



## GARDEN GAINS

### Uganda Farmer Based Organizations Incorporate Gender and Nutrition within Business Enterprises

Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) represent financially sustainable “lean” private-sector extension platforms that serve smallholder farmer members. FBOs provide a robust and responsive platform to reach smallholder farmers due to their existing function as an aggregation center for farmers, and provide access to agricultural inputs, market creation, and advisory services.

In Uganda, women comprise a substantial percentage of many FBO’s membership base, yet culturally do not share an equal role in decision-making or leadership positions within these organizations. Additionally, FBOs fail to take into consideration nutrition issues when developing their extension approaches due to the knowledge gap on developing nutrition sensitive value chains that improve the nutritional wellbeing of their farmers while also maintaining profits.

INGENAES is working to change that in Uganda by aligning its efforts with local counterpart Uganda Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (UFAAS) to build capacity and provide technical assistance to 30 FBOs in 20 districts, which in turn directly serve roughly 100,000 members. Tororo District Farmers Association (TODIFA) in Eastern

Uganda is one such FBO that took part in the INGENAES engagement and subsequently reported developmental impacts in the areas of improved household incomes, overall family nutritional health, and gender integration at the household and organizational levels.

Following an initial INGENAES gender and nutrition training, Isaac Bwayo, Technical Officer for Tororo District Farmers Association (TODIFA), was convinced of the value of integrating gender and nutrition into TODIFA’s programming. As technical lead, he persuaded the TODIFA leadership to submit a proposal to the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) in order to seek the funding needed to mobilize and sensitize the Tororo community on gender and nutrition. This included equipping and training 50 Farmer Trainers across two districts and the planting of 100 kitchen garden demonstration plots. In July 2017, TODIFA received a grant from AFAAS and immediately set to work.



A successful kitchen garden in Tororo district.

Mr. Bwayo stated, “Because of the [INGENAES] trainings, I knew we had to do something to reach more of our members with what we learned, but we didn’t have the funds to do anything on a large scale. Thanks to the grant we were finally able to do that.”

INGENAES Uganda Field Coordinator Amber Martin has been assisting TODIFA on multiple technical aspects of kitchen gardens, including which varieties and combination of crops to grow for a nutritionally complete diet. Pursuant with that aim, INGENAES also helped to connect TODIFA with local distributors like Harvest Plus to purchase familiar, yet more nutritionally dense crop varieties, such as Vitamin A Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes (OFSP) for a

source of carbohydrates and vitamin A, and iron-enriched beans as an affordable source of protein with the added benefit of much needed iron. To date, TODIFA has purchased and planted 200 bags of OFSP vine cuttings, 200 kilograms of iron-enriched beans, and five kilograms of kale seed to be split amongst its 100 kitchen garden demos.

*The demos have sparked a lot of interest and conversations about nutrition, especially when we explain the purpose each one serves. And that’s what we wanted to do – get more people talking about nutrition.... [And] the women too have been empowered by having more control over profits that the village savings groups are very active now.*

- Isaac Bwayo

Upon following up with Mr. Bwayo six months later, he happily reported that TODIFA’s board was now employing gender-responsive practices. The kitchen garden demos were so successful that women reported having enough OFSP and kale (one of the most nutritionally dense leafy greens) to sell the excess and cover other household expenses, such as school fees. He went on to state that people actually preferred the vitamin A sweet potatoes so much, due to their sweetness, that people from the community requested to buy vine cuttings, which opened up another revenue source for the group.

Cover photo: FBOs embrace women as key members and partners in business. © INGENAES 2018.

This publication was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development, USAID. The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States government.



© INGENAES 2018. Authors: Amber Martin, Maria Jones, Katy Mosiman.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License. Widespread dissemination and use are encouraged.

