

HOPE

An AFARD newsletter (Issue 3)



Focus on Zombo...

We are back with Hope – an Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) newsletter.

In this issue, we focus on a district referred to by many as West Nile's food basket – Zombo. With enormous agricultural potential, Zombo produces a range of produce, from traditional cash crops such as coffee and tea, to food crops turned cash crops, such as potatoes, peanut among others.

AFARD is one of the most active non-governmental organisations in the district. Read some of the most inspiring stories from some of our projects in Zombo.

Pleasant reading

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Man of God excelling in farming

About NURI project

✕ The Northern Uganda Resilience Initiative (NURI), a project implemented by AFARD under funding from DANIDA

Reverend John Orombi's has two callings in life. The first calling is 'harvesting' souls for God's kingdom. The second calling is harvesting crops and excelling as a model farmer in his community.

As a member of Sangi Elderly Farmers' Group in Luma village, Jangokoro sub-county in Zombo district, the retired Anglican Church of Uganda clergy is very enterprising, a trait that is leading him to success. The Northern Uganda Resilience Initiative (NURI), a project implemented by AFARD under funding from DANIDA, is helping transform John's efforts in agriculture.

**“Thanks to AFARD,
I now know good
farming practices.”**

“Thanks to AFARD, I now know good farming practices. I also approach farming as a business, so I keep track of my costs, expenditure and the margins when it comes to marketing of my produce,” says John, who specialises in growing white potatoes (commonly known as Irish potatoes), maize and

beans. To support John and his farmer group, AFARD has constructed a produce store. Further, the farmers were trained on how to best manage the store.

“The store has made such a difference for us. We use it to keep our produce safely and in the best conditions, before we go to the market,” he says.

Using the proceeds from improved output, John has ventured into a new project – a nursery bed for coffee seedlings. Coffee is one of the main cash crops grown in Zombo district, and John is keen to be part of the party.

Due to the hilly topography of much of Zombo, getting water from far off sources to irrigate crops can be a challenge. To get around this, John has invested in an underground water system at his home to have optimal attention to his coffee nursery. Today, he supplies government projects with seedlings that are then distributed to other farmers in the district.

He has also acquired a pick-up truck and a tricycle to ease the transportation of his produce to markets. John says he is only getting started – he is eyeing bigger markets for his produce, such as Arua city. The sky is the limit.

Muber is now a confident farmer

Knowledge makes all the difference. Not so long ago, Muber Fuacan of Nzese village in Padea town council, Zombo district, was getting a lacklustre harvest of white potatoes, commonly known as Irish potatoes. She did not have access to quality information on how to best farm the crop.

White potatoes are a popular enterprise crop among farmers in Zombo. While such farmers are enthusiastic about the crop, many do not always have the knowledge on how to best manage them.

With improved earnings, Muber has bought a motorcycle for transporting produce.

This is why extension services from organisations like AFARD are crucial and can be the difference between despair or optimism for a farmer.

In March this year, she signed up to join the Sustainable and Resilient Smallholder Farmers'



project (SURE), a project AFARD is implementing SURE in Zombo district with support from Manos Unidas and the Government of Canary Islands.

"In our group, AFARD trained us on how to prepare gardens for planting, the concept of spacing when planting, how to look after the crop while it grows and post harvest-handling of the potatoes," she says.

In addition to the extension service, AFARD further supported Muber and her fellow group members each with three bags of potato seedlings, three hens and farming equipment, such as spray pumps and watering cans.

With this support, Muber noticed a marked improvement in her harvest and, ultimately, the money she generated from selling the harvest. With improved earnings, Muber has bought a motorcycle which she says now helps with transporting

About SURE project

✕ *The Sustainable and Resilient Smallholder Farmers' project (SURE) is being implemented by AFARD with support from Manos Unidas and the Government of Canary Islands.*

produce to the market and, further, eases her movement out and about.

Buoyed by recent results from her farming efforts, Muber is dreaming of improving the quality her life.

"My next goal now is to build a new house here at my home. I also want to acquire other assets such as goats, pigs so that I can have a more diverse income source," says the thirty-five year old mother of five.



About ALENU project

✕ The Action for Livelihood Enhancement in Northern Uganda (ALENU) project being implemented by AFARD in ~~Northern Uganda~~

Nebbi & Zombo

Pithua strikes gold with poultry

Oscar Pithua of Nvuli village in Kango sub-county, Zombo district, has an unquenchable thirst for knowledge.

When a group member attended a paraveterinary training organised by AFARD under the Action for Livelihood Enhancement in Northern Uganda (ALENU) project and returned with books and manuals on poultry keeping, Oscar got the reading material.

After reading and internalising all the information on poultry keeping, he decided to start a poultry project with the guidance of AFARD's field staff.

"I started by building a small structure in June. Using the savings I got from our group, I went to Arua and bought 100 chicks. I also bought chicken feed and I decided to give poultry a try," says Oscar.

Oscar's group had chosen bee keeping as an enterprise under



I fell in love with poultry because you do not need a big plot of land.

ALENU. He even attended the training in Agago district, on honey bee farming, but there was something about poultry that was irresistible.

"I fell in love with poultry because you do not need a big plot of land to set up a project."

From the initial 100 chicks that Oscar bought, 87 survived the first two weeks – a crucial 'do or die' stage in poultry when a farmer can lose many birds. Oscar's birds are now gradually maturing. He is almost at the

stage of selling some of them off, so he can bring in new chicks. He is excited about what the future holds.

"By December (2021), I want to have 250 birds. I have done my market survey and I am convinced that there is a ready market for chicken. Potential buyers come from as far as Arua to make inquiries about whether the birds are ready," he says.

While Oscar is doing well for a first time poultry farmer, he wants to add to his basic knowledge by attending further training on poultry farming, especially as he has big expansion plans,

Oscar dreams of becoming a model farmer in his village and inspiring others to aggressively fight poverty.

"In future, I want to have a model farm in my village and I will train my village mates on how to be successful farmers," he says.

Tomatoes doing the trick for Ocircan

Simon Ocircan of Akwanyu village, Jangokoro sub-county in Zombo district, was always intrigued by growing tomatoes. For long, he stayed away from the idea because of inadequate knowledge on how to grow the famous vegetable.

All this changed when Simon signed up as a beneficiary under the Northern Uganda Resilience Initiative (NURI), a project AFARD is implementing with the funding support of DANIDA.

Under the project, Simon and other farmers under the group are given support, ranging from seedlings of white potatoes to farm inputs, such as pesticides.

"In our group's philosophy is that we should use agriculture to transform our homes. For example, we decided that every member should build at least one iron roofed house in their homes. So far, nine members have started working on such improvements in their homes," says Simon.

The group also continually receives quality agricultural extension services from AFARD's field officers.

Our philosophy is that we should use agriculture to transform our homes

"Before I started working with AFARD, I did not know many good farming practices, such as how to best open up the garden for planting and the importance of creating contours in gardens that are in hilly places such as ours," says Simon.

Simon took advantage of the access he had to AFARD's field staff, to seek knowledge on growing



NURI facts

✕ The Northern Uganda Resilience Initiative (NURI) farmers under the group are given support, ranging from seedlings of white potatoes to farm inputs such as pesticides and pesticides

tomatoes – a passion he had always harboured. He has recently ventured into growing tomatoes, and he is happy with the results so far.

"Tomatoes are a staple in our homes. Everyone uses them to prepare meals and, as a result, they are always in demand. That is why I was always interested in tomatoes," says Simon.

Tomatoes require adequate supply of water to grow well. To cater for this need, Simon has invested in the digging of a water hole to ensure constant supply of water to his crop.

His tomato enterprise is so promising that Simon is already making plans for the future.

"I want to buy a motorcycle to ease my movement. I also want to build another two roomed iron roofed house in my home," he says.