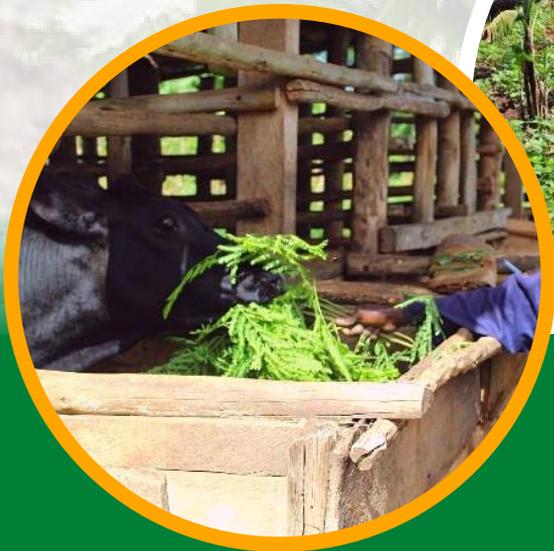




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MODEL FARMER FOR SUSTAINABLE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PRACTICES



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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.



A. Skills Oriented Development Initiatives (SODI)

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Contact phone:	+256 (0) 772484157
Contact email:	sodi.skills@yahoo.com
Physical address (office):	Nakirebe along Kampala-Masaka highway
Location:	Nakirebe
District:	Mpigi
Extension services contact person:	Mr. Thomas Ssewaya

SODI is an independent indigenous non-government organization (NGO) founded and fully registered in Uganda in 2006. It was established to provide holistic community development through provision of skills to enhance people's livelihoods. The organization aims at empowering the targeted groups and communities with knowledge and skills for job creation as well as identifying sustainable farm and non-farm employment opportunities. As a result, a number of projects have been implemented over the years hinged on sustainable organic agriculture practices and livelihood skills interventions for the youth and other vulnerable people in Mpigi and Wakiso districts. SODI is working with farmers in the sub counties of Bujjuko, Kasanje, Nsangi, Kiringete, Kituntu, Muduuma and Mpigi town council.

Mr. Posiano Mpagi

Gender:	Male
Group:	Eyetterekela Bujjuko Farmers Group
Cooperative:	Kisuuto Farmers Cooperative Society
District:	Wakiso
Contact:	0758255439

Mr. Posiano Mpagi is a smallholder farmer from Kisuuto Village, Malima parish, Muduuma Sub County, Wakiso district. Posiano owns 4 acres of land and has been passionate about agriculture since his childhood. He has adopted integrated farming with a major focus on coffee, bananas, vegetables, dairy, apiary, beans and maize enterprises.



Crop Production:

Mr. Mpagi was constantly challenged with rain-fed agriculture, which motivated him to be innovative in addressing the problem by adopting rain water harvesting technology for simple irrigation of crops during the dry season.

Runoff water and rainwater harvesting:

Posiano says the utilization of runoff water and rainwater for irrigation is a cost effective and an efficient way of irrigating crops for smallholder farmers given the scarcity of water for production in the country. Initially, Posiano depended on rain water harvested in roof tanks supplemented by water fetched from community water source points. Both sources were inadequate given the limited capacity of the water tank, the congestion of community water sources, and their drying-up during the dry season. This led to limited access to water for irrigation.

Following the training about rain water harvesting technologies by SODI, Posiano realized that during the rainy season, a lot of water was lost as run off. He opted for a ground reservoir that stores much more water of up to over 200,000 litres to ensure continuous provision of water for irrigation. He is however still using a watering can to irrigate his gardens throughout the dry season.



Other innovative practices:

COVID-19 lockdown was a time for Posiano to be innovative in his irrigation practices. He started applying organic manure as liquid-fertigation using locally made plant teas and animal manure in the watering can system. The fermented plant extracts and animal excreta are rich in nitrogen and once mixed with water lead to rapid growth of plants.



Economic Impact

Integration of farm enterprises has enabled Posiano’s family increase their household income hence improving the standard of living. For instance, the vegetables have provided the family with an average daily income of Shs.2,500 from the community per day, coffee yields an average of Shs.3,800,000 per year, while selling 2 litres of milk every day. Posiano continues to reiterate that the major achievement has been the ability to educate his children with the last one being in a secondary school and the family becoming food secure in amidst of declining land holding in the community due to urbanization.

Community Impact

Posiano being the chairperson of Kisuuto Farmers’ Cooperative Society has contributed a lot to the formation and growth of the cooperative, while he also doubles as the chairperson of Eyetterekela Bujjuko Farmers Group, which has ensured that all members are income secure through adopting coffee as a commercial crop. Posiano has successfully supported the cooperative in a post-harvest lobbying campaign where they have acquired a coffee milling facility from a World Bank project under MAAIF. He has provided land for the construction of the facility in addition to volunteering in monitoring and supervising the construction processes.



Lessons learnt

Posiano attributes his success and that of fellow farmers to commitment and passion in farming. He strongly believes that agriculture is very profitable for smallholder farmers when they are open to new and efficient appropriate technologies that can reduce the labor burden and most importantly allow them to integrate a number of enterprises on the farm.



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