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## AGENCY FOR ACCELERATED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (AFARD)

Building Thriving and Resilient Families

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# CAPABILITY STATEMENT 2024





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# 1.0 Who we are

We empower poor and marginalized people to actively engage in unlocking their multifaceted vulnerabilities to livelihood insecurity.



The Agency For Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) is an indigenous not-for-profit, non-denominational, NGO formed in July 2000 to empower poor and marginalized people to actively engage in unlocking their multifaceted vulnerabilities to livelihood insecurity. Currently AFARD has offices in the towns of Nebbi (headquarters), Zombo, and Yumbe from where it executes its Memorandum of Understanding with the

Office of the Prime Minister and district local governments. For the last 24 years, AFARD primarily operated in the West Nile and Acholi sub-regions. However, the Board of Directors resolved for a cascaded upscaling starting with a Northern Uganda where the high negative impacts of post-conflict, refugee influx, climate change, and a dysfunctional market and decentralized governance has exacerbated food, nutrition and income insecurity.

## VISION

*A prosperous, healthy, and informed people in Uganda.*

## MISSION

*To enhance the capacities of vulnerable and marginalized communities (especially youth, women, and refugees) for inclusive, dignified and sustainable socio-economic transformation of Uganda.*

## OUR OBJECTIVES

- » *Harness the knowledge, skills and experiences of development practitioners and channel it for accelerated inclusive, thriving and sustainable development.*
- » *Bridge vulnerable communities and sources of information, innovations, expertise, and funding necessary for people-led socio-economic transformation.*
- » *Share our expertise and experiences with other development stakeholders through consultancy, technical assistance services, and evidence-based documentation.*

## OUR VALUES

- » *Empowerment (respect and safeguarding rights and dignity of all people; local ownership of change process, pace, direction, scope, and results; and providing relevant resources - knowledge, skills, technologies, networks, and opportunities).*
- » *Professionalism (adherence to sector ethical, technical and competence standards; decision-making based on rigorous evidence, time-tested innovations, and continuous research; and we are a learning and adaptive organization).*
- » *Genuine partnership (mutual respect of values and status; openness to new ideas, change and standards; and meaningful participation of all parties).*
- » *Transparency & Accountability (adherence to high standards of personal honesty and integrity; We take responsibility for our actions; and Open communication and feedback mechanism).*

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

- » *Context and engagement matters: people know their problems better.*
- » *It takes hard work to live a better life.*
- » *Poor people lead holistic livelihoods and support to them should be cognizant of this fact.*
- » *Change is gradual, involving time, hard lessons, openness, innovations and flexibility.*
- » *Capacity building can neither be rushed nor pre-determined.*

## OUR ALLIANCES

*Central and Lower Local Governments; Academia and research institutions; Civil Society Organizations and networks; Donor community; Farmers organizations and cooperatives; Financial institutions; Private sector institutions; Religious and cultural institutions; Media; and Technology and digital firms.*



Overall, AFARD envision active and resilient citizens who sustainably and equitably:

(i). *Eat adequate nutritious foods to be healthy;*



(ii). *Own adequate financial net worth to afford decent living;*



(iii). *Live longer by being less susceptible to preventable illnesses;*



(iv). *Have marketable skills to be economically productive to society;*



(v). *Exhibit voice and choice in the governance of their families, groups, communities and country.*



## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT:

AFARD is managed according to its Memorandum and Article of Association. At the policy level there is a 5-person gender-sensitive Board of Directors well versed with corporate governance that consists of credible, respected, and experienced public figures like the Bishop of Arua Catholic Diocese Rt. Rev. Dr. Sabino Odoki, Retired Archbishop, Henry Luke Orombi, and a High Court Judge, Justice Flavia Senoga Anglin. The Board provides effective leadership and oversight in compliance with NGO laws and regulation and has a number of policies to this effect namely, Board of Directors' Regulation, Board Financial Audit Charter, Finance and Administration Manual, Human Resources Policy, Communication and Visibility Strategy, Safeguarding Policy, and Data Protection Policy with inherent code of conduct, fraud/anti-terrorism, anti-money laundering, and conflict of interest provisions.

The technical team is composed of competent and highly skilled and experienced staff headed by the Executive Director (Ph.D. holder). He is supported of the Director Programmes (MSc. Agroforestry) and Director Finance and Administration (CPA and B. Com. Finance). All districts have District Team Leaders as Stakeholder Connectors.

## NETWORKING:

AFARD is an active member of national and district networks such as: Uganda National NGO Forum; PELUM-Uganda Chapter; Uganda National Aids Service Organizations (UNASO); Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET); West Nile Regional Civil Society Network (WECISNET); Northern Uganda Agricultural Extension Platform (NUEAP); the District NGO Forum in Nebbi, Pakwach, Zombo, Yumbe, and Moyo.

## 2.0 Strategic Directions

On December 21, 2019, the Board of Directors launched a **UGX 42 billion** AFARD Strategy 2020-25<sup>1</sup> that seeks to Inspire poor people for self-development, Empower them with relevant capacities and innovations, and Account for real time change..



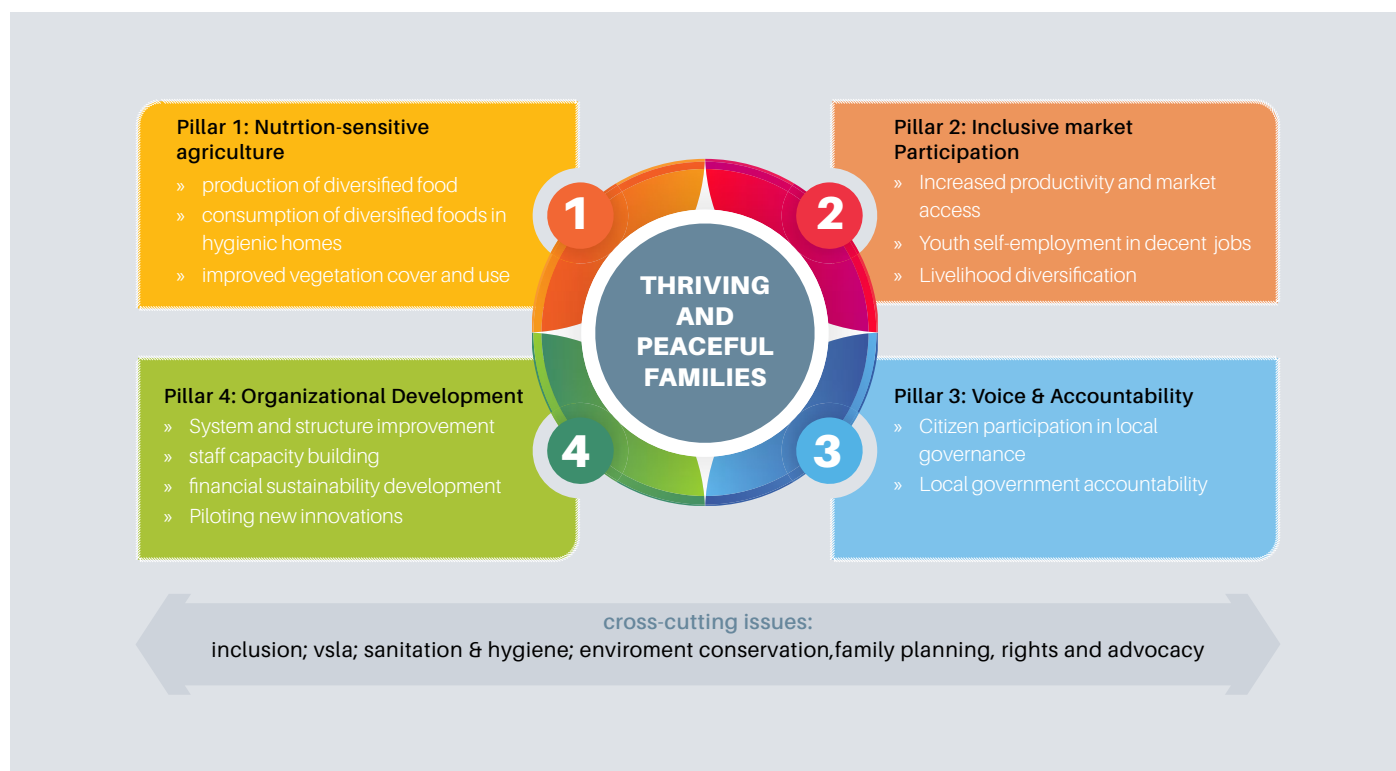
The plan theme '**Thriving and Peaceful Families**' target to 'reduce hunger and extreme poverty in

» **20,000**  
peaceful families'

» with **138,500**  
people

[**30%** refugees; **60%** females; and **25%** youth]

1. <https://afard.net/publications/policy-documents/172-afard-strategy-2020-25/file>



**To achieve this ambition, our top 10 aspirations are:**

- » 20,000 families have kitchen gardens for regular consumption of green vegetables.
- » 20,000 families have pit latrines with hand washing facilities to reduce water-related diseases.
- » 500,000 fruit-, medicinal-, firewood-, and timber-trees are planted and surviving for improved nutrition, health and environment conservation.
- » 15,000 families own profitable income generating activities for diversified revenue portfolio.
- » 10 functional multipurpose cooperatives are established to enhance collective market participation.
- » 5,000 skilled youth own profitable enterprises for decent self-employment opportunities.
- » 10,000 families have net worth able to afford living above the international poverty line.
- » 25% of females use any form of family planning method acceptable to them to reduce the rising population growth.
- » 250 community groups accessed local government budget support to boast their economic investments.
- » AFARD headquarter office in Nebbi is completed and furnished and a reserve fund put in place.

**Our guiding principles are:**

- » Mindset change that promotes positive behavior change, growth mindsets, self-starting, pro-activity, and resilience.
- » Family centered approach that “leaves no one behind.”
- » Knowledge, innovations and evidence-based interventions building on the current strategic partnership.
- » MSME competitiveness building for a thriving market systems and value-chain development.
- » Mainstreaming of: Gender and social inclusion and cohesion; Financial inclusion; Environment conservation; and Family planning.



## 3.0 Our Anchor Points

AFARD Strategy 2020-2025 is anchored on four strategic pillars:



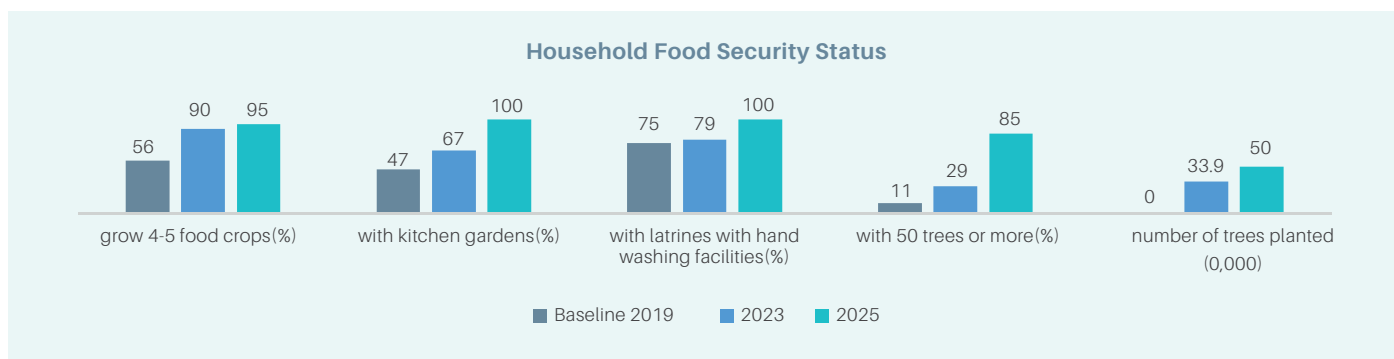
### PILLAR 1:

**Nutrition-sensitive agriculture** for increased production and consumption of diversified foods (Target: 65% of targeted families are hunger free).

**Approach:** Targeted families are holistically empowered to ably; plan what nutritious foods to produce; diversify food intake to include staple foods with animal protein, fruits and vegetables; adopt safe sanitation and hygiene practices; and live in green villages.

We use peer-to-peer extension for sustainable agricultural intensification; community-led total sanitation (CLTS); nutrition education; and Village Climate Action Planning (committees, byelaws, tree growing, improved energy saving technologies). We are also piloting Cash grant for basic needs.

To date, 133,651 people are impacted and 53% are hunger free.





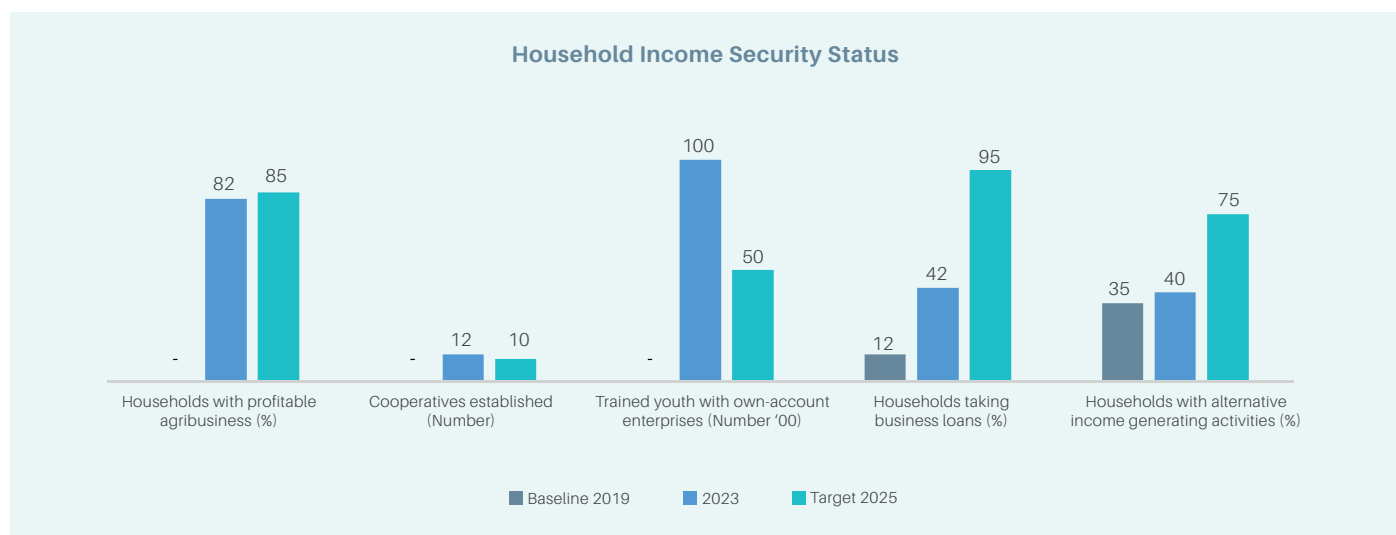
## PILLAR 2:

Inclusive market participation for decent employment in strategic (agri)businesses and vocational labor markets (Target: 50% of targeted families exit extreme poverty).

**Approach:** AFARD's market-led income security focuses on climate smart agribusiness development, microenterprise development and youth vocational skilling.

We use Individual or Family Development Planning; VSLA Plus methodology (i.e., VSLA, IGA-SPM and financial literacy); Area-based commodity cluster (One group, one commodity) and Producer Cooperative Development (PCD); Graduation out of poverty; youth skilling in technical vocational education and training (TVET) institutions and private sector enterprises (PSEs); and Business development services support. Start-up business cash grants are complemented with access to funds from financial institutions and government programs.

To date, 279,229 people (12,918 youth) are impacted and 60% exited extreme poverty.





### PILLAR 3:

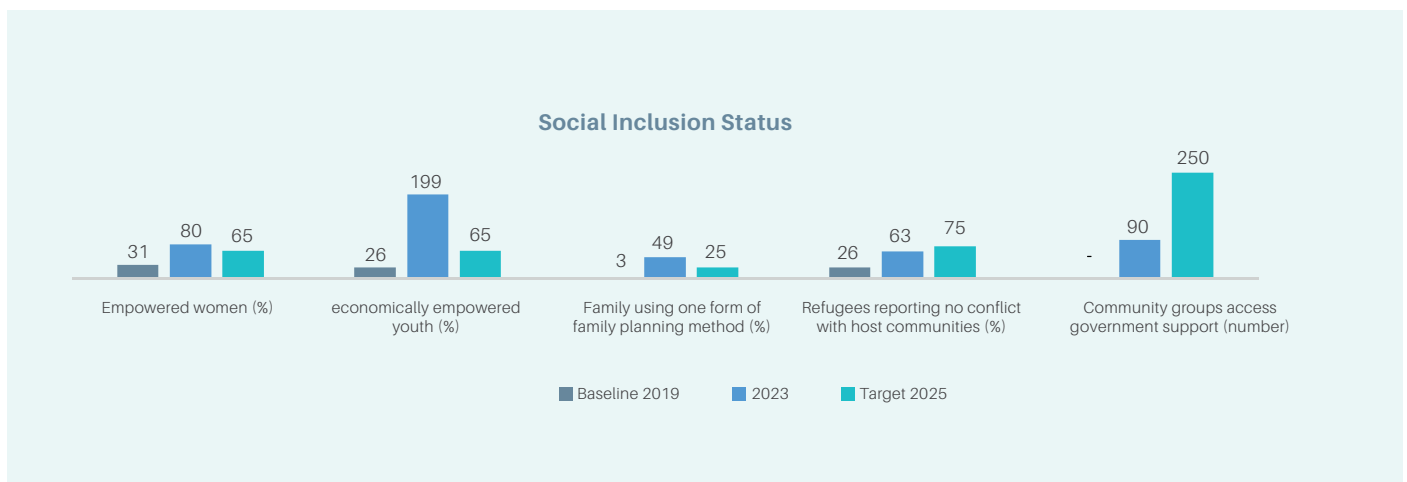
Voice and accountability for responsive and people-centered decentralized local governance (Target: 65% of targeted women and youth are empowered).

**Approach:** AFARD sees voice as a multilayered rights cutting accords families, self-help groups, and communities (cultural and religious) and government institutions.

We promote respectful and peaceful advocacy, community connections, and capacity building especially in key areas of gender and disability inclusion, youth employment, land rights, environment conservation, and family planning.

We promote respectful and peaceful advocacy, community connections, and capacity building

To date 56,723 people are impacted





#### PILLAR 4:

AFARD organizational development to strengthen operational capacity and financial base (AFARD – preferred partner, fit for purpose, and financially sustainable).

**Approach:** Strengthening the Board’s oversight function, Talent management, and capital investments (logistics, software, office space, etc.) for the effective operation of the organization. AFARD is also strengthening West Nile Holdings Ltd its social enterprise arm.

#### As a results of strategic decision-making, AFARD:

- » Completed its headquarter office block in Nebbi municipality.
- » Procured a robust Aplos Accounting software.
- » Diversified its donor landscape and revenue mobilization frontiers.
- » Reviewed and developed policies necessary for best practice and compliance management.
- » Secured a country-wide operation permit.

## 4.0 Financial Stewardship

AFARD is a low-risk organization as “its governance, management practices, program development, human resources, financial resources, collaboration and networking, and sustainability exhibits a high level of organizational strength.”



AFARD has over the years gained adequate experience in managing large and small donor funded projects to successful completion. AFARD has managed funding from various sources including multilateral agencies (UNICEF, FAO, EU), bilateral agencies (ADA, NORAD, SCD, GIZ, Irish Aid, Danida, DFID), Governments (Embassies of Netherlands, Ireland, and Canada, Ugandan Ministry of Health, Office of the Prime Minister, and District Local Governments), Trust/Foundations (Sall

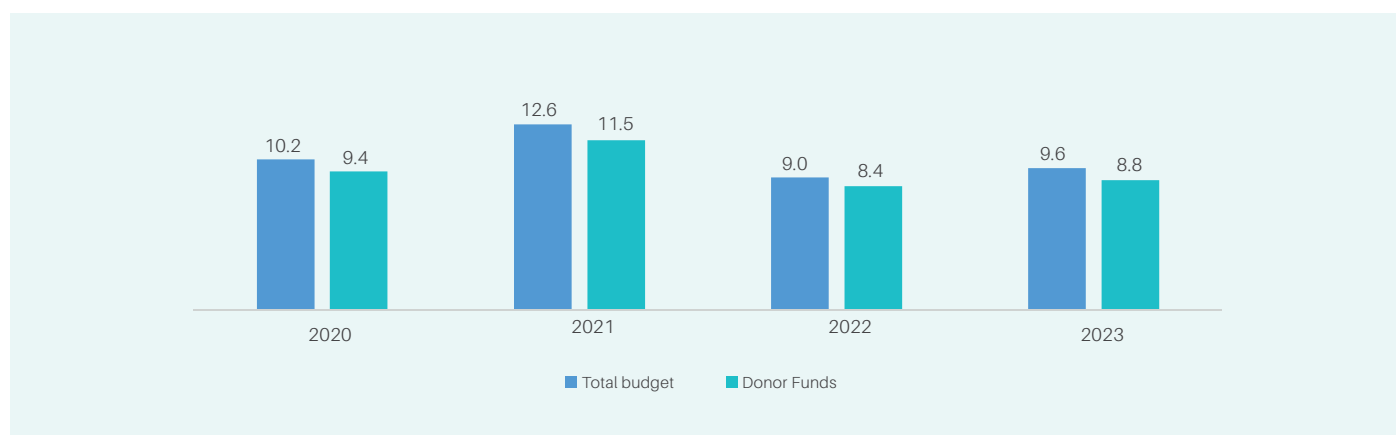
Family Foundation), International NGOs (Caritas Switzerland, AWO International, horizont3000, KNH, Cordaid, Gorta/Self Help Africa, INclusion), networks (UWASNET, HURINET, PELUM Uganda, Global Fund, Civil Society Fund), Private sector (PSFU, AFC, Total ES&P), and the Academia (University of Groningen, University of Northumbria, African Study Centre, Leiden, Uganda Martyrs University).

Through all these partnerships, AFARD: Has a diversified income sources that ensures stable inflows; Tracks “where does our money go?” to ensure cost-effectiveness; and maintains transparent financial and program management practices. Plans and budgets are developed participatorily and shared with staffs and stakeholders. Internal control systems are robust. Managers commit to performance standards and personal liability. Annually the Board hires reputable audit firm (e.g., IKA and Associates; Lawrie Prophets & Co.; Jasper-Semu & Associates; DAVITA & Associates; KPMG; Deloitte and Touché (U) Ltd., RSM Eastern Africa, and TMK & Co.) to conduct a comprehensive institutional audit of the final accounts. This is complemented by project

specific and internal audits. Institutional audit reports are uploaded on AFARD website.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, periodic risk assessments are conducted by our partners. The various Partner Risk Assessment by Caritas Switzerland (2021), AWO International (2022), Edukans (2023) and Master Card Foundation (2023), found that AFARD is a low-risk organization as “its governance, management practices, program development, human resources, financial resources, collaboration and networking, and sustainability exhibits a high level of organizational strength.”

Figure 1: Budget performance, 2020 -2023 (UGX in billions)



2. <https://www.afard.net/publications/annual-reports-and-audits/273-afard-final-audit-report-2023/file>



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