

Project Grow

An Ethical Plant-Based Environmental Initiative to Empower At-Risk Ugandans.

Overview

The Podrska Foundation (www.podrskafoundation.org) is a grassroots organization that advocates for human and non-human animals in Uganda. Established by Dash Meizler in 2018, the Podrska Foundation seeks to improve the lives of vulnerable humans whilst promoting compassion for non-human animals. We also see care of the environment as an integral part of our work. After all, it takes a healthy environment for humans and non-humans to thrive together. Through our ongoing outreach work in the slums of Kampala, we have gained insight into a number of simple ways in which we can improve peoples' lives. One such way is *Project Grow*: a grassroots initiative designed to practice and promote the care of all three spheres of life – humans, non-human animals and the environment.



Podrska founder, Dash Meizler

Project Grow will enable participants to learn about environmentally sustainable plant-based ways to improve all three spheres of life. This will be achieved by training participants to acquire the understanding, skills and means to recycle their plant based organic waste into usable compost. Additionally, participants of the project will be given the training and materials needed to grow nutritional vegetable crops to feed themselves and their families and potentially create a modest income from the sale of any surplus.

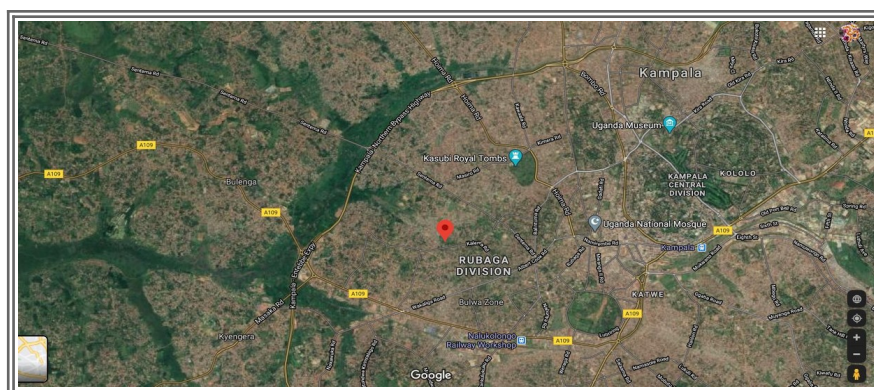
As an organisation that actively campaigns for non-human animals, we at Podrska will also be sharing with our participants information about the ethics and benefits associated with a vegan approach to life. (see appendix A for examples of Podrska's vegan training schedule). To our knowledge, *Project Grow* is unique in Uganda and the Podrska Foundation is well-placed to deliver it.



Podrska Foundation animal advocacy campaign

Participants

In order to make the best use of finances, resources and time, we will initially run this as a pilot project on behalf of a limited number of participants from a single district. It is our intention to extend the reach of the project to cover members of the community at large in Uganda. By first running it as a pilot project we will be able to analyse its strengths and weaknesses and use the feedback to make any improvements. In its pilot phase, *Project Grow* will consist of five groups from the slum district of Kiwunya in Kampala, Uganda. Residents of Kiwunya face many challenges. There are high illiteracy rates, poor housing conditions, overcrowding, water logging and poor sanitation. Many residents not only have health issues but are also unemployed and thus live in extreme poverty. The selection of initial participants for the pilot will be according to their level of vulnerability and their access to space for growing plants.



Kiwunya, Kampala Uganda

Delivery and Orientation

Project Grow will be launched when sufficient funds are raised. With the permission of the local rural development offices, the Podrska Foundation's local and international volunteers and advisers will oversee the project. Horticultural training (about which the Podrska team has insufficient knowledge) will be delivered by qualified instructors. Participants will initially take part in an orientation conducted by the director of Podrska. This will include not only information about the Podrska Foundation's other activities but also an outline of the proposed project.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

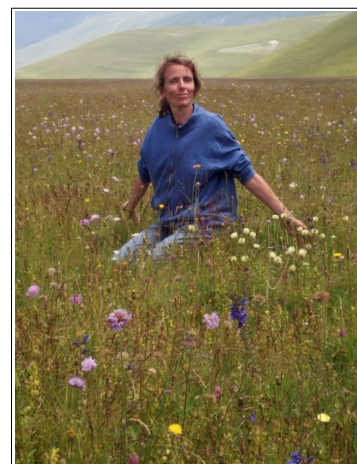
The Podrska Foundation will monitor the various aspects of *Project Grow* and obtain feedback throughout from volunteers, trainers and participants as to the strengths and weaknesses of the project. Participants will also be asked to complete a simple feedback form at the end of the pilot project (see appendix B). The founder of Podrska (Dash Meizler) will meet with international volunteers and advisers via the internet to discuss the feedback in depth and accordingly make suitable adjustments to the project. Financial sponsors and interested parties will receive regular reports on the project's progress.



*Arvind Thomas, PHD:
external adviser*



*Aporu Constantine:
field volunteer, Uganda*



*Nirvikalpini Nithya:
international volunteer*

Funding

For the initial pilot project, we will be seeking funding from individuals interested in helping us support a vulnerable community in an ethical and environmentally friendly way. The cost to run each component of the project is shown in the relevant section below. An overview of

the total cost of the project can be seen in appendix C.* After the initial pilot project is completed, we will seek institutional grants and/or donations from individuals in order to extend Project Grow to involve more vulnerable households in Uganda. By undertaking a pilot project first, we will be able to see if any of the project's components need to be improved upon before we roll it out to the wider community. We will determine improvements in light of the feedback from the pilot project's instructors and participants. For example, if the participants have difficulty with understanding or implementing the recycling of organic waste, we can adjust the training schedule accordingly.

** please note that the amount in USD is subject to change depending on the exchange rate at the time of purchase*

Sustainability

Project Grow is designed to be self-sustaining for participants. There is the potential for participants to buy new seeds and plants through the sale of any surplus vegetables. The growing medium for the container gardens will be eventually provided from the compost that is produced from the organic waste collected at the participants' homes. Podrska will be fully involved with overseeing, training and managing all aspects of the project during the first growing season (up to 6 months). It is our aim and hope that after receiving the initial training, the participants will be able to continue to recycle and grow their crops without Podrska's continual oversight or further training.

By enabling the participants to acquire knowledge and practical experience regarding plant-based diets and natural cycles involved in crop production and the decomposition of organic waste, *Project Grow* will also promote sustainability for the environment as a whole.

Components

Organic Waste Recycling

Currently in the slums of Kampala there is a lack of knowledge of the benefits and processes involved in recycling organic waste. Most of the organic waste comes from food, plant waste and paper which, rather than being composted, is currently dumped on the streets or in trenches along with non-organic waste. Apart from missing the opportunity to create a fertile compost, this approach to waste management impacts the community by creating unpleasant odours, encouraging unwanted rodents and insects (such as cockroaches) and blocking the movement of water which can stagnate and become a breeding ground for mosquitoes. All of these consequences can have a negative impact on the residents' health. Podrska will provide rodent-proof bins for organic waste collection. Podrska's founder (Dash Meizler) is currently receiving training to teach participants about the process and benefits of recycling organic waste (see appendix D for the organic recycling training schedule for participants). We intend to transport the organic waste to an area of rented land in order to compost it. The resulting

compost will then be used to provide an organic growing medium for future container gardens. The two main benefits of the project are improvements to community health and the production of a valuable and natural organic medium. We believe that these anticipated benefits will provide sufficient incentive to the participants to continue recycling their waste.

Requirements

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE UGX	COST FOR PILOT UGX (\$)	COST FOR 50 FAMILIES UGX (\$)
Recycling bin	10	100,000	1,000,000 (272.71)	5,000,000 (1363.55)
Land rent for composting	3 months	350,000	1,050,000 (286.34)	1,050,000 (286.34)
Transportation- taking organic waste for composting	6 (2 trips per month for 3 months)	300,000	1,800,000 (490.87)	1,800,000 (490.87)
TOTAL			3,850,000 (1049.92)	7,850,000 (2140.76)

Vegetable Container Gardening

Currently, plant-based farming is scarce in Kampala's urban slum areas. A shortage of land has led to the over cultivation of available land. The result has been soil erosion and poor soil fertility. Given the low productivity of the land, the potential for crop failure is a common concern. Furthermore, the slum areas tend to have too much water which does not support crop growth. However, by enabling the slum-dwellers to grow nutrient-rich vegetables in containers, we can address their food insecurities without exploiting either non-human animals or the environment. It is proposed that participants will be given theoretical and practical training by Spark Growers, a company from Kampala that specializes in organic growing (see appendix E). Where space allows mini garden constructions will be used as these make good use of limited space allowing more crops to be grown. Participants will also be provided with the materials to grow a selection of nutritional crops which are suitable for container growing. For example, if participants grow spinach, a leafy vegetable that is high in vitamins and minerals, it will take around two months from the seedling stage to the first harvest. As spinach is a 'cut and come' vegetable, there is potential for harvesting its leaves for over five months, if it is watered and fed with an organic plant feed when necessary. Participants will also be provided with vegan organic feed to sustain plant growth and obtaining water for growing plants will not be an issue due to the abundance of water in the slums. When the plant has reached the end of its cropping phase, the containers can be refreshed with a new growing medium and used for replanting. By growing their own plants,

participants can themselves address the challenges of food insecurity and become self-sufficient. At this stage, the Podrska Foundation will speak with participants about ethical food choices, give practical demonstrations of sustainable food production that does not adversely impact non-human animals. At the same time, we can show them the productive value of recycling their own organic waste.

Requirements

ITEM	UNIT PRICE UGX	COST FOR PILOT UGX (\$)	COST FOR 50 FAMILIES UGX (\$)
Tomatoes	3000	30,000 (8.18)	150,000 (40.91)
Spinach	2,000	20,000 (5.45)	100,000 (27.27)
Springs	2,000	20,000 (5.45)	100,000 (27.27)
Beetroot	2,000	20,000 (5.45)	100,000 (27.27)
Amaranthus	20,000 handful	100,000 (27.27)	500,000 (136.35)
Solanum aethiopicum	20,000 handful	100,000 (27.27)	500,000 (136.35)
Collards	20,000 handful	100,000 (27.27)	500,000 (136.35)
Training	50,000 per head	500,000 (136.35)	2,500,000 (681.77)
Mini Garden construction with soil	300,000	1,500,000 (409.06)	4,800,000 (1309.00)
Planting containers/ bags	15,000	300,000 (81.81)	1,500,000 (409.06)
TOTAL		2,690,000 (733.56)	10,750,000 (2,931.60)



Example of crops growing in planting bags



Planting bags on a mini garden construction

Miscellaneous Expenses

Transportation expenses

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE (UGX)	COST FOR PILOT UGX (\$)	COST FOR 50 FAMILIES UGX (\$)
Transportation- delivery of materials	One trip	250,000	250,000 (67.22)	500,000 (134.44)
TOTAL			250,000 (67.22)	500,000 (134.44)

Administration expenses

ITEM	COST FOR PILOT UGX (\$)	COST FOR 50 FAMILIES UGX (\$)
Government administration	350,000 (95.45)	700,000 (190.90)
Phone	100,000 (27.27)	200,000 (54.54)
Internet	150,000 (40.91)	300,000 (81.82)
TOTAL	600,000 (163.63)	1,200,000 (327.26)

Promotional expenses (whole project)

In order to increase visibility about the project and attract interest and potential sponsorship, we intend to share it not only on our electronic media but also in our printed media as outlined below:

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE (UGX)	AMOUNT (UGX)	AMOUNT \$
Banners	3	70,000	210,000	57.27
Pull ups	2	350,000	700,000	190.90
Tear drops	2	450,000	900,000	245.44
Posters	20	2500	50,000	13.64
T-shirts	25	45,000	1,125,000	306.80
TOTAL			2,985,000	814.03

Appendices

Appendix A: Examples of Podrska's vegan training schedule

Learning Objectives:

To understand what veganism is and to reflect on why someone chooses to be vegan.

Knowledge to be shared:

- What vegans do and do not eat.
- The positive health implications of a vegan diet
- The sentient nature of non-human animals and the exploitation done to them for food and other products
- The environmental impact of animal agriculture.

Success Criteria:

Gaining an understanding of a vegan diet and non-human animal exploitation in order for participants to make informed personal choices as to whether or not to adopt a vegan lifestyle.

Appendix B: Evaluation of Project Grow (pilot project)

Your candid evaluation of Project Grow is integral to its future success. We urge you to offer constructive feedback on the instructor and the project. Your feedback will help us revise and relaunch Project Grow on a larger scale. Below are some guidelines to evaluate the instructor(s) and the project.

1) How effective was the instructor in teaching you the benefits of the following?
In answering the questions for each of the four stages listed below, feel free to identify any aspect(s) that you felt the instructor had not clearly described.

- a) Recycling organic waste
- b) Composting
- c) Container gardening
- d) Adopting a vegan lifestyle

2) To what extent were the lectures/presentations for each of the four stages well-prepared and suited to you?

- a) Recycling organic waste
- b) Composting
- c) Container gardening
- d) Adopting a vegan lifestyle

3) How confident do you feel about being able to do the following?

- a) Practicing recycling of organic waste at home
- b) Making compost from the recycled waste
- c) Starting container gardening
- d) Adopting a plant-based lifestyle

4) How welcome did you or the participants feel in asking questions or seeking help during the project?

5) How willing are you to recommend this project to others?

6) Please identify at least three strengths of the instructor and/or the project:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

7) Please identify at least three weaknesses of the instructor and/or the project:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

8) Please offer at least three suggestions that you think we should immediately follow in order to improve the project and its vision of care for both human and non-human animals.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Appendix C: Total overall cost for Project Grow

COMPONENT	COST FOR PILOT UGX (\$)	COST FOR 50 FAMILIES UGX (\$)
Organic Waste Recycling	3,850,000 (1049.92)	7,850,000 (2140.76)
Container Gardening	2,690,000 (733.56)	10,750,000 (2931.60)
Miscellaneous	2,342,500 (637.86)	3,192,500 (868.71)
TOTAL	8,882,500 (2,421.34)	21,792,500 (5,941.07)

Appendix D: Participant organic recycling training schedule

Learning Objectives:

To have an understanding of the benefits of recycling organic waste and to be able to successfully separate household waste to make plant based organic compost.

Knowledge to be shared:

- Which items are suitable and not suitable for composting.
- How to separate and collect organic waste in a way that will not attract unwanted insects and rodents.
- How organic waste breaks down.
- The benefits of organic compost
- The benefits of recycling organic waste to the local and wider environments.

Success Criteria: Participants are motivated to make organic waste recycling part of their regular routines.

Appendix E: Participant container gardening training schedule

Learning Objectives: To understand the benefits and best practices associated with container gardening and how it supports a vegan lifestyle.

Knowledge to be shared:

What is container gardening?

The benefits of container gardening such as food security and nutritional benefits

Types of plants suitable for container gardening

Plant needs such as nutrients, water and sun/shade

Success Criteria:

Gaining practical experience of container gardening and its benefits as well as an understanding of how container gardening is non-exploitative to non-human animals and the environment.