

MONTHLY MEMBER ORGANIZATION

Bidhampola Community Development Association (BICODA)



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About BICODA

Bidhampola Community Development Association (BICODA) is a registered membership community based organisation found in Mayuge district engaged in agricultural production, marketing as well as lower level policy influencing for improved incomes and livelihoods. BICODA was founded in 2001 by 40 members with a primary objective of improving members' livelihood and increased production through sustainable agriculture practices. The association works with and is targeting smallholder farmers, farmer groups and marketing associations in the various agriculture Commodity value chains.

The association currently has a total membership of about 830, majority of whom are farmers that are loosely organized in 26 groups and membership is drawn from the three Sub Counties: Buwaya, Imanyiro and Mpungwe. Farmers are engaged in the production and marketing of a number of enterprises that mainly include maize, coffee, cocoa, bananas, beans, groundnuts, selected fruits, poultry and piggery. The current interventions are designed towards increasing agriculture production and productivity, postharvest handling, value addition and processing as well as marketing. Policy influencing through advocacy and lobbying is another aspect high on the association's agenda.

Agriculture Production and Productivity

At the beginning of 2000, farmers in Buwaya sub County had started experiencing reduced productivity due to soil exhaustion and increase in the incidences of pests and diseases. This threatened food insecurity among many households and hence led the formation of BICODA in 2001 for the purpose of ; addressing food insecurity concerns in the short run and aim for market as production increased, addressing concerns over the declining soil fertility by adopting practices that would ensure environmental sustainability. Over the years, members have adopted and promoted sustainable climate-smart agricultural practices which are addressing the interlinked challenges of food production and climate change adaptation as well as mitigation.

Major Focus Areas

Sustainable practices of agriculture production, Sustainable environmental Management, Value addition and marketing, Lobbying and advocacy, Health and livelihoods

Target Groups

Smallholder farmers, Farmer Groups, Youth & Women, Marketing groups and agencies

Current Areas of Operation

District: Mayuge

Sub Counties: Buwaya, Imanyiro, and Mpungwe

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For Networking & Linkages

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Mr. Baligeya Patrick the chairperson of BICODA showing a cocoa garden, apiary and a mango orchard

The association leadership has tirelessly invested in increasing access to and scaling-up agricultural practice, which promote sustainable and productive food systems and these include but not limited to; soil and water conservation through retaining crop residues as mulches for weed control and soil fertility management, minimum tillage and diversifying through rotation or intercropping. Farmers have established new methods of controlling weeds, retain water, manage soil fertility, and control pests and diseases as well as improving the old techniques.

Thanks to the leadership, which has ensured that all members gain knowledge and experience for on farm demonstrating being motivated by the sustainable commercialization of household production though identification and promotion of locally adapted varieties of crops and animals. Hence, member households have optimally utilized their farm lands towards increasing productivity with maize as the main enterprise, that is produced commercially up to about 80 tonnes seasonally, processed and bulked to generate better prices for the farmers.



Mr. Sulaiman Kibesi, a farmer under BICODA with water conservation practices employed in a banana garden

Value Addition and Processing

With increased production at the household level, the association has built the capacity of individual members in value addition and processing of agriculture produce. Establishing linkages and subscribing to a number of networks has improved the association's access to other relevant services like trainings in postharvest handling, value addition and processing of various commodities. This has necessitated BICODA source for support to acquire value addition equipment, hence improving their capacity to process and add value to some of the commodities. At the association level, the association is bulking and processing maize into flour, which is sold at fair price.

At the group and individual level, farmers have taken on additional commodities that include coffee, spices a case in point is; Mr. Nabangi Nathan, a member of BICODA who grows cypress trees, rosemary and strome grass to extract plant oils by distillation method, which marketed locally due to their curative properties to many symptoms of different ailments as well as being used as repellents and raw materials for pharmaceutical industry. Given this innovation the method of extraction is still rudimentary calling for linkages with the national technology appropriate technology centre artisans at Namalere.



Mr. Nabangi Nathan grows cypress and rosemary that are locally distilled to extract oil, Different oils extracted from cypress, rosemary and strome grass



BICODA's mill processing maize into flour

Marketing

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Maize and cocoa bulked from farmers

Extension Services

For members to adopt good practices of sustainable agriculture, BICODA introduced a practical extension approach to help young farmers and new members to acquire practical skills, which is hinged on the leadership and senior members of BICODA being model farmers to offer community extension services. New members or group recruits are given a probation period of one year to fully adopt sustainable and climate-smart agricultural practices prior to benefiting from the association being supported by selected senior members who offer on-farm training and demonstration.

Farmers who fail to adapt at the end of the 12 months period have their association membership revoked. This has ensured that all members develop skills and capacity necessary to increase production, improve food security and ultimately improve the wellbeing of their households. Through this approach members have taken ownership of their own development and commitment to practices of sustainable agriculture.

Advocacy and Lobbying

In a bid to increase household incomes, the association sought to add value to their produce, which called for aggressive lobbying and advocacy towards acquiring necessary equipment and services. BICODA runs a lobby and advocacy programme which has led the association to acquiring a number of equipment and services. Spearheaded by the chairperson Mr. Patrick Baligeya, a road map that included identifying potential partners was developed and efforts were directed to local fundraising targeting Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU), American Embassy, VECO Uganda (now rikolto), Mayuge District Farmers Association (MDFA), Mayuge district local government structures and Government agencies like NAADS/OWC and Rural Electrification Agency (REA).

Through this effort, BICODA acquired a maize mill and huller from NAADS secretariat valued at UGX 85,000,000 and UGX 25,000,000 respectively. They accessed an extension of a 3-phase power line from Buwaya trading center to run the maize mill and huller machines. The organization has acquired a tractor with two sets of ploughs from the NAADS secretariat valued at over UGX 125,000,000.

Other equipment and support received as grants by the association include; a maize sheller, post-harvest tarpaulins, silos and 2 grants totaling to UGX 59,000,000 from Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU), a rice thresher huller and a grant of UGX 21,500,000 from American Embassy and another maize / rice thresher from the World Food Program, UGX 5,290,000 from Uganda AIDS Commission, UGX 6,000,000 from International Republican Institute.

BICODA has also acquired land for the construction of offices from Buwaya Sub County Local Government. At individual farmer level, many farmers have continuously acquired agricultural inputs such as planting materials and animal breeds from OWC/NAADS program at the Sub County level. Currently, members are pushing for the Mayuge district local government leadership to enact an ordinance regulating the growth of sugarcane by smallholder farmer households.





Some of the equipment acquired through the association's advocacy & lobbying efforts

Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA)

Smallholder farmers need to be fully empowered to boost tier production through friendly Agriculture credit facility and hence BICODA started a community savings and loan scheme which was developed after a realization that commercial financial institutions offer unfriendly credit facility. The savings and loan scheme is not limited to the association members and this has enabled a number of small holder farmers to save and have access to cheap friendly credit facilities. Farmers are able to access simple financial solutions to address production and marketing challenge, which improved access to equipment for specific enterprise and agricultural inputs; contracting labour for planting and harvesting; transportation of goods to markets; invest in education, shelter and health; addressing emergencies and ultimately improving the general wellbeing of households.

The Future of BICODA

BICODA is very grateful to ACSA for the capacity building that has been rendered to BICODA leadership and farmers. However, the association and farmers are still challenges of access to simple irrigation equipment, community store for their produce and lack of transport for their produce. Therefore any partnership that could support the association in bridging these gaps will take them an extra mile in the journey of development.

BICODA also wishes and hopes to expand its influence beyond the three Sub Counties of Buwaya, Imanyiro and Mpungwe upon the completion of offices structures by designing interventions that target smallholder farmers in the whole of Mayuge district.

REACH US

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