AFARD

The Quest for a Better Society

AFARD's QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY - APRIL 2026 | VOL 5



Dear friends and partners,

Sometimes, change does not arrive loudly. It grows quietly, in gardens, in homes, and in the everyday decisions people make about their lives.

As you read through this edition, you will notice something consistent across all the stories. It is not just about projects, outputs, or numbers. It is about people who have begun to see themselves differently. Farmers who once worked for survival are now planning for the future. Families are making decisions together. Young people are turning small opportunities into something meaningful.

At the knowledge-sharing event in Nebbi, one message stood out clearly: communities are not just participants in development. They are the leaders of it.

This shift, from being supported to taking ownership, is what makes change last.

What we see in these stories is not perfection. There are still challenges, from drought to disease to limited resources. But there is also resilience, determination, and a growing confidence that change is possible and within reach.

These are the kinds of changes that do not end with a project. They continue, because they are now owned by the people themselves.

As you go through these stories, we invite you to look beyond the activities and see the lives behind them. Lives that are slowly but surely building something better.

Together, this is what sustainable change looks like.

With gratitude,

Editorial Team

CONTENTS:



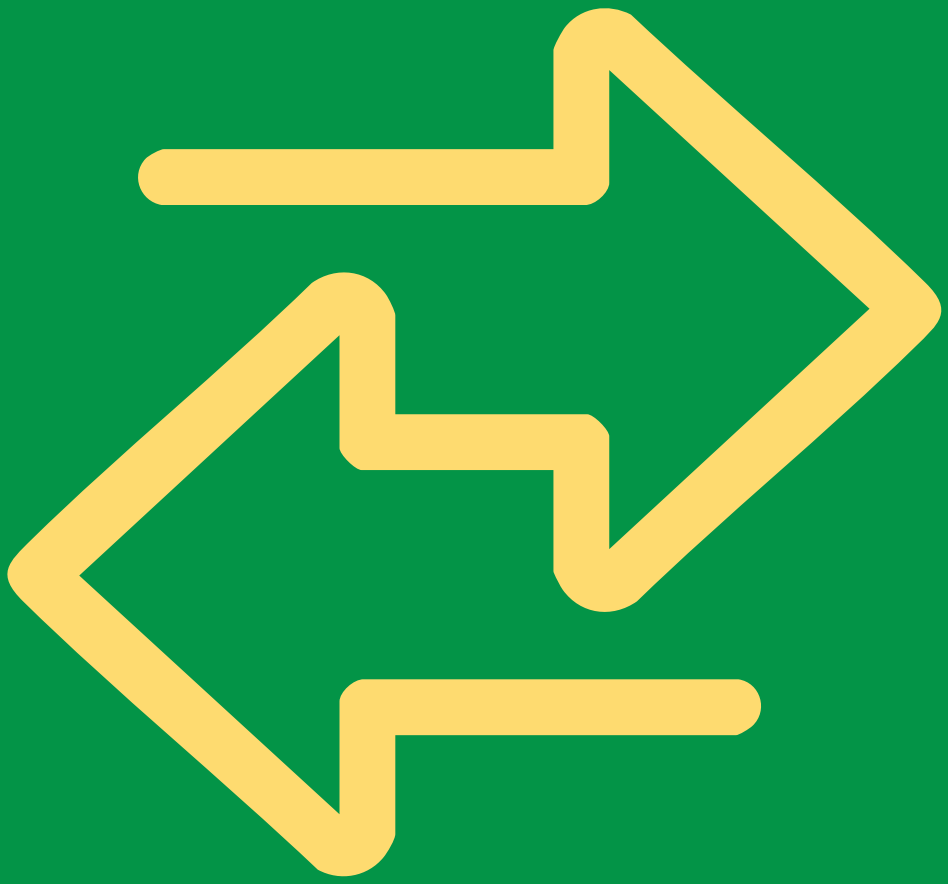
10 A RETIREMENT ROOTED IN RESILIENCE: OUR JOURNEY INTO BANANA FARMING

12 OTHER STORIES MAKING HEADLINES AT AFARD

16 SMALL START, BIG IMPACT: ALEX'S POULTRY JOURNEY

COMMUNITIES LEADING CHANGE:

LESSONS FROM THE CLIMATE ACTION MODEL VILLAGE PROJECT



On 18 February, leaders, partners, and community members gathered at Nyaravur Primary School in Nebbi District for a knowledge-sharing event under the Climate Action Model Village (CAM) Project, an initiative that has been strengthening community resilience to climate change in Nebbi and Pakwach districts since October 2022.

The project, implemented by the Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) with support from German Cooperation through AWO International e.V., and in partnership with the Pakwach and Nebbi District Local Governments, has worked to ensure that communities are better prepared to respond to climate, health, and economic shocks.

The event brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including Resident City Commissioners, district agricultural focal persons from Nebbi and Pakwach, community leaders, farmers, and school representatives. Also present were Ms Barbra Karungi, Coordinator for Humanitarian Action at AWO International, and Mr Alex, a Commissioner from the Office of the Prime Minister, whose presence highlighted the importance of linking community-led solutions to national development priorities.

‘Farmers, youth groups, school clubs, and cooperative members took to the stage to share what they had learned and practised during the three-and-a-half-year project.’

But the real spotlight of the day belonged to the communities themselves.

Farmers, youth groups, school clubs, and cooperative members took to the stage to share what they had learned and practised during the three-and-a-half-year project. Their stories demonstrated how communities have adopted climate-smart agriculture, diversified their livelihoods, strengthened community health practices, improved disaster preparedness, and taken action to conserve their environment.

Across the project areas, the impact has been tangible. Farmers have adopted improved agricultural practices, planting over 723 acres of cassava, 201 acres of sweet potatoes, and establishing more than 21,000 banana plantations. Communities have collectively marketed over 410,000 kilograms of cassava, strengthening household income and food security.

Livelihood diversification has also expanded through 15 Village Savings and Loan Associations, with cumulative savings reaching UGX 39 million, as well as poultry enterprises raising over 8,000 birds. A cooperative structure, Alwi Multipurpose Cooperative, was also established to support collective marketing and economic growth.

Beyond livelihoods, the project strengthened community health and disaster preparedness, reaching more than 6,000 community members through improved sanitation practices, kitchen gardening, and nutrition demonstrations. Environmental conservation efforts have also taken root, with over 7,000 trees planted, 3,000 seedlings established in nurseries, and more than 600 energy-saving stoves constructed across the communities.

These results reflect more than just project outputs. They represent behavioural change and strengthened local systems. Through structures such as Climate Smart Champion Groups, School Health and Environment Clubs, and community cooperatives, communities have taken ownership of the knowledge and practices introduced through the project.

While the journey was not without challenges—including erratic weather patterns, pest outbreaks, and initial resistance to behaviour change—continuous training, exchange visits, and strong collaboration with local governments helped communities adapt and stay committed.

As the project approaches its conclusion this year, the event served as both a celebration and a reflection. AFARD and its partners emphasised that sustainability has been a key priority, working closely with district and sub-county leadership to ensure that the approaches introduced under the CAM Project are integrated into local government development and extension systems.

At the heart of the event was one powerful message: communities are not just participants in development, they must lead it.

The Climate Action Model Village Project has shown that when communities are trusted with knowledge, supported with practical tools, and encouraged to lead their own transformation, change becomes sustainable.

The lessons shared in Nyaravur are therefore not just stories of progress in Nebbi and Pakwach. They are examples of how community-driven solutions can shape resilient futures in the face of climate change and economic uncertainty.

Farmers have adopted improved agricultural practices, planting over

723 acres of cassava

201 acres of sweet potatoes

21K banana plantations

marketed over

410K kilograms of cassava

15 Village Savings & Loan Associations

39M savings

poultry enterprises raising over **8,000** birds

strengthened **6,000** community members through improved sanitation practices, kitchen gardening, and nutrition demonstrations.

7K trees planted

3K seedlings established in nurseries

600 energy-saving stoves

EXHIBITOR TESTIMONY

My name is Vincent Avone, and I am 50 years old. I live in Akworu Cell, Mbar East Ward in Nyaravur Sub-county.

> **“I learned this practice through the CAM project, which came to our community and sensitised us on climate-smart and resilient agriculture.”**

The project I demonstrated is called resilient design for water conservation, a permaculture practice I started in 2024. I adopted this approach in response to the water challenges we faced in our gardens. I realised that when it rains, water naturally collects in certain areas. By designing my garden this way, I am able to redirect rainwater into my crops and retain moisture in the soil. Even when watering manually, the water stays within the garden instead of running off.

I learned this practice through the CAM project, which came to our community and sensitised us on climate-smart and resilient agriculture. The project also helped us form groups within our villages, trained us in various farming practices, and supported us in accessing quality seeds and seedlings.

These practices have transformed how I farm. I now understand proper spacing in my cassava garden and have learned to prepare land more efficiently using an ox-plough instead of relying only on hand hoes. My income and ability to save have improved significantly.

In the first season after applying these practices in 2024, I earned UGX 600,000. I used part of this income to buy a bull and paid school fees with the balance. In the following season, I earned UGX 800,000 and used part of it to purchase another bull.

My goal now is to train the bulls for ploughing so that I can stop relying on hired oxen and further reduce my farming costs.



PARTNER VOICE

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the political and technical leadership from both the lower local governments and the districts who are represented here today. I also thank the pupils who joined us and actively participated in the school clubs that we worked with throughout the duration of the project. My gratitude equally goes to the farmers who participated as beneficiaries, as well as to all the stakeholders who supported this initiative in various ways.

In 2022, we came to this region with an idea that was still only a vision. We engaged with communities and different stakeholders through a needs assessment to better understand the realities on the ground and to guide the development of a proposal together with AFARD that would meaningfully respond to those needs.

When the CAM project was later approved, the sub-counties once again welcomed us with openness and cooperation. It is this spirit of partnership that has enabled us to gather here today to reflect on what has been achieved. I would also like to commend the local leaders who facilitated the capacity-building sessions under this project with dedication and commitment, and who have played an important role in building local ownership of the initiatives introduced.

As the project comes to a close, I encourage all stakeholders, local leaders, to continue championing these efforts within their communities and to guide beneficiaries in sustaining the practices that have been introduced. Strengthening local ownership will be key to ensuring that the benefits of the CAM project continue well beyond its formal end.

I also encourage all beneficiaries to continue applying the knowledge and skills they have gained so that the impact of this work can extend into the future. I am confident that AFARD has done an excellent job in implementing this initiative. I would therefore like to express my sincere appreciation to AFARD for being a reliable and trusted partner and for serving as a responsible steward of the resources entrusted to them.

Barbra Karungi
Coordinator Humanitarian Action, AWO International



“As the project comes to a close, I encourage all stakeholders, local leaders, to continue championing these efforts within their communities and to guide beneficiaries in sustaining the practices that have been introduced.”

REAL LIVES, REAL CHANGE:

TESTIMONIES FROM CAM PROJECT BENEFICIARIES





ADOKIRWOTH JOYCE

My name is Adokirwoth Joyce, and I am 49 years old. I live in Acutugeno Village, Ayila Parish, Alwi Sub-county in Pakwach District with my husband, Rupiny William. Together, we are raising six children, one boy and five girls.

Before joining the CAM project, I kept a few chickens at home on a free-range system, and honestly, I never knew much about proper poultry management. To me, chickens were just something small we kept at home. I never thought of poultry as a business.

Everything started to change when I joined the project. Through the project, I was trained by a Paravet on proper poultry management. I learned about good housing, disease prevention and control, feeding practices, and record keeping. These were things I had never known before. After the training, I also received five chickens—four local hens and one kroiler cock. When I added them to the ones I already had, my flock increased to twelve chickens. I am very grateful for this support from AWO and AFARD.

My husband attended the training with me, and together we became motivated to take poultry more seriously as a family business. One of the first things we did was to build a new poultry house measuring six meters by four meters, which is much bigger than the small structure we used before.

Now our chickens stay in a better house. It has more space, good ventilation, and is easier to clean. We also collect the droppings and use them as manure in our kitchen garden.

At one point, we had over 80 birds, but an outbreak of Newcastle disease killed most of them. This set us back, but we are now recovering and still working toward our goal.

Today, I see poultry farming differently. I believe that combining poultry with crop farming will help us diversify our family income. At the moment, a cock sells for about UGX 25,000 and a hen for about UGX 15,000, which can help support our household.

Our dream as a family is to grow our flock to 150 chickens by the end of this year. Right now, we already have seven hens that we hope will hatch more chicks, helping us move closer to that goal.

Of course, we still face challenges. Sometimes it is difficult to get enough money to buy feed and medicine, and diseases can also affect the chickens. But despite these challenges, we remain hopeful and determined.

Through the CAM project, I have gained knowledge, confidence, and a new vision for my family's future. What once seemed like a small activity at home is now becoming a growing business and a source of hope for our family.

UNEGIU HANNINGTON



> **Hannington and Florence plan to continue harvesting cassava for sale while engaging in other income-generating activities to support the completion of their home.**

Unegiu Hannington (35) and his wife, Masendi Florence (30), live in Paryema Village, Nyaravur Sub-county in Nebbi District with their three daughters. Hannington holds a craft-level certificate from Ora Vocational Institution in Zombo District. Before joining the CAM Project, the family lived in three small grass-thatched houses.

Through the project's home design approach, Hannington participated in sessions on gender equality, which greatly strengthened teamwork and harmony within the household.

"We developed a family development plan that has guided our progress," Hannington says.

With support from the CAM Project, both Hannington and Florence received training in climate-smart agriculture and improved agronomic practices for crops such as cassava, sorghum, sweet potatoes, and bananas. In 2022, Hannington cultivated one acre of cassava. He expanded to two acres in 2023, and by 2024, he had increased the area to 2.5 acres—allocating 1.5 acres for family consumption and one acre for income generation.

In January 2025, he sold 11 sacks of cassava for UGX 605,000. The income supported their home construction, helping them lay and burn 9,836 bricks, purchase aggregates worth UGX 360,000, and pay UGX 100,000 in school expenses for their children in nursery and primary school. Using his construction skills, Hannington has also been able to reduce building costs while working toward the goals set in their family development plan.

By November 2025, Hannington sold an additional 222 kilograms of cassava chips, earning UGX 177,000. He explained that this income would help cover water costs for construction and pay daily wages of UGX 6,000 for the two masons assisting him in building a four-room permanent house.

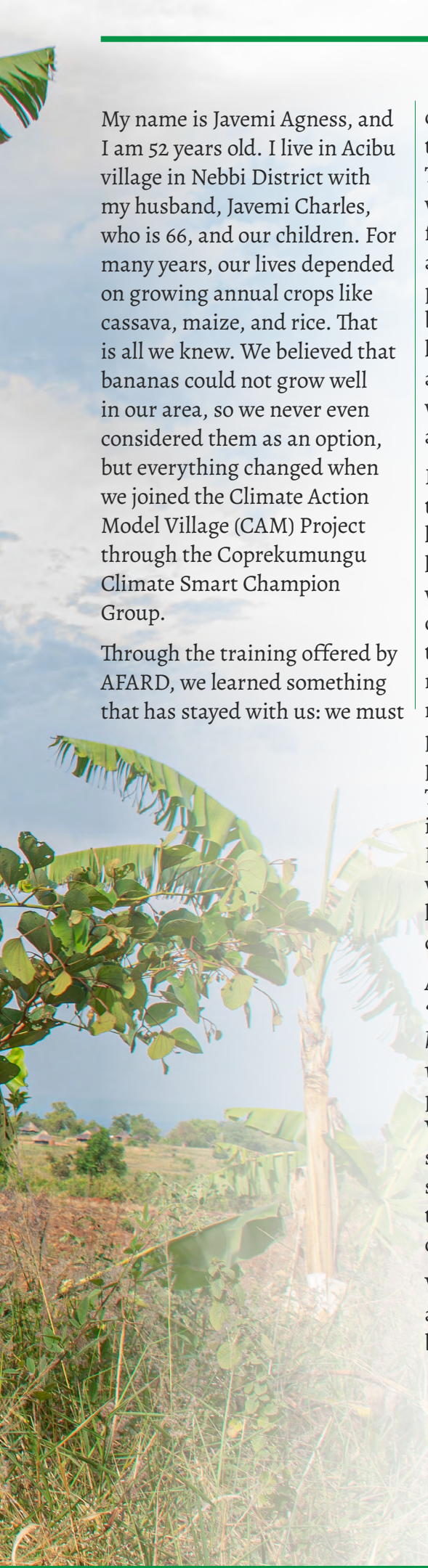
Hannington and Florence plan to continue harvesting cassava for sale while engaging in other income-generating activities to support the completion of their home.

"Thanks to AFARD and AWO International for enlightening and empowering us," Hannington says.

A RETIREMENT ROOTED IN RESILIENCE: OUR JOURNEY INTO BANANA FARMING



> Beyond banana farming, the training also helped me improve how I manage my land. I learned how to prevent running water from flooding my compound and how to protect the soil so it can regain its nutrients.



My name is Javemi Agness, and I am 52 years old. I live in Acibu village in Nebbi District with my husband, Javemi Charles, who is 66, and our children. For many years, our lives depended on growing annual crops like cassava, maize, and rice. That is all we knew. We believed that bananas could not grow well in our area, so we never even considered them as an option, but everything changed when we joined the Climate Action Model Village (CAM) Project through the Coprekumungu Climate Smart Champion Group.

Through the training offered by AFARD, we learned something that has stayed with us: we must chase poverty by working hard to get where we want in life. That mindset shift changed how we looked at farming and our future. I was trained in good agronomic practices for banana production, and we received 10 banana suckers. At first, it felt like an experiment. But together as a family, we chose to apply what we had learned and give it a chance.

Beyond banana farming, the training also helped me improve how I manage my land. I learned how to prevent running water from flooding my compound and how to protect the soil so it can regain its nutrients. These practices have made a big difference in how productive our land is. I started planting bananas in 2023. Today, we grow different types, including Sukali ndizi, Bugoya, Plantain, and Nakitembe. What we once thought was impossible has now become part of our daily life.

As my husband often says, *"We are ageing, and we may not have the energy for heavy farm work anymore."* That realisation pushed us to think differently. We decided to invest in something more sustainable, something that will continue to support us even as we grow older.

We chose banana farming as our retirement plan, and between December 2023 and March 2024, we planted 90 banana suckers. Ten came from the project, and the remaining 80 we sourced ourselves. For the first time, we were not just farming for survival. We were planning for the future.

At the same time, we have continued to expand our farming activities. I have opened more land for watermelon and cabbage production, and I am learning how to make my own fertilisers to improve soil fertility when planting crops.

However, farming has not been without challenges. Prolonged drought remains our greatest difficulty. To cope, we sometimes use tap water to irrigate our plantation. We also face destruction from goats that stray into our garden and damage our crops.

Despite these challenges, we continue to push forward. We are now working toward planting 400 banana suckers on one acre of land, and we plan to acquire a water tank for harvesting rainwater to better manage dry seasons. Banana farming has given us more than food. It has given us hope, stability, and a sense of direction for the future.

We are deeply grateful to AFARD and AWO International for the knowledge and support they gave us. Through this project, we have learned not only how to farm better, but how to think differently about our lives.

OTHER STORIES MAKING HEADLINES AT AFARD



SIYEP PARTNERS MEET IN NEBBI TO STRENGTHEN COORDINATION AND DELIVERY





> **The programme also prioritises refugees and young women with disabilities to ensure that those most at risk of exclusion can access opportunities.**

Consortium partners implementing the Sustainable Inclusive Youth Employment Pathways (SIYEP) programme met in Nebbi in February 2026 for a three-day reflection meeting to strengthen collaboration and review progress toward shared g oals.

Hosted at AFARD headquarters in Nebbi, the meeting brought together implementing partners to assess programme performance, reflect on early implementation experiences, and agree on practical actions to improve delivery.

In his opening remarks, outgoing Executive Director Alfred Lakwo commended partners for the strong start to the programme and encouraged continued focus, accountability, and teamwork as implementation expands.

During the sessions, partners reviewed key assessment findings, financial and procurement performance, and implementation trends across programme areas. Discussions also focused on aligning programme resources with field realities and strengthening collective responsibility among consortium members.

The SIYEP programme aims to reach 258,000 young women aged 15–35 across Uganda with market-relevant skills and support 90% of them to transition into work, with at least 70% securing dignified and fulfilling employment. The programme also prioritises refugees and young women with disabilities to ensure that those most at risk of exclusion can access opportunities.

Partners further reviewed programme results, inclusion outcomes, and safeguarding standards while identifying areas that require early adjustments.

By the end of the meeting, the consortium had clarified roles, updated performance expectations, and agreed on follow-up actions to strengthen coordination and accelerate progress toward programme objectives.

As SIYEP enters the next phase of implementation, the meeting reaffirmed the importance of shared learning, accountability, and coordinated action in creating meaningful employment opportunities for young women across Uganda.

YOUNG WOMEN BUILD AGRIBUSINESS SKILLS THROUGH FAAB TRAINING







What if farming could move beyond survival and become a profitable business for young women in rural communities? A new training under the SIYEP programme is helping young women make that shift.

On 28 January, 94 young women peer trainers from Pakwach, Nebbi, and Zombo districts participated in a three-day Farming as a Business (FAAB) Training of Trainers at AFARD offices. The training, delivered under the Sustainable Inclusive Youth Employment Programme (SIYEP), introduced participants to practical agribusiness skills such as enterprise selection, production planning, budgeting, and marketing.

Throughout the training, participants reflected on the challenges many young women face when trying to build livelihoods in agriculture, including heavy workloads, social expectations, and limited access to markets.

"I want to learn how to plan costs, understand markets, and help others see farming as a way to earn and grow," said Jennifer, a peer trainer from Pakwach District.

Participants also learned how to select enterprises based on market demand and income potential, moving beyond subsistence farming toward more profitable agricultural opportunities.

Following the training, two peer trainers from each group will spend three months working with Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and local artisans. During this period, they will apply FAAB principles in real-world settings.

When they return to their communities, the peer trainers will share their knowledge with the rest of their groups, extending practical agribusiness skills to hundreds of other young women.

Through this approach, the SIYEP programme aims to strengthen women's economic participation while building confidence, leadership, and sustainable livelihoods through agribusiness.

BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN NEBBI



Across many rural communities, farmers are experiencing more frequent dry spells and unpredictable seasons, disrupting traditional planting and harvest cycles. For smallholder families who depend on agriculture, these climate shocks can quickly lead to food and income insecurity.

To support communities in adapting, the Climate Resilient Model Village (CREMOV) project is working with smallholder farmers in Jafuranga and Ngali villages in Nebbi District. The project aims to strengthen farmers' ability to cope with climate risks while improving household livelihoods.

The initiative focuses on raising awareness about climate change and national climate policies while building practical skills in climate-smart agriculture. Farmers are learning adaptation strategies such as crop diversification, kitchen gardening, poultry management, tree planting, and water conservation.

Now in its first year, the project recently hosted a donor monitoring visit, during which representatives met with district and sub-county leaders as well as beneficiary households. During the visit, they toured farms, dragon fruit fields, and newly constructed valley dams to observe how communities are applying climate-resilient practices.

Farmers reported improved knowledge of climate change and climate-smart agriculture, as well as stronger awareness of nutrition, sanitation, and household planning. All participating households now have pit latrines with handwashing facilities, and more than 80% of families cultivate multiple food crops while maintaining kitchen gardens.

Food security is also improving. On average, households now report eating three meals per day with more balanced diets. About 60% of households are earning additional income, averaging more than UGX 500,000 annually.

Beyond agricultural production, the project is also strengthening household decision-making and community participation. Findings show that 78% of households report joint ownership of key assets, while 85% make joint decisions on farming activities, education, and income use. Nearly 90% of beneficiaries also participate in local government meetings.

Visitors also observed thriving dragon fruit fields and expanding poultry enterprises, with farmers actively applying recommended feeding, vaccination, and treatment practices.

These early achievements highlight the potential of practical, community-based climate adaptation approaches. As the CREMOV project continues, the focus remains on strengthening knowledge, building resilience, and helping rural households adapt and thrive despite increasing climate uncertainty.



SMALL START, BIG IMPACT:
ALEX'S POULTRY JOURNEY

A year ago, Alex owned just one hen and saw little value in poultry farming. Today, it has become one of his main sources of income and a way to serve his community in Ndhew Sub-county, Nebbi District.

Alex's journey began when he was selected as a community poultry paravet under the TRALIDE project. He received a starter package of four birds, one cock and three hens, along with training in synchronised and foster brooding. With this knowledge, he began to take poultry farming seriously.

Within a short time, Alex grew his flock to 25 birds. He sold 15 of them, earning UGX 345,000, which he reinvested to expand his enterprise. He later added eight more birds using funds borrowed from his VSLA group.

Beyond his own farm, Alex's skills are now benefiting others in his community. He manages about 30 birds for a local businessman, earning a weekly stipend, and also provides vaccination services. In February alone, he earned UGX 60,000 from vaccinations.

"Within a short time, Alex grew his flock to 25 birds. He sold 15 of them, earning UGX 345,000, which he reinvested to expand his enterprise."

Today, Alex earns income from multiple streams—selling poultry, managing other people's farms, and offering technical services. This has brought greater stability to his household and increased his confidence.

"People respect me within our community because of my technical knowledge, even though I am young," he says. "It has uplifted my sense of being."

Looking ahead, Alex plans to lead a youth initiative to raise at least 200 birds for sale during the festive season.

Alex's story shows how the right support, combined with determination, can turn even the smallest start into a growing business and a source of pride within the community.

Plot 3-5 Butime Road
P.O. Box 80, Nebbi Town Council
Plot 1, Lourdel Road,
Lourdel Towers 6TH Floor
Tel: +256704785224 / +256782400856
Email: info@afard.net
Website: www.afard.net