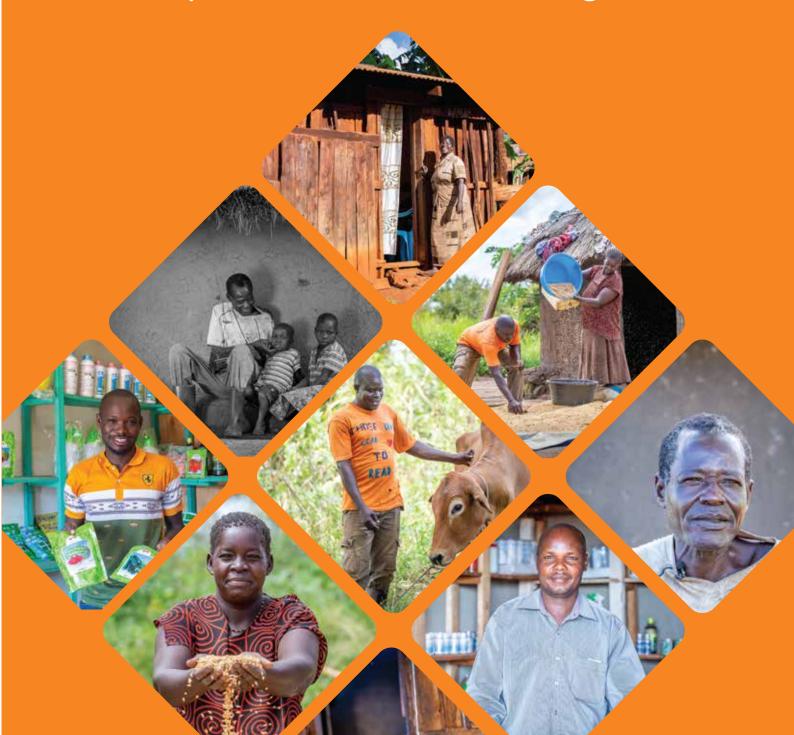






Making a Life out of Seed Business

Stories from Seed Producers in Uganda



A Big Thanks to Our Partners

















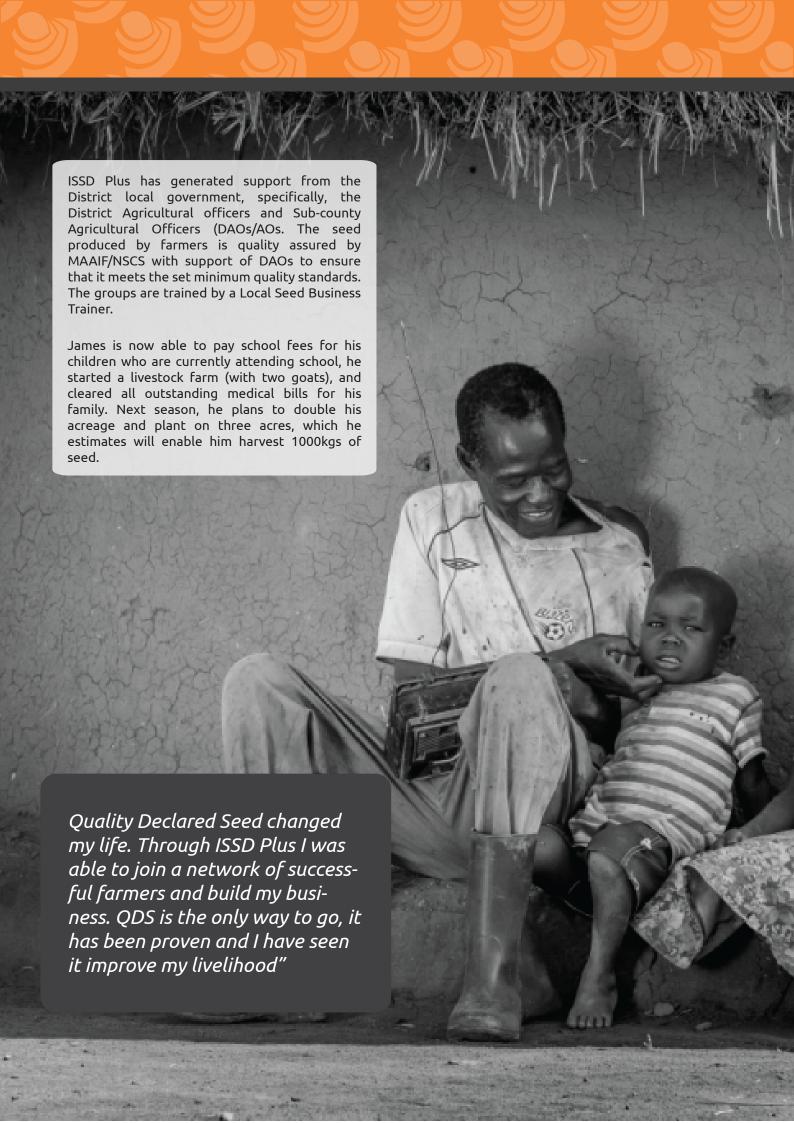
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Acronyms

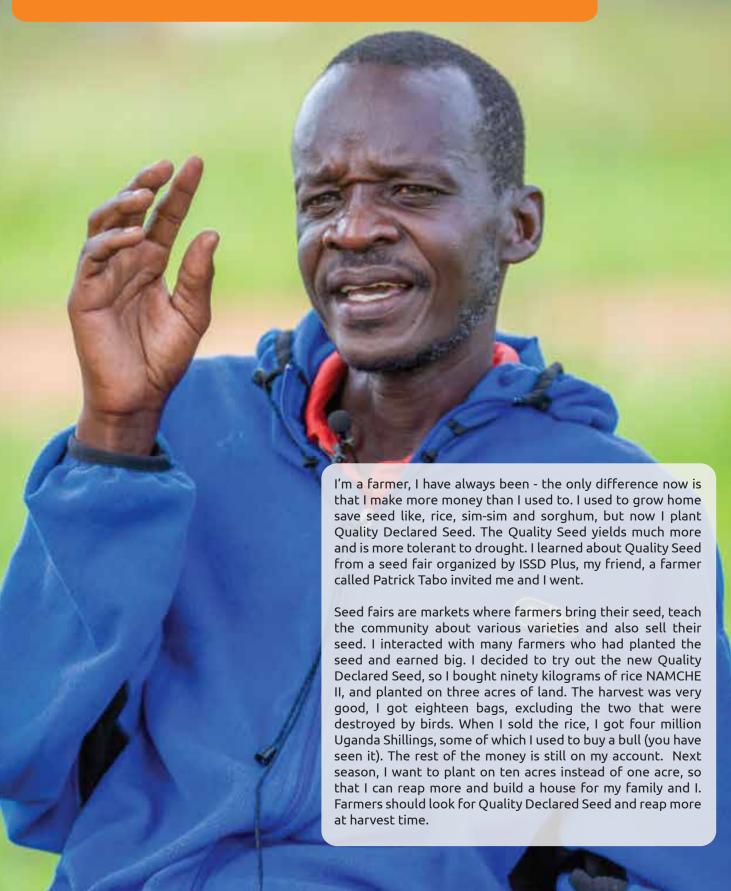
ISSD Plus - Intergrated Seed Sector Development Program SPS - Sanitary and Phytosanitary Sytems ToT - Trainer of Trainers QDS - Quality Declared Seed







KOMAKECH FRANCIS
Paicho subcounty, Gulu District





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."











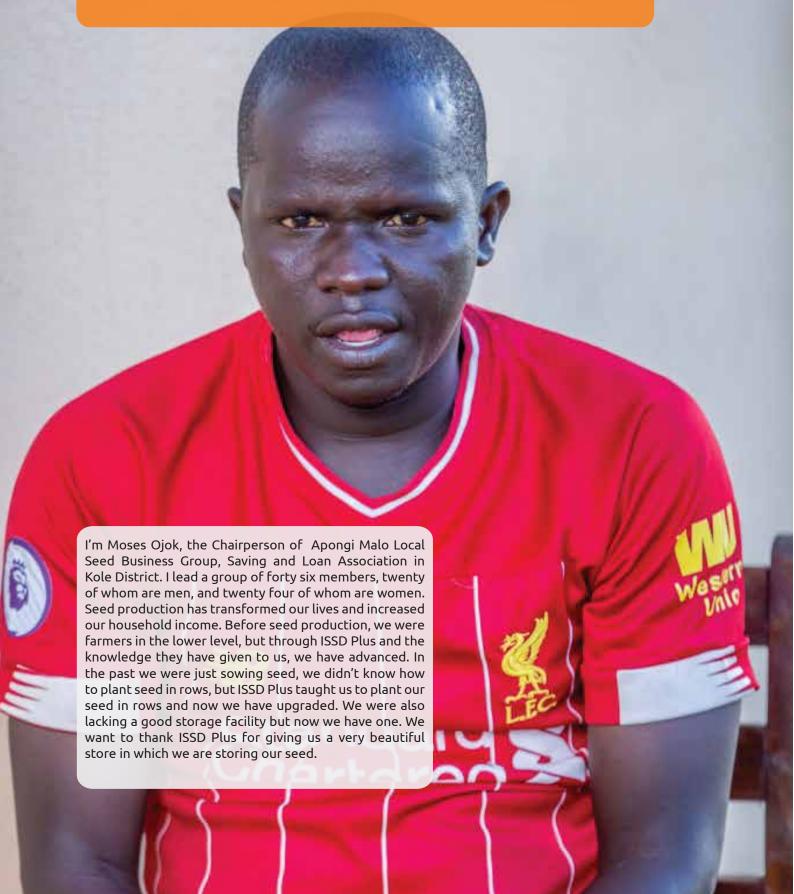






MOSES OJOK

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











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 Kaproron 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

THE ROLE OF THE FARMERS IS THEREFORE TO:

01

a. ISSD Plus transforms existing networks or groups into Local Seed Businesses.

b. ISSD Plus builds their capacity on exisiting gaps in seed production and marketing focusing on four building blocks i.e. Technically equipped, Professionally organized, market oriented and strategically linked.

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.

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.

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

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.

01

Make sure they avail resources to procure the seed.

The farmers decision on what seed to plant is determined by the availability of market, suitability of growing in

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

Farmers transfer knowledge and skills to their clients who buy seed from them as taught by ISSD Plus 04

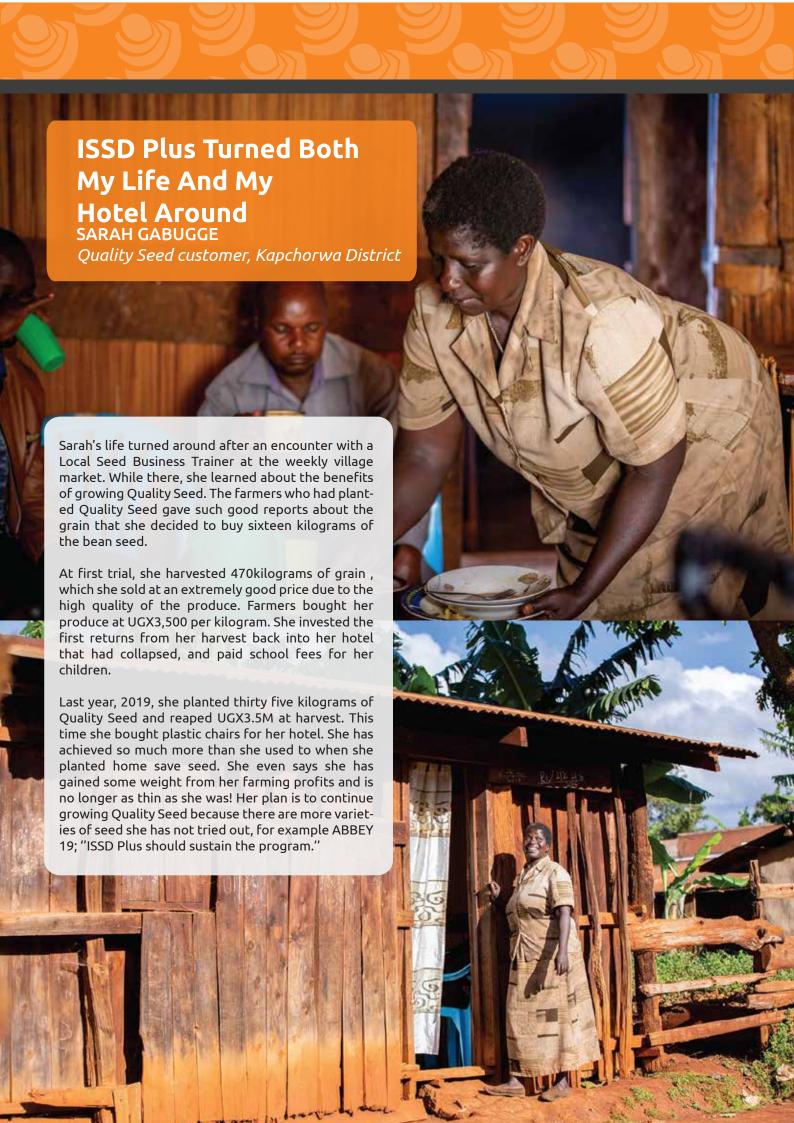
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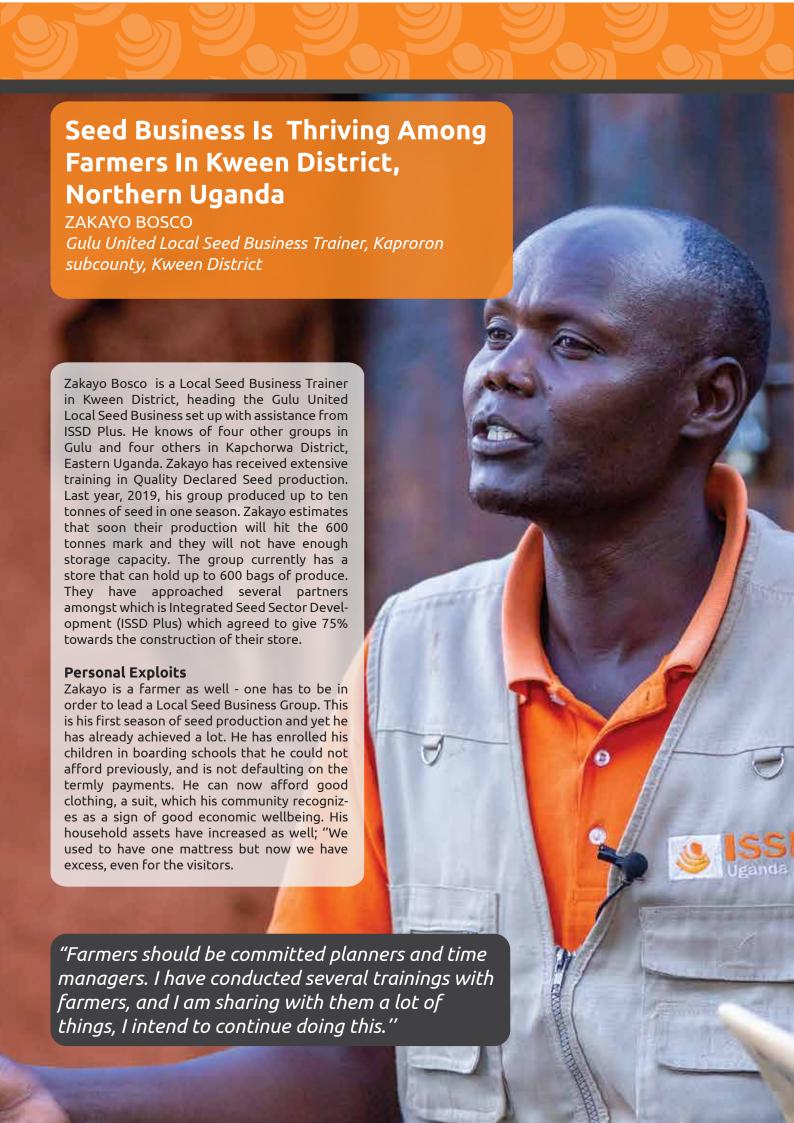
05

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.

05









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 Declar.d 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.





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

01

Increase in household income

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

02

03

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

Improved living conditions: Improved housing – many have constructed permanent homes with bricks and iron sheets 04

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

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 eq. mattresses

07

Increased land ownership by both women and men

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

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

10

08

Creating Demand For Quality Declared Seed

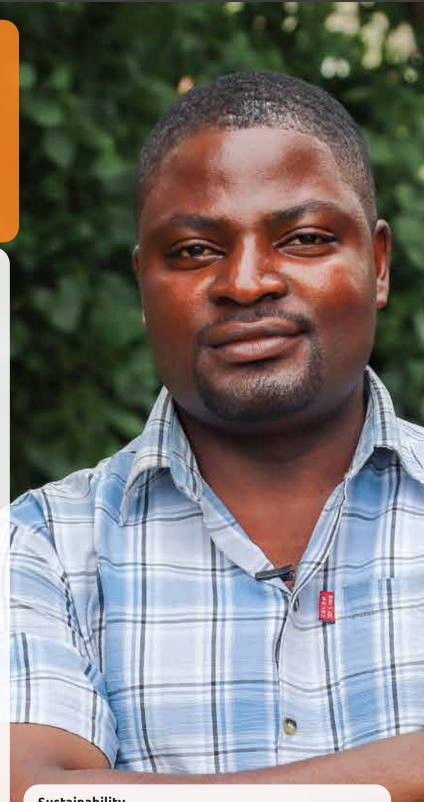
ISINGOMA LAWRENCE Seed Field Inspector for Rubirizi District, also doubles as an Agricultural Officer for Rubirizi District, Nyakasharo Ward, Ndekve town council.

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

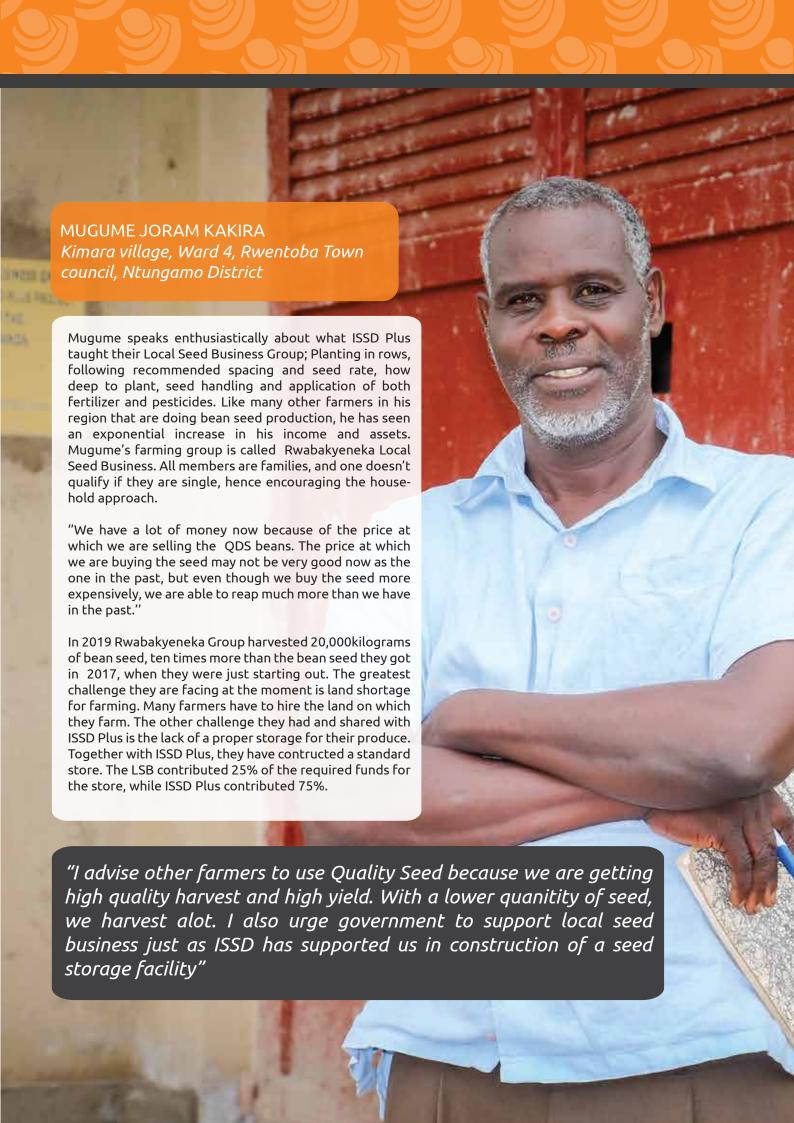
For a large amount of seed, there needs to be matching market demand, and Lawrence's job (among other duties) is to find it. He scouts market for the Local Seed Business Farming Groups. This he manages to do by conducting surveys to ascertain the number of local farmers who will need Quality Seed for 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 Kanyegarame 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. particular Kamwenge in post announcements about the seed and advertises the various Local Seed Business Groups.

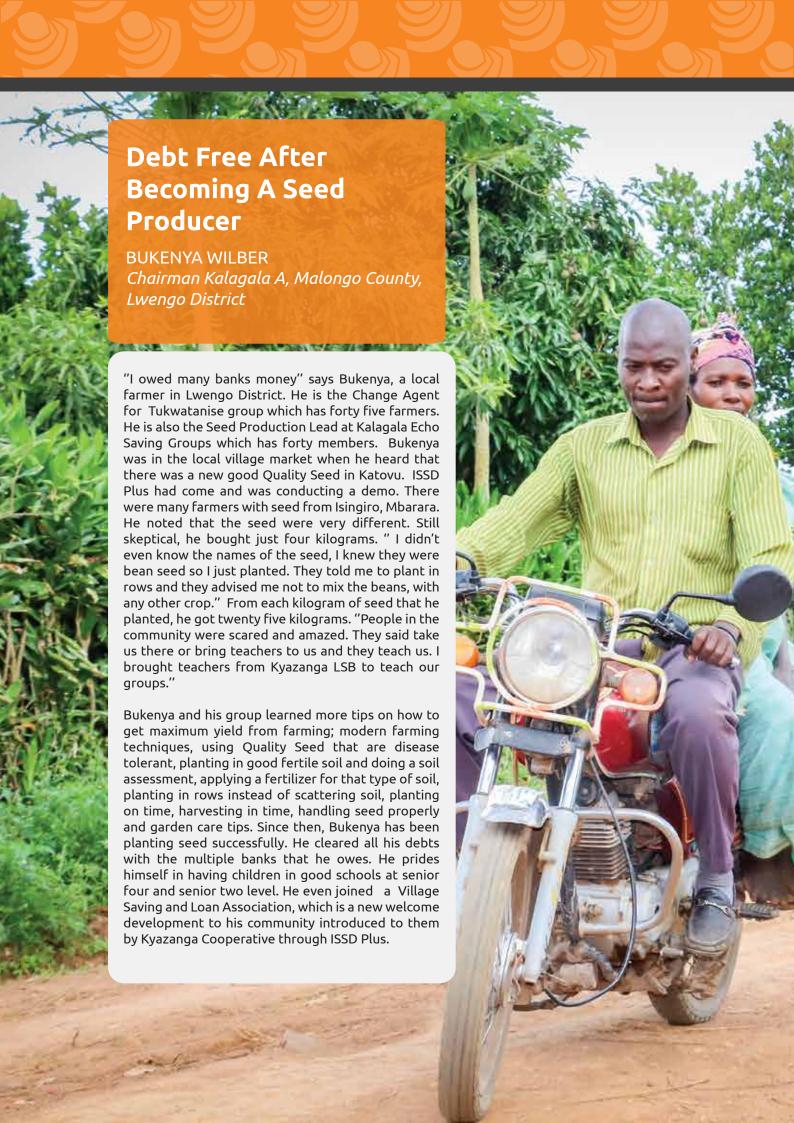
Seed fairs are synonymous with ISSD Plus's approach to increasing access to Quality Seed. In collaboration with Rubirizi District Local Government, seed fairs involving all seven groups have been conducted in Katerera county, reaching over two thousand farmers.

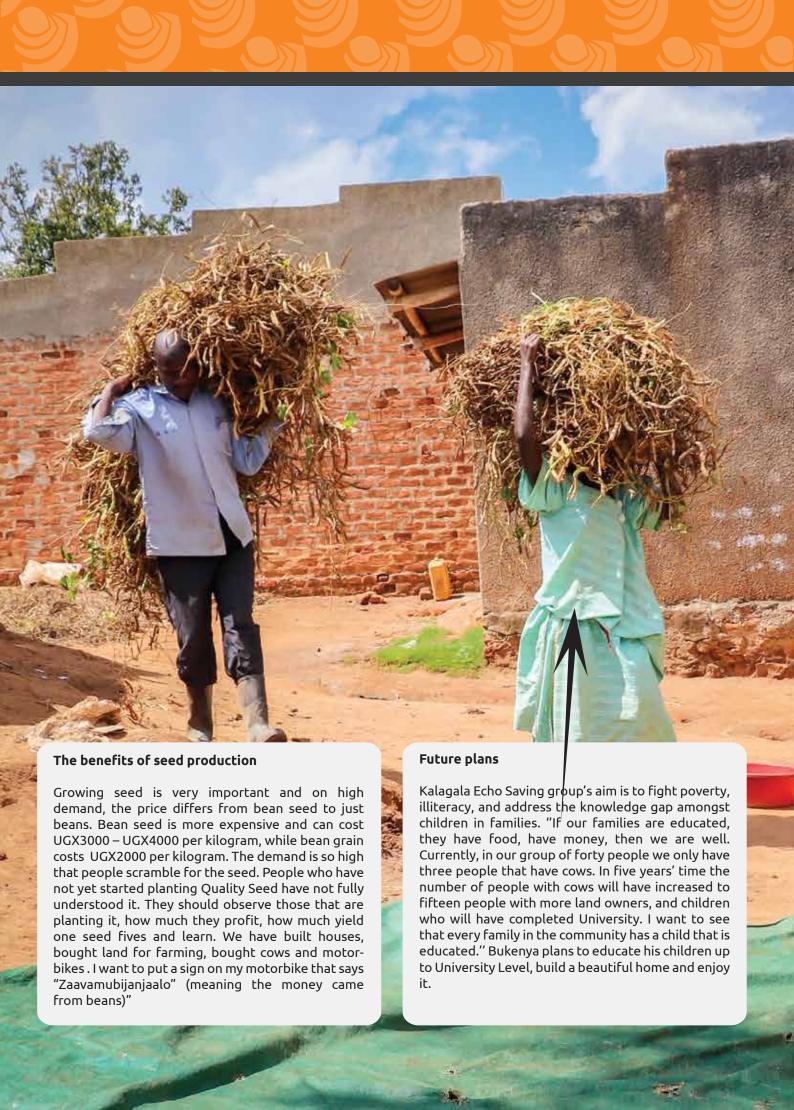


Sustainability

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.









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