

# **KUBBI COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**



## **PROGRESS REPORT JULY – NOVEMBER 2007**

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## 1.0 SUMMARY DATA

<b>Funding agency</b>	Robert Hunter Foundation, The Netherlands
<b>Implementing agency</b>	Kubbi Community Development Project, Uganda
<b>Contact person</b>	Dr Alfred Lakwo
<b>Project name</b>	Enabling Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Education
<b>Project goal</b>	<i>Increased incomes from a sustainable production of seed Irish potatoes</i>
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	50 Orphans and Vulnerable Children.
<b>Project location</b>	Kubbi Community, Erussi sub county, Nebbi District, Uganda.
<b>Project duration</b>	6 months
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	UGX 10,700,000
<b>Reporting Period Cost</b>	UGX 9,047,040
<b>Reporting Period</b>	July– November 2007
<b>Reporting Date</b>	November 18, 2007

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This project aims at enhancing family ability to earn income so as to be able to support the education of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs). Kubbi Community is the first ever organized and foresighted community in the district undertaking a collective effort to support OVC's education. This commitment, in part, explains why AFARD has been supporting the groups in many ways. This project builds on that support but more into Irish potato production for sale so that there are funds with which they can continue to support the furtherance of the education of children in their community.

This report, therefore, highlights the activities undertaken to date in line with the project plan. It also points as activities undertaken but were not planned for. Finally, it concludes by presenting some of the changes and challenges visible in the community.

## 3.0 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

### 3.1 Implementation preliminaries

In view of the fact that there is changing weather patterns, with the second rainy season being more reliable, this year the second rain came rather sooner than expected. From the usual period of July it started to pour steadily in June. This meant a lot of unpredictable situations for the months to come. As such, I had to seek consent from Henk as to weather we can proceed with the procurement of seeds in order to make good use of the rain.

### 3.2 Group debriefing

While the above consultation was on-going, the group members of Kubbi were mobilized and debriefed. First, the Chairperson and the Treasurer were called to AFARD offices. During this meeting with them, the project prospects and expectations were explained to them. The focus was on strengthening their capacity to improve on their on-going support for OVCs. They were then requested to go back and mobilize their members and fixed a date for the joint meeting between us from AFARD and all the group members, at their venue.

During the meeting with the group, an elaboration of the project goal and deliverables was made. Attention was paid on sustainable income generation through a group approach but with the support and participation of the OVCs.

However, because of the local lessons members discussed and agreed for a couple of changes which they sought our consent to. These changes were seen as most effective and with more returns to the individuals and their households. Notable here were:

- In struggling to set up a long-term project, the group allotted much of its land for tree planting. This meant that there was limited group land to accommodate all the bags of seeds to be procured. As such, it was prudent to get the seeds to also group members.
- Past experiences also revealed that by concentrating support at group levels, many members do not directly benefit. An example was given of the initial cassava cutting that the group had. When cassava mosaic attacked the area after a planting cycle, many members and their households had not yet benefit. As such, the losses that accrued from such an experience left many members disgruntled of which way forward. To solve this, having seeds at member levels was also seen as beneficial.
- Also argued was the fact that often support projects are seen from an umbrella view forgetting that there are 'micro benefits'. An old woman retorted, 'some of us cherish those smaller benefits than the bigger ones'. Her argument was that it is good to look at the education support for the OVCs. But what about their households having a little of the potato to eat as they harvest and awaits to sell?
- Finally, it was seen that it will again take time to get more benefits from the project. The group lacked a common store (not very easy to construct though). In this situation, collective seed stores and pool marketing will be weak. Yet, such inertia can not come purely from 1-2 harvest but rather from a long term engagement in production to the point that every member finds it hard to manage -storage and sales - the potato alone.



**A debriefing meeting**

As a result, this meeting resolved that the seeds to be procured will be divided both for planting on group land and to members to plant on their individual lands. It was also agreed that training will be conducted jointly on the group land given that a demonstration approach will be used. Finally, it was resolved that the group leaders will monitor the members' production and support to OVCs.

### 3.3 Input procurement and distribution

After the production consensus was arrived at, together with the Chairperson we made contact with the District NAADS Coordinator. This was done because at the moment there is a government regulatory enforcement on crop variety for multiplication especially those that are highly susceptible to spreading diseases in the district.

The second reason to do so was economic. With the increase in fuel prices from Ushs 2,500 per liter to Ushs 3,200 in the district, there has been a general increase in transport cost. Thus, meeting with the NAADS Coordinator was to solicit when they would proceed to procure seeds for their farmers in Okoro county so that we could share transport cost.

In deed this strategy worked because we agreed to do joint procurement. Hence, instead of having to hire a vehicle that would carry the 50 bags at Ushs 2,850,000 we both cost shared at Ushs 1,950,000 to get a bigger tonnage lorry. The Irish potatoes (Victoria and Chinyinge spp) were then procured at the end of July from Kabale. AFARD Field Officer traveled with the NAADS Coordinator to and from.



Loading of seeds at AFARD offices



Distribution of seeds

### 3.4 Best Practices Training

A number of practical trainings were conducted in order to ensure that the seeds provided were optimally cared for. The objective of the training was to equip the farmer group members with knowledge and skills in improved planting of Irish potato. Trainings were conducted at the right time

when farmers needed such training in order to put to practice what was learnt. Below are details of the training conducted.

### 3.4.1 Demonstration

For the group members to plant the seeds as is expected of the improved varieties, demonstration was conducted on their group plot immediately the seeds were brought. This demonstration followed a pre-training session during which field site selection, early land opening and early planting, seed bed preparation, and planting (plant spacing, seeding and planting techniques) as done. Emphasis was on soil selection that should include good loam soil that is friable and not water logged and should not have had Irish or other *solanum* species planted in it for at least 5 years. Emphasis was also laid on the depth of digging across contours and mulching.

### 3.4.2 Planting

This training addressed the peculiarities in terms of planting rate and handling as opposed to the traditional varieties. It was done through practical demonstrations at the time of planting. For instance, it was recommended that improved Irish potato seeds be planted on top of ridges while traditionally, the seeds are planted in furrows between the ridges. Changing the mind-set of the farmers required patient explanation and follow-up since even after the emphasis some members would still insist on doing it their original style.



### 3.4.3 Mid-season crop agronomy training

Mid-season training focused on:

- Field hygiene which basically dealt with maintaining a healthy growth environment for plants. It was emphasized that aeration, soil water and phyto-sanitation are in themselves important disease prevention mechanisms since a healthy plant is better able to resist infection.
- Pest and disease control (weeds are also considered pests). The highlight of the training was the preparation of pesticides from locally available materials such as tobacco and garlic leaves and their application in the field.



Making local organic pesticide

### 3.4.4 Pre- and post-harvest training

The objectives of these two training were to enable group members (i) detect signs of maturity; (ii) handle crops properly during harvest time, and (iii) handle crops properly during storage. Irish seed storage requires specific conditions of aeration and sunlight that must be punctiliously adhered to, and use of organic fungicides may become unavoidable if loss through rotting should be avoided.

Thus, the focuses were on:

- First, crop maturity detection, preparing for Irish potato harvesting, harvesting and harvesting costs, and seed selection from the field.
- And, second seed quality control in stores, storage structure and construction requirements, stores management (for table and seed Irish), chemical application (Malathion dust), and seed sprouting suppression.



**Seeds in stores for the Chairman**

### 3.5 Entrepreneurship skills training

Income generation is key for the success of this project. This can be from farming or any other activity. However, where the “off-farm incomes” bridge the gap in the on-farm production, household income security is enhanced. This practice is unfortunately lacking in many households that solely rely on farming for income while the few engaged in petty businesses do it the ‘wrong ways’ when looked at from best business practices perspective.

As such, this training aimed at ensuring that group members gained the requisite skills with which to identify profitable enterprises, invest and manage them well. In this context, farming itself is seen from the angle of profitability, a perspective that is different from the current one where farming is solely a subsistence activity. This approach requires a major change in attitude from a fatalistic, peasant/subsistence mentality to a positive, “wealth is possible” attitude. The basic assumption is that given the current resources and opportunities available to the farming household, a better livelihood is possible.



**Training in IGA management**

Using the five finger grid-rules, trainees were taken in a step-by-step way from livelihood and poverty analysis into identifying the three priority IGAs of their choice. From these IGAs they progressed into understanding the business value-chain that involved input-output analysis in order to assess the management demand and the profit margins. This was done to enable trainees know how IGAs compete for resources yet they yield different returns and hence one needed to be strategic in order to identify and invest in the best performing (profit maximizing) IGA. Using the priority IGAs, issues relate to capital mobilization such as by engaging in groups so that they can save and on-lend or join existing village banks were analyzed. Eventually, trainees developed their own projects in which to venture after the training.

### 3.6 Routine monitoring

To ensure that partner groups were functioning well and adhering to the skills and best practices provided, routine monitoring was done both by Dr. Lakwo and Mr. Khemis the agronomist (AFARD Field Officer). Four routine visits were held – during the debriefing meeting, after planting, near pre-harvest training and at the start of harvesting. These visits were also opportunities to offer field level advice to the farmers given that training cannot cover all problems that can possibly occur in the field.

Issues that were later ironed out from these visits included:

- Income sharing between homes and OVC education. While most members had fears that they would ideally be producing the Irish and earning income only for OVC use, it was noted that OVC support would primarily be education but that does not mean that one would allow a OVC die for lack of medicine simply because the funds MUST be tagged to only education costs.
- Involvement of OVCs in the production cycle so that they too can gain ownership and pride about being productive.
- Seed preservation for the next season given that the expected dry season farming in the valley is now under attack by the District Environment Officer who is also arresting and prosecuting culprits in the courts of law. Two solutions came up. First, those who are willing to preserve the seeds until the next season (March 2008) they should sell part of the proceed and buy storage chemicals. But those who are unable, they should sell all the harvest, collectively, and save the money for procuring seeds next season with the group.

## 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Of the Us\$ 9,047,040 remitted the expenditures are as shown below.

Activity	Approved budget	Actual expenditure	Variance
Provision of inputs	5,250,000	6,200,000	-950,000
Best farming practices training	1,725,000	1,750,000	-
Entrepreneurship skills training	700,000	700,000	-
On-going supervision	3,000,000	-	+ 3,000,000
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>10,700,000</b>	<b>8,650,000</b>	<b>2,050,000</b>
<b>Cash disbursed (80%)</b>	<b>9,047,040</b>		
<b>Balance b/d</b>	<b>1,625,960</b>	<b>397,040</b>	

## 5.0 CHALLENGES FACED

During the period, the following challenges were witnessed:

- Heavy rain affected the eventual output from the gardens. For those who have started harvesting, there is much yield decline from a basin yielding almost a bag (of 6 basins) to a negligible 3-4 basins. This has repercussions on seed stocking as well as benefit sharing.
- Lack of land for dry season farming given the problem with government concerning wetland farming. This will reduce the production cycle from the planned 3 to only 2. besides, for this season it will stress farmers in especially storage from November/December to March. A lot of losses may be incurred in between now and March 2008.
- Lack of joint stores to improve collective risk taking – seed storage and pool marketing. At the current production level, each farmer seems comfortable with own management.

## 6.0 EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

Although it is too early to talk of long term impacts of the project, anecdote evidences arising from meetings with and observations of group and group members' undertakings lead us to identify the following effects:

- **Increased access to improved seeds:** All members are planting improved Irish potato variety and this means that the chances of further multiplication of 'genetically secure species' are increased.
- **Improved knowledge and practice of better agronomy:** Following the hands-on training, group members now know the value of Irish potatoes (commonly known as a poor man's meat) in terms of yield, income, and nutrition. As such, all know of the Irish potato growing techniques and can distinguish between seed and table Irish potato farming. They are also practicing such techniques on their fields.
- **Adoption of agri-business:** While the Chairman has opted to preserve his harvest for seeds, the treasurer sold his harvest already. He has saved Ushs 150,000 with the group for next season seeds and school fees for the 2 OVCs under his care. This action reveals critical environmental scanning skills and ability to secure the future.
- **Groups' cohesion and growth:** The groups are also exhibiting an increased team spirit in their work. Members work together and have built a strong solidarity among themselves. Leaders are also more willing to listen.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

All planned project activities were implemented and expected outputs achieved. Constraints that emerged during the project implementation were partly addressed. Field visits indicated positive effects on productivity but as to whether the project goals have been achieved will only be made after at least two planting seasons.

Important to point here is that, it may be prudent, early next year to request Robert Hunter Foundation, to remit the 20% retained part of the funds given the fact that more seeds will be required. But, this observation is also subject to the final harvest status as well as the seed stock and/or cash equivalent saved.