



Australia Awards



Agro-Processing and Value Addition training for Women and Youth Groups in Uganda

A Small Grant case study: James Asiiimwe
Master of International Development, University of Canberra, 2013

Introduction

James Asiiimwe loves a challenge. In his home country of Uganda one such challenge was to support women to make more income from agriculture, especially in rural areas.

About 60 per cent of Uganda's population depend on agriculture as their primary source of income, but most farmers operate at a subsistence level, with only a small surplus going to market.

'Very often farmers sell their produce and livestock in their raw form which earn low returns,' said Mr Asiiimwe, an Australia Awards alumnus. 'Because of that, their income is not enough to cater for their needs, including, for example, school fees for their children.'

Mr Asiiimwe knew there was a way to increase income levels and so in 2017, he applied for and received an Australia Awards small grant of \$10,000, to support women's agriculture in a rural area outside of Kampala. He intended to deliver the project through his KAVC Foundation, using the skills he gained while studying a Master of International Development at the University of Canberra (2013).

Mr Asiiimwe established KAVC Foundation to equip vulnerable children, youth, women and grandmothers with the skills necessary to be self-reliant through innovative and sustainable livelihood approaches. During his studies in Australia, he had received funding from Opportunity To Do, an NGO in Canberra, to formally register the foundation in Wakiso District, Uganda, enabling him to operationalise his vision.

The Australia Awards small grant enabled Mr Asiiimwe to deliver a project to improve the farming income of KAVC Women's Group and support the Fortress Youth Group, which was able to reconstruct its piggery and buy two adult pigs.

'When we met James we were really in need. We lacked skills and training. We were trained for two months on poultry and realised we were not raising our pigs well. We now earn money from our farm and our savings scheme is big, we can each save 1,000 Ugandan Shillings (approximately \$0,38) a week whereas before we could only save 200.'
Vice Chairperson, KAVC Women's Group, Noel Naluada

Achievement of project objectives

The project achieved all objectives. Experienced trainers, including veterinarians, delivered workshops and conducted learning tours at a tertiary institution and demonstration farms. The objectives were to:



Train KAVC Womens Group members on agro-processing, improved economic value of agricultural produce, marketing, group dynamics and income-generating activities.



Train youth from Fortress Youth Group in agribusiness, focusing on piggery and poultry farming.



Conducted community outreach to equip farmers with agribusiness skills.



Promoted animal product packaging and branding for effective marketing.

Concrete results

Project outputs included:

- Conducted eight community outreach projects to train farmers on agribusiness, reaching 100 people.
- Trained 20 members of the KAVC Women's Group and 10 members (five female and five male) of the Fortress Youth Group on agro-processing, improved economic value of agricultural produce, marketing, group dynamics and income generation. Each workshop lasted five days in July and August 2017 and included learning tours to the Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute and two demonstration farms in the Wakiso area.
- Conducted training sessions and learning tours with 30 people (25 female and 5 male). These were recorded as part of a documentary produced to train other farmers in the region. Veterinarians also trained this group on vaccination and farm hygiene practices. The income-generation training included village savings and loans on how best to use income.
- Reconstructed the old Fortress Youth Group's piggery shelter and bought two adult pigs which have since multiplied to eight.



'Music, singing and drama are our passion and through this project we have been able to sustain our work. We were able to sell five mature pigs at 300,000 Ugandan Shillings each to buy ourselves a new keyboard. Five of our members are former drug addicts and the money we earn from the project has allowed us to offer them a safe and secure environment.'

Chairman, Fortress Youth Group, Ivan Kasaana

Contribution to country development

The project supports Uganda Vision 2040 which focuses in part on agriculture, rural women and youth empowerment and the necessary move from subsistence farming to commercialised agriculture activities.

Partnerships created

The project established partnerships with:

- Another Australia Awards Alumni, Felix Etudi, who assisted with outreach, helped conduct training and shared the new skills and knowledge he received while studying a Master of Public Administration at University of Canberra
- Wakiso Animal Farm, a commercial farm based in the Wabiyinja area where the project was implemented, which agreed to buy the group's eggs
- Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute, with trainers and veterinarians sharing information on animal husbandry and agribusiness
- Quality supermarket in Kampala and individual butchers who now stock the group's packaged pork products
- A supplier for animal feeds who now offers quality feeds to the groups to maximise farm outputs.

Sustainability and recognition

The groups will sustain their activities through the profitable sale of their produce to established partnerships. With the KAVC Women's Group, sales profits now cover their operating costs, feed into their savings and loan scheme. The Fortress Youth Group is using its surplus to fund its music production and tours.

Australia's support was acknowledged in several ways throughout the project. Group members wore branded t-shirts sporting the Australian Aid logo during their learning tours and at public events. Signposts with the Australian Aid logo directed the public to project locations.

Outcomes

The project has had a positive impact on the community in many ways:

- Improved financial practices: previously, group members would sell farm produce through intermediaries who would take advantage of their lack of market knowledge. Members now only sell to intermediaries when they can negotiate reasonable prices that cover production costs.
- Increased output: women have increased their output of eggs from three or four trays a week to more than 20 and their stock of birds from 30 to 150. Through training, groups also sell poultry and pork products through the year, instead of just at Christmas time.
- Community-based organisation registration: trained groups are now registered with the Uganda Government as community-based organisations. This has allowed KAVC to begin a savings and loans scheme. Members can access financing from the group to conduct other personal businesses. In addition, the KAVC Women's Group has saved more than \$500.
- Exposure to improved animal rearing and agribusiness practices: groups have been exposed to these improved practices through the Makerere University Agricultural Research Institution Kabanyoro, including profitability of fish farming and efficiencies in pig farming. Groups plan to expand their ventures to include these approaches when finances allow.
- Egg and meat distributors are procuring products from KAVC Women's Group at competitive prices. Wakiso Animal Farm agreed with KAVC Women's Group to purchase all eggs they produce. Through the linkages made with Quality Supermarket in Kampala, the group is now selling their packaged products directly to supermarkets in Kampala. Currently, the demand from the Wakiso Animal Farm exceeds the supply from KAVC. To date, over 200 kilograms of packaged pork and poultry products and 100 trays of eggs have been sold, earning 2 million and 1.1 million Ugandan Shillings respectively, which is \$747 and \$410.