



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Making a Life out of Seed Business

Stories from Seed Producers in Uganda



A Big Thanks to Our Partners



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Acronyms

ISSD Plus - Intergrated Seed Sector Development Program

SPS - Sanitary and Phytosanitary Sytems

ToT - Trainer of Trainers

QDS - Quality Declared Seed

James Is Changing His Life One Seed At A Time


OMONY JAMES

Paicho, Gulu District

Producing quality declared (QDS) seed has put more food on the table for James' family than anything else he has ever done. James was just a struggling peasant farmer before his friend, a member of a Local Seed Business Group (supported by ISSD Plus) introduced him to seed production. Eager for a financial breakthrough, James acquired one and half kilograms of simsim seed from NARO/Breeder. He planted these on half an acre of land. His first harvest was one hundred and fifty kilograms, which shocked him. ISSD Plus shared with him planting techniques and connected him to a network of farmers that were into seed production.

There are many such networks scattered all over the country, mainly supported by ISSD Plus under the Quality Declared Seed Component. The groups are dubbed Local Seed Business Groups, and are made up of local farmers that plant and supply high Quality Seed to their communities. Local Seed Business Groups act as a buffer system for local farmers, a source of information and encouragement through out the planting process. Farmers are able to share knowledge, uniformly scout for market, and consequently, grow together. ISSD Plus provides technical support to the groups through regular training and provision of technical advice to solve individual challenges.





ISSD Plus has generated support from the District local government, specifically, the District Agricultural officers and Sub-county Agricultural Officers (DAOs/AOs. The seed produced by farmers is quality assured by MAAIF/NSCS with support of DAOs to ensure that it meets the set minimum quality standards. The groups are trained by a Local Seed Business Trainer.

James is now able to pay school fees for his children who are currently attending school, he started a livestock farm (with two goats), and cleared all outstanding medical bills for his family. Next season, he plans to double his acreage and plant on three acres, which he estimates will enable him harvest 1000kgs of seed.

Quality Declared Seed changed my life. Through ISSD Plus I was able to join a network of successful farmers and build my business. QDS is the only way to go, it has been proven and I have seen it improve my livelihood”



From One Acre To Ten Acres, Komakech Plans To Plant Big Next Season

KOMAKECH FRANCIS

Paicho subcounty, Gulu District

I'm a farmer, I have always been - the only difference now is that I make more money than I used to. I used to grow home save seed like, rice, sim-sim and sorghum, but now I plant Quality Declared Seed. The Quality Seed yields much more and is more tolerant to drought. I learned about Quality Seed from a seed fair organized by ISSD Plus, my friend, a farmer called Patrick Tabo invited me and I went.

Seed fairs are markets where farmers bring their seed, teach the community about various varieties and also sell their seed. I interacted with many farmers who had planted the seed and earned big. I decided to try out the new Quality Declared Seed, so I bought ninety kilograms of rice NAMCHE II, and planted on three acres of land. The harvest was very good, I got eighteen bags, excluding the two that were destroyed by birds. When I sold the rice, I got four million Uganda Shillings, some of which I used to buy a bull (you have seen it). The rest of the money is still on my account. Next season, I want to plant on ten acres instead of one acre, so that I can reap more and build a house for my family and I. Farmers should look for Quality Declared Seed and reap more at harvest time.

Increasing Demand For Quality Declared Seed Among Local Farmers In Paicho

NYEKO FRANCIS OJOK

Agricultural officer for Paicho sub-county & Omel sub-county (newly created from the mother subcounty Paicho), Gulu District

Seed fairs are special markets where farmers exhibit various seed varieties, sensitize and interact with other farmers or potential buyers in the community. The seed fairs are organized with support from ISSD Plus, as part of their strategy to increase both access to, and demand for Quality Seed. Many farmer groups across Northern Uganda have used seed fairs to educate, share knowledge and connect with other local farmers.

According to Francis Ojok, an Agricultural Officer for Paicho Sub-county, in order to qualify to exhibit at these seed fairs, seed must have passed through the full certification cycle i.e. field inspection by DAOs, seed sampling and testing by MAAIF/NSCS as well as labeled with green tamper proof QDS labels printed by MAAIF for seed that has passed the set minimum standards for QDS. Some of the quality parameters looked at include Moisture content ($>$ or $=13\%$), germination ($>80\%$) and purity.

“Seed fairs have been a good intervention, prominent, well understood. The farmers’ participation has been overwhelming. The seed brought into the market from local seed business groups and also other groups within the sub-county have been quite outstanding.”





RADIO SHOWS

Radio is one of the most effective media for communication in rural areas. The secret to the success of the radio is that at least every household in the village has one. Using just one central broadcast, ISSD Plus has been able to reach hundreds of households with information on Quality Seed, their high tolerance to pests, diseases, and drought, as well as the monetary benefits. They have also used radio to educate farmers, address challenges and share information on dates and venues for seed fairs. "The radio shows were highly successful with a widespread listenership" Nyeko Francis Ojok an Agricultural Officer at Paicho was one of the radio show hosts.

CAN ISSD Plus TAKE ON MORE LOCAL SEED BUSINESS GROUPS?


There's a steadily growing interest amongst farmers to be enrolled as Local Seed Businesses under the ISSD Plus project. According to Nyeko, the desire is overwhelming, because all the new groups have to be trained and supported by the same number of people. He quickly adds that many farmer groups have already been enrolled and trained, for example: Kumgwaro Farmer's group has already received adequate training. Looking to the future, he says sustainability of project activities such as training of new farmers and continuous monitoring is essential to ensure that the benefits of the project are long lived. Nyeko and his colleagues plan to continue working towards increasing access to Quality Seed within their communities and neighbouring sub-counties. "The future of Quality Declared Seed is bright. As a sub-county we are prepared, to do what it takes to further Local Seed Business groups"

"The shows were highly interactive, we recorded some instant feedback through phone calls. Farmers were expressing appreciation and knowledge about Local Seed Business. They were quite happy and satisfied with the quality, uniformity of germination, and yields of the Quality Seed compared to the old seed they used to buy whose origins were more often anonymous."

ISSD Plus Should Not Leave Us, We Are Still Young!

PATRICK OGIK

Palare subcounty, Gulu District , Latyeng Local Seed Business Trainer



Latyeng Local Seed Business Group is led by a Champion, and rightfully so, because it is one of the first and most successful Farmer's Groups in Gulu District in Northern Uganda. Patrick Ogik "Champion" serves as their Local Seed Business Trainer and the Chairperson of Quality Assurance. The group has forty members, twenty of whom are women, while eighteen of them are men. The total number of youth in the group is eleven.



“Most people didn’t know about the existence of the quality declared seed. This year we have planted rice on eleven acres and simsim on five acres. It yields better than other seed, one can sell it at a higher price and earn more. Quality Declared Seed gives more confidence to farmers to grow more, the more one plants the more money one earns.” Patrick the Champ personally testifies to the great yield from the Quality Seed: he planted four acres of rice and expects to harvest about three tonnes of rice, which he says will be low (compared to other harvests) because of the interruption from floods this year. From the returns of the last season, Patrick started building a house and he even bought a bull to till the land. His colleagues have also bought bulls through planting QDS – “the price is higher and the yield is better.”





Patrick, advises other farmers to look for Quality Declared Seed and plant it because it takes a short time in the garden and gives a better yield.








Thank You ISSD Plus

MOSES OJOK

*Chairperson of Apongi Malo Local Seed Business Group,
Saving and Loan Association
Bala subcounty, Kole District*



I'm Moses Ojok, the Chairperson of Apongi Malo Local Seed Business Group, Saving and Loan Association in Kole District. I lead a group of forty six members, twenty of whom are men, and twenty four of whom are women. Seed production has transformed our lives and increased our household income. Before seed production, we were farmers in the lower level, but through ISSD Plus and the knowledge they have given to us, we have advanced. In the past we were just sowing seed, we didn't know how to plant seed in rows, but ISSD Plus taught us to plant our seed in rows and now we have upgraded. We were also lacking a good storage facility but now we have one. We want to thank ISSD Plus for giving us a very beautiful store in which we are storing our seed.

How Seed Fairs Are Enabling Farmer To Farmer Interaction Across Sub-counties

RONDA RUMOLO

NASECO Seed Company, Product Placement Officer Based in Northern Uganda

Farmers are always on the lookout for good seed to plant and this search intensifies during planting season. This, according to Ronda, is the opportune time for seed fairs. ISSD Plus has been active in organizing seed fairs across the country to enable farmers tap into an already existing market for their produce. So far, seed fairs have proven to be a highly effective and extremely economical means of reaching farmers at the community level.

Seed fairs are market style exhibitions where LSBs and seed producers get to show off and sell various varieties of seed. Farmers are able to interact with each other, share information, learn through music, dance and drama, compare seed varieties and trade. Through such activities, Ronda Rumolo's company has been able to reach 70% of all districts in Northern Uganda Region, namely; Lira Apach, Dokolo, Aleptong, Kitgum, Lamwo, Amuru and Nwoya District. A lot of the success of seed fairs is dependent on the preparation and mobilization efforts done ahead of the fair. Ensuring that farmers, key stakeholders in the community and members thereof know the agenda, date, venue as well as the benefits of attendance well in advance. Failure to provide this information has resulted in either a low turn up or a high turn up of non-buyers.





Exhibitors at seed fairs are always Local Seed Business Groups doing seed production or established seed companies such as NASECO. Some of the seed that NASECO promotes & sells includes: Maize seed (LONGE 10 & BAZOOKA varieties), Vegetable seed eg. PADMA- F1 tomatoes seed, which are on high demand in Eastern and Northern Uganda. Additionally, NASECO promotes and sells watermelon seed in Northern Uganda, especially in Aleptong District. Other seed includes, Eggplants (AJANI), Green & Sweet pepper (KAVERI-F1).

NASECO is a partner with East West Seed, which is a private sector partner under the broader ISSD Plus umbrella.

A woman with short dark hair, wearing an orange top with a patterned neckline, is speaking outdoors. The background is a blurred green and brown, suggesting a rural setting. The top of the page has an orange decorative border with a circular pattern.

ISSD Plus Is Training Farmers In Seed Production– Untreaded Territory

KAPTING IRENE

Agricultural Officer, Kitawoi Sub-county, Kween District

Our farmers started working with ISSD Plus in 2018. When ISSD Plus comes to an area, they select existing groups to work with. It is in these groups that ISSD Plus introduced the concept of Local Seed Businesses. The farmers were equipped with both skills and knowledge on how they can produce Quality Seed. Currently, there are a number of groups in Kitawoi producing Quality Seed. They are all well versed in the procurement process of the foundation seed from NARO, and were trained in proper seed management in the field, seed harvesting and post-harvest seed handling and marketing. The farmers involved in seed production are thriving because they were well trained and the market for the produce is readily available.

Unlike many seed varieties on the market, Quality Declared Seed are pure unmixed seed, this is one factor that has made them have very high demand. I attended a seed fair in Kitawoi where all the seed on display were bought and there was nothing left to sell! Farmers in attendance demanded for contacts of the sellers so that they could find them after the fair in order to buy more. For this reason, seed farmers are able to charge UGX1000 more for each kilogram they sell.

ISSD Plus has put a lot of effort in ensuring that the quality of seed produced by the Local Seed Business Groups is high. So, quality control is a key element of the QDS system. They have involved us (the Agricultural Officers), NARO and MAAIF to monitor and inspect the farmers to make sure their seed meet acceptable standards of quality. ISSD Plus also taught farmers seed quality control and now some groups are able to independently conduct a standard quality assessment. Local Business Groups such as Kaptoi and Kapronon are leading the pack, they have MAAIF'S green label on their seed packs.

With more and more farmers starting to produce seed, in a few years to come we expect that all farmers in the region will be able to access Quality Declared Seed. At the moment, production is still too low to satisfy the market demand. Some farmers are demanding for varieties that are not yet on the market, eg. Quality Declared Seed for Barley and wheat. With time, our farmers will be helped so much through this program of Quality Declared Seed.

HOW FARMERS START OUT IN SEED PRODUCTION

01

- a. ISSD Plus transforms existing networks or groups into Local Seed Businesses.
- b. ISSD Plus builds their capacity on existing gaps in seed production and marketing focusing on four building blocks i.e. Technically equipped, Professionally organized, market oriented and strategically linked.

02

ISSD Plus Connects these groups to Agricultural Officers, District Extension Workers who continuously conduct Quality Assessment, offer technical advice and support to the farmers. ISSD Plus connects the LSB groups to NARO so that they can procure Foundation seed.

03

ISSD Plus sets up demos in the field: Where farmer groups are trained in seed production - seed planting, management of seed in the field, postharvest handling, quality assessment, and marketing. All are trained in proper packing of their produce.

04

ISSD Plus trains farmers on how to access available market and farmers do it themselves.

05

ISSD Plus continues to support the farmer groups to address any challenges that come up: skills gaps or lack of proper seed storage. ISSD Plus has supported more than two groups with over 75% funding to build a modern seed storage facility, in Northern Uganda, West Nile Region and South Western Uganda.

THE ROLE OF THE FARMERS IS THEREFORE TO:

01

Make sure they avail resources to procure the seed.

02

The farmers decision on what seed to plant is determined by the availability of market, suitability of growing in that area, or whether it is a QDS crop or not.

03

Farmers start to produce seed and sell to other farmers

04

Farmers transfer knowledge and skills to their clients who buy seed from them as taught by ISSD Plus

05

Farmers can acquire quality (seed) certification. They can connect with MAAIF, and be guided on certification of services. They are aware and can successfully follow the process without ISSD Plus being present with in their communities.



An Agro Input Dealer Serving Farmers In Kapchorwa

CHEMUTAI NATHAN

Agro Input dealer, Kapchorwa District,
Eastern Uganda.

I'm an Agro - Input dealer in Kapchorwa District. I sell all items that a farmer needs in their garden. These include; fertilizer, pesticides and fungicides, hoes, pliers as well as planting tools and harvesting tools.

Ever since ISSD Plus came in and started training farmers, the agro input business is picking up. More farmers are planting large sacel and we have to work full time to meet their demand for tools and agro input.

When farmers come to my shop, I share with them some nuggets I have learned from experience.

ISSD Plus's interventions are tailored towards:

1. Community: Farmers, Local Seed Business Groups
2. Government: Agricultural Officers, District Extension Workers
3. Private sector Partners: eg. East West Seed
4. Agro Input Dealers

ISSD Plus Turned Both My Life And My Hotel Around

SARAH GABUGGE

Quality Seed customer, Kapchorwa District

Sarah's life turned around after an encounter with a Local Seed Business Trainer at the weekly village market. While there, she learned about the benefits of growing Quality Seed. The farmers who had planted Quality Seed gave such good reports about the grain that she decided to buy sixteen kilograms of the bean seed.

At first trial, she harvested 470kilograms of grain , which she sold at an extremely good price due to the high quality of the produce. Farmers bought her produce at UGX3,500 per kilogram. She invested the first returns from her harvest back into her hotel that had collapsed, and paid school fees for her children.

Last year, 2019, she planted thirty five kilograms of Quality Seed and reaped UGX3.5M at harvest. This time she bought plastic chairs for her hotel. She has achieved so much more than she used to when she planted home save seed. She even says she has gained some weight from her farming profits and is no longer as thin as she was! Her plan is to continue growing Quality Seed because there are more varieties of seed she has not tried out, for example ABBEY 19; "ISSD Plus should sustain the program."



Seed Business Is Thriving Among Farmers In Kween District, Northern Uganda

ZAKAYO BOSCO

Gulu United Local Seed Business Trainer, Kaproron subcounty, Kween District

Zakayo Bosco is a Local Seed Business Trainer in Kween District, heading the Gulu United Local Seed Business set up with assistance from ISSD Plus. He knows of four other groups in Gulu and four others in Kapchorwa District, Eastern Uganda. Zakayo has received extensive training in Quality Declared Seed production. Last year, 2019, his group produced up to ten tonnes of seed in one season. Zakayo estimates that soon their production will hit the 600 tonnes mark and they will not have enough storage capacity. The group currently has a store that can hold up to 600 bags of produce. They have approached several partners amongst which is Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD Plus) which agreed to give 75% towards the construction of their store.

Personal Exploits

Zakayo is a farmer as well - one has to be in order to lead a Local Seed Business Group. This is his first season of seed production and yet he has already achieved a lot. He has enrolled his children in boarding schools that he could not afford previously, and is not defaulting on the termly payments. He can now afford good clothing, a suit, which his community recognizes as a sign of good economic wellbeing. His household assets have increased as well; "We used to have one mattress but now we have excess, even for the visitors.

"Farmers should be committed planners and time managers. I have conducted several trainings with farmers, and I am sharing with them a lot of things, I intend to continue doing this."





The process of Seed Production

1. Foundation Seed Purchase: Seed farmers in Local Seed Businesses - purchase foundation seed from research centres such as NARO.
2. Site Selection: Seed farmers select sites for planting with support from Agricultural Officers. A good site should be a place with a history of planting different crops for the previous three seasons.
3. Follow seed principles: Some of the principles farmers must follow include, observing the correct Isolation distance, plant in rows, weed management, recommended spacing and seed rate
4. Submit planting returns to the District Agricultural Officer and submit a request for inspection: Farmers provide a small transport allowance for the Agricultural Officers to carry out inspection. Farmers pay for inspection, each inspection costs UGX 50,000/- for one LSB.
5. Inspection is done in two cycles; First at two weeks after germination and then at Flowering stage.
-From inspection, Agricultural Officers identify any off types, unwanted plants in the garden and ascertain that the seed being produced is the actual seed wanted on the market, then it is certified by MAAIF.
6. Request for Seed sampling and Testing from the National Seed Testing Laboratory, MAAIF. When the seed passes the minimum quality standard, then MAAIF issues a certificate to the farmer.
7. Request for tamper proof green labels: When a seed farmer's seed lot has passed the tests, s/he can request for Green Labels from MAAIF. Each label cost sUGX200/- which the seed grower has to pay in the bank before labels are printed; the number of labels depend on the packaging interest of the farmer; small packs means many labels, bigger packs means fewer labels.

From A Subsistence Farmer To A Commercial Farmer; How Quality Declared Seed Eases The Transition

MURUNGI VICENT MAINUKA
*Kichuchu Village, Kichuchu Village,
Kisomoro Sub-County Bunyagawu
District*

It is every farmer's dream to make money from their long laborious hours in the garden, however, the switch from subsistence to commercial farming can be difficult. It usually means getting more land, acquiring more labour or machinery to work the land. These can all be expensive and almost impossible for small scale farmers to do in real time. For many farmers in rural areas, such a transition is something they only dream about.

With Quality Declared Seed, ISSD Plus has made this dream possible for many farmers like Vicent. ISSD Plus introduced modern farming practices that are easily adaptable to last mile farmers. It increased access to Quality Seed that are pest, disease and drought tolerant. With this support, Vicent has successfully transitioned from subsistence farming to commercial farming.

His journey started when ISSD Plus went to his village in Kichuchu. He joined an ISSD Plus Local Seed Business Group and started seed production, "The seed from ISSD Plus yielded more, and ISSD Plus taught us to plant in rows, to weed in time, plant early, plant Quality Seed, how to properly spray pesticides and fungicides – this helped us take care of our crops better." The market for their produce comes from seed fairs and village markets, where other farmers come and buy the Quality Declared Seed produced by the farmers.

His neighbors are planting the same beans that he is planting after seeing his garden. Vicent's group makes demo gardens where farmers from the community come and learn. Sometimes they give free seed, one time he gave an old woman aged 80yrs two kilograms of seed and she planted in rows. She reaped eighty kilograms of produce and came back to plant fifty kilograms for the next season. Other farmers have seen the big change in Vicent's life as well and they are eager to start seed production.





Vicent mobilized five youth to join his group and next season they too will be producing Quality Declared Seed. "Farming Quality Declared Seed is the only way one can benefit from subsistence agriculture. It also eases the transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture - its is the only way to go."

Vicent says the change in his life due to seed production is evident; "You can see now, I have a good compound, I own a banana plantation, a piggery project, two cows and I started an apple farm. Both my children graduated from university because I could afford to pay their tuition, thanks to ISSD Plus and seed production." His capacity as a farmer has also improved. Previously, he could not plant on an acre. But now he has many acres of irish, beans and is now planning to plant on more acres in order to satisfy the demand for the seed because it is higher than he or his group can supply at the moment.



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE WAYS IN WHICH FARMERS HAVE BENEFITTED FROM SEED PRODUCTION?

01

Increase in household income

02

Increased yield at harvest meaning they can sell more and earn more. Farmer groups in Kororo, Kapraron produced 3000kilograms this season alone

03

Able to educate their children in private school systems from primary, secondary up to university level

04

Improved living conditions: Improved housing – many have constructed permanent homes with bricks and iron sheets

05

Improved family nutrition: Able to eat more than two meals a day, balanced and variety. Some have bought cows for milk production that supply the entire community

06

Able to support other community businesses because they have the money to buy from other traders, eg. Scholastic materials, Community Health Clinics, Shops selling household items eg. mattresses

07

Increased land ownership by both women and men

08

Reduced Youth unemployment: Youth are involved in seed production - Local Seed Business Groups look out for youth to enroll into their groups

09

Gender Equality: Women in business are able to earn and get respect from community members as they train other groups of both women and men in the practices they have learned from ISSD Plus

10

Community members are now able to afford high quality health care because of increase in household income

Creating Demand For Quality Declared Seed

ISINGOMA LAWRENCE

Seed Field Inspector for Rubirizi District, also doubles as an Agricultural Officer for Rubirizi District, Nyakasharo Ward, Ndekye town council.

In 2017, ISSD Plus project started Quality Declared Seed activities in Rubirizi district, the farmers that were involved have never been the same again. Currently in their fifth planting season, local farmers have formed seven Local Seed Business groups producing up to two and a half tonnes of bean seed per season. The groups are spread out in Katerera and Bunyaruguru County with about sixty percent of them being new farmers in seed production. According to Isingoma Lawrence, after a year or two, the groups are set to produce about ten metric tonnes of seed per season; "Farmers who are not planting Quality Declared Seed are losing out. Because the benefits of using a good Quality Seed is higher than what a farmer can expect. Our commitment as extension workers and as a government is to try and sensitize more people so that they can join Local Seed Business Groups and grow QDS."

Tapping into local seed markets

For a large amount of seed, there needs to be matching market demand, and Lawrence's job (among other duties) is to find it. He scouts market for the Local Seed Business Farming Groups. This he manages to do by conducting surveys to ascertain the number of local farmers who will need Quality Seed for the next planting season. He then gives this number to the farmers who plan to match their produce with the demand. In Katerera County, specifically in Kanyegarambe market, this approach has worked extremely well. Various media like Radio have also been instrumental in spreading information on Quality Declared Seed and their benefits. Radio Kamwenge in particular posts announcements about the seed and advertises the various Local Seed Business Groups. Seed fairs are synonymous with ISSD Plus's approach to increasing access to Quality Seed. In collaboration with Rubirizi District Local Government, seed fairs involving all seven groups have been conducted in Katerera county, reaching over two thousand farmers.



Sustainability

At the heart of ISSD Plus's long term sustainability strategy are Local Seed Business trainers (LSB-Ts). These are local farmers who coordinate the Local Seed Business Groups, train farmers, source market for their produce and act as a connector between the community and key government stakeholders in the agro business. Because they are intrinsically part of the community and not employees of ISSD Plus, even after the project transitions out of the regions, they will remain as a lynch pin and resource for farmers.

A portrait of Mugume Joram Kakira, a middle-aged man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a light blue polo shirt. He is standing in front of a red wooden structure, possibly a door or wall. He has his arms crossed and is holding a blue pen and a notebook in his left hand.

MUGUME JORAM KAKIRA

Kimara village, Ward 4, Rwentoba Town council, Ntungamo District

Mugume speaks enthusiastically about what ISSD Plus taught their Local Seed Business Group; Planting in rows, following recommended spacing and seed rate, how deep to plant, seed handling and application of both fertilizer and pesticides. Like many other farmers in his region that are doing bean seed production, he has seen an exponential increase in his income and assets. Mugume's farming group is called Rwabakyeneka Local Seed Business. All members are families, and one doesn't qualify if they are single, hence encouraging the household approach.

"We have a lot of money now because of the price at which we are selling the QDS beans. The price at which we are buying the seed may not be very good now as the one in the past, but even though we buy the seed more expensively, we are able to reap much more than we have in the past."

In 2019 Rwabakyeneka Group harvested 20,000 kilograms of bean seed, ten times more than the bean seed they got in 2017, when they were just starting out. The greatest challenge they are facing at the moment is land shortage for farming. Many farmers have to hire the land on which they farm. The other challenge they had and shared with ISSD Plus is the lack of a proper storage for their produce. Together with ISSD Plus, they have constructed a standard store. The LSB contributed 25% of the required funds for the store, while ISSD Plus contributed 75%.

"I advise other farmers to use Quality Seed because we are getting high quality harvest and high yield. With a lower quantity of seed, we harvest a lot. I also urge government to support local seed business just as ISSD has supported us in construction of a seed storage facility"

Debt Free After Becoming A Seed Producer

BUKENYA WILBER
*Chairman Kalagala A, Malongo County,
Lwengo District*

"I owed many banks money" says Bukenya, a local farmer in Lwengo District. He is the Change Agent for Tukwatanise group which has forty five farmers. He is also the Seed Production Lead at Kalagala Echo Saving Groups which has forty members. Bukenya was in the local village market when he heard that there was a new good Quality Seed in Katovu. ISSD Plus had come and was conducting a demo. There were many farmers with seed from Isingiro, Mbarara. He noted that the seed were very different. Still skeptical, he bought just four kilograms. " I didn't even know the names of the seed, I knew they were bean seed so I just planted. They told me to plant in rows and they advised me not to mix the beans, with any other crop." From each kilogram of seed that he planted, he got twenty five kilograms. "People in the community were scared and amazed. They said take us there or bring teachers to us and they teach us. I brought teachers from Kyazanga LSB to teach our groups."

Bukenya and his group learned more tips on how to get maximum yield from farming; modern farming techniques, using Quality Seed that are disease tolerant, planting in good fertile soil and doing a soil assessment, applying a fertilizer for that type of soil, planting in rows instead of scattering soil, planting on time, harvesting in time, handling seed properly and garden care tips. Since then, Bukenya has been planting seed successfully. He cleared all his debts with the multiple banks that he owes. He prides himself in having children in good schools at senior four and senior two level. He even joined a Village Saving and Loan Association, which is a new welcome development to his community introduced to them by Kyazanga Cooperative through ISSD Plus.





The benefits of seed production

Growing seed is very important and on high demand, the price differs from bean seed to just beans. Bean seed is more expensive and can cost UGX3000 – UGX4000 per kilogram, while bean grain costs UGX2000 per kilogram. The demand is so high that people scramble for the seed. People who have not yet started planting Quality Seed have not fully understood it. They should observe those that are planting it, how much they profit, how much yield one seed gives and learn. We have built houses, bought land for farming, bought cows and motorbikes. I want to put a sign on my motorbike that says “Zaavamubijanjaalo” (meaning the money came from beans)”

Future plans

Kalagala Echo Saving group’s aim is to fight poverty, illiteracy, and address the knowledge gap amongst children in families. “If our families are educated, they have food, have money, then we are well. Currently, in our group of forty people we only have three people that have cows. In five years’ time the number of people with cows will have increased to fifteen people with more land owners, and children who will have completed University. I want to see that every family in the community has a child that is educated.” Bukenya plans to educate his children up to University Level, build a beautiful home and enjoy it.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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