Development Initiative for Northern Uganda - DINU

PROJECTCOMPLETION REPORT

for

[Inclusive Market-Based Development for Smallholder Farmers in Northern Uganda]

Reporting Period:

January 2020-Februray 2023

CRIS Number:

FED/2019/412-795

Submission date: August 30, 2023

PROJECTDETAILS

Programme Title	**Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU)**
Project Title: Inclusive Market-based Development for Smallholder Farmers in Northern Uganda	
CRIS No:	FED/2019/412-795
Implemented by:	CARE Denmark
Area of Implementation	Region(s)/District(s) Amudat, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit, Moroto, Napak, Katakwi, Kotido, Abim, Kaabong, Karenga, Kitgum, and Gulu
Starting date:	January 2020
End date:	February 2023
Implementing partner(s):	CRS, SORUDA, DADO, GADC
Direct beneficiairies	68,250
Final beneficiaries	
ProjectDuration:	38 Months
Total budget:	EUR 8,216,418.93
Financial contribution:	EUR 1,760,778.93
European Commission financial contribution:	EUR 6,455,641.00
Reporting period/ No. of report:	January 2020 – February 2023
Specific Objective(s) of DINU targeted by this Action:	To contribute to increased food security, improved maternal and child nutrition and enhanced household incomes through support to diversified food production and commercial agriculture and through improved household resilience
Specific Result(s) of DINU targeted by this Action:	DO1 Increased production of diversified food by women and men smallholder farmers in Karamoja Sub-region, Kitgum, and Katakwi districts. DO 2: Increased market accessibility for women and men smallholder farmers in Karamoja Sub-region Kitgum, and Katakwi districts. DO 3: Improved nutrition & uptake of FP services through gender-responsive community-based approaches in Karamoja Sub-region, Kitgum and Katakwi districts.
Specific Activity(ies) of DINU targeted by this Action:	1. Increasing adoption of production of diverse food crops and animal products. 2. Increasing access to key input and output markets for women and men small-scale farmers. 3. Improving access to savings and credit along the value chain through community saving and credit schemes. 4. Sustainable strong linkages between smallholder farmers, agro-processors, and market operators.

	5. Market opportunities and product niches identification along the value chain and market exchanges and contractual agreements increased. 6. Increasing adoption of community-based nutrition initiatives. 7. Increasing community appreciation of SRHR (family planning).
OPM Programme Outcome	Improved incomes and sustainable livelihood for the people in the disadvantaged areas through improved production and wealth creation.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CAO	Chief Administration Officer
CAHWs	Community Animal Health Workers
CBPP	Contagious bovine pleuro-pneumonia
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DADO	Dynamic Agropastoral Development Organization
DCO	District Commercial Officer
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
DPMO	District Production and Marketing Officer
DFP	DINU Focal Person
DHO	District Health Officer
DINU	Development Initiative for Northern Uganda
CDO	Community Development Officer
EU	European Union
FAs	Field Assistants
FFBS	Farmer Field and Business Schools
FP	Family Planning
IHO	Integrated Health Outreaches
KAP	Knowledge Attitude and Practices
LSB	Local Seed Businesses
MCG	Mother Care Groups
MIYCAN	Maternal Infant Young Child Adolescent Nutrition
MOH	Ministry of Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
PPR	Peste des Petits Ruminants
PMG	Producer Marketing Group
RDC	Resident District Commissioners
SILC	Saving and Internal Lending Committees
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SORUDA	Soroti Rural Development Agency
TOR	Terms of Reference
TSP	Tillage Service Providers
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority
VHT	Village Health Team
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Associations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE ACTION

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The Karamoja, Teso and Acholi regions are highly vulnerable to climate change in Uganda, experiencing increased climate vulnerability, recurrent droughts, unpredictable rainfall, and flood risks. Rising food prices and conflict exacerbate the extensive food insecurity in these areas. Moreover, hunger and malnutrition remain major challenges, with 35.2% of children under five in Karamoja suffering from stunting. The high fertility rate, coupled with low contraceptive use, contributes to common teenage pregnancies. Gender-based violence is prevalent in both Karamoja and Teso. Women's empowerment indicators, such as control over earnings, access to financial services, and mobile phone ownership, are relatively low in Karamoja, highlighting the need for focused efforts to uplift and support women in these regions.

The Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU) was a 38-month project implemented between January 2020 and February 2023, with an aim to improve food security, maternal and child nutrition, and household incomes for smallholder farmers in 11 districts of Kitgum, Katakwi, Kaabong, Karenga, Kotido, Moroto, Napak, Nabilatuk, Nakapiriprit, Amudat, and Abim. The project was implemented by a consortium led by CARE Denmark, alongside partners such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Gulu Agricultural Development Company (GADC), Dynamic Agro-Pastoral Development Organization (DADO), and Soroti Rural Development Agency (SORUDA). The project had three major outcomes: increased production of diversified food by both men and women smallholder farmers, enhanced market accessibility for these farmers, and improved nutrition and Family Planning services through gender-responsive community-based approaches.

The Project employed an Inclusive Market Development-Based approach, emphasizing economic gender equality, women empowerment, youth engagement, and community-based nutrition, while also focusing on the value chain. This strategy involved multi-stakeholder engagement and synergizing with existing government and development partner initiatives like DADO, CRS, and SORUDA. By implementing this approach, the project provided smallholder farmers with opportunities to enhance their incomes through the cultivation of high-value crops, such as sesame, cotton, soybean, and iron-rich beans. Additionally, measures were taken to ensure sustainability, including integrating activities into the government's PDM approach, building capacity among extension staff, and linking VSLA/SILC/YSLA/PMGs groups to financial institutions and agro input service providers.

A crucial aspect of the project was empowering women and youth, often marginalized in agriculture and rural development. Women were trained in Climate-Smart Agriculture and offered access to markets and finance through VSLA/SILC groups. Furthermore, Role Model Men were involved in raising awareness on gender-responsive actions, family planning, and women empowerment within smallholder farmers' households, fostering attitudinal changes towards gender equality and encouraging women to play an active role in agricultural production.

To achieve success, the project effectively engaged both public and private extension workers, disseminating information on Climate-Smart Agriculture practices to smallholder farmers and boosting production and income. Additionally, collaboration with Tillage Service Providers promoted entrepreneurship among youth and reduced manual labor burdens for smallholder farmers.

Throughout the project's duration, notable outcomes were achieved. These included a significant 16.3% increase in the adoption and production of diverse food crops and animal products, as well as a 23.8% increase in the adoption of climate-smart technologies. In the regions of Karamoja Sub-region and Katakwi districts, 40% of smallholder farmers reported improved food security, with 49.3% (46.6% female and 53.7% male) adopting the production of diversified food crops and animal products. Additionally, 74.4% of smallholder farmers (9.8% female and 9.4% male) adopted at least three new climate-smart agricultural technologies. Market accessibility also improved, with 15.8% of smallholder farmers reporting increased income, and 92.4% (91.7% female and 93.7% male) belonging to community groups partnering with financial and technical institutions or market operators. Moreover, the project contributed to improved nutrition and increased uptake of Family Planning services through gender-responsive community-based approaches in the target regions.

In terms of financial delivery, the project effectively utilized 100% (6,455,641) of the resources received from the EU through the Government of Uganda (GOU). Approximately 6% of the funds were allocated to equipment procurement, civil works, and system capacity building, while the remaining 94% covered training, capacity building for human resources, project coordination costs, and other project activities.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

Endline Evaluation of DINU by Key Outcome Indicators

Summary of the projectprogress according to results and indicators for the reporting period				
Result (Outcome/output)	**Indicators**	**Baseline Values**	**Endline values**	**Change**
Outcome 1.0 (Oc1.0): Increased production of diversified food by women and men smallholder farmers in Karamoja Sub-region and Katakwi districts.	Percent of smallholder farmers with improved food security	Overall 25% Female 23. 6% Male 26.1%	Overall, 40.4% Female 40% Male 40%	14.6%
Intermediary Outcome 1.1 (Oc1.1): Increased adoption of production of diverse food crops and animal products.	Percent of smallholder farmers adopting production of diversified food crops and animal products	Overall 33.7% Female 31.3% Male 38.1%	Overall, 49.3% Female 46.6% Male 53.7%	15.6%
	Percent of smallholder farmers (disaggregated by sex) report adopting at least three new climate smart agricultural technologies	Overall 26.2% Female 24.2% Male 29.5%	Overall, 74.4% Female 9.8% Male 9.4%	48.2%
30,000 farmers, including 18,000 women have been trained on how to integrate into value chains for commercial production of cotton, soya, sorghum/cassava, and sesame	# of farmer group members trained (sex disaggregated)		73,892	5642
	# of public and private extension staff trained in select value chains and CSA (sex-disaggregated)		Total 206 Female 52 Male 154	-14
2,700 lead farmers trained and supported on improved breeds of livestock and improved agricultural production based on targeted climatic and ecological zones	# lead farmers trained		Total 2,713 Female 1278 Male 1435	0
	# of improved goats distributed		1,894 goats	NA
Train and distribute apiary starter kits to 200 PMGs adopting apiary based on a business plan.	# of individuals trained on apiary business		Total 1,380 Female 869 Male 511	+1180
	# of apiary kits received by members of PMGs		1,100	100
Intermediary Outcome1.2 (iOc1.2): Increased access to key input and output	Percent of smallholder farmers accessing quality agro-inputs	Overall 30.5% Female 31.1% Male 29.1%	Overall, 65.7% Female 64.5% Male 67.8%	35.2

markets for women and men small-scale farmers.	Percent of smallholder farmers reporting access to output market	Overall 79.2% Female 79.0% Male 79.5%	Overall 54.0% Female 53.2% Male 55.6%	-25.2
50 local seed businesses (LSB) identified and trained in value chain approach for selected value chains	# local seed businesses identified for selected value chains		50	0
200 community animal health workers trained and supported in preventing and controlling pests and disease among the livestock (40 percent women) and animal husbandry practices	# of community animal health workers trained		Total 204 Female 24 Male 180	4
500 tillage service providers within farmer groups trained to provide draught animal power tillage services.	# of tillage service providers within farmer groups trained to provide draught animal power and tillage services		Total 316 Female 72 Male 244	-184
2 PMGs to set up and manage a honey processing incubation Centre.	# of PMGs running honey processing incubation Centre		2	0
Intermediary Outcome1.3 (iOc1.3): Improved access to savings and credit along the value chain through community saving and credit schemes.	Percent of smallholder farmers who are active users of informal and formal financial services	Overall 59.1% Female 36.4% Male 49.3%	Overall: 79.7% Female: 79.3% Male: 80.4%	20.6%
	Percent of women who report they can equally participate in Household financial decision making	43.2%	64.5%	21.3
357 existing and 2,343 new VSLA groups trained in establishing linkages to FFS, developing business skills, financial literacy, and gender sensitive business development.	# of VSLA groups trained (disaggregated by new and existing)		2,187	0
	# of CBTs /Field agents trained to mobilize and support V/YSLAs		Total 193 Female 37 Male 156	43
	# Smallholder farmer households trained on gender equitable financial management		73,892	5642
Existing e-wallet financial innovative products and services, as well as usage of agency banking at partner FSPs rolled out to members of 357 VSLAs	# of VSLA members (sex-disaggregated) introduced to e-wallet financial innovative products and services, as well as agency banking at partner FSPs		400	0
	# of Linkage Banking Officers recruited and trained		Total 33 Female 8	17

			Male 25	
Outcome2.0(Oc2.0): Increased market accessibility for women and men smallholder farmers in Karamoja Sub-region and Katakwi districts.	Percent of smallholder farmers reporting increased income		15.8%	15.8%
Intermediary Outcome2.1(iOc2.1): Sustainable strong linkages between smallholder farmers, agro-processors, and market operators.	Percent of smallholder farmers that belong to community groups that have partnered with or connected to financial & technical institution, or market operators	Overall 13.1% Female 14.3% Male 10.8%	Overall: 92.4% Female: 91.7% Male: 93.7%	79.3%
675 PMGs supported to develop business plans and apply for support from existing business incubations funds (10 percent applying for incubation funds i.e., DINU/UNCDF)	# of PMGs supported to develop business plans		675	0
	# of PMGs applying for incubation funds		0	-675
	# of Investment roundtable meetings conducted		1	0
01 digital market information systems linked to existing system operated by Agrinet, Infotrade and FEWSNET on traders and produce sales prices established.	# of digital market information systems linked to existing system		1	0
09 learning exchange sessions conducted for representatives of Farmer groups through agriculture trade fairs, shows, including participation in exhibitions and international world food days.	# of learning exchange sessions conducted		9	3
Intermediary Outcome2.2(iOc2.2): Market opportunities and product niches identified along the value chain and market exchanges and contractual agreements increased.	Percent of smallholder farmers who are adding value to their crop and or animal products	Overall 19% Female 18.4% Male 20.1%	Overall 38.3%	19.3%
	Percent of smallholder farmers who have sold any of their produce through collective marketing/bargaining	Overall 16.9% Female 16.4% Male 17.6%	Overall: 19.6% Female: 19.7% Male: 19.3%	2.7%
3,600 youth provided skills development and support, and 1,000 women and 1,000 youth entrepreneurs provided	# of youth and women supported for business development		3344 Female 2085 Male 1259	-256

business development through GoU BTVETs.				
Small market infrastructure: 5 small abattoirs, 2 cattle markets, 5 slaughter slabs constructed and implementation arrangements agreed with LAs and existing market operators	# of small market infrastructures constructed.		15	3
15,000 smallholder farmers of the 30,000 smallholder farmers trained (1.1.3) supported to undertake contract farming.	# of smallholder farmers of the undertake contract farming.		Total 14,779 Female 8610 Male 6169	-221
150 traders and market operators trained on conducting businesses in a responsible manner including, gender barriers especially facing women producers	# of traders and market operators trained		Total 150 Female 32 Male 59	0
1 ultraviolet sesame cleaning facility established for access to the EU niche market.	# ultraviolet sesame cleaning facility established.		1	0
2000 women and youth engage in business operation with the UNCDF seed funds	# of youth and women operating small businesses		0	
30,000 smallholder farmers engaged in contract farming	# of smallholder farmers engaged in contract farming		Total 14,779 Female 8610 Male 6169	-221
Outcome 3.0: Improved nutrition and uptake of FP services through gender-responsive community-based approaches in Karamoja Sub-region and Katakwi districts.	Dietary diversity score	2.5	2.5	0
	Demand satisfied for modern contraceptive among women aged 15-49	31.2%	39.5%	8.3%
	Percent of women of reproductive age in target area who adopt 3 – 5 recommended feeding practices	17.6%	12.7%	-4.9%

Intermediary Outcome3.1(iOc3.1): Increased adoption of community-based nutrition initiatives.	Percent of male partners (husbands, fathers, male children etc.) taking part in household food and nutrition security including milk preparation)	46.9%	66.7%	19.8%
19,000 members of 2700 Household Caregiver Groups trained and mentored on essential nutrition and hygiene actions, and SRHR including modern family planning methods including establishment of kitchen gardens	# of Household Caregiver Groups established		16275	2725
	# Household Caregiver Groups trained and mentored on essential nutrition and hygiene actions, and SRHR including modern family planning methods.		16275	2725
	# pregnant, lactating women and adolescents (members of Household Caregiver Groups) trained and receiving inputs to establish kitchen gardens.		19000	0
2,700 Role Model Men (RMM) identified by communities, trained, and accompanied to promote good nutrition	# of Role Model Men (RMM) identified by communities, trained and accompanied to promote good nutrition		2700	0
2400 Integrated Health Outreach Services facilitated to provide ANC, supplementation, deworming and immunization services through public health providers.	# Integrated Health Outreach Services conducted by Health Centers facilitated to provide ANC, supplementation, deworming and immunization services through public health providers.		2447	47
Intermediary Outcome3.2(iOc3.2): Increased community appreciation of SRHR (family planning)	Percent increase in the demand for family planning in the targeted sub-counties (the sum of unmet needs and met needs for family planning)	21.3%	39.5%	18.2%
	Percent of people who reject intimate partner violence (Disaggregated by Sex)	89.7%	68.9%	-20.8%
	Percent of ever partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months	37.2%	19%	18.2%
2700 Role Model Men (RMM) trained as champions for gender and women empowerment including SRHR and family planning.	# of Role Model Men (RMM) trained as champions for gender and women empowerment including SRHR and family planning.		2,700	0
	# of VHTs trained as champions for gender and women empowerment including SRHR and family planning.		1,120	0

20 youth-friendly safe spaces established in schools/health facilities for awareness raising in sexual and gender-based violence and SRHR	# youth-friendly safe spaces established in schools/health facilities for awareness raising in sexual and gender-based violence and SRHR	[redacted]	22	2
IEC materials on nutrition, gender, SRHR and family planning developed and disseminated though 50 local radio talk shows	# local radio talk shows on nutrition and family planning		50	0

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT.PROGRESS ON OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

OUTCOME 1: INCREASED PRODUCTION OF DIVERSIFIED FOOD BY WOMEN AND MEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS.

The Projectsuccessfully increased the production of diverse and nutritious food by 35% for 73,892 smallholder farmers. This was achieved through 1)adoption and production of diverse food and animal products by mobilization and training of farmers in selected value chains, training of extension staff, purchase and distribution of inputs, farmer field days and organic certification;2) increased access to input and output markets by LSB certification, training and equipping Community Animal Health Workers, training of TSPs; and 3) increased access to savings and credits by training and support to VSLAs, recruiting & training of Community Based Trainers, linkages to financial institutions. The consortium employed gender transformative models, such as Farmer Field and Business Schools (FFBS) and Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA), to promote gender equality and sustainability in the agricultural sector. The above resulted to increased household food availability and income.

OUTCOME 1.1 INCREASED ADOPTION AND PRODUCTION OF DIVERSE FOOD CROPS AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS.

The Project resulted in a significant 16.3% increase in the adoption and production of diverse food crops and animal products, as well as a 23.8% increase in the adoption of climate-smart technologies. The success is attributed to the capacity building and technical support provided to farmers, as well as improved access to quality agricultural inputs.

There is increased adoption of new climate smart technologies and practices, establishment of market linkages, enabling organic certification of cotton and sesame, more profitable value chains.

To better understand the value chains involved, the consortium conducted a value chain and market analysis, upon which key actors, opportunities and constraints were mapped. This analysis established clear relationships and linkages among the main value chain actors, from input suppliers to consumers, and guided smallholder farmers to make informed Agricultural investment decisions.

The analysis further informed the business plan development for PMGs, capacity building initiatives for small holder farmers and traders and investments in market infrastructure.

1.1.1 Mobilization and training of farmers

73,892 farmers were trained on adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices such as variety selection, land preparation row planting, disease and pest management, and post-harvest handling.

Selected lead farmers from the farmer groups were trained by extension staff through established demonstrations under the technical guidance of the district production department. A total of 44,129 acres of land in the project districts were planted with soybean, beans, maize, and ground nuts. As a result of the above initiatives, small holder farmers including non-targeted commercial farmers now invest in quality seeds (soybean MAKSOY 3N, 6N, Iron-rich beans NARO Bean 3, 6, and groundnuts Serenut 7,8,14R) from seed companies and breeders.

During the project period, 14,779 smallholder farmers (8,610 females and 6,169 males) were trained in cotton and organic sesame production. Community based training was conducted by 52 private and 27 public extension staff, who trained 587 lead farmers as Trainers of Trainers (ToTs). The ToTs in turn mobilized, registered, and trained 2,713 smallholder farmers (1,446 females) in nine modules of organic farming; (internal control systems and registration improved yield, integrated pest management, harvest and post-harvest handling, markets and quality maintenance, Internal inspection, Improved yields, Integrated Pest Management, Post Harvest Handling and Marketing- information). The linkages with GADC – as the market off taker boosted the production capacity, quality and marketing of sesame and cotton**.**

1.1.2 Video Screenings

The project, with support from the field officers, used video kits translated in the local dialects as a tool for agricultural knowledge transfer, as an effective approach to reach farmers with limited access to extension services.

The video screening enabled farmers to visualize agricultural technologies and practices, leading to faster and better adoption of new ideas and practices such as seed selection, land selection, planting in rows, soil management, crop protection, crop management, timely harvesting which were the most widely adopted Climate Smart Agricultural CSA practices.

1.1.3Training of Lead Farmers.

A total of 2,700 lead farmers were selected and trained in crop and livestock husbandry and facilitation skills. The training followed the FFBS curriculum and included disease control and animal feeding practices for livestock value chains and agronomy and post-harvest handling aspects for crops. The lead farmers cascaded similar trainings to their group members, and this resulted in 65% improvement in adoption of CSA practices. By the end of the action, 6,000 farmers are recorded to have procured quality seeds (sesame, soybean, and beans) and planted up to 3,000 acres. Of the 2,700 lead farmers trained, 407 were recruited as both buying agents and local suppliers of quality seeds locally which contributed to increased access to markets and increased household income.

1.1.4raining of extension staff

In a bid to provide ongoing support sustainably, of the planned 206 (52 Female) staff were trained, (with 117 Public Extension staff and 89 Private extension staff) were trained on CSA and facilitation skills during the project period.

These extension staff included the Sub- County Extension workers, Bank Linkages Officers and CBTs/ community volunteers who technically supported and trained the 2,700 lead farmers in soybean, beans, groundnuts, sunflower, maize, green grams' demonstrations. This initiative has provided continued support and technical assistance to farmers even after the Project closed. This promoted fast adoption of new climate smart technologies and practices, By Project midterm, 60% of the targeted small holder farmers had already adopted at least three of the recommended practices such as line planting, timely weeding, integrated pest and disease management, post-harvest handling, indicating a high level of engagement and uptake of the training.

1.1.5 Purchase and distribution of inputs.

During the 3 years, 2,700 lead farmers received quality inputs including seeds, chicken, and goats. Out of the 2,700 lead farmers, a total of 1,773 (522 female) farmers received 48,100kg soybean quality seeds 15,500 kg Iron Rich Beans Foundation seed, while 927 Lead farmers received 5,980 kgs of quality bean seeds and 25,942 kgs of quality maize seeds, 23,900 Kuroiler chicken and 1,830 goats.

In addition to the provision of quality inputs, the Project also established linkages between lead farmers and markets. This improved market access led to increased profits for the lead farmers and helped to sustain their businesses.

The establishment of market linkages also facilitated the certification process of smallholder farmers for organic production. This was achieved using internal control systems, which allowed smallholder farmers to comply with organic production standards and access premium prices for their produce.

Overall, the provision of quality inputs and training on improved farming practices contributed to increased agricultural productivity and improved food security.

1.1.6 Office Rent- store rental for agro-input delivered ahead of season 100 percent)

The Project rented 104 stores through which 14,779 farmers (8610 females) accessed cotton and sesame inputs worth UGX 282,903,405 (~EURO 69,000) from Cotton Development Fund (CDF). These inputs included quality seeds, approved pesticides (Organophosphate, Synthetic Pyrethroids, Cruiser for seed dressing, and Di-methoate, among others) and spray pumps.

Additionally, the stores served as a way for farmers to access output markets during the buying season for cotton and sesame. By working with trained lead farmers as sub-agents, buying agents accessed produce more easily and affordably.

1.1.7 Field Days - Composting, Tillage, and Postharvest Handling Techniques

To reduce yield and post-harvest losses, and quality, farmers were trained on post-harvest handling of sesame, cotton, and soybean.

At project closure, farmers were using rack-building and threshing in sesame production, which has improved grain quality and a 20% reduction in post-harvest losses. The Project engaged 316 tillage service providers (72 females) who ploughed 3,098.5 acres at UGX 40,000 UGX per acre. Additionally, 2,404 farmers (1,112 females), benefited from the tillage service providers by offering their gardens as demonstration sites for other farmers to learn about the new tillage technology.

To promote the use of tillage services among smallholder farmers, 1,643 field days which focused on land opening, planting and weeding. The new userfriendly tillage technologies was adopted by female farmers who constitute 70% of the agricultural labour force which reduced the labour hours. Additionally, the technique encouraged men to participate in traditionally female-dominated tasks like weeding, which reduced the burden on women.

1.1.8 Organic Certification

To make the products eligible for European markets, GADC and 14,779 farmers obtained the required certification by Control Union BV. As a result of these certifications, the confidence of the European Market in Ugandan sesame-consignments exported by GADC increased, leading to a 45% increase in GADC's sesame purchases and exports throughout the intervention period.

1.1.9 Quality Control Costs at Field Level – Cotton

To ensure farmers produce the required quantity of cotton to attract better prices, GADC provided interest-free pre-finance to buying agents to aggregate cotton from smallholder farmers. As a result, a total of 6,514,391 kgs of cotton worth UGX 21 billion were sold to GADC by 14,779 smallholder farmers (47.9% youth).

GADC processed the cotton lint for export and sold the seed to national markets and Cotton Development Authority (CDA) for re-distribution to farmers. The Project contributed to cotton price stability, increased cotton production by 31%, improved traceability and reduced contamination. In total 176,145 kgs of cotton seed was sold to farmers throughout the intervention period.

1.1.10 Quality Control Costs at Field Level – sesame.

During the project, 14,779 farmers (9,316 females) earned UGX 16 billion from the sale of 4,814 metric tons of sesame. Among these farmers, 5,000 were directly contracted to produce organic sesame and earned extra commission of UGX 0.96 billion for providing quality sesame to GADC.

GADC distributed one metric ton of sesame II foundation seed to 1,811 farmers (673 females) that resulted into an increase in white sesame production.

According to GADC's Project Coordinator, Emily, ‘sesame has proven to be a more profitable value chain than cotton in the project areas, and through the Action, GADC have expanded reach

to new farmers and districts, including previously hard-to-reach Karamoja.' As of September 2022, to March 2023, all 52 field agents and 20 Community-Based Trainers had been recruited as buying agents in their respective parishes, providing farmers with accessible links to market information, buying points, and off-taking capacity.

1.1.11 Mobilizing and Training Farmers Groups on other Value Chains

By the end of the project, 11,346 acres of groundnuts, 3,660 acres of cassava, and over 4,000 acres of fruits, including oranges, passion fruit, and mangoes were under cultivation. Drought tolerant varieties were promoted and adopted by the smallholder farmers. These crops included cassava sorghum, groundnuts, and green grams, which contributed to the household food security community.

To promote diversified food production,71,936 smallholder (44,248 females) was trained on vegetable production and a total of 250 acres of tomatoes, onions, green pepper, spinach, and eggplants was planted.

OUTCOME 1.2 INCREASED ACCESS TO KEY INPUT AND OUTPUT MARKETS FOR WOMEN AND MEN SMALL-SCALE FARMERS.

During the action, there was a significant increase of 50.1% in the access to quality inputs, which rose from 30.5% at baseline to 80.6%. The increase in access to inputs was attributed to the distribution of seeds and tools, training on recommended crop and livestock practices, and linkages created with input service providers. The Project also conducted a mapping of input and output market services providers in the target districts, assessing their capacity to offer services for women and men smallholder farmers. Input and output market services providers were identified and engaged in roundtable meetings to dialogue with smallholder farmers.

1.2.1 Training and Certification of Local Seed Businesses

Through collaboration with the Research Institution-National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) trained 50 Local Seed Businesses, consisting of 750 members (450 females) selected from the existing farmer groups to promote seed multiplication. The training improved seed packaging, labelling that eased identification and traceability. During the Project period, 670 metric tons of improved seed (soybean, beans, and groundnuts) were multiplied and distributed to 1,773 farmer groups.

Through the multiplication and distribution of improved seed, the Project increased smallholder farmers' access to quality seed and improved crop productivity and contributed to sustainable community seed system.

1.2.2: Training and Support of Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWS)

The Project trained and equipped 204 Community Animal Health Workers- CAHWs (46 females) on feeding, pest and disease management, and breeding which contributed to improved agrovet drugs supply chain for smallholder farmers. These CAHWs provided deworming, spraying, and

treatment services to 2,118 livestock farmers, resulting in increased livestock production and productivity. Additionally, the CAHWs worked closely with District Veterinary offices during vaccination campaigns for common livestock diseases such as Contagious bovine pleuro-pneumonia (CBPP) and Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) deworming, prophylaxis treatment, and spraying of 154,000 livestock. The skills and knowledge acquired by these CAHWs helped them to earn income through charges/fees of between UGX 200 and UGX 10,000 for services rendered.

1.2.3: Training of Tillage Service Providers (TSPs)

The Project trained 327(83 females) Tillage Service Providers (TSPs) in conventional tillage and weeding using tillage equipment. The TSPs conducted 3,092 Field Days to members of 587 farmer groups in the project districts through effective animal traction techniques, farmers experienced increased efficiency in land-opening and weeding. The TSPs earned incomes by charging a fee of UGX 40,000 per acre. Over 3,000 farmers who benefited from tillage services testified about the benefits of using them including cost-effectiveness, soil, and water conservation.

1.2.4 Facilitation of Produce Marketing Groups (PMGs) on honey processing

OUTCOME 1.3: IMPROVED ACCESS TO CREDIT ALONG THE VALUE CHAIN THROUGH COMMUNITY SAVING AND CREDIT SCHEMES

The Project increased access to credit by 44.6%) from 59.6% to 79.3%) among female small holder farmers, and from 43.9% to 80.4%among men. Through the action,1,247(58,138 members 36,464 males and 21,674 females) Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) were formed. The VSLAs saved UGX 3 billion and loaned out UGX 2 billion to members. This success was a result of the training, technical support on the Y/VSLA methodology, and provision of Y/VSLA kits. Continuous monitoring and mentoring of these groups ensured that they remained active and saved regularly.

1.3.1 Train, Support and Monitor Youth / Village Savings and Loan Associations (Y/VSLAs) groups.

A total of 2,187 Y/VSLAs and 513 Savings Internal Lending Community (SILC) groups with membership of 58,138 (36,464 female and 21,674 male) were trained on VSLA methodology. By the end of the Project the VSLAs and SILC groups saved UGX 3 billion, provided credit worth UGX 2 billion to its members and 357 mature groups linked to financial services providers accessed UGX 211million.

500 groups were linked to government programs (Parish Development Model, Operation Wealth Creation, and ''Emyoga''). The funds accessed by members of the groups were invested in purchase of productive assets and Income-generating activities (trade in small ruminants, commercial vegetable growing, retail shops, sale of secondhand clothes, saloon, bakery, restaurants).

Additionally, the project implemented e-Wallet pilots (CHOMOKA) which provided digital financial services to VSLAs group members. Through the e-Wallets, farmers saved and managed their savings digitally. The mature VSLAs are linked to financial institutions.

1.3.2: Provision of VSLA tool kits

Each of the 2,187 Y/VSLAs groups received a VSLA toolkit (which comprised of a metallic saving box, three padlocks, transledger books, a ruler, ink pad, ink pots, a VSLA stamp, two money bags, three plastic bowls and a simple calculator). The VSLA toolkit improved the security of the groups' savings and records.

1.3.3: Recruitment, Training and Allowances for Field Agents/CBTs

A total of 43 field agents (10 female) and 150 Community-Based Trainers-CBTs (27 female) were recruited and trained on VSLA methodology. These field agents and CBTs cascaded the training to 2,187 groups. Each field agent and CBT was equipped with a bicycle, bag, t-shirt, gumboots, umbrellas, hats, and stationery to facilitate training. The field agents and CBTs were also paid a monthly stipend based on the number of Y/VSLAs/SILCs they were responsible for, with each CBT handling 10 to 15 VSLAs (1:10) and each field agent handling five SILC groups (1:5). They provided regular support and mentorship to the groups through mobilization for project activities and training.

1.3.4: Linkages to financial institutions

A total of 357 mature VSLA groups (those that have saved for more than 2 cycles and ready for graduation and linkage to financial institutions) were linked to the formal financial institutions (Post bank, Opportunity bank, Centenary bank, Stanbic bank, Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs).

At the end of the action, 181 group and 38 individual accounts were opened with financial institutions, UGX 211 million was borrowed from these financial institutions.

OUTCOME 2: INCREASED MARKET ACCESSIBILITY FOR WOMEN AND MEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS.

63.4% of smallholder farmers (both women and men) recorded increased market accessibility of which 8.6% with earnings over UGX 1 million annually. This was attributed to adoption of contract farming, value addition and collective marketing using the FFBS and PMG models.

The use of market-based approaches, such as contract farming and value addition, in combination with capacity building contributed to improved market access, higher incomes, and increased food and nutrition security.

2.1 Linkages between smallholder farmers, agro-processors and market operators

In order to build on the baseline and value chain analysis findings, the project conducted an engendered-market analysis for selected Value chains(cereals, grain legumes ,pulses and small ruminants) to identify market opportunities for engaging 675 PMGs in business and trade with specific emphases to promote new product development and niches of the various value chains, including off-farm activities such as Produce trade, poultry selling and apiary.2.1.1: Mobilize and support 675 PMGs (68,250 smallholder farmers) in developing business plans.

The findings of the market analysis informed the development of the business plans for the 675 Producer Marketing Groups (PMGs) with support from the District Commercial Officers (DCOs) and Community Development Officers (CDOs).

The PMGs had a strong governance structure, used their business plans to access small production grants and markets which resulted in the bulking and marketing of 1,473 metric tons of produce (477 metric tons of soybeans, 16 metric tons of beans, 180 metric tons of sorghum, and 800 metric tons of sesame).

2.1.2 Support and linking of PMGs to the market Information systems.

The target to have a functional MIS was not realized. However, the Project procured 5 laptops and 5 internet routers and distributed to Kotido District Production and Commercial Departments to gather market information and share with small holder farmers through the extension staff.

2.1.3 Exchange learning events including agricultural trade fairs and exhibitions.

Nine (9) learning visits were conducted where 1,200 farmers (174 females and 1,126 males) replicated Climate Smart Agricultural practices (use of local pesticides, and use of short-term maturing varieties).

Three round table meetings with producers, input dealers, output buyers were facilitated, where market opportunities were identified, and linkages were created, through which UGX 64 million were earned from sales of soybean and maize to a large-scale buyer.

The districts and UNBS regulated the exploitation of farmers by middlemen. Overall, the program improved smallholder farmers' access to markets, income, and improved production skills.

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2.2 Identification of market opportunities and product niches along the value chain plus market exchanges and contractual agreements

The market analysis informed the action of the market opportunities and product niches for priority value chains. A total of 3,644 youth and women were trained in entrepreneurship and employability skills, and

supported in business plan development through mentoring, and coaching to set up sustainable businesses.

By the end of the action, 65.5% of youth and 63.7% of women engaged in micro businesses (farming, poultry keeping, and retail shop business). 26.9% of smallholder farmers added value to their crop and/or animal products, while 21% of smallholder farmers sold their produce through collective marketing.

14,779 small holder farmers undertook contract farming and established linkages with market operators, leading to increased market access and opportunities for the youth and women.

2.2.1: Skills development and support for youth entrepreneurs including business development.

The Project trained 3,344 youth (2,085 females and 1,259 males) on selection planning and management of income generating activities such as produce trade, poultry selling, tailoring and garment cutting and trading and commercial vegetable production. This equipped the youth with knowledge, skills, innovation, and creativity in entrepreneurship. The training was facilitated by the technical teams from the project and districts.

A group of 1,205 youths (704 females and 501 males) were vetted, and 122 individuals and 12 groups received capital (Ugx 1 million each) to boost their businesses.

2.2.2 Construct and/or rehabilitation of 5 small abattoirs, 2 cattle markets, and 5 slaughter slabs

A total of 15 market infrastructures were constructed in 10 districts. The Project engaged the districts through the Engineering and production departments from the initial stages of planning (developing the Bills of Quantity) through to monitoring of the constructions/rehabilitations till completion and handover.

S/N	District	Infrastructures	# Planned	# Achieved
1	Abim	Renovation of the Town Council Abattoir	1	1
2	Kaabong	Min Abattoir	1	1
3	Karenga	Cattle Market	1	1
4	Katakwi	Slaughter shade	2	2
5	Kitgum	Cattle crush	2	2
6	Kotido	Honey Processing House	1	1
7	Kotido	Livestock Market, Kanair Sub County	1	1
8	Moroto	Slaughter shade	2	2
9	Nakapiripirit	Cattle Market	1	1
10	Nabilatuk	Cattle Market	1	1
11	Amudat	Renovation of Abattoir	1	1
12	Napak	Slaughter shade	1	1
	TOTAL		**15**	**15**

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During the project period, 15 Livestock Infrastructure Management Committees were established and

trained on their roles and responsibilities. These committees which comprised of 30% women, monitored, and supervised the construction of the livestock infrastructure, managed the operation and maintenance.

2.2.3: Mobilize and support 15,000 smallholder farmers (including youth and women) to undertake contract farming.

A total of 14,779 farmers received training in organic sesame production, and 5,000 of these farmers were directly contracted and certified in organic sesame production. As a result, farmers received USD 788,749 in premium payments in addition to UGX 5.9 billion earned from the sale of organic sesame. Contract farming offered farmers assured markets for their produce and provided equity through pre-financing agreements.

Of the 14,779 farmers, 6,000 invested revenues from contract farming into their own production, resulting in an additional 10,042 acres of sesame, and 3,121 acres of soybean planted. Other farmers used their earnings to improve their livelihoods (purchase of productive assets, pay school fees, built houses, and invested in VSLAs).

Furthermore, the Project improved collective bulking and marketing which enabled farmers to access markets and negotiate better prices for their produce.

Overall, the Project strengthened the capacity of farmers and farmer-based organizations to participate in the organic sesame value chain, thereby contributing to the development of a sustainable and inclusive agriculture sector in Karamoja and Northern Uganda.

.2.2.5 Select and train 150 traders and market operators on contract farming and conducting businesses in a responsible manner including gender barriers facing women producers.

The Project trained 150 traders (57 women) using a curriculum validated by the Government of Uganda and district production and commercial departments.

This resulted into improved coordination between farmers and traders. Some farmers received interest free loans from traders and paid back. Women in the groups reported being involved in joint decision-making regarding sale of household produce.

6.2.2.6 Sesame cleaning facility established for access to the EU niche market.

The Project established an ultraviolet sesame cleaning facility in Gulu City. The facility enabled GADC to clean sesame to the high microbiological standards required by international organic clients, and since installation, 1,850 metric tons of sesame was cleaned and marketed to Europe.

The adoption of the UV technology which conforms to organic certification requirements addressed the previous challenge of micro biological infections, losses of valuable contents and essential oils. By selling highly attractive clean organic sesame to European markets, GADC bought more 45% volumes and farmers earned UGX 0.96 billion as premiums.

6.2.2.6 Inputs paid for Farmers -Cotton (Average yield of 600 per acre)

OUTCOME 3: IMPROVED NUTRITION AND UPTAKE OF FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES THROUGH GENDER-RESPONSIVE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES.

To improve nutrition and uptake of family planning services, the Mother Care Group (MCG) approach was used to promote behavior change through peer-to-peer support. The VHTs played a critical role in supporting mindset change within target communities using the Ministry of Health's Maternal, Infant and Young Child and Adolescent Nutrition (MIYCAN) community guidelines.

This Project contributed to increased utilization of family planning and modern contraceptive measures, child spacing and reduced cases of teenage pregnancies.

OUTCOME 3.1 INCREASED ADOPTION OF COMMUNITY-BASED GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE NUTRITION INITIATIVES

To increase the adoption of Gender Transformative Nutrition Initiatives, a KAP survey was conducted in the targeted districts which informed the context in which the Project was implemented. The survey report was widely disseminated to relevant stakeholders in the region and guided the engagement of women and men to promote essential nutrition actions.

3.1.1 Establish Household Caregiver Groups with 19,000 pregnant, lactating women and adolescents.

The Project formed 2,700 Household Caregiver Groups which formed 450 Mother Care Groups comprised of 19,000 pregnant and lactating women and caregivers of children under five years. The Village Health Teams (VHTs) rolled out training to HHCG members through the Mother Care Groups. As a result of the training, HHCGs adopted backyard gardening (tomatoes, collards, Amaranthus, and carrots) that improved access to diverse foods.

Nutrition campaigns on essential hygiene and nutrition actions were conducted to 1,556 pregnant lactating and adolescent women from the HHCGs. As a result, 85 of the mothers who were mentored constructed hygiene and sanitation facilities.

Generally, the Project adopted gender transformative nutrition initiatives such as FFBS, EMB and VSLA

3.1.2: Train and mentor Household Caregiver Groups on essential nutrition and hygiene actions, and SRHR

86.3% of Household Caregiver Groups (HHCGs) were trained in Maternal Infant and Young Child and Adolescent Nutrition practices. Monthly home visits were conducted by the VHTs and Lead Mothers and assessed the adoption of recommended health and nutrition practices.

By the end of the action, the uptake of family planning services remained low. This is attributed to limited access to Family services and socio-cultural barriers.

3.1.3: Participatory identification, selection and training and accompaniment of Role Model Men (RMM) in good nutrition:

The Projecttrained 2,700 Role Model Men (RMM) using CARE RMM curriculum to champion gender and women empowerment, SRHR, and family planning.

By the end of the project, more men were involved in caring for children, accompanying their spouses on antenatal visits, assisting with household chores.

3.1.4: Train and provide inputs to 19,000 pregnant, lactating women and adolescents (members of Household Caregiver Groups) to establish kitchen gardens and keep small livestock for nutrition.

A total of 16,275 pregnant, lactating women and adolescents (85.6%) were trained, provided assorted vegetable seeds and established 16,275 kitchen gardens. 19,000 Kuroiler chicken and watering cans were distributed .

The kitchen gardens provided all year-round source of nutrient-dense foods. The women and adolescent girls were linked to local markets to be able to sell excess garden produce for income generation.

By providing women and adolescent girls with the skills and resources needed to start and maintain their own kitchen gardens, they have been empowered to continue producing their own food and earning income for their households even after the end of the intervention.

3.1.5: Facilitate Health workers undertake Integrated Health Outreach Services to provide ANC, supplementation, deworming and immunization services through public health providers.

The Project facilitated 2,447 integrated health outreaches and reached 154,486 participants majorly women, men, youth, and children. The involvement of local government health teams in the identification and facilitation of these outreaches was crucial for the sustainability of these interventions.

A total of 27,277(12,169 females and 15,108 male) participants were vaccinated, 26,639(16,821 females and 9,818 male) were screened for malnutrition, 8,169 mothers attended the ANC, 21,716(9,003 females and 12,713 male) were administered with different contraceptive methods. 25,871(15,213 females and 10,658 male) were screened for other medical conditions (malaria, typhoid, pneumonia, and Peptic Ulcer Disease).

The outreaches provided an opportunity for people in the targeted communities to access integrated health services among the hard-to-reach communities.

OUTCOME 3.2 INCREASED COMMUNITY APPRECIATION OF SRHR (FAMILY PLANNING)

The Project contributed to 18.2% increase in community appreciation of SRHR (family planning) which resulted to a 15% increase in demand for the SRHR services.

Through the community-based approaches, the RMM served as role models in family planning, child spacing, and reduction of teenage pregnancies. Working with the VHTs, establishment of the youth friendly spaces and development of IEC materials resulted to increased appreciation of SRHR by community members.

3.2.1 6.3.2.1 Train 1,120 VHTs on gender and family planning, accessible services and referrals

1,120 Village Health Teams were trained on gender, family planning and SRHR which addressed the myths and misconceptions around contraception, especially among young women. This subsequently contributed to increased uptake of family planning services.

Through the referral mechanisms, households and farmer groups accessed optional family planning services among the hard-to-reach communities. The efforts further yielded to breaking the gender barriers and promoted gender equality in reproductive decision making among households.

3.2.2 Train 2,700 Role Model Men (RMM) as champions for gender and women empowerment including SRHR and family planning.

6.3.2.3 Support 20 existing youth friendly spaces with information and training materials for SRHS and family planning

The Project equipped 20 youth friendly spaces with information and training materials and assorted equipment (plastic chairs, balls, TV screens, and tents). These spaces provided a conducive environment for peer-to-peer health education, built trust and positive relationships between youth of opposite sex.

The Project mentored and oriented of 517 health workers on the National ADYFRHs strengthened the operation of the youth friendly spaces.

.The Project developed and disseminated IEC materials on nutrition, gender equality, SRHR and family planning. These materials were used to train VHTs, lead mothers, RMMs, and other community members. Fifty (50) radio shows were conducted which focused on aspects of production and market, nutrition and family planning and COVID-19.

The development and dissemination of the IEC content involved the local government technical teams who supported the VHTs, RMMs, lead mothers and youth. These efforts increased the knowledge and awareness of community members which subsequently resulted to positive behavior change.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Expenditure Items	Budget	Reallocation	Expenditure	Variance	Variance Percentage	Comments
	EUR					
1. Human Resources	1,483,757		1,592,222	-108,464	-7%	The costs charged were based on actual levels of effort for staff supporting the project.
2. Travels	52,950		67,597	(14,647)	-28%	Increase in activity travel costs coupled by increased fuel prices due to increased inflation within the country. The geographic scope is large requiring more field stays and movements. Staff were encouraged to charge travel facilitation directly to activities they are executing.
3. Equipment and supplies	260,150		219,313	40,837	16%	The variance is within manageable limits. For any equipment not yet delivered, the costs will be included in the reporting
4. Local office	338,359		424,379	-86,020	-25%	There was an increase in the fuel prices because of inflation, and impact of rationing of fuel following effects of the war in Ukraine.
5. Other costs, services	524,343		561,963	-37,619	-7%	This mostly relates to respective studies carried out on the project. These were successfully conducted within the provisions made in the budget.
6. Other - Programs	5,019,337		4,813,422	205,915	4%	
7. Subtotal direct eligible costs of the Project (1-6)	**7,678,896**	-	**7,678,896**	**0**	**0%**	
8. Indirect costs (maximum 7% of 7, subtotal of direct eligible costs of the Action)	537,523	-	537,523	0	0%	
9. Total eligible costs of the Action, excluding reserve (7+ 8)	**8,216,419**	-	**8,216,419**	**0**	**0%**	

MAINSTREAMING OF CROSS-CUTTING AND OTHER ISSUES

Local authority ownership and participation: The Project promoted effective implementation, responsive to local needs. The local authority was engaged in selection of infrastructures, procuring of contractors, monitoring the quality of construction works. Newly elected political & administrative leaders were oriented on Action goal and objectives. The Local authorities committed to the project through MOUs, and aligned the actions to district priority plans, guided beneficiary selection criteria, which grounded the actions to local context, responsive to community needs, and quality services delivery. The district authorities monitored and supervised the action, guided implementation, and ensured accountability to beneficiaries. District Health Teams, District Production Officers, and District Agricultural Officers were specifically involved in planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and capacity building activities.

Quarterly progress reviews, joint stakeholders' monitoring, and annual reflection meetings, bench marking visits among consortium members improved coordination, collaboration and knwolegde sharing, progress discussion, lessons, and Projectplans. Local authorities mobilized communities, guided on prioity value chains, recommended technologies and models for strengthening food security through multi-stakeholder approach which promoted ownership, sustainability, and effective implementation of the Action's activities.

Beneficiaries of the Project were actively engaged in the planning, design, and monitoring of activities. Their participation was based on the principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, and transparency. They did self-selection of farmer group members and shared localized solutions to adress local challnges.

Gender inequality had been a pervasive issue in Karamoja Sub-region, women and girls faced various forms of marginalization, food insecurity, discrimination, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence. The Project adopted **a gender transformative approach**, where through the local CBOs (DADO and SORUDA), marginalized and vulnerable women were recruited along other community members into farmer groups, role model approach bridged gender gaps in agriculture. Women took up leadership roles in farmer and community groups, participated in decision-making processes. As a result, women were able to negotiate better market prices for their produce and took up community leadership.

Men Role models promoted gender equality where selected "bad men" by community standards, within the groups abandoned their past engagement in violent or oppressive forms of masculinity, underwent a transformation, gradually became advocates for gender equality, supported women in domestic tasks and shared decision making processes within their groups.

Through 16 Days of Activism campaign, more awareness was raised on Gender-Based Violence (GBV), which influenced local actions on GBV, shared action's impact on GBV.

50% of the population of target districts were under 15 years. The Project recruited youths aged 18 and 24 into VSLA s and Farmer groups who were skilled and given small scale businesses enhancing grants. The targeted youths participated in nutrition activities, gender equality and sexual and reproductive health rights and family planning which made them avoid teenage pregnancies and made informed decisions on their reproductive health.

Through the Project **nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions** targeted children under 5 years of age, pregnant and lactating women, and adolescent girls, which addressed micronutrient deficiencies, The Project promoted proper hygiene practices and improved home food processing and preservation. Nutrition assessments screened cases of malnutrition, improved access to health services, infant and young child feeding practices. The MCG approach intensified peer-to-peer interactions promoted effective health and nutrition practices among mothers and caregivers, diversified commercial agriculture, which improved access to nutritious food by boosting the production of staples nutritious food crops. Linkages with health facilities promoted comprehensive health services which improved nutritional status in the regions.

The Project implemented **a value chain approach and enhanced production and competitiveness** in the market, which contributed to food security and the production of nutritious crops and livestock. The identified value chains leveraged market opportunities and increased women's participation and involvement in agricultural activities.

Organic certification and contract farming improved market access for cotton and sesame which were processed and certified to international markets requirements. This in turn increased the benefits for smallholder farmers, both men and women, improved the production, competitiveness, and income, contributed to increased income generation, improved household food and nutrition security, and enhanced economic opportunities for the targeted communities.

Priority value chains promoted by the action.

Geographical clusters	Districts	Value Chains (VCs)
South-central Karamoja	Amudat, Nabilatuk, Moroto, Nakapiripit; Napak	Livestock, sorghum, apiary, vegetable, sesame, cassava.
Northern Karamoja	Abim, Kaabong/Karenga, Kotido	Livestock, sorghum, apiary, vegetable, cotton, soybean, sesame.
Teso	Katakwi	Livestock, soybean, cassava, apiary, vegetables, sesame, millet
Acholi	Kitgum	soybean, cassava, apiary, vegetables, sesame, millet.

Private sector development reduced barriers and created opportunities for the economic empowerment of youth, women, and men smallholder farmers. The trained private sector actors (traders and off-takers) promoted decent working conditions, equal opportunities, included youth and women as employees, producers, and participants in value chains.

The Projectestablished market linkages for local value through engaged private companies, Private agro-vets and seed businesses who created conducive environment for smallholder farmers to thrive, enhanced their productivity, contributed to the economic empowerment of youth, women, and men in the agricultural sector and promoted sustainable and inclusive economic development in the targeted communities.

Private service providers, including Formal Financial Services Providers, Agribusiness Services Providers, and Extension Workers, engaged producers in round tables. Farmers accesed climate-resilient agricultural inputs, were linked to savings & credit facilities, output markets and value addition to agricultural and livestock products.

Environmental protection and climate change mitigation. The project contributed positively to the environment through production of organic sesame, cotton and apiary. There was improved to sustainable land use, stabilized enhanced soil and enhanced water retention and improved the overall health of agricultural land. Farmer-managed Natural Resource Regeneration approach restored and managed natural resources, contributed to environmental protection, resilience to climate change, and sustainable management of natural resources. This holistic approach benefited the environment and supported the long-term viability and productivity of agricultural systems in the targeted communities.

Digitalization and ICT: The Projectimplemented e-Wallet pilots (CHOMOKA) which provided digital financial services to VSLAs group members. Through the e-Wallets, farmers saved and managed their savings digitally. The mature VSLAs linked to financial institutions (Post Bank, DFCU Bank, and Centenary Bank) accessed formal banking services and expanded their financial capabilities. These made VSLA bankable and could easily access credit.

The monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning:
A MEAL plan designed at the inception phase facilitated effective management and improvement in projectdelivery, with two staff, a MEAL coordinator and advisor who oversaw the internal MEAL processes of the Action, with support from other technical leads. An indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) was developed, data integrity and ofan updated beneficiary database was done and engaged disttrict stakholders in regular field visits to monitor progress.

All project activities followed the "do no harm" principle and employed trusted enumerators for data collection and monitoring. Routine (monthly, quarterly, and biannually) and annual outcome monitoring were conducted to track indicators as outlined in the IPTT and M-Water tools. Projectaddressed the specific needs of different gender groups, a Community Accountability Response Mechanism (CARM) system was instituted which allowed community members to lodge complaints that were resolved through face-to-face interactions.

The Action's MEAL framework were at various stages; baseline surveys, mid-term assessments, and a final evaluation. External consultants conducted the evaluations, provided independent perspective on the Action’s achievements and outcomes. The evaluation reports were shared with stakehoders and donor. The final evaluation compared outcomes to the baseline and followed the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluations. Annexed to this report.

The Projectemphasized collaboration, learning, and adaptation (CLA) through quarterly review workshops and annual stakeholder reflection meetings, which facilitated critical thinking and ownership of the Projectoutcomes. The jjoint monitoring and evaluations conducted offered justifications for support and deviation from planned actions, areas for improvement, necessary adjustments for the desired outcomes. This interactive approach enabled the Project to contniue durring COVID 19 pandemic which had

interrupted project particiants engagements in VSLA meetings. Participants were advised to observe social distancing and still delivered positive results in the targeted communities.

SUSTAINABILITY MECHANISMS AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PLANS

- **Engaging DINU stakeholders:** The projectactively involved local authorities and private sector stakeholders at both national and local levels. This engagement fostered ownership and commitment to the projectoutcomes. The projectlinked with local authorities and government structures through the DINU steering committee, coordination and support. MoUs were signed with district authorities, actions intergrated into district plans. This approach facilitated institutional sustainability through the ownership of local authorities and the inclusion of support from extension workers, Village Health Teams (VHTs), and the prioritization of maintenance for constructed agricultural market infrastructures.

- **Involvement of district leadership:** The continuous involvement of district technical and political leadership throughout the planning, implementation, and monitoring of projectactivities was crucial for increasing ownership and sustainability. Their engagement ensured that the projectactivities were aligned with local priorities and embedded in existing structures for long-term impact.

- **Capacity building of extension staff:** Trained extension staff from both the private and public sectors supported Farmer Groups/Market Groups (FG/MGs), which sustained increase in market-driven production and supported the financial sustainability of smallholder farmers. even after Action, Extension staff still provided support and knowledge transfer to ensure continued productivity and income generation.

- **Empowering private sector actors:** capacity of private sector actors were built who worked effectively with smallholder producer groups through Producer Market Groups (PMGs) in contract farming and marketing. By empowering the private sector, the Projectcreated lasting market linkages

- **Continuation of VSLA activities:** The Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) groups established during the projectcontinued their savings and loan activities even after the end of external support. This sustainability was achieved through strong group dynamics and a sense of ownership among the VSLA members.

- **Intergrating intervention into the parish model group approach:** The Projectadopted a parish model group approach, where selected model groups served as epicentres of knowledge, Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) skills, and best practice diffusion within the community. These model groups were introduced to local authorities and integrated into PDM interventions, ensuring their continued impact and influence in promoting sustainable practices into selcted value chains.

- **Promotion of quality seed access:** The Projectcollaborated with the Department of Local Government (DLG) and the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) to promote access to quality seeds through the Community Seed System. This collaboration directly supported Local Seed Businesses to produce quality seeds, ensured long-term access to improved seed varieties for enhanced productivity.

By implementing these strategies, the Projectcreated a sustainable and self-reliant environment for smallholder farmers, enabling them to continue benefiting from improved agricultural practices, market access, and financial inclusion even after the project's completion.

Financial sustainability

The Projectestablished strong linkages between smallholder farmers and private market structures, and formal financial service providers. This approach ensured mutual benefits for both the farmers and private sector actors, fostering continued engagement even after the project's completion.

- **Linkages with private market structures:** The Projectfacilitated the integration of smallholder farmers into the private input and output market structures. By connecting farmers with private market actors (agribusinesses and buyers), the Projectcreated opportunities for sustained market access and income generation. This allowed smallholder farmers to continue selling their produce and accessing necessary inputs beyond the project's duration. The ongoing engagement with private sector actors ensured a mutually beneficial relationship that supported financial sustainability.

- **Linkages with formal financial service providers:** The Projectfacilitated the linkage of smallholder farmers and youth through Youth/Savings and Loan Associations (Y/SLAs) with formal financial service providers. By connecting farmers to these providers, such as banks or microfinance institutions, the projectpromoted financial inclusion and access to credit and savings services. This linkage allowed farmers to continue accessing financial services even after the project's completion, supporting their financial sustainability and ability to invest in their agricultural activities.

- **Group approach and scale of production:** The Projectemphasized the formation and engagement of smallholder farmers in groups, such as Farmer Groups/Market Groups (FG/MGs) and Youth/SLAs. Working in groups reduced transProjectcosts for private service providers and enhanced the scale of production. The larger volume of produce and collective bargaining power of the groups created more favorable conditions for engaging with private sector actors. This facilitated continued collaboration between farmers and private service providers, ensuring sustained market linkages and financial viability.

- **Value chain development:** The Projectfocused on strengthening value chains and promoting market-driven production. By supporting smallholder farmers in improving their production techniques, post-harvest handling, and product quality, the projectenhanced their competitiveness in the market. This increased their potential for generating income and building financial sustainability. The projectalso worked closely with private sector actors involved in the value chains, fostering long-term partnerships that continued beyond the project's duration. These partnerships created opportunities for ongoing collaboration, market access, and value addition, supporting the financial sustainability of both the farmers and the private sector actors.

- **Capacity building:** The Projectprioritized capacity building for smallholder farmers, youth, and extension staff. By providing training and technical assistance, the Projectenhanced the knowledge and skills of farmers in areas such as improved farming practices, entrepreneurship, financial management, and market dynamics. This capacity building empowered farmers to make informed decisions, adapt to changing market conditions, and effectively engage with private sector actors. The enhanced capacities of farmers and extension staff contributed to their long-term financial sustainability by enabling them to operate more efficiently and effectively in the agricultural sector.

- **Integration into local plans:** The Projectensured its activities and outcomes were integrated into local plans and strategies. By signing formal Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with district authorities at the start of the project, the actions and priorities of the projectbecame part of the district plans. This interventions initiated was sustained and continued by the local authorities even after the project's completion. By aligning with local plans, the projectenhanced its financial sustainability by leveraging existing resources and structures within the local governance systems.

Policy level sustainability

The Projectactively engaged in policy dialogues at the local level through platforms such as the Annual Reflection Meeting and dialogues facilitated by the DINU structures. These engagements provided opportunities for consortium partners to share insights, lessons learned, and recommendations with policymakers and other stakeholders. By actively participating in these policy dialogues, the Projectinfluenced and shaped local policies that are supportive of smallholder farmers and the agricultural sector.

Environmental sustainability.

Environmental sustainability was a key focus of the Action, which promoted sustainable diversified agriculture and organic farming practices, minimized negative impact on the environment and promoted the long-term health and productivity of agricultural ecosystems.

Promotion of sustainable diversified agriculture: The Projectencouraged smallholder farmers to diversify their agricultural practices, including the cultivation of a variety of crops and the integration of livestock and agroforestry systems. Diversification enhanced soil fertility, reduced pest and disease pressure, and improved overall ecosystem resilience.

Adoption of organic farming practices: The Projectactively promoted organic farming techniques that minimized the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Organic farming practices prioritized the use of natural inputs, such as compost and organic manure, to enhance soil fertility and improve crop health. By avoiding the use of harmful chemicals, organic farming contributes to the preservation of biodiversity and the protection of soil and water quality through soil and water conservation measures, agroecological approaches, soil and water conservation measures, Conservation of natural resources

MAIN LESSONS LEARNED.

1. **Stakeholder engagement and ownership:** Active engagement and involvement of local authorities, government agencies, private sector actors, and community members throughout the projectimplementation process fostered ownership and sustainability. Collaborative partnerships and participation ensured that the projectaligned with local priorities, leveraged existing resources, and increased the likelihood of long-term success.

2. **Integration of multiple sectors and approaches:** The project's holistic approach, which integrated various sectors such as agriculture, health, livelihoods, and gender, proved effective in addressing the complex challenges faced by smallholder farmers. By adopting a multi-sectoral approach, the projectwas able to achieve synergies, maximize resources, and provide comprehensive support to the target communities.

3. **Value chain development and market linkages:** The focus on value chain development and market linkages strengthened the economic sustainability of smallholder farmers. By facilitating access to

markets, promoting business partnerships, and enhancing value addition, farmers were able to increase their income and improve their livelihoods. The engagement of private sector actors as key partners contributed to the sustainability of these market-based interventions.

4. **Institutional collaboration and capacity building:** Collaboration with government agencies, research institutions, and local organizations helped build institutional capacity and promote sustainable practices. By engaging with stakeholders at various levels, the Projectfostered knowledge sharing, promoted policy dialogues, and enhanced the technical skills of farmers, extension workers, and other key actors. This collaborative approach contributed to the sustainability of projectoutcomes and created a conducive environment for future interventions.

5. **Community-led approaches and participation:** The Projectemphased community-led approaches, including the involvement of farmers in decision-making processes and the establishment of community-based groups, enhanced ownership and sustainability. Empowering farmers to take charge of their own development, promoted participatory approaches, and recognizing local knowledge and expertise were critical in ensuring the long-term impact and sustainability of the interventions.

6. **Monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management:** The Action's robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning mechanisms facilitated evidence-based decision-making and adaptive management. Regular data collection, joint reflective sessions, and stakeholder dialogues enabled the projectteam to track progress, identify challenges, and make timely adjustments to improve implementation. This iterative approach contributed to the project's effectiveness and enhanced its ability to respond to evolving needs and contexts.

7. **Environmental sustainability and climate resilience:** The integration of sustainable agricultural practices, climate change adaptation, and environmental conservation measures proved essential for long-term sustainability. By promoting organic farming, efficient water management, conservation agriculture, and climate-smart techniques, the projectenhanced environmental sustainability, resilience to climate change, and the conservation of natural resources.

8. **Financial sustainability and market-oriented approaches:** The Action's focus on market-oriented approaches, private sector engagement, and value chain development contributed to financial sustainability. By fostering linkages between smallholder farmers and formal financial institutions, promoting business partnerships, and leveraging market opportunities, the projectfacilitated income generation and enhanced the economic sustainability of farmers.

9. **Knowledge sharing and capacity building:** The emphasis on knowledge sharing, capacity building, and skills development played a crucial role in empowering farmers and promoted sustainable practices. By providing training, demonstrations, and farmer field schools, the projectenhanced farmers' knowledge and skills, enabling them to adopt sustainable agricultural practices and become agents of change within their communities.

10. **Policy engagement and institutionalization:** Active engagement with policymakers, local authorities, and government structures facilitated policy dialogues, institutionalization of projectactivities, and mainstreaming of sustainable practices. By aligning with existing government plans, signing MoUs, and integrating projectactivities into district plans, the projectenhanced the likelihood of sustained support and replication of successful interventions beyond the projectduration.

11. **Improved seed demand:** The availability of improved seeds triggers a demand for them among farmers. Partnerships with private sector actors can stimulate interest and investment in specific crops, as seen with GADC's initiative to procure soybean seed and promote soybean production and export in the region.
12. **Tillage Service Provision (TSP) approach:** The use of animal trProjectand mechanized tillage services significantly improved efficiency in ploughing, planting, and weeding large areas of land. This approach allowed for timely cultivation and provides opportunities for gender equality by involving men in traditionally female-dominated tasks, freeing up women's time for other productive activities.

VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION OF THE ACTION

Describe the C&V activities implemented, and materials produced and disseminated clearly indicating the main target receivers.

Please add a list of all major visibility events organized during the implementation.

Please add a full list of all publications, references, visibility materials and IEC material produced and disseminated during the action.

Please elaborate and add photos, videos, storytelling, and impact stories related to the action.

The Project visibility.

Various strategies were employed to meet the EU's visibility guidelines and communicate the EU's contribution to the program.

Assets and supplies purchased using EU funding, (vehicles, motorcycles, and livestock market infrastructure) were appropriately labeled according to EU visibility guidelines. Printed materials, including documents, brochures, community meeetings and reports, also featured EU branding and logos to highlight the support received.

Acknowledgment of the EU's role as a contributor to the program was consistently made during working groups, inter-agency coordination meetings, and other stakeholder forums. Regular updates and information about projectactivities and the donor (EU) were provided through agency-specific websites, newsletters, and annual reports.

Field visits were conducted to monitor compliance with communications and visibility guidelines. These visits confirmed a high level of compliance, with livestock infrastructures prominently displaying signposts and stone engravings to improve visibility and recognition.

Publications in print media underwent a review and approval process by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) before being shared with the media, ensuring adherence to established communication guidelines.

By implementing these visibility and communication strategies, the Project aimed to ensure transparency, promote the EU's support, and raise awareness among stakeholders and the general public about the impact and achievements of the Actions.

The Project developed the communication and visibility plan that formed the basis for all visibility and communication activities for sharing information about the project with relevant stakeholder and undertaking branding.

With guidance and approval by the DINU-OPM for some products, the Project developed and printed five-pull-up banners, 15-tear drop banners, 100-round neck t-shirts, 340-collar t-shirts, 92-back bags, 50-field jackets, 80-umbrellas, 60-overalls.

The Project developed other branded products such as the quarterly newsletter, 10 land cruisers stickers, 32 motorbikes stickers, 400-round neck t-shirts, 400-collar t-shirts, 200-field jackets, 400

projectfactsheets, 400 projectinformation pact, 400 notebooks and pens, engraving 20 laptops and 60-foot spray pumps, and five CARE office signposts in Kotido.

The projectteam and district staff developed radio messages for talk shows and radio jingles and spot messages that aired on local radio stations.

A total of five signposts, 6 stone engravements were developed for the livestock market infrastructures, Six dummy cheques were printed and signed off by the district officials during the launch of the youth skilling capital in six districts.

Three Newspaper articles including the DINU close out event that happened in the last quarter of 2022 were published in a National Newspaper following its approval in line with Visibility and Communications guidelines. Similarly, the close out event was also aired on a National Television accessible at https://youtu.be/avhmozlTe1Y

The Projectsupported the team and stakeholders in the commemoration of 16 Days of activism as well as Women's' day celebrations to advance the gender and inclusion agenda. This can be accessed at https://www.careuganda.org/Publications/2022-commemoration-of-16-days-of-activism-against-gender-based-violence/

The Projectalso produced a ProjectVideo Documentary to show case the achievements during the projectperiod.

CHALLENGES

- **Prevalence of Livestock Diseases:** The outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in Karenga and Kaabong districts challenged the procurement and distribution of livestock. To address this, Karenga district has sought a special waiver from MAAIF (Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries) for the projectlivestock. The projectteam is awaiting a response from the authorities to mitigate the delays.
- **Insecurity:** Insecurity to some extend hindered farming activities and limited field monitoring visits by the projectstaff. To address this challenge, the projectteam worked closely with local leaders to access security information and followed the recommended travel windows provided by UNDSS (United Nations Department of Safety and Security).
- **Delayed Rains and Long Dry Spell:** There were prolonged dry spell which affected the opening of multiplication and demonstration sites. To mitigate the impact, the projectutilized national weather forecast reports to sensitize farmers on planning for production preparations, emphasizing the importance of water conservation and drought-tolerant crop varieties.
- **Slow adoption of nutrition and family planning practices:** behavioral change, particularly in gender norms and family planning services encountered slower progress than expected. Changing attitudes and embracing gender equality norms took longer time. Experience sharing sessions were adopted to encourage community members and facilitate the process of behavioral change.

Signature of the report

Name of the contact person for the action:

……

Signature: ……

Annexes

A. Final Logical Framework

Please provide the updated logical framework

B. Expenditure Verification Report

In accordance with the General Conditions, please provide an expenditure verification report and a financial report on the expenditures incurred during the reporting period in relation with the agreed budget. (Separate document)

C. *Attach a copy of Mid-term Evaluation Report of the Project(if applicable) and of the Final ProjectEvaluation Report*

Photos

Picture 6: District Local Government assessing the performance of Foundation Seed in Kitgum during the Joint Monitoring

Karenga Lead farmers pose with their District Production officer after receiving Kuroiler Chicken.

Photo showing Kitgum Tillage Service Provider weeding cotton for a farmer group member at Ugx 45,000 per acre. The weeding exercise took 4 hours.

Photo showing Left; Youths in Rupa- Moroto marketing green paper from the garden to traders from Mororoto.Right: having realized profit, the same youths venturing into large scale produciton of green paper

Photo showing farmers during the Exchange learning from small-scale irrigation farmers from Katine sub county Soroti district to boost production off season.

Photo showing Nadiket village youth who adopted off season tomatoe produciton after participating in the learning exchange visit from Katine sub county Soroti district

Photo showing Cross-projectlearning: Tingoswo group in Amudat learning Honey production from farmers supported by self Help Africa in Amudat

Photo showing adoption of green paper production in Amudat

Photo showing Murut apiary farmers in Amudat district Loroo Sub county receiving coaching in honey production after technical gap assessment of using local material.

Photo showing Training of tillage service providers in Kitgum

Photo showing Farmers learning from the demonstration of vegetable micro irrigation that promotes all year-round production and marketing.

Photos showing Kaabong farmers during the Learning exchange visit on sesame production value chain in Kitgum.

Photo showing Training of Karamoja, Teso and Katakwi LSBs and Sub county Extension staff in Soybean QDS Seed Production

Photo showing Karamoja, Teso and Katakwi LSBs & Sub county Extension staff trained on Beans QDS Seed Production

Mr. Johnson Owaro-Regional Coordinator DINU- OPM Karamoja/TESO gives key highlights on DINU- a government of Uganda Program, its expected outcome and why these DAOs and sub county Extension workers (being trained) were selected and engaged to support Community seed access.

Beans seed multiplication training by NARO seed breeders.

Photo showing Election of Cattle Market committee Members in Kanair Sub County Kotido district.

Photo showing Training of the Livestock infrastructure Management committee of Guyaguya- Usuk, Katakwi district.

Photo showing Angarakin Akanin FG in Katakwi drying part of their newly harvested soybean harvested from Lead farmer garden

Photo showing Putting into practice: After being trained on PHH, Brenda Adong (Right), a member of Lonyo me anyim FG in Abim packed her Beans, ground nuts and maize in the pics bags and says her mind has rested from the worry of pest in the store.

Photo showing Epedori farmer group in Abim sub-county in Abim district with their improved breeds of goats received from the projectin October 2021. After one year, 17 goats have multiplied to 34 and offspring have been distributed among members.

Photo showing Amudat farmers selling honey during the National Agricultural tradeshow in Jinja from which they earned Ugx 12 million

Sesame farmers delivering her sesame to regional GADC Buying Agents

Figure 22. Bagged pre-cleaned sesame at Kitgum station ready to be sent for final cleaning at the Gulu.

Photo showing Early birds: The first truck of cotton this buying season, sent to GADC by Lobalangit farmers group in Karenga – Karamoja.

Kitgum ginning hall, the cotton on platform about to be ginned for the lint and seed to be separated.

Tillage Service Providers (TSPs) in Karenga with their tillage weeding equipment.

TSPs providing their tillage weeding services during a Field Day in Omiya Nyima, Kitgum District

Group representatives display their VSLA tool kit after distribution in Kaabong east sub-county, Kaabong district.

During the reporting projectimplementation, six slaughter shades in Katakwi (two), Amudat (one), Moroto (two) and Napak (one) were completed, officially commissioned, and handed over to the respective districts. The component of the slaughter shades included the main structure where the animals are slaughtered from, provision of the rainwater harvest system, fencing from the structures and in Katakwi there is a provision of a platform for slaughtering birds.

Renovated slaughter shade in Amudat district.

The completed slaughter shade in Toroma Town Council

Completed renovated Town Council abattoir, Abim district.

Additionally, two cattle crushes in Lagoro sub-County (one) and Namokora Sub County (one), kitgum district were completed, officially commissioned, and handed over to the district and the user communities. One honey processing hub that was fully equipped under the projectin Kacheri Sub County, Kotido district was completed, and officially commissioned by the district Leadership.

The cattle crush in Lagoro Sub County is serving 13 villages, where a total of min 500 cattle is sprayed/ treated monthly and the one in Namokora Sub County is serving 9 villages where a total of min 375 cattle is sprayed/ treated per month.

The temporary cattle crush that the community used before the construction of the permanent one.

Kitgum district leadership officially commissioning the completed cattle crushes.

Completed cattle crush.

One min abattoir in Kaabong Town Council, Kaabong district was completed, it comprises of the main slaughter area, an office, rainwater harvest system and the structure were fenced off. This structure is pending official commissioning by the district leadership.

completed min abattoir, Kaabong district.

The district stakeholders were involved in all the construction activities right from identifying the type of livestock infrastructure depending on the gaps they had, to groundbreaking, joint monitoring of the constructions and official commissioning/ handover of the completed structures. Among the officials were CAOs, RDCs, LCVs, DINU-DFPP, DVO, DHOs, DPOs, DEs, DCOs, the Sub County/Town Council Leadership, the Infrastructure Management Committees, and the user communities among others. This partnership has made the respective districts to own the infrastructures which will improve the user experience and the operation and maintenance even after the projectcloses.

Pregnant Lactating Women and Adolescents during the mentorship sessions on proper baby attachment for a good breast feed.

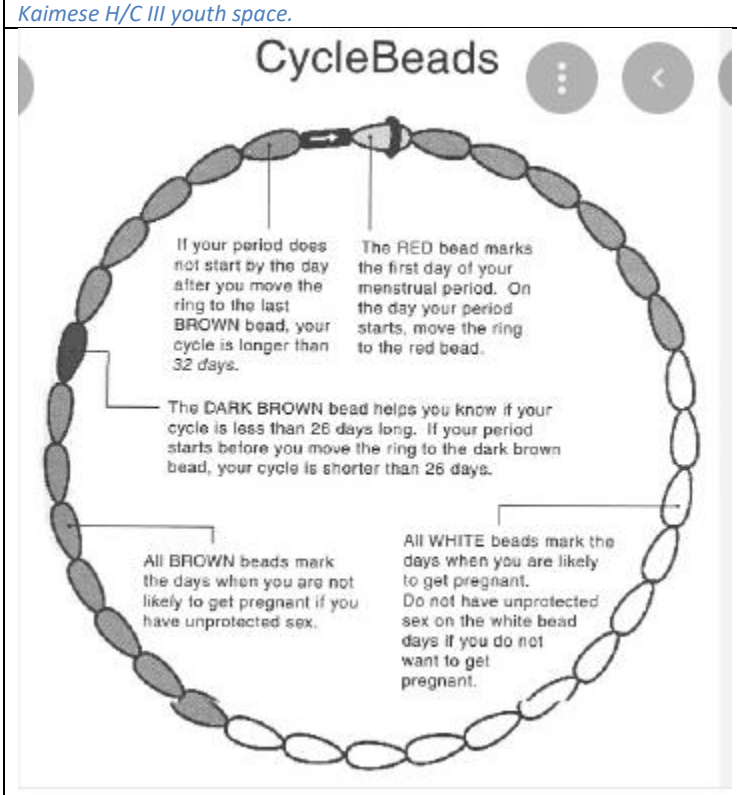
One of the VHT's mentoring community members on hygiene and nutrition practises.

Nutrition screening of a pregnant mother during the Integrated Health Outreach in Akilok sub county Kitgum District.

Nutrition screening of an Infant using the MUAC tape during the Integrated Health Outreaches in Kitgum Matidi sub county in Kitgum District.

Youth decided to take moon bead after a family planning session at Kaimese H/C III youth space.

Demonstration of family planning methods to the youth at Kaimese H/C III.



Cycle bead, preferred natural family planning method in Karamoja

Photos showing members of vetting committee of Loroo subcounty verifying the existence of Moricho youth group business of hair dressing at Loroo town. (Photo by Miriam/CRS)

Photo showing Akwii Judith, selling produce, sorghums during the market days meanwhile buying form the farmer is also taking place

Photo showing Ekellot Basil seeling actively participating in selling shoes inToroma Market during the physical verificationin Toroma Sub-county, Katakwii district

1. **SOYBEAN** Seed production Value chain that Local Seed Businesses (LSBs), Extension staff, and Partner staff practically participated in, as they were coached by breeders.

Participants being taken through Soybean seed field Management principles sessions at MUAK.

Maintaining soybean seed purity: Participants being taken through distinguishing features of distinct MAKSOY varieties by physical appearance, shape and color.

Participants being taken through soybean seed storage principles.

Iron-rich Beans - Seed Production Value chain that LSBs, Extension staff and Partner staff practically participated in, as they were coached by breeders.

The breeder takes participants through standard Beans seed Field Management practices required by Seed Inspectors – MAAF.

Seed processing, coating, storage and preparations for seed inspection session.

Sesame and Groundnut Seed Production Value chain that LSBs, Extension staff and Partner staff practically participated in, as they were coached by breeders.

SUCCESS STORIES

Geoffrey Komakech in his sesame garden

Sesame - my new delicate adventure.

'As a family we earned Ugx 5,670,000 when we sold 13 bags (1,350kgs) of sesame at Ugx 4, 200/kg out of the 15 bags of sesame we harvested in December 2021, we preserved 200kg for food. This was our biggest earning in a crop season as a family ever since we came back from the IDP camp in 2009. We agreed with my wife and bought 5 cows -a pair of oxen and 3 cows and bought a plot of land in akilok trading centre. The balance for school fees for two of their children at secondary school. My wife and children are very happy about the progress in a short time, now I look at sesame as my gold'' said Mr. Geofrey Komakech, a 50-year-old member of Pur Ber Farmer Group" in Akilok south village, Orom Sub County in Kitgum district, 450 km north of Kampala city – Uganda capital- East Africa.

Komakech continued, ''Here we used to do mixed farming and shifting cultivation'' when I used to interact with development partners teaching farmers on so called best farming practices, we used to have lengthy arguments about the benefits of those new practices, because to me farming was not new even before Acholis ran to the camp. My side of the argument was that the only new thing if shift from pure food production to commercial production, which moved us from Sorghum, millet, cassava and ground nut to other new crops demanded in other regions.

In 2021 April when GADC introduced DINU projectto our community, reluctantly, out of being convinced by some community members, I joined Pur Ber Farmer Group, our group was taken through trainings on organic contracting principles and procedures. The projectsupported us to establish 3 cares of demonstration garden for sesame ii, we I together my group members opened 3 acres of virgin block and applied followed good practices on site and seed selection, early land preparation- at the onset of rain, timely planting, spaced 30 * 5 cm, timely weeding twice and properly managed pest sesame III garden. This resulted to good harvest of 15 bags (approx. 1,500 kgs) of clean sesame. Something that surprised me was the double yield in an acre; I quickly realized there was some about my past farming practices that needed to be changed. This I had no doubt because I had participated in all the activities in demonstration garden. The results did not lie".

This season'' Okello continued ''me and my wife have become serious, we have opened land and planted 5 acres of sesame, now 1 month old and the crop is performing well, we are expecting 20-30 bags of sesame, projecting to earn over Ugx 15 million, we shall build a 3 roomed commercial house on the other plot we bought in Akilok center.

Okello's 5 acre sesame for this 2nd crop season.

Sarah's Journey to a permanent house through group savings and diversified farming:

Figure 1Sarah infront of her new three-bedroom permanent house at roofing level

"The permanent structure at the roofing level you see here is a product of 26 months of sleepless nights'' says a 29-year-old Sarah Amoding, a member of Ateka Lubanga Coa Village saving and Loans Association (VSLA) group, located in Pemkworo village in Awach Sub County, Abim District in Karamoja sub region – 600km northeast of Kampala – Uganda's capital city in East Africa. Amoding recalls 'without any past experience in saving as a group in my lifetime, till DINU projectcame into our sub-county, we were advised to form groups, consisting of 30 members, our group consisted of 22 females and 8 males.

''We were introduced to VSLA, which was a strange concept to us since I was already used to saving my small income in a wooden box under my bed which I would also break anytime I wanted whenever there was a pressing need for money. As a new VSLA group, we were taken through trainings on setting household saving goals, improving income sources, saving & Loaning procedures, and investment options, among others, the training was conducted by Community Based Trainers (CBT). In our first saving cycle which ended in January 2021, our share value was 2000, and after the short cycle share-out, I got Ugx 500,000, which I used for constructing a semi-permanent house for my 6 family members, which was a big single room grass thatch house better than our former small house, though this solved the challenge of sleeping space, but I found it still not very convenient to share a room with my 5 children especially the 15 and 13 years old boys. In the start of the second cycle starting January 2021, having seen the benefits of savings in a group, and being motivated, I purposed to further improve my Living standard. I diversified my income sources by starting a mobile saloon (Hair dressing/plating for ladies within my homestead here). I borrowed 80,000shs to rent space and get material and because of the demand at the time, I got 1,200,000shs within 3 months and used the money burn 10,000 bricks, bought 10 bags of cement and constructed my semi-permanent house to shift my household from my small housed room. By the beginning of a end of that cycle in January 2021 share-out, I got 1,800,000shs and used it to lay more 7000 bricks and added to the balances of brick that remained, I also bought 35 bags of cement and started construction of my 3 bedroomed house, with the weekly income, I became a member in 3 different VSLA groups near me (Arambe development group 29 members, Ribo cing ber 30 members, and my own group Atek ka Lubanga coa VSLA 30 members) so that I could get more money to build a better convenient enough for my family members. By end of that 2nd cycle in January 2022 share out, I got 4,500,000 million shillings which I used for adding materials for the construction of this three-roomed house up to this roofing level''.

Figure 2Sarah infront of her grass thatched house.

Remembering the multiple benefits, the group got from the projectAmoding says, ''Part of the money (Ugx 100,000) came from sale of 250kgs group beans sold to WFP. We were trained on Climate smart agriculture and given 30kgs of beans, I received 20 cups as a member and planted 1-acre on my own garden, I am expecting to harvest 500kg 2 months from now.

As a group, the projectalso supported us with 17 Boer goats for breed improvement which the group decided to give (by lot) to the 1st 15 members as the 1st beneficiaries to multiply and pass the offspring to the other 15 group members (Pass on a gift), my one goat has now multiplied to 5 now, even after passing on a gift, I am expecting to sell and buy a bull.

I am expecting to get more seed to plant more acres (over 10 acres) in the coming season. At that same time of receiving the seed, our group Lead farmer was also supported with 3 Kuroiler Chicken to multiply and pass on to other groups members for breed improvement, The group decided that to speed up multiplication of chicken, members would take eggs and hatch with local chicken. As a member I received four eggs from the Lead mother and hatched with local chicken, the same have also started laying eggs and I expect to be having 60 chickens by January 2023."

and now waiting to roof after sharing the third cycle in January 2023. my vision is to see myself expanding Beans production to 10 acres, my Hairdressing business and live in a descent and eat well in the next 2 years to come.'' Narrates Sarah Amodgin.

Foot Note:

Amoding is one of the 68,250 (60% women) small holders in the 2,700 groups (202 in Abim) in 11 districts supported by 'Inclusive Market based development for small holder farmers in northern Uganda' projectunder The Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU) implemented by CARE consortium (CARE Denmark-lead, CRS, DADO, SORUDA, GADC). The projectis promoting food security, Nutrition food production, access to Household income, access to market, prevention of Gender based violence and promotion of sexual reproductive Health rights.

A lead farmer in the projectrefers to a farmer selected by group members and supported with inputs to demonstrate Climate smart Agriculture technologies to other group members.

A lead mother is a woman selected and train to train pregnant lactating and adolescent women (5-7) in her group on nutritious practices and family planning practices.

A community-based Trainer (CBT) is a community resource person selected and trained by the projectto train and coach VSLA groups within a sub-county on VLSA Principles.

Buya John in his retail shop

The Business Battle

"It was a battle for me to start this retail business, Because of lack of enough starting capital; I started small by making Chapatti at the road side" says Buya John, 26 years old man from Lokolia Centre village, Kaabong District, 606 km North east of Kampala - Uganda capital, East Africa, as he narrates his economic growth through DINU's interventions.

"Before joining Oyara Kapei Village savings and loan association (VSLA) group in June 2020 under this project. I had operated Sambusa and Chapatti making business for the last two years. unlike at the beginning, I realised there were a few customers buying chapatti as many people preferred to take kwete (local brew) to eating chapatti. I would bake one packet of flour at a cost of Ugx 10,000 and earn Ugx 12,000 if all were sold which was sometimes rare. The 2,000 shillings profit a day was not enough to cater for my family needs.

Even while still operating that business, I joined the group, and spared some business time to attend group training on business skilling. One vivid topic of interest to me was on how to select low-cost profitable income generating activities (IGAs), which opened my mind to explore several income generating activities that I could venture in within the trading centre here to substantiate my income and meet my family needs. I zeroed to opening a small retail shop with basic commodities demanded locally here.

From the time I joined VSLA, I started saving part of that 2,000 daily profit. The group principle permitted members to borrow 3 time their saving, and having saved 60,000 within 3 months, I borrowed Ugx 180,000= at 10% interest rate per month for three months and added up my own Ugx 223,000= which I had also saved separately from Sambusa and Chapatti business in the last two years. To begin the merchandise business shop, I bought salt, soap, cooking oil, ball gums and biscuits and also used some money to pay rent. Being a new business where I had invested in it all my income and the loan, my household daily needs like food were also met through the same and after 2 months of operating it, my family was able to eat at least two meals in a day unlike before.

After 2 months of operations, I had saved 200,000 with the group. I repaid the 1st loan and borrowed another Ugx 200,000, which I also paid back successfully after 2 months. With this business expansion and financial growth, I used part of the profits (Ugx 400,000=) to buy a piece of plot (half an acre) in the trading centre here."

At the start of this retail business when customers were few, I lamented over what seemed to be a failure in choosing right business, now I appreciate everything including I went through including those hurdles in my initial business which pushed me to look for new Business alternatives that brought me to join a VLSA group. But above all I have realised the value of saving money as a group, more so how VSLA kept me focused on saving goals till auction audit but also held me accountable to our group members on my set goal. This New saving cycle my focus is to at least start building in that plot of land I bought and stop renting so that I reduce the business expenses and maximize profit.

For his first time, Rachel's Husband- Dengel shaving the 3rd born's hair.

From disgrace to a hero

''My husband has never been the same since that time, from household chores to children's hygiene you see him very supportive. Improved meals and nutrition have made our children look different, they are not the best, but they are not worst either, we admire them. From disgrace, my husband is now a hero at home and in the community'' said Kodiak Rakele a mother of 4 from Rupa sub county, Moroto District 550km North of Kampala -Uganda's capital, East Africa.

I earned Ugx 130,000 at once, for the first time, from the sale of 100kg of that 1st harvest of Sukumawiki and Onions, I agree with my husband on priority things to do, and he rented another 1 more acre of land, we became ardent commercial farmers. it is not only income which has changed, even our family diet and nutrition is now improving''.

''This has made my husband to be recognized as a lead farmer. Our CBT has called on him severally to participate train and give testimonies in women empowerment training, even among his fellow men and among elders, my husband is now recognized as opinion leader in Rupa community. We were even very hard working before, but now we know where to direct effort, we waste no single minute knowing it pays. We used to offer labour to other people in the community occasionally, but now we are fulltime on ours, soon others will offer labour for us too''.

Rachel continues, ''I have grown up respecting the social cultural context of my Karimojong community where women are submissive to their husbands and provide for the household, I would wake up at 5am to go and fetch firewood to prepare food for my family, leaving my children with no food or water to wash their face. From firewood, which I would sell some, I would then join my fellow women to drink alcohol a little bit and we would then go for water and prepare meal for our families, but sometimes would drink too much and end up not fetching water in time or not fetch at all, then the family would eat late or not eat at all and I end beaten by my husband for this habit but that did not even change me either.

One Saturday in July 2020, while at our drinking joint with my fellow women, someone came to and introduced himself to us, as a community-based trainer from DINU -CRS, he asked us to mobilize ourselves and our husbands, he will come back and take us through some important issues to get more money to drink better but also buy food for our family. We did so and he came back and took us through several trainings on Kitchen Gardens and gender roles as a strategy to curb malnutrition within our families and also what to do to avoid family fights. It was interesting to me because I saw this was the only way I could support my malnourished children and reconcile with my outraged husband. Though not in good terms because the change did not immediate in my life, I and husband fully participated in the kitchen gardening trainings, of interest to me was use of pesticides to boost vegetable production. The trainer gave us Sukuma wiki, tomato seeds and eggplants seeds in sachets to demonstrate what have learnt in the garden. As a group, we planted half an acre which like others provided for us food for our family. I remember one morning of group work where I went back with one full bag of 50kgs. That was food for the whole week.

Rachel in her Sukuma and tomato garden

Since that time, I have been a responsible woman focusing on improving my household and also in good terms with my husband who is also very supportive, he is not the man I knew 7 years ago. I feel very relieved that I no longer work as a donkey with no benefits. Occasionally am also requested by our trainer to support other women to have better dialogue and joint decision making as well as share responsibility when it comes to gender roles.

The new man

''Within two months, we started harvesting the vegetables for home consumption and sale to facilitate my weekly saving and loan VSLA repayment. Not only was our group active in saving but borrowing from the group was easy because members demonstrated ability to pay loans in time. From the start, each Kitchen Garden of 2 by 5 meters, for a member a minimum of Ugx15, 000 weekly, I had garden 3 plots from which I earned and saved and borrowed against. In addition, my family changed diet of fish and meat which had not eaten for a long time. Borrowing 40,000 to 100,000 from the group and paying before a month was normal for me. I was credit trustworthy. Those who used to giggle at me, now laugh with me freely because am looking different. My family are friendly with me. Am now a role model man coaching other men in mind-set change on gender roles, nutrition and family planning after I learnt myself that Working with women does not change your virility as a man'' Narrates Lot yang, a member of Nangoromit farmers group in Longoletyanga village, Lobalangit sub county in Karenga district, 550 kilometres from Kampala – Uganda's capital, East Africa.

''Previously, I used to look at vegetable growing as purely a woman's role and for the poor. This was the identical mind-set of other men in my community, our women used to do vegetable growing without our support. My eight children ate one meal a day because of inadequate food stuff and their health were compromised. Their mother struggled to bring food to the table alone without my support.

In 2020 June, my wife convinced me I joined a farmer group, Furthermore, the group was guided to select one man who is hard working, willing to coach other men on good interpersonal relations, nutrition and gender. I was identified as a role model man for the group. I reflected and found I was selected not change anybody but to first change myself because I was never supportive of my family. The projectteam and the district team of trainers skilled us in vegetable growing and me specifically as a role model

man, took me for exchange visits and we learned from other groups. I learnt and good vegetable agronomic practices for kitchen gardening, with support from my hard-working spouse and children, I became the foremost man in my community to engage in vegetable production. Being a member of the VSLA, saving regularly, I borrowed Ugx 40,000 from the groups which I used to buy sukumawiki and onions seeds which we planted in our kitchen garden, for the last 4 months I have earned more than Ugx 40,000 weekly form my kitchen garden and now am a change model man changing others.