

GOOD PRACTICE CASE EXAMPLES –

Organic Farming

NAME OF THE PROJECT	Green Light Revolution 2: Reforestation, food security, processing and marketing for smallholder communities in Uganda
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Organisation	Skills oriented development initiative – SODI
Position	Coordinator
Country	Uganda
Project Period	2016–2022, project continues
Budget/ Funding	76,923 Euros per year, funded by GLS Future Foundation and BMZ Germany
Short description of Organisation	<p>SODI is a Ugandan NGO based in Mpigi district and works with 1,030 smallholder farmers. It was established to provide holistic community development through provision of skills to help people improve their livelihoods.</p> <p>The organization has implemented several projects since 2006 in sustainable agriculture practices and livelihood skills interventions for the youth and other vulnerable people in Mpigi and Wakiso districts of Uganda.</p>
Background to the intervention	<p>This intervention started in 2016, after finding out that the rural population of Mpigi and Wakiso districts were living in difficult life conditions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many families eating one meal a day due to poverty caused by low yields and to lack of income on their farms. • Low access to education due to lack of money to pay for school fees in many families. • Very high farm inputs due to modernisation of agriculture and use of expensive agrochemicals, which also brought about soil degradation and lowered yield. • The few animals they kept were badly managed and did not give them enough products revenue to sell. • Young people migrating to towns for casual labour, because of low income in agricultural activities. • Small farms used to have around 30 acres of agricultural land surfaces. Due to land degradation and low production, farmers were forced to sell their land and reduce to 0.5 to 5 acres, converting to small businesses or migrating to towns for hard labour jobs. Land grabbing by powerful people obtaining land titles for the farmer’s lands and displacing farmers is also a common issue in the region.

	<p>For all the above reasons above and more, SODI proposed this project to promote organic farming through different activities: e. g. giving out animals for manure and income, construction of water tanks, support farm produce value addition initiatives, seed production among others. The aim is to restore the degraded soils and teach farmers to use the remaining little land profitably.</p>
Project location (Country, district/state/province)	Mpigi and Wakiso districts, Uganda
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic development and improvement of the living conditions of disadvantaged people from rural communities through education, increased yields, food security, improved infrastructure and health care, income generation, conscious and sustainable use of natural resources. • Promotion of organic farming, protection and sustainable management of natural resources, and the creation of income-generating opportunities and education for disadvantaged children and youth in rural areas.
Project activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Formation of farmers and youth groups b. Training c. Development of model farms d. Exposure visits e. Provision of clean water through tank construction and well protection f. Construction of fuel saving stoves g. Giving out animals in groups in a revolving format h. Construction of biogas production systems i. Production of tree seedlings and tree planting j. Construction of soil protection structure using A frame k. Compost making l. Integrated pest control m. Agroforestry n. Setting up model drip irrigations o. Vegetable growing p. Value addition on produce
Key activity	<p>Training for livestock farmers over 1 year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers groups of around 120 participants were formed attending landscape characteristics, cultural background, livestock keeping systems among other traits. • Each group received 3 trainings per month per sector. • Each training session comprehended a 1-hour theory class and afterwards a practical session (also around 1 hour long) at a nearby farm.

Results / Impact of intervention on animal welfare and livelihoods
(including quantitative data where possible)

1. **Farmers Training** – 1030 farmers trained on:
 - how to use small pieces of land both for food and income generation.
 - how to grow a balanced diet fodder and to make mix feeds as supplements for livestock.
 - how to make feed reserves, like silage to cater for dry season when grass is very little.
 - animal welfare, including proper handling of animals, especially small animals like rabbits, and proper feeding
 - animal health: farmers have been trained in deworming and immunizing animals and can do it by themselves today.
 2. Water harvesting tanks of 10,000 litres were built in the homes to eliminate the need of fetching water from 0.5 km – 1.5 km distance. Thus, allowing farmers to provide water to animals adlib.
 3. For drip irrigation, model mini dams were built to collect ground running water when it rains, which can be used for irrigation when rain stops.
 4. Biogas systems were built for those farmers who could contribute 30 % of the total cost.
 5. All trained farmers use organic fertilizers like manure or slurry.
 6. As an important part of organic farming, the integration of trees on farms was promoted through raising tree seedlings by SODI and giving them for free to the farmers. These trees are used as fodder, but also, some of them bear fruits for people on farms and for sale. And eventually a microenvironment improvement on the farm is achieved.
- Impact on livelihoods:
7. Today over 80 % of the farmers have food security including animal proteins (milk and eggs).
 8. The farmers now have 3 meals a day in comparison to one meal a day before.
 9. 60 % of trained farmers now have incorporated animal welfare capacities.
 10. Farmers make and apply compost on crops which resulted in increased yield per unit area.
 11. The families which keep animals now have incomes ranging between 1,500,000 – 4,000,000 UGX per season from selling milk, eggs, fruits, and vegetables.
 12. Some farmers now rely on biogas to cook, avoiding having to fetch firewood and cutting trees. The organic matter resting from the biogas production, called Slurry, is used as a liquid fertilizer which increases vegetables and crops' production like maize and bananas.
 13. There is improved health of family members due to good nutrition.
 14. Children are sent to good schools.

M&E	Evaluation comprised a qualitative method involving focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) with identified stakeholders and staff of the 5 implementing organizations, district technical officials and sub county level officials, local leaders among others.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal welfare knowledge was adopted by farmers, but they fail to implement some changes because of lack of resources. E. g. better infrastructure for housing. • Some of the farmers return to conventional farming because they were offered agrochemicals. • Lack of organic markets in Uganda which makes it difficult for farmers to sell their products. • In the central region there is only small land for production, which limits space for animal production and animal welfare. • Land grabbing and loss of productive land surface. • Climate change influences negatively on all agricultural activities: changing rain seasons make it difficult to plan and carry on the activities like planting and harvesting. • Local animal breeds tend to be less productive and high production animal breeds (genetically improved) are very expensive and hard to access for farmers.
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to inform the beneficiaries and all stakeholders of the desired goal of the project and specify the benefits of organic practices, and measures to avoid future conflicts. • Looking at the cost benefit analysis currently, farmers are not getting enough revenue from organic practices, thus there is a need to improve marketing possibilities for differentiated products. Standardization and certification of organic products was lacking among trainings in the branding and packaging of the products. • Animal welfare is key to sustainable animals' production: providing animals must be accompanied with training on husbandry and welfare awareness. • Choosing appropriate animal breeds is important: they should be adapted to local conditions, e. g. provide local chicken breeds instead of exotic since they are more resistant to diseases. • Need of refresher visits to older project beneficiaries to guarantee continuation of organic farming practices and sustainability of the project. • Joint planning by all partner organizations, capacity building and sharing of work plans from the start has yielded positively and led to sharing of experiences which allows replicability. • With capacity building and training, gender issues can be addressed. In the beginning women were not involved in leadership roles, but many are leaders.
Source (include reports and/or relevant organisational website if possible)	SODI is a member of GREEN LIGHT FUTURE UNION greenlightuganda.org