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ACSA MODEL FARMER FOR SUSTAINABLE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PRACTICES



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INTRODUCTION

ACSA is a legally registered national network of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) which work with smallholder farmers to promote sustainable agriculture, agricultural market development, and environmental conservation and undertakes research and advocacy. ACSA has membership of 31 CSOs spread country wide in 28 districts with a Mission “to Empower civil society organizations (both church and non-church actors) working with small holder farmers to advocate for favorable agrarian Policy environment for sustainable communities” and a Vision of “Smallholder farmers living in a Sustainable Environment”. ACSA’s focus areas are; Advocacy and Lobbying, Research and Documentation, Capacity building of Member Organisations, Capacity building of ACSA secretariat, Networking and Partnership Building, which are undertaken under the overall goal of: **“Relevant agriculture policies and services for Small Holder Farmers (SHFs) are implemented to foster profitable sustainable agriculture enterprises”**. In its effort to advocate for smallholder farmers, ACSA has been employing various strategies such as use of media – both main stream and social and publication of documents like this one.

Over the past years, the focus on the approach and channels of delivery of extension and advisory services has evolved through different stages. These changes have been driven by a changing context in resource availability; climate change; new developments in information, communication, and production technologies; the entry of new actors; and increasingly globalised and vertically integrated agri-food systems. There is a renewed interest in exploring different extension and advisory services delivery models to better serve the changing agricultural development context. This renewed interest is accompanied with a desire to revive community-based approaches of extension service delivery, with farmer-to-farmer extension now as a dominant approach in many African countries.

In Uganda, the model farmers’ approach has been adopted by many CSOs to address the inadequate government extension service delivery due to high ratio of extension worker to farmer which is established at 1:5000 as opposed to the global benchmark of 1:500. The situation has persisted since 2013 when the National Agriculture Extension Strategy (NAES) was developed and has recently been exacerbated by the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. In this context, Model Farmers (MF) are understood as farmers that continually demonstrate increased productivity per unit area, while diversifying and integrating farm enterprises for food security and income generation at household level. These translate into their ‘good practices’, which are replicated in the community peer-to-peer learning. This strategy has proved to contribute to increased extension service delivery and or coverage in addition to improved technology transfer and use. Nonetheless, with the agribusiness orientation, MFs are playing a significant role in organising farmers towards collective and sustainable markets for their produce.

In the year 2022, ACSA has profiled and documented 12 model farmers drawn from member organisations country wide specifically the following CSOs; Skills Oriented Development Initiatives (SODI), Bidhampola Community Development Association (BICODA), KULIKA Uganda, Nnina Olugero Foundation, Homeland agro tourism, Caritas Lugazi, PROMETRA Uganda, Mityana District Modern Farmers Ltd (MIDMOF), Uganda Youths at Risk Development Network (UYDNET) and Agency for Integrated Rural Development (AFIRD). The criteria for selection of model farmers was based on; the level of farmer development, uniqueness of sustainable organic agriculture practices employed, specific agricultural innovations, and the level of production among others. Farmers' enterprises included seasonal and perennial crops, livestock and agroprocessing of produce.

List of Acronyms

ACSA:	Advocacy Coalition for Sustainable Agriculture
CSOs:	Civil Society Organizations
MAAIF:	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MOs:	Member Organizations
NGO:	Non-governmental Organizations
SHFs:	Smallholder Farmers
Shs:	Shillings
UK:	United Kingdom

Agency for Integrated Rural Development (AFIRD)

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Location:	Nkoowe
District:	Wakiso
Contact person:	Mr. Eustace Sajjabi

Agency for Integrated Rural Development (AFIRD) is an indigenous NGO founded in 1997 to provide an integrated approach to rural development. AFIRD has implemented projects in the fields of sustainable agriculture focusing on addressing food insecurity, low household income and environmental degradation. This is done majorly by building capacity of farmers who are organized in groups through trainings (practically and theoretically). The organization has also played a vital role in addressing of other cross cutting issues like gender equality, agrarian policies and markets that affect agriculture.

Mr. Albert Kakande

Gender:	Male
Group:	BalandizaKimese Farmers group
Village:	Sselinya-Kaliiti
Sub County:	Mende
District:	Wakiso
Contact:	0752 603755

Mr. Kakande Albert living in Sselinya-Kaliiti village in Mende Sub County is a farmer trainer with AFIRD under Balandiza Kimese Farmers' group. He owns and operates on just 0.5 acre which he has turned into an ecological demonstration farm. On the farm, he rears goats and rabbits and main enterprises but also grows banana, selected vegetables and potatoes. Mr. Kakande has also been engaged in research to come up with a number of organic fertilisers as a response to the need for innovations in organic fertility management.

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Methods of production

Mr. Kakande has acquired sufficient technical and scientific knowledge about agroecology practices. He has been trained extensively with AFIRD and other Civil Society Organizations in agroecology practices, which practices are being replicated on the farm. The main enterprise are the goats that are commercially being kept for breeding and selling of the kids at 3 months. He keeps 8 goats and the ninth Nubian savannah he goat and has constructed a raised shelter that promotes a healthy and natural behaviors and maintenance of the goats. The shelter is big enough to ensure that goats are safe, have an opportunity to exercise, are protected from severe temperatures, have adequate ventilation and have appropriate bedding (clean and dry). He grows different feeds at the farm and these range from grass pastures to legumes.



Using the knowledge of agroecology, Albert has been able to produce bananas and with the organic enhanced fertilizers, weed and water management and integrated pest and disease management he gets a good yield as evident from the increased size of banana bunches given the myth that Mende sub-County soils are not favorable for banana growing.



His farm being an ecological centre, a number of other enterprises have been undertaken. These include potatoes to serve as feeds, various vegetables, maize, ground nuts and others.



Economic Impact

Albert says that his farm is still operating with less efficiency at the moment and his goal to set up an agroecology centre was initially affected by its economic inefficiency. However, his goat project has become profitable and he breeds and sells young ones at 3 months which he sells at Shs.200,000. He has 8 goats which produce twice in a calendar year. Therefore, from goats' enterprise, Albert is able to make about Shs.1,600,000 annually. Another important element at the farm are the innovations in soil fertility management. He has been able to add value to bio slurry to produce a pelleted fertilizer that has been liked by the communities of Mende, Masuliita and Gombe. Although he has not officially been certified to market the product, local farmers have been collecting the fertilizer from his farm.



Impact on the community

Albert's greatest contribution to the community is his efforts to promote sustainable agroecological practices. He has mobilised all farmers groups in the three sub counties of Mende, Masuliita, and Gombe into one association known as MEMAGO. This association is composed of farmer groups that have been trained in agroecology practices and the main goal is to sensitize their local communities about adopting agroecological practices and this is achieved through community trainings and on farm research to provide alternatives for organic soil fertility management.



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ACSA Uganda

