

HOPE

An AFARD newsletter (Issue 4)



Reviving West Nile Holdings...

Happy New Year, everyone and welcome to the newest edition of HOPE

Did you know that AFARD has a social enterprise? West Nile Holdings Limited is undergoing a revival. Learn more about the social enterprise in our newest newsletter.

This issue also features feel good stories about cage fish farming and animal traction, and how they are changing the fortunes of youth in Pakwach district.

Pleasant reading

Billy Rwothungeyo (Editor)

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What is West Nile Holdings?

↓ *West Nile Holdings Limited was established in 2000 by AFARD, to break the dependency on foreign donors and become self-sustainable to meet funding requirements of programmes.*

Reviving West Nile Holdings

AFARD has grown leaps and bounds since its founding in 2000. Today, the organisation is one of the biggest homegrown non-governmental organisations in West Nile. Twenty-one years after its founding, the organisation is still growing and aiming for greater heights.

To break the dependency on foreign donors and become self-sustainable in the quest to meet the funding requirements of expanding social development programmes, AFARD decided to establish a business arm. In 2010, West Nile Holdings Limited was established by AFARD.

While West Nile Holdings Limited has been in existence for a few years, it has not been fully operational due to several challenges. The social enterprise is currently undergoing a revival. Technical Advisor, Anne Terheggen and Business Development Manager, James Wanadi are leading the revival of the social enterprise. James Wanadi spoke about the revival of the social enterprise.

Q: What is West Nile Holdings Limited?

A: West Nile Holdings Limited is a social enterprise that was founded and incorporated by AFARD. As a social enterprise, we were created to provide financial sustainability to AFARD.

Q: What are some of the business ventures West Nile Holdings is pursuing?

A: At the moment, we have three core business streams. Firstly, we have tractor hire services; we plough farmers' gardens at a fee. We also have lorry hire services, targeting farmer groups who want to transport their produce to markets. The lorry hire service fits in well with the work AFARD is doing with hundreds of farmer groups.

There should be means to aggregate what is produced by these farmers and access better markets. We have a grain cleaning facility with the capacity to clean grain to

99.9% purity, an internationally accepted level of cleanliness for grain commodities. We also have interests in growing commodities. This year, we planted fifteen (15) acres of cassava that we shall add to the value.

Q: As the Business Development Manager, what is your strategic vision for West Nile Holdings Limited?

A: With the support of our technical advisor, Anne Terheggen, we are re-establishing the company. We are envisioning a company that has vibrant business streams, taking advantage of the massive economic potential of the entire West Nile sub-region.

West Nile region is blessed with enormous agricultural potential for natural resources. We want to put West Nile Holdings in the best possible position to take advantage of all this.

Cage fish farming excites Opar

Fishing is second nature to many Jonam men. It is almost a rite of passage for many young men living in Pakwach district. While most Jonam are knowledgeable about the traditional method of fishing that requires one to row a boat into either Lake Albert or River Nile, before casting out their net, very few know a thing or two about modern cage fish farming. Nobert Opar is one such man.

Nobert was not even a fisherman before AFARD introduced the project in his village.

The resident of Ongwelle central village in Wadelai sub-county, is enthusiastically taking on the new approach to fishing, thanks to the Youth Agri-skilling for Decent Employment (YADE) project AFARD is implementing in the sub-county.

In fact, Nobert was not even a fisherman before AFARD



introduced the project in his village. He spent his adolescent years far away and, so, unlike his peers, he did not learn the traditional way of fishing.

"I am learning a lot of things from this project, for example how to best feed the fish in the cages, and how to tell the difference between a male and female fish amongst others," says the thirty-year-old.

In addition to knowledge, AFARD has supported Nobert and other youth with setting up fish cages in River Nile and feeds.

Cage fish farming is a novel concept for many in Uganda's rural fishing communities. It can be testing for first timers like Nobert, but he is relishing the challenge.

"When farming fish in cages, you need to be very dedicated to properly managing the fish. This requires a great level of discipline," he says.

About YADE project

➔ Youth Agri-skilling for Decent Employment (YADE) project AFARD is implementing in Wadelai sub-county.

➔ It is implemented with the financial support from Medicor Foundation and Dka Austria through HORIZONT3000.

The project is also promoting the savings culture among the youth so they are in a better position to plan for their future.

"I am saving so that in the near future, I have enough money to diversify into other ventures, such as opening a shop that sells fast-moving consumer goods," says Nobert.

AFARD is implementing YADE with the financial support of Medicor Foundation and Dka Austria through HORIZONT3000.



Business skills change Owiny's fortunes

About Panyango Community Dev't Project

↓ The project aims at empowering women in Panyango sub-county to provide basic needs for their children and tackle gender-based violence.

Rural women are strong pillars in their homes. They are willing to do anything to put food on the plates of children and contribute to household development.

Grace Owiny is one such woman. Realising that small-scale subsistence farming alone was not enough to realise family development goals, she dived into the murky waters of business a few years ago for additional income.

The beginning was rough. Grace, a resident of Nyangwendu village in Panyango sub-county, Pakwach district, was not well versed with small enterprise management skills, like proper record keeping. The tide changed when Grace became a beneficiary of the Panyango Community Development Project.

Under this project, which is funded by Kindernothilfe (KNH), women are organised

into self-help groups for easier mentorship and training purposes. The project has trained Grace on prudent business management skills, savings and credit management and investment options among others.

"I did not know much about how to run a business. Now I am confident and my small businesses are growing. I sell foodstuffs, like fish, beans, rice and sugar, among others," says Grace.

2to6

Grace has grown her herd of goats from two to six in less than a year.

As business improves, Grace is investing in acquiring assets. She now has six (6) goats, which have multiplied from the two (2) she had just a year ago.

"I work very hard so that I can keep my children in school. My eldest child has enrolled in forestry school and that gives me a lot of encouragement and hope," says the mother of six.

Grace is also making headway with the construction of a new permanent house. She has so far bought ten (10) pieces of iron sheets to roof the house.

The Panyango Community Development Project also aims to empower women in the sub-county to better provide basic needs, such as food and clothing for children in their households and tackle gender-based violence. The six-year project also has components that deal with youth and children.

About the ALENU project ➔ *The Action for Livelihood Enhancement in Northern Uganda (ALENU) project trains and mentors farmers on how to effectively deploy animal traction in their farms*



Animal traction energises Pakwach youth

As honourably as the humble hoe has served us for generations, its limitations are glaringly obvious, especially for farmers with ambitions of increasing acreage of growing crops.

With tractors still priced out of the reach of many rural farmers, animal traction is one of the most realistic options for farmers that want to move on from the hoe.

The members of Dikiriber group in Vungadik village, Pakwach sub-county in Pakwach district, are witnessing first hand just how effective animal traction is. AFARD, under the Action for Livelihood Enhancement in Northern Uganda (ALENU) project is training and mentoring the group on how to effectively deploy animal traction in their farms.

"Before, I used to spend a lot of time preparing just one acre of land. Now, with the animal



When you use animal traction, weeds are buried better than if you were to use hoes.

traction technology that AFARD has provided us, I only spend one day on one acre," says Francis Ongeiwun, the thirty-year-old leader of the group.

Group members take turns to feed the animals and they have a daily register in which those on duty sign in. The animals and the equipment can be hired out to

other farmers who are not part of the group, at a fee.

"I have learnt the skill of operating the equipment that is used with the bulls. Overtime, I have become better and better, and I hope that in future, I will be in position to train other farmers how to operate the machine."

Colline Opiyo, an agricultural extension officer with AFARD, trains the group and other farmers, on how to effectively use animal traction. He explains that animal traction requires dedication and diligent care of the animals and equipment. He says this modest mechanisation does almost even better than hoes.

"When you use animal traction, weeds are buried better than if you were to use hoes. When weeds are buried properly, they actually contribute to soil fertility."