

Executive Director's Remarks

I would like to welcome you to our seventh issue of the UDS bi-annual Newsletter.

In this newsletter you will read about how UDS projects are benefiting the community by meeting their needs.

Am optimistic that as you read through this issue you will enjoy it benefit from it.

Thank you

Rita Epodoi

Highlights

- Sustainability of the farmers project.
- Adoption of water Jars.
- Benefit of reading to active schools.
- Integrating IT in every sector
- Case studies .
- Interest stories

UDS farmers' project takes on a sustainable trend

UDS farmer's project has kept revolving since its initiation in 2002. It started by providing information which graduated to skills development in 2006 then provision of seeds for income crops in 2007 and then establishment of demonstration gardens through the group approach method.

Since 2007, this project has reached out to 330 households in 11 Parishes located in 2 subcounties of Bugaya and Kagulu in Buyende District. These parishes include: Wandago, Ngandho, Gwase, Namuskizi, Gumpi, Mpunde, Kitukiro, Nsomba, Kabukye, Bukongoro and Mango.



Prior to UDS' intervention, the major income crops among these communities were maize, beans and groundnuts and once the season was good, production would be high leading to low prices and therefore a loss to the farmers. Through this project, UDS introduced and promoted short, medium and long term income and food crops some of which were new. At first, UDS promoted bananas and pineapples and start up seeds were provided. Although these are good income crops with a sustainable nature (seeds *can easily multiply*), returns would be realized at 12 and 18 months respectively. Based on this, short term income crops of carrots, onions and green pepper were introduced. During the training, these enterprises were demonstrated but seeds were not provided because they didn't have a sustainable



nature. Despite this, a few early adopters tried these enterprises and they realized serious returns. Because of the income earned, farmers were able to reinvest and expand their gardens and it is through their testimonies that others have also adopted these enterprises thus sustainability. Through various feedback meetings it was noted with concern that food scarcity was becoming evident because the main source of food (cassava) had reduced tremendously because of the mosaic disease. UDS noted that once this is not checked, what farmers have been selling for income will be diverted for food. Based on this in 2013, the component of food security was introduced among 9 parishes - here a disease resistant cassava specie (*nasy 14*) and nutritious sweet potato specie (*orange freshed*) were introduced. **PTO**

Photo 1: Lyada Robert (a progressive farmer) training a new farmers group at Mango.

Photo 2: A farmer from Ngandho weeding the cassava demonstration garden.

UDS Activities



Since these have a sustainable multiplication nature, group demonstration gardens were established and farmers have started sharing seeds.

Besides promoting enterprises with a sustainable nature, UDS realized that the dissemination approach of just selecting individuals from a parish doesn't produce good results. So currently for any community to benefit from UDS' training it should have a group and this group should officially request UDS for the training. The group approach is sustainable because farmers are able to monitor and support each other without UDS.



All the previous communities that had benefited through individual approach were encouraged to establish groups most of them have responded positively and these include:

1. Ngandho -Tusitikiremu group.
2. Wandago -Njababona group,
3. Kitukiro -Agali awamu group
4. Gumpi farmers - Ndijobone group
5. Mpunde farmers-Akulabula group,
6. Nsomba - Kyebajatobona group
7. Kabukye– Bisoboka Kabukye farmers group
8. Bukongoro– Bukongoro farmers group
9. Mango– Tukolele walala farmers group



In addition to the change of dissemination approach, UDS has built capacity of active farmers to train others. Since these have been transformed, trainees have confidence in them and this has increased the adoption rates. A good example of this is a number of community groups that have asked Robert Lyada to train them. This approach has registered sustainability of UDS' intervention.

Story 1

Moses Balilayine is a farmer from Gumpi parish who was trained in 2012. Among all the enterprises, he decided to concentrate on bananas. Like all other farmers, he received 5 banana suckers which he planted and managed according to the knowledge he received. Slowly by slowly he has been expanding his garden and by June 2014, he had 400 banana plants from which he harvests bananas for income and food.

From the income earned, Moses has been able to buy more land for production and educated his children. In his own words Moses said "because of the knowledge and skills I got from UDS, my home is food secure, my children have a future because am able to meet school dues and am now able to met my family medical bills. Thank you so much UDS.

Story 2

Mrs Tenywa from Wandago learnt from UDS the importance of short term income crops and started growing onions which take two and a half months to be harvested. As a wife in a home she now has her own income.

Photo 3: Moses Balilayine in his banana garden

Photo 4: Mrs Tenywa attending to her onion garden

Photo 5: Bikaba Fred in his cabbage garden

Story 3

Bikaba Fred- Kitukiro

Am grateful to UDS for the knowledge they gave me in farming. Before UDS' intervention, I was practicing traditional farming and I was growing only maize for both food and cash. After UDS' training my life changed for the better. I started growing bananas and short term income crops that include: tomatoes, onions and cabbages. My banana fruits are attractive and people buy them before they are even ready. There is ready market for all my produce from these I have been able to get good income.

Story 4

Ibanda Matiya - Nsomba

Matiya is an upcoming commercial farmer and trainer. He started his banana garden with 3 suckers in 2013 and by the end of 2014 he had a garden with 400 banana plants. He has started training other farmers and after training he sales suckers each at sh. 2000

Story 5

Byansi Moses- Nsomba

Moses is a progressive farmer, both his pineapple and banana gardens are well managed. Moses received 5 banana and 440 pineapple suckers and by mid 2014, he had 200 banana and 600 pineapple plants. In his own words he said "I have been a UDS beneficiary for the past 2 years and I have started getting income from my garden. Am grateful to UDS for opening my eyes and enabling me to do good work. All the money earned has been reinvested in the following: I Bought another piece of land where am going to expand the banana garden and I have started a fuel business where I sell petrol to motor bike riders.

UDS Activities

UDS adopts Water Jar Technology

Access to clean water is one of the major challenges of rural communities in Uganda. For long government and humanitarian organization have been sensitizing communities on the dangers of using water from unprotected sources for domestic use since its one of the causes of diseases and death especially among children. To address the water problem in Kamuli and Buyende districts, the government and other humanitarian organizations have dug a number of boreholes within the range of 3 to 4km. Despite this, the distance moved and time taken still leaves a lot to be desired because it takes 1 to 3 hours for a woman to collect a 20 liter water container. The time taken depends on the distance and queues at the borehole. Traditions in this region hold that it is a woman's role aided by children to collect water. However with the introduction of free education for all, women are left alone with the burden in addition to their routine household cores of cooking, digging and caring for children. Because of too much responsibility, women are deterred from attending to developmental activities thus continuous poverty.



In 2006, UDS envisioned that poverty emerging from lack of easy access to clean water can be reduced by harvesting rain water since the region benefits from the biannual rain fall pattern totaling to 7 months of rain in the year. With financial support from Afrinspire and other individual donors from UK, UDS has been promoting rain water harvesting through construction of a 2000 liter water tank. This technology consumes a significant amount of money and because of this only 35 tanks have been

constructed since then. The reason for this slow progress is lack of resources yet the demand is high but the target community can't afford the cost.

In 2012, UDS team conducted a study visit to Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Project located in Kabale District to study the different water harvesting technologies that are being promoted. Among the many technologies UDS selected water jars as an appropriate and more affordable technology. The size of water jars range from 420- 2000 liters and according to the construction manual, a 500 liters water jar costs a total of Sh. 250,000/= and besides, it is easy to construct.

A research conducted among UDS target communities indicates that on average, a household uses 80 liters of water daily. So with a 500 liter water jar in place, benefiting households will be saved a burden of collecting water for an average of 7 months of a year if rain fall pattern has not change. Yet once a jar is full it can take a house hold 6 days without a need of collecting water if it hasn't rained again.

Based on the above UDS has decided to adopt the water jar technology and 3 people have been trained in its construction and moulds to be used have been purchased. Construction is planned to start January 2015.

Photo 1: Program Manager checking out a water jar on a study trip to Kabale

Story 1

Jane Maganda

"The water tank has changed my life because water is now available and this helps me to prepare food in time. Previously I would come back from the garden very tired worrying about the distance to the borehole. But since the tank was constructed, all this worry is now history– Thank you UDS."

Story 2

PurisukaWotali

" I can never thank UDS enough for what they have done in my life. The water tank has reduced my trips to the bore hole, am now able to do more productive work at home."

Story 3

Musoke Elizabeth

Am advanced in age and it has always been a hurdle to collect water from a borehole because I don't have enough strengths to pump and carry water. I thank UDS for giving me a tank. During the rain season I don't need to collect water and I spend most of the time in the garden. Because access to clean water is a serious need in my community, I share with my neighbours.

Story 4

Kadayi Tadeo

Sometimes the borehole breaks down because of the large numbers that use it. But currently at my home we no longer have worries about water issues because we have a tank that takes care of our water needs even when the bore hole breaks down. We only worry in a dry season when there is no rain at all.

UDS Activities

UDS Initiates ICT Awareness

UDS has realised that the level of ICT innovation and use has greatly increased in the past 7 years to the extent that among developed countries, everything now is empowered by a computer.



As technology grows rural communities are still lagging behind because of lack of knowledge, skills and infrastructural development. It is surprising to note the even among elites like teachers, medical professionals and district officials, majority of these still tag computer use for only secretarial work and have little or no interest in it. A number of these elites have upgraded them selves to smart phones but they only use them for calls and messages. It is based on this background that

UDS started creating awareness about the benefits of ICTs and how they can lead to social-economical transformation of both individuals and communities.

The first awareness workshop was conducted at Kamuli District Headquarters and was attended by district officials, NGO representatives and business people. The workshop was officially opened by the LC5 Vice Chairperson who appreciated UDS for initiating this idea.

E- Learning Supporting Rural Students

In November 2013, UDS Library introduced the E-Learning software called Digital Science and Virtual Lab. This software was developed by [Cyber Schools Technology Solutions](#) in partnership with the Ministry of Education and National Curriculum Development Centre. Through this, the science syllabus of Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics for Ordinary level education was digitalized to ease learning of science subjects through visual learning and it has both theory and laboratory practicals.



In Uganda, this technology has been embraced by high grade schools that have electricity, computers and can afford to pay the annual subscription. So UDS introduced it at Kamuli to support rural schools that can't afford it and above all those that lack science laboratories. Since its installation, the technology was mostly used by students who use the library until awareness created among schools in and around Kamuli town council. After the

awareness and demonstration, teachers and students from various schools started visiting UDS centre to access the service. A number of candidate students testified that the service had done them well because they never had an opportunity to conducted laboratory practical from their respective schools and they are grateful to UDS for this

Photo 1: UDS IT Officer creating awareness at the district Headquarters.

Photo 2: E-learning demonstration conducted at Central College Kamuli

Book Box Story

The Head Teacher of Immaculate Heart of Mary Nakabugu Secondary School located in Luuka District is grateful to UDS for the support of the Book Box which the school started benefiting from in 2013. Being a private rural school, access to text books and reference materials had been a challenge to both students and teachers for a long time. In his words the head teacher said "Because teachers and students have reference books, the academic performance has kept improving. From the time the school started in 2004, it had not registered great success like the one of 2013 O'level National Exams, where it produced the best student in Luuka District who scored 14 points.

Library Story

Isabirye Kenneth is grateful to UDS for the library, he has used it since 2004 and he was able to pass all his academic levels of education that included secondary and university education where he obtainable a bachelors degree in Human Resource Management. After working for some years, Kenneth went back to school and he is currently doing an Accounting course. He says that for all his academic achievements, UDS has been the only place where he has done his research.

UDS Activities

Reading Improves Performance

Poverty in Uganda continues to be a big challenge especially in most rural communities despite efforts by the government and several humanitarian organizations. Poverty in Uganda is linked to ignorance and ignorance is linked to lack of information and this is linked to limited or lack of education. For most rural communities, education is not given a priority and therefore they don't invest in it and even when Universal Primary Education was introduced several years ago, many communities don't care to provide the requirements needed to have their children educated. Even among educated communities, the emphasis has been passing exams and the foundation of reading hasn't been given a priority and therefore people can't read the available information that can help improve performance.

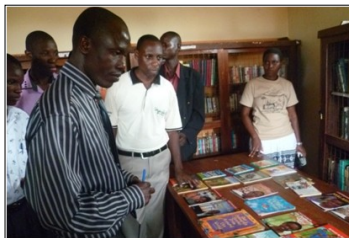


Since 2009, UDS library has been conducting Book Week Festivals and reading competitions among primary schools have always been one of the activities. It is evident that participating children have a big reading problem because school do not give it attention.

According to experienced teachers, reading should be emphasized at lower primary and once a child misses this, it becomes very difficult to catch up later in life. A survey conducted by UDS in 2010 among several primary schools in Kamuli District noted that one of the factors responsible for the poor reading culture in schools was lack of essential reading materials.

It is based on this that UDS initiated a Reading Project in 2012 in primary schools in Kamuli district to provide access to reading materials and promote reading skills and habits. So far 4 schools have benefited from this project and these include: Bezarell Primary school, Kyeeya Primary school, Kimenyuro primary school and Kasambira Public Day and Boarding school.

The National Book Week Festival 2014



In March 2014, UDS organized a third National Book Week Festival at the Centre in Kamuli. This event is an initiative of The National Book Trust together with the National Library of Uganda and all public/ community libraries throughout the country are encouraged to conduct it with activities that promote books and reading. The event at UDS was conducted for 5 days and was officially opened by the District LC5 Chairperson who was represented by the District Education Officer. Participants included; schools, civil servants, business people and individuals in and around Kamuli town. Activities conducted during this week included: Book exhibition, Reading aloud sessions, Word search from the dictionary, Debates, Quiz and painting among others. To encourage participation, most of these activities were done competitively and awards were given to the best participants on

the last day of the event. Participating schools included 10 primary and 4 secondary

Photo 1: Reading session at Kasambira Public School

Photo 2 & 3: The DEO visiting UDS book stall on display and addressing the gathering.

Kasambira Public Day and Boarding Primary School

It was joy when UDS introduced the reading project at Kasambira Public Day and Boarding School, both teachers and pupils were amazed to see books delivered at the school. According to the teachers, these books have developed the reading habits of children and their ability to speak English. In addition to this, the children's spiritual lives have improved because of the biblical stories they read from the books.

The Principle of the School had this to say "Thank you UDS, our prayers are being answered, we have been crying for this for a long time. Other schools were being helped in terms of reading materials by organizations around but we were ever left out, since everything is now in place, it's now our work to promote and improve reading".

Testimony Bezzallel Primary School- from Teacher Rose

I thank UDS management for the good work they had done in our school, we have been for long facing a challenge with reading materials at lower levels. Since we were given books, we have seen a tremendous change in our pupils. Reading has become the song of the day, this has been successful in the classes where reading is handled 'We thank UDS for this initiative that has begun to produce results'. Pupils can now confidently read and write English well. Apart from that they have also developed the habit of reading on their own and can now borrow and read books during their free time and this has never happened before.

Lessons learnt from the smokeless stove project

Since 2009, UDS has been disseminating smokeless stoves in Busoga region with a purpose of reducing smoke from the kitchens. During this period UDS has learnt the following lessons:

1. Awareness: For quick dissemination and adoption, awareness creation should be done at different levels which may include: Community leaders, households, over the radio, through awareness materials like calendars, posters and T-shirts for the constructors.
2. Drying period: The available construction manual written by the Ministry of Energy indicates that once the stove is constructed it should be left for 30 days to dry before it is used and up to 2012, UDS was observing the same condition. From the monitoring rounds conducted in 2012, UDS learnt that when a stove is given more than 30 days to dry, it serves a longer period before cracking. Based on this, a stove is now given 60 days before use.
3. Training: This should take 6 days: Day- 1 theory, Day 2 -trainer constructing while trainees observe, Day 3- trainer constructing with trainees and Day 4-6 trainees construct 2 stoves while trainer is correcting mistakes. (Previously the training has been taking 4 days).
4. Construction Errors: This can be addressed in the following ways: a) After the training, trainees should work together until each has had enough skills to work independently- if this is not observed, construction errors may be many and this can affect the dissemination. b) Trainees should be closely monitored for the first 4 stoves they construct on their own to check on their skills and to address any upcoming construction errors
5. Stove construction is more successful during the dry season when farmers have less work to do in their gardens .
6. Successful dissemination: This should be demand driven and at group level. This is because interested groups are accountable and committed to disseminate the technology than selecting and training any person from the community. When the former is observed, sustainability is registered
7. Each constructed stove should be monitored twice before it starts to work.

Story 1

Naigaga Robinah from Bulike- Ntaagirwa is grateful to UDS for the smokeless stove project that was initiated in their area. Robinah's stove was constructed in February 2014. The beneficiary is very happy and thankful because she no longer suffers from smoke when cooking besides she is able to attend to other domestic chores while cooking.

Smokeless Stove - Story 2

From time memorial household women in Ugandan are charged with the responsibility of preparing meals for their families. Cooking practices dictate that food is prepared with sauce and this means that two cooking fire places have to be maintained if both lunch and supper are to be taken at their appropriate time. Contrary to most urban women who are supported by maids and use advanced cooking technologies, rural women spend over 50% of their daily time in a kitchen using traditional cooking three-stone stove which not only uses a lot of fuel wood and is prone to fire accidents but also produces a lot of smoke which is dangerous to health of women and children.

During a needs assessment exercise conducted in Nsomba Parish Bugaya Subcounty in 2012, Edisa Namuganza, welcomed UDS team with closed eyes because she was coming from an intensively smoky kitchen. With a kid clasped on her back, inhaling smoke in equal measures like her mom, Edisa's appearance called for action to save her from smoky kitchen. At the end of the exercise it was evident that the community needed a smokeless stove intervention which was implemented a few months later and Edisa was one of the beneficiaries.

During one of the monitoring rounds, Edisa welcomed UDS team with open and bright eyes and in her own words she said; "the smoke challenge is history. I no longer suffer from cough and itching eyes, my children too can comfortably sit with me in the kitchen when am cooking. Besides removing smoke from the kitchen, cooking has been made easy because two pots are cooked at the same time using the same amount of wood, fire accidents are no more and the days of sitting in the kitchen taming fire are over cooking can be done together with other household chores. Thank you UDS".