

ISSD Uganda newsletter



Integrated Seed Sector Development Uganda Programme

Issue 4; July 2015

Inside this issue:



ISSD Uganda achievements in 2014

The activities implemented in 2014 were tailor-made according to the capacity gaps of the Local Seed Businesses as seed producers both technically and professionally. The activities were identified based on the performance of 2013 and the weakest areas in terms of the different success factors. From the activity audit, over 90% of LSB planned activities have been implemented. However, those activities under the supportive public sector aspect were dependent on building stakeholder consensus, passing of seed policy and regulation and joint innovation and as such a flexible approach was taken, focussing on building a strong buy-in for the ISSD approach and building a network for innovations.

LSBs relied on seed sales to raise money for booking foundation seed and this resulted in late purchase and or no purchase at all for the foundation seed booked from the research stations. To address this, the ISSD agribusiness experts have introduced seed boxes as a VSLA saving scheme (based on Village Saving and Loan principles). >>>

page 2

Editorial 2

**ISSD Uganda:
Contributing to institutional strengthening of the seed sector in Uganda** 4

2015 Seed Event 5

Seed System Security Assessment (SSSA) 6

TOT workshop 8

Voices from partners 9

Voices from the field 10

Vision of ISSD Uganda

Through a vibrant and pluralistic seed sector, ensure that quality seed of superior varieties are available and affordable to a larger number of farmers, thereby contributing to agriculture for food security and economic development in Uganda.

Editorial

Welcome to the second ISSD Uganda programme newsletter for 2015. In this issue we are sharing the key results that we achieved in 2014. We are proud to present that all LSBs met their target in terms of seed production and sales and ISSD together with PASIC project and USAID-FTF-EEA activity were able to support the MAAIF led National Seed Policy stakeholder validation.

The newsletter further highlights some of the activities that took place in the first six months of 2015. Notably with MAAIF are the National Seed Strategy development and Seed Regulations stakeholder review in collaboration PASIC and EEA. Other activities highlighted in this newsletter include the seed event, the Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops that were carried out in preparation for our out-scaling programme, the results of the Seed System Security Assessment that was carried out in West Nile region in March 2015, and the facilitation skills training conducted in Wageningen, in March 2015.

Astrid Mastenbroek

Chief of Party

ISSD Uganda Programme

>>>> from cover page

Access to foundation seed is still a challenge, this is mainly attributed to the high costs involved and long distances from the research stations to the places where LSBs are located. Collaborative efforts that involve production of foundation seed by some LSBs will continue to be piloted. Additionally, engaging the ZARDIs to develop foundation seed production as a sustainable business will continue to receive attention in 2015. Table 1 summarizes performance of ISSD against annual 2014 targets while figure 1 shows major achievements for the 2 project components and some challenges.

Table 1: Summary of 2014 key results

	Target description	Target #	Unit	Achievements per zone			Total	Achieved (%)
				South Western	Northern	West Nile		
1	3 LSB committees functional	90	committees	24	30	21	75	83
2	75% of LSB members (at least 675 members from 30 LSBs) growing and producing seed	675	%	352	288	278	918*	136
3	Increase in area under seed production - 20 acre per LSB per season (600 acre for 30 LSBs)	1200	acres	697	730	515	1942	162
4	At least 0.5 acre per LSB member	0.5	acres	0.91	1.41	1.43	1.27	255
5	80% of LSB seed meeting minimum standards for purity and germination	80	%	100	100	**	100	125
6	15 LSBs access extension from other service providers	15	LSBs	4	3	3	10	67
7	3 LSBs access credit services	3	LSBs	2	1	0	3	100
8	30 LSBs linked to research	30	LSBs	7	10	10	27	90
9	70% of LSB seed produced is sold	70	%	55	85	58	68	97
10	50% of LSBs earn profits from seed sales	15	%	8	10	7	25	167
11	40% of LSBs re-invest in seed business	12	%	6	7	7	20	167
12	70% of LSB Foundation Seed needs met by research	70	%	85	no data available	60	72	104

*Note that there are different seed growers in each season. Not all seed growers in 2014A grew seed in 2014B and visa versa. To calculate the achievement towards the target, the figure is taken from the season with the highest number of seed growers.

** The LSBs of West Nile region did not have their samples tested at the National Seed Laboratory.

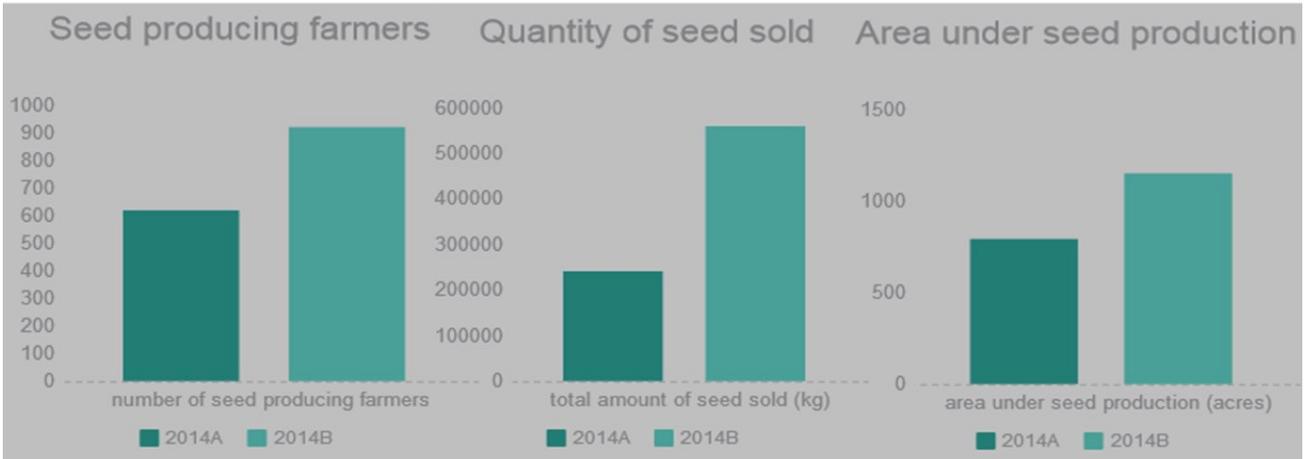
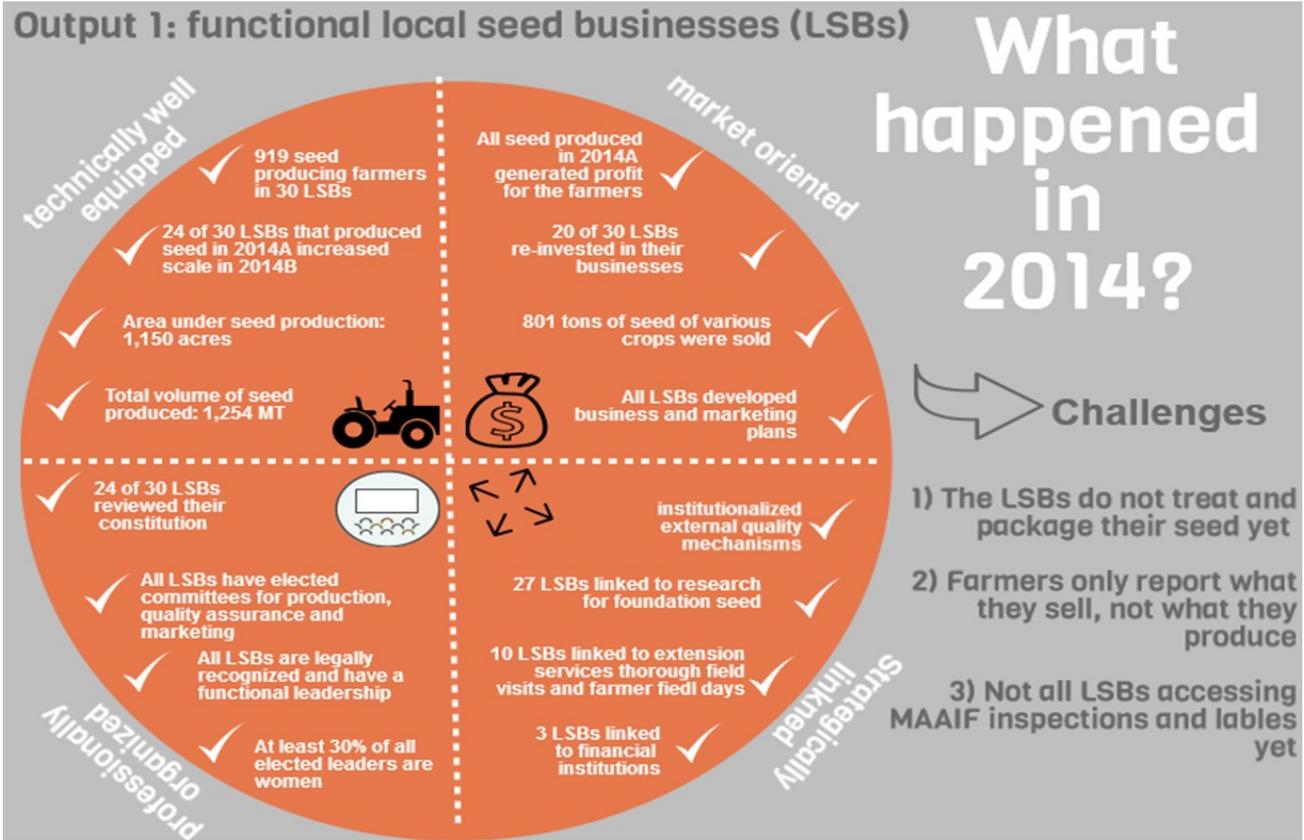


Figure 1: ISSD Achievements

ISSD Uganda: Contributing to institutional strengthening of the seed sector in Uganda

Stakeholders' review meeting on the seed and plant regulations

In collaboration with MAAIF, PASIC and USAID/FtF-EEA, ISSD supported a stakeholders' meeting to review the Seed and Plant regulations of 2010. The meeting was held on 27th January, 2015 at Golf Course Hotel in Kampala.

The Seed and Plant regulations are one of the key instruments for operationalizing the Seed and Plant Act of 2006. The review was necessary because a number of developments had taken place in the seed sector since the time when the regulation were drafted. In the meeting, different classes of seed were discussed. A separate regulation for Quality Declared Seed (QDS) was proposed and subsequently drafted.

Stakeholders' consultation meeting on formulation of the National Seed Strategy (NSS)

In February 2015, MAAIF in collaboration with ISSD, PASIC and USAID/FtF-EEA organised a series of consultation meetings with breeders, seed companies, LSBs, public sector actors, development partners, CSOs and the NSCS to solicit inputs for the formulation of the National Seed Strategy (NSS). The NSS operationalizes the National Seed Policy (NSP) which was validated by stakeholders in September 2014.

The mission of the NSP is to create a well-regulated seed sector that ensures availability of and access to safe and high quality seed and planting materials under pluralistic seed systems. The NSP provides guidance, principles, objectives, broad strategies and implementation responsibilities.

The NSS provides the detailed activities, tasks and budgets and links them to the annual and medium term national planning and budgeting processes.

National Seed Strategy Validation workshop

MAAIF, ISSD, PASIC, USAID FtF EEA facilitated a national stakeholder workshop to validate the National Seed Strategy. The workshop was held at Speke Resort Hotel, Munyonyo on 19th February, 2015.

The carrousel methodology was used to engage participants in the sub-group discussions. Group discussions involved suggesting improvements to the strategy. Some of the suggestions proposed include:

- Farmers and extension workers should be sensitized on the seed regulations.
- Agro-ecological variations and the seed demand per zone should be considered when setting targets for the number of LSBs in the country.
- A maximum of 50 seed fairs per annum should be organized at the national, zonal and district levels prior to the start of every season.
- Seed companies should provide extension services beyond demonstration fields.
- National Seed Certification Service (NSCS) should build capacity of stakeholders in quality seed production, processing and inspection regimes.
- NSCS should create awareness on the Seed Policy, Seed Act, Plant Variety Protection Act and all related regulations.
- Seed dealers should be registered at the district.



Chris Muwanika, ISSD Seed Expert facilitating one of the discussions during the stakeholders' validation workshop

2015 Seed Event

ISSD in collaboration with AgriProFocus, Uganda Seed Traders Association (USTA), Bioversity International and Ministry of Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) organized the second seed event on 26th February, 2015 at Kati Kati, Kampala. The theme for the day was "access to quality seed for improved livelihoods".

Dr. Karyeija Robert, the Commissioner Crop Inspection and Certification at MAAIF, officially opened the event. He thanked the organisers for putting together the seed event. Dr. Karyeija stated in his opening remarks that "the country is in a bad state as far as agro inputs are concerned and seed is one of the agro inputs. Seed is a very important aspect of agriculture which has been ignored in the 21st century".



Dr. Karyeija Robert, Commissioner Crop Inspection and Certification at MAAIF, giving his opening remarks

Dr. Karyeija informed participants that MAAIF is in advanced stages of finalizing seed policy, while the seed strategy is still under going development.

Dr. Karyeija concluded by stating that "the limited number of farmers or communities multiplying quality seed, is a major constraint to agriculture in Uganda. At the moment, about 30,000 metric tons of seed are required annually for planting, yet only 10,000 metric tons of improved seed is produced. Dealers in poor quality and fake seed have taken advantage of this deficit. Multipliers of quality seed should use this opportunity".

Dr. Arinaitwe Geoffrey, the Principle Research Officer at NARO made a presentation on fundamental differences between indigenous, open pollinated and hybrid seed, and seed developed through biotechnology approaches.

Mr. Rodeyans Nicolai, the Managing Director Nalweyo seed company presented strategies of production and commercialization of quality seed.

Phillip Odii, a hybrid maize farmer from Teso, Ataho George, a vegetable farmer from Mityana and Okwera Peter, a seed farmer from Kitgum presented success stories from using high quality seed. Mugarura Geoffrey from Bioversity International presented "bridging the gap between informal and formal seed systems through community seed banks".

Stakeholders made the following recommendations:

- i. Stakeholders should participate in the formulation of national seed strategies.
- ii. To bring quality seed closer to farmers, a community seed bank system should be established by the government.
- iii. Farmers should make use of the hotline 0800280280, to report cases of counterfeit or fake seed.
- iv. Sensitization should be carried out regarding tamper proof labels that will be introduced by government.
- v. An effective legislation should be in place to reprimand fake seed dealers.
- vi. To achieve Vision 2040, a robust extension system to support seed distribution should be put in place.
- vii. Farmers should establish markets before planting, and pursue contractual arrangement.

Over 300 participants including 32 exhibitors attended the event. The exhibitors showcased their products and service.

Mr. Kamayombi Bulegeya, the Commissioner, Crop Protection at MAAIF concluded by awarding certificates to exhibitors and organisers of the event.



A participant exhibits quality seed during the seed event

Seed System Security Assessment

Background

ISSD in partnership with FAO (Kenya), ZOA, Danish Refugee Council, NilePro Trust Limited and the local governments of Koboko, Yumbe, Moyo and Adjumani carried out a Seed System Security Assessment (SSSA) in West Nile region in March 2015. The study was aimed at assessing the seed security at household level in West Nile. In particular, the study sought to understand how the influx of refugees in the region affected seed demand and supply; and understanding local community's perspectives on the seed systems. The assessment focused on both the formal and informal systems which farmers use.

The assessment was conducted in Arua, Koboko, Moyo and Adjumani district. The agro-ecologies and presence of refugee camps or setting determined the selection of the districts. Data was collected from 10 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 344 households consisting of either local residents or refugees. 16 local market (LM) traders, 9 agro-input (A.I) dealers and 20 key informants (K.I) were also interviewed.

The Seed Security Conceptual Framework (SSCF) developed by FAO¹ was used in the assessment to answer questions on seed availability, access, quality, varietal suitability and resilience.

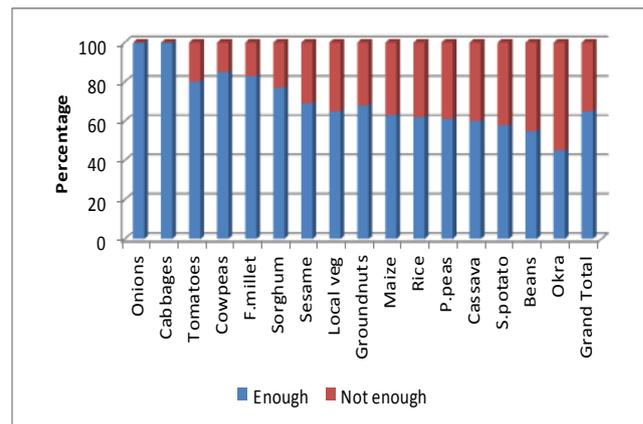
Key assessment findings

Availability of adequate seed, timing and proximity: Overall, 65% of the farmers who planted in 2014 indicated that there was enough seed available (see Figure 1). From the farmers' perspective, seed is generally available in adequate quantity at the time of planting, especially that from informal sources through own source or the local market (LM). A large number of farmers (50-60%) felt that seed from social networks (SNS), Community Based System (CBS) and seed aid was available but insufficient, and in some cases it was delivered late.

In terms of proximity, over 50% of residents and 71% of refugees considered seed from agro-input (A.I) dealers to be far away.

¹www.fao.org/in-action/food-security-capacity-building/project-components/seeds/seed-security-conceptual-framework/en/

Figure 2: Seed availability status



Access to seed: LMs were the main source of seed for the majority (43%) of households followed by own seed, seed from SNS and seed from seed aid organisations at 34%, 10% and 12% respectively. Seed from CBS and A.I dealers each were reported by 4% of households as their main source of seed.

The major concern by farmers was the high price of seed from A.I dealers and the late delivery of seed by seed aid actors, which affects the extent to which land can be cultivated and planted with crops. Seed from CBS and SNS were considered by some farmers as affordable while others said they were expensive (figure 3).

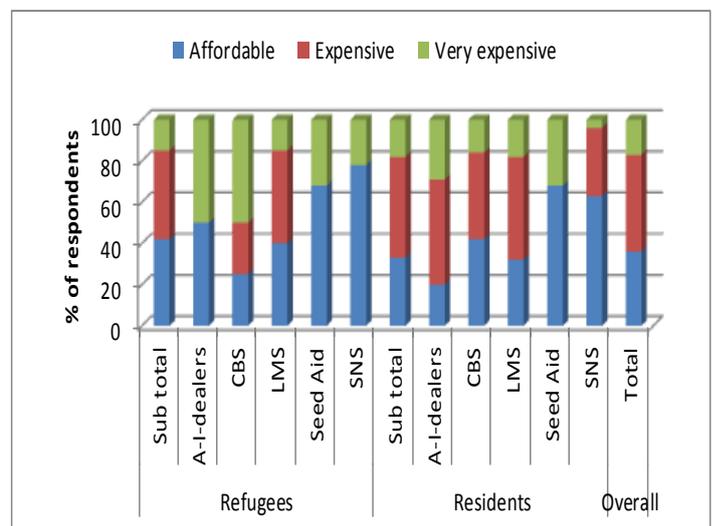


Figure 3: cost of seed

The main means of acquisition of seed are cash (75%), free delivery (25%), and credit and barter (3%). Acquisition of seed by cash has limited some farmers from accessing quality seed since some do not have the means to do so especially if the seed is expensive.

Seed quality: Farmers generally expressed their satisfaction with the level of cleanliness of seed and rates of germination and considered seed from agro-input dealers and CBS to be cleaner than their own saved seed and seed from the market. Although farmers were of the view that the quality of seed planted was good, discussions with key informants and participants at FGD cited poor quality of seed on the market, poor seed/grain storage and attacks by pests during seed storage as some of the factors affecting seed security in their area. Their views were echoed by the staff from the local governments.

Varietal suitability: Overall, about 75% of the farmers said they like the varieties they grow because they possess attributes such as short maturity duration, and resistance to pests, diseases and drought. Farmers indicated that varieties of major crops had done well in their agro-ecologies and coped with the prolonged dry spells over the past few years. New varieties of crops such as cassava, simsim, groundnuts, maize, beans and rice have been introduced and adopted by the community. Indeed farmers have multiple seed sources through which they obtain seed (figure 4).

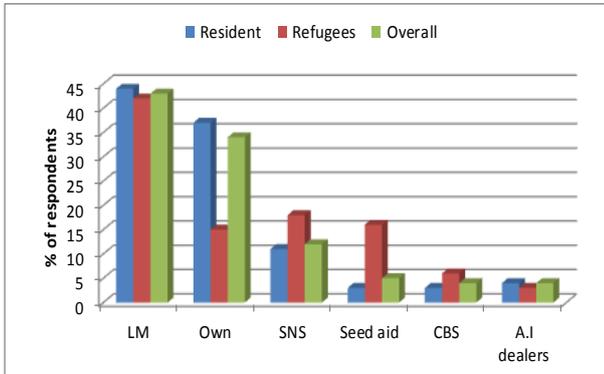
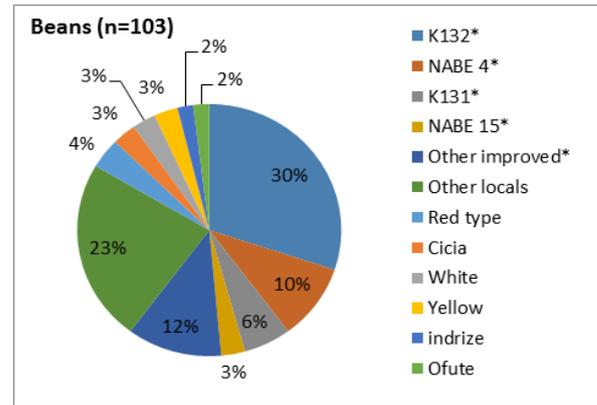


Figure 4: Seed sources by resident status

Resilience: There is a mix of local and improved varieties, with each crop having at least seven different varieties planted, beans and cassava have more than 12 varieties. The high level of diversity of varieties within a given crop species signifies that the household's seed system in West Nile sub-region is generally resilient to weather (drought) and biotic (pest and diseases) shocks. However, the sub-region continues to face crises and disasters like prolonged dry spells and floods which renders the households prone to seed insecurity (low resilience). Figure 5 shows the proportion and number of varieties for beans.



(* denotes improved varieties)

Figure 5: Bean varieties grown

Conclusion

Farmers have multiple sources through which they obtain seed, with the major ones being own saved seed, local market, CBS and social networks. From the farmers' perspective seed is generally available in adequate quantity at the time of planting, especially informal seed through own source or local markets.

A large proportion of farmers felt that seed from SN, CBS and seed aid is available but insufficient and that seed from agro-input dealers are far away and expensive. They also had concerns about timely availability and proximity of seed, high prices of seed from agro-input dealers and the late delivery of seed by seed aid actors.

Discussions with key informants and participants at FGDs cited poor quality seed, as some of the factors affecting seed security in their area. Farmers like the varieties they grow because they possess attributes such as short maturity duration and resistance to pests, diseases and drought. However, lack of information on some varieties provided and limited involvement in decision-making regarding variety introductions were singled out as main concerns regarding varietal suitability.

Farmers' ability to have access to adequate and sufficient quantities of adapted and preferred seed at all times has been greatly affected by prolonged dry spell, floods and influx of refugees over the past few years, rendering resilience of the seed system low.

Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop for LSB out scaling partners

In 2015, 70 new Local Seed Businesses (LSBs) will be created through out-scaling partnership, each partner is expected to support at least five new LSBs. The partnership is intended to foster the sharing and adoption of the result-oriented LBS model with other organizations, to ensure sustainable LSB operation and development even beyond the current ISSD program. The partners have to be equipped with necessary skills to support the development of functional LSBs.

In light of the above, two 5-day Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops for LSB out scaling partners were organized by ISSD, one in Lira and another in Mbarara. Gerard Baltissen from KIT-Netherlands supported the ISSD team in developing the training manual and an interactive training program.

The training aimed at introducing trainers in the LSB methodologies. Participants were taken through the LSB training manual, the concepts, principles and methods of implementing ISSD. Participants visited one of the LSBs for a practical training session. An opportunity was given to participants to interact with LSB members and share experiences with regards to seed production and marketing using the LSB approach.

The facilitation methods included individual and group presentations using cards, role plays, fish ball techniques, PowerPoint presentations, use of flip charts and critical reflection among others.



Participants equipped with the LSB manual pose for a group photograph after attending the TOT workshop

42 participants drawn from World Vision Uganda, Self Help Africa, Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO), Teso Farmers Association (TFA), AbiZARDI, MbaZARDI,

Coalition for Health, Agriculture and Income Networks (CHAIN), West Nile Private Sector Development Promotions (WENIPS), Private Sector Development and Consultancy Centre (PRICON) and NilePro Trust Limited attended the training in Lira. In Mbarara, 31 Participants from World Vision Uganda, Mbarara District Farmers Association (MBADIFA), Maracha District Farmers Association (MADIFA), Uganda Cooperative Alliance (UCA), Community Empowerment for Rural Development (CEFORD), and CABI International attended the training.

Partners developed and presented their draft work plans to all participants on the last day of the workshop.

Training

Facilitation skills course

A team from ISSD Uganda attended a one week, tailor made facilitation skills course in Wageningen.

The training focused on developing skills of individual participants, presentation skills, managing stage fright, facilitation methodologies, engagement with participants, balanced negotiation and stakeholder analysis among others.

The course methodology was highly interactive, with a mix individual and group assignments, discussions, role plays, and critical reflections, this gave participants an opportunity to use their skills and receive feedback from colleagues. At the end of the training, individual staff presented skills that they are going use to improve their work. These skills will be monitored by their colleagues in the course of their work.



ISSD participants taking part in the facilitation skills training in Wageningen, the Netherlands

Voices from partners

Gumoshabe Benon, Business Development and Marketing Officer, Mbarara District Farmers Association (MBADIFA) – out scaling partner



I participated in the Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop that was organized for LSB out scaling partners. From the training, I liked the facilitation skills that were used by the ISSD staff and the way the LSB manual was designed. This is because, the manual is easy to understand, information flows in a logical order and it gives clear guidance on how to support the LSBs. I believe this manual will be very helpful in the course of implementation of our work. I will apply all the methodologies and approaches learnt to all the farmer groups that subscribe to Mbarara District Farmers Association (MBADIFA).

One of the key things that was emphasized in the training, was that farmer groups should be market oriented and not product oriented, this implies that knowing what the market wants before production is critical to commercializing agriculture, and for sustaining LSBs.

The ISSD concept is very good, I believe it will have a positive impact on the seed sector in Uganda. The training has empowered me, I am now confident that I can support the development of LSBs for sustainable production of quality seed by smallholder farmers.

Gertrude Badaru, Arua District Agricultural Officer – participated in the innovation project to curb counterfeit seed and in development of Arua District Quality Seed Regulations, 2014.



The Arua District Seed regulation has been helpful in the course of my work for the following reasons:

1. The seed regulation were developed with consultation and involvement of the local communities as key stakeholders and the communities owned the regulations. This has made it easy to carry out the implementation, since farmers are aware of the benefits of the regulation. Farmers have been told to ask for a receipt when they buy seed, if the seed sold to them is fake, they are supposed to report to me. When they do so, I normally follow up such cases, I trace the source of the fake seed, I remove the fake seed from their shops and burn it, in addition to this, I warn the agro-input dealers.
2. The seed regulations have also helped in ensuring that planting material from Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) is good for planting. When suppliers bring fake planting material, I act on it very fast, by rejecting it. In addition to this, we decided that some planting material (like cassava) that are supplied to farmers in Arua, should have been raised within the district.
3. I was appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), as an agricultural inspector for West Nile region. In the course of inspection, I utilize the Arua seed regulation not only in Arua but also in other districts within West Nile. Because of this, I feel the seed regulations have empowered me to do my inspections better. Am also known and respected in West Nile region.
4. When I give a message on radio regarding fake or counterfeit agro inputs, people listen attentively, they seek clarification, and accept the message. It is through the radio message that am able to popularize the regulations, to a wider audience in West Nile, implying that agro dealers or suppliers fear to bring counterfeit seed to Arua.

Voices from the field

John Ssegawa, member of finance committee & head, youth group, Kyazanga Farmers' Cooperative Society, Lwengo district – LSB Member

I used to waste a lot of time in unproductive activities with my peers such as gambling in search for daily quick money, like any other youth. Little did I know that farming is more rewarding and offers more sustainable income than gambling. One day I was frustrated with gambling and sought some advice from an elder in the community, who advised me to join Kyazanga Farmers' Cooperative Society, a seed producing group, which I did.

At that time, the group was interested in recruiting youths because majority of the founding members were already elderly. I was lucky to have joined at the time when the group was being mentored into a Local Seed Business (LSB)

by the ISSD programme. At that time, I had no confidence to speak amongst the elders, but through the trainings offered by ISSD Uganda, I gained confidence to express myself freely and worked hard until my efforts were recognized and I was elected as a member of the Finance Committee of the LSB. This, together with related trainings on farming as a business exposed me to more opportunities and motivated me to work even harder.

Because of this, am now self-employed and I have a more sustainable source of income. I have become an ambassador in the community, spreading the opportunities of engaging in LSB to my fellow youths. The LSB has created more opportunities for youths, for example, in addition to undertaking seed production activities, the youths generate income from services such as tractor driving (ploughing and planting), looking for markets for seed and transporting seed, among others.



Betty Alaso, member of Aye Medo Ngeca Local Seed Business group, Dokolo district – LSB member



When I was informed that we were going to have training to promote gender sensitive LSBs, I was so delighted, because I knew this would help me in improving my working relations with people at home.

During the training, we looked at different roles and activities performed by women and men. In seed production, women participate in many activities like ploughing, planting, weeding, harvesting and post-harvest handling activities. In addition to this, women carry out household chores. The men do most of the planning, they also participate in activities like ploughing the land, planting and selling. In addition to this, the men decide how to share the money from

sale of seed. We discussed on how women and men can help each other in performing different tasks.

At the end of training, action points were agreed upon, for example, it was agreed that the men should help their wives in performing other activities, so that all family activities move on smoothly.

Because of the training, we now plan together on what to do as a family, which was not the case before. My husband now helps me with other activities like weeding, harvesting, post harvest handling. Generally, the training has improved our relationship in the home, our marriage has improved, my views are also valued even at planning stage.

Voices from the field

Mpumwire Zedekiah, dairy farmer and member of Kazo Dry Land Husbandry Agro-Pastoralists' Association, Kiruhura district – LSB Member



As a dairy farmer, I was always puzzled on how to improve productivity of my herd. I tried the option of improving the genetics of my herd through crossing. This still did not yield any significant change in terms of milk yields. Little did I know that productivity of any animal is a combination of several factors, one of them being nutrition”.

I decided to join Kazo Dry Land Husbandry Agro-pastoralists' Association, out of the need for joint efforts to address challenges facing dairy farmers in the Ankole cattle corridor. The cattle corridor that is characterized by adverse climatic conditions especially drought and poor indigenous grasses.

We were introduced to pasture seed production by the ISSD Uganda programme in 2012. We started producing several drought tolerant pasture grasses and legume species both for seed (as a business) and for improvement of our rangelands. However, pasture seed production resulted into more benefits than earlier anticipated. First, I have been able to improve nutrition for my herd through more available feed during the dry season. Initially I used to sell off some animals as a strategy to reduce on the stocking rate during the dry season when grass and water were very scarce. What hurt me most was that animals would be sold at a low price because every farmer in the community struggled to reduce herds during this period.

But now, the situation has changed. I have adopted hay making using the stalks of the pastures after harvesting seed. I sell hay to other farmers to generate income during the dry season. I also have dedicated fields with a combination of improved grass and legume pasture species that I use for hay making. As a result of combining improved genetics and better feeding practices, the average daily milk yields have significantly improved from less than 2.5 liters (poor breeds + poor feeding) to 2.5-5 liters (after crossing + poor feeding) and now to 10-15 liters (after crossing + balanced nutrition). I'm very happy that the productivity of my herd is progressively improving and I now plan to stock pure breeds for better milk yields because I have learnt the trick behind livestock productivity. In addition to selling milk, I also earn extra income from sale of pasture seed and advisory services to other farmers in the community. For these great achievements, I will forever be grateful to the ISSD Uganda Programme that introduced us to farming as a business.

Aber Paska, chairperson Can Coya women group, Pader District – user of LSB seed



I purchased 20 kg of MakSoy3N (soy beans) from Wot Anyim LSB after realizing the benefits of using quality seed from my neighbours. I particularly choose soybean because it is easy to handle while in the field.

I planted all the seed on one acre, the seed germinated well, in addition to germinating well, it podded well. Am confident that I will get at least 400 kg. This would not have been possible had I used farmer saved seed. I expect to sell my soybean at about UGX 1,200 per kg. I will use part the income from sale of soybean to purchase more seed for the next, since I believe LSB seed is more remunerative than local seed saved by farmers.



LSB out-scaling partners participating in a practical session during the Training of Trainers workshop held in Isingiro district

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