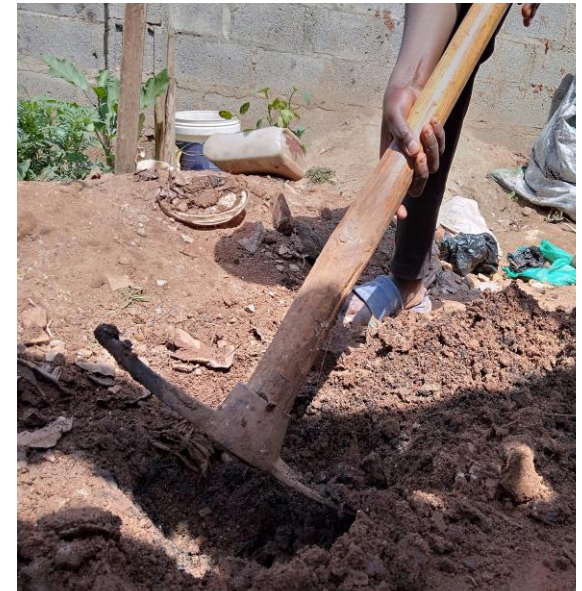
"The world would have been better without Humans but God gave us a second chance, so Climate change must end and we must live."

BIGOMBA STANLEY TRAVOR

14 years
Student



@Kichini_Gardeners   



Modi Nobert's commitment to curb Climate change;

I will educate my parents on the importance of planting trees and the dangers of cutting down trees and seek permission to start gardening in our compound.



10. PARTNERSHIP 1: ENHANCING CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS AND FOOD PRODUCTION IN KABALE DISTRICT.

Kichini Gardeners Initiative conducted a school outreach activity in partnership with Ebapreneur Solutions to create awareness on climate change and food production among primary students of Kigata Primary School, Kabale district. This project was funded by Real Food Systems through and in partnership with Ebapreneur solutions. **“How to use organic, sustainable Gardening practices to address climate change as well as safe food production at micro-level”** and practical sessions were delivered to a total number of 150 students of Kigata Primary School and 5 class teachers.

The goal of the school outreach was to enhance our partnership with Ebapreneur Solutions as well as gauge the capacity of rural schools in addressing climate change emergency among school-going children.



PARTNERSHIP 2: SPEAK FOR CLIMATE, WHISPER FOR NATURE STORYCRAFTING WORKSHOP AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY.

Storytelling, as a unique tool is relevant for the young people to communicate, share stories of their work, passions and interests. However, it still remains an underused tool for enhancing action within the nature-climate nexus. In a bid to bridge this gap, Youth4Nature in partnership with GAYO and Tree Adoption Uganda organized a story telling workshop that took place on the 9th July, 2022 at Makerere University. This was aimed at;

- i. Educating youth on the relevance of storytelling as a tool to tackle the nature-climate nexus crisis while building their capacity as leaders in their local landscapes
- ii. Listen, learn and interact with youth so as to build on the experience as well as expertise from their work within the nature-climate space
- iii. Build the capacity of youth through participant-led story-crafting sessions for communication and impact.

Just like other organizations were invited to share their work and elaborate how they incorporate story telling in their day to day activities to impact lives, we (Kichini Gardeners) were invited to share how we use story telling as a tool to uplift our target group as well as preach the message of climate change and environmental conservation across the globe.



Asianzu Blessing Apamaku representing Kichini Gardeners at the workshop.



Participants pose for a group photo after the workshop.

11. AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Many young people have innovative ideas that most of the times go unheard. We work to see that young people send out their messages respectfully and proudly as well as share their ideas with their communities. We strongly believe the knowledge these young people hold, can be used to transform the communities and working on the challenges affecting them. With amplifying young people's voices, we have given an opportunity to these young people to say out their mind when it comes to conservation issues.





If plants give us the above, then we should all conserve them



Betty and Favor's messages

Message from Kawuma
Kawuma 14 years, a PWD(Deaf) student, he says a green environment is good for everyone because it provides us with shade, so let's conserve our environment for more shades in schools.



12. IMPROVING NUTRITION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Backtracking to the baseline data we collected during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021 for the Kofi Annan Change makers project in Kireka community; a sub-urban and slum setting. The informal survey from 20 households suggested the persistent Covid-19 situation held back most caretakers home, some with lost jobs, 4 in every 10 households, approximately 40% opted to take their children to relatives in home villages, where food is not always purchased whereas 60% stayed with their children. Even with the first measure, they still have to cut down on the meals consumed a day, from 3 to at least 2; breakfast at midday and late lunch to serve as supper or one meal per day (late lunch). This made children/families susceptible to other forms of malnutrition due to insufficient intake of multiple micronutrients.

Furthermore, in 20 households, 1-3 children and adolescents displayed visible signs of malnourishment according to the neighborhood and once diets are supplemented, it could be ratified.

With the findings, we opted to engage 200 children in a variety of vegetable growing, while conserving their environment. From the 10 gardens that were set up in homes with 10-15 participants each, the young people shared that they could eat vegetables at least on a daily basis.



Sweetney, 14years

“This produce is so much and the smile cannot go off my face.” She said.



Anastasia, 8years

“We didn’t know that we had fertile soils at home, but looking at these fat Swiss chard I always felt the joy of gardening.”



13. YOUNG PEOPLES' MINDSET TOWARDS GARDENING.

Many young people have not grown up to be attached to nature, in urban setting. Some have compounds but majority are ignorant about green spaces yet they could utilize their compounds for a tree or vegetables to reduce on the carbon emissions at micro level.

Relating to the story behind the initiative, most young people grow up from urban spaces with less exposure to gardening. On the other hand, gardens at home or school are places to make up for wrong deeds, thus young people grow up with negative attitudes towards gardens. This is different now!



Meet Titus 12years old,
“Behind our house was a dumping site and we never thought of starting a garden not even a single day in my life. I never thought my hands would enjoy the dirt but now see the beauty in my home”

Young people grasping knowledge from the trainer cheerfully.

14. INTERGENERATIONAL EXCHANGES

Following the Kofi Annan Change makers intergenerational dialogue, the initiative realized the importance of bringing together generations of different ages, to share, learn from one another, and envision a better future together. In our intergenerational exchanges held in 2021 and 2022, we created space for both children and youth. Through the exchanges, the children learn to express themselves, ask about the challenges youth face in advocating for Mother Nature, and ask about the future opportunities around conservation spaces and what lies ahead of the current generation.



Shamim Nangobi, student at Kyambogo University pursuing Environmental sciences exchanging with the children about soils and what we can do as young people to save soils biodiversity.



Aiita Joshua Apamaku from Youth4Nature smiling for the camera having had an exchange with the children on issues relating to climate awareness.

15. PICTORIALS.....

Reasons you should start a home garden



Gardening has done us so well because it has motivated our students' interest towards learning, their attitudes towards environment has changed, I want to train other classes and fellow teachers to continue growing crops within our school to benefit us and our planet." Teacher Joshua Jackson a.k.a Tr. J.J

Girls need this knowledge too....







With our tutors,
peers and garden,
we have the
reason to smile



The joy in the faces of young people is the joy we want to see and spread out to our peers

16. SPECIAL THANKS.

Kichini Gardeners is forever indebted to work with the following partners to accomplish its first year's project.

- ❖ Kofi Annan Foundation
- ❖ Communities of Kireka, Kasokoso, Naalya
- ❖ Ebapreneur Solutions
- ❖ Youth4Nature
- ❖ St.Anthanasius Primary School
- ❖ Mulago Bright Primary School
- ❖ Katwe KCCA Primary School
- ❖ Kichini Volunteers

As Kichini Gardeners, we shall continue to preach the gospel of saving mother Earth and ensuring that we impact more young people to become ambassadors towards this cause.

We are therefore open to chances of collaboration to build sustainable cities and peaceful communities.

Feel free to reach out,

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