



YOUTH EFFORT FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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Introduction:

This report presents the impact and progress of our development initiatives in Kumi District Eastern Uganda for selected beneficiaries. The topics explained in this report include; Projects implemented Beneficiaries, Outcomes, lessons learned and follow up action plan acknowledgement of sponsors and supporters and pictorials.

Background:

2020 has been a year full of uncertainties due to the Covid-19 crisis that has affected not only Uganda but the world at large. A lot of has changed as communities try to adopt the ***new normal*** so as to curb the spread of the novel virus.

A series of unexpected events happened such as closure of schools, markets, public transport, non agricultural businesses, places of worship from March to almost the end of the year. This created a lot of pressure to everyone and the worst of all, the issue of gender-based violence during Lockdown was at the pick. Many women and girls lost jobs and some dropped out of school which made them vulnerable to sexual exploitation in exchange for money. Over **30%** of young girls did not go back to school as they were either married or pregnant.

Basing on the fact that at least **90%** of the rural population relies on agriculture, we continued to support women and youth through farming as a business.

The increasing case of de-forestation in an attempt to burn charcoal for sale was also on the rise during the country Lockdown. For that reason we continued to promote the use of renewable energy solutions such as improved cook stoves and solar lamps.

The problem of access to credit and advisory services was noticed in the first quarter and a resolution was made.

In the course of the Lockdown, many households were subjected to poverty as their revenue streams were interrupted by the closure of markets and businesses. This affected savings through the Village Savings and Loan Associations (**VSLAs**) as members resorted to sharing out the money saved to buy food for their families before the end of the cycle.

Projects:

We have engaged communities in Kumi District in three main projects i.e;

1. S.M Catalyst Project:

The S.M Catalyst project is funded by [Latek Stay Alliance Uganda](#) and we are implementing it in partnership with [STINA FOODS](#). The project aims at ending poverty everywhere through farming as a business. Launched in 2019, the project has continued to support **700** households (**4,600** individuals). The project was designed to support smallholder farmers with knowledge, skills and resources to scale up their production from subsistence to commercial/contract farming. This has led to increased household income and savings evidenced by established and operational Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). The project has continued to support the capacity building of **20 VSLAs**. Each household saves an average of **Ugx 10,000** (\$2.9 USD) weekly.





2. The Switch to Clean Energy program.

Officially launched in 2017, the program continues to support rural communities with access to affordable renewable energy solutions. The program is currently funded by [ENVenture](#) and [New Energy Nexus Uganda](#). They have since supported us with technical support and resources needed for our program to run successfully. The project has supported over **4,000** households since 2017.





3. Farmer support Database:

The project was initiated in **March 2020** and officially launched in **August 2020**. It aims at supporting farmers with advisory services and loans using the individual farmer data collected, processed and stored. This project was developed to bridge the gap between smallholder farmers and other value chain actors like **financial institutions, agro-processing companies, credible input dealers, market and extension/advisory services**.

The project has supported **1,300** smallholder farmers and **5** farmer cooperatives. This was made possible through funding from [USAID](#), [PEDN](#) and technical support from [MIIC](#).

Beneficiaries:

Our programs have been majorly supporting women and youth because we believe and know that “to empower a community, you have to empower women and youth” as they perform almost **85%** of the household duties in our community. However, we also support men in a small scale but engage them as a household when running our projects. About **85%** of our beneficiaries are women and youth irrespective of any disability.

Outcomes:

1. **20** vibrant groups using developed and functional business plans to conduct farm business.
2. **700** farmers able to use knowledge and skills gained to increase production.
700 farmers able to use and adopt technologies demonstrated on the learning platform with a **30%** improvement in production.
700 farmers report reduction in post harvest losses.
3. Community members able to access affordable renewable energy solutions for lighting and cooking.
4. **20** Collective marketing committees have an increased knowledge on local business and vibrant business community with ability to address issues affecting their business environment and influence policy.
5. **700** farmers report increase in market opportunities and able to sell through established bulking centers with increased prices.
6. **20** VSLAs saving regularly with results showing the recommended practices followed.
7. Reported increased internal savings of the 20 VSLAs..
8. **Graduated VSLAs** able to access agricultural financing from financial institutions and have group savings bank account.

Lessons learned and recommendations:

- a) Some of the **VSLAs** shared out their savings before the end of the cycle due to the effect of the Lockdown. The members said that they could not afford saving basing on the prevailing economic crisis caused by **Covid-19**.
- b) There was an increase in gender-based violence especially during the country Lockdown which was associated with poverty, sexual exploitation, forced and early marriages, un-planned pregnancies and spread of HIV in the community.
- c) Women appreciated the use of improved cook stoves saying, they are healthy (no smoke), saves time and use little charcoal compared to three stone arrangements.
- d) There was a need to form and register more farmer groups to scale up the farming as a business program.
- e) There is a need to train smallholder farmers on making of organic pesticides and fertilizers using the locally available resources to reduce the cost of production and promote sustainable agriculture.
- f) There is a call to empower women and youth with hands on skills for self reliance. This is aimed at unlocking reliable income streams to improve livelihoods.

Acknowledgements of sponsors and supporters:

Great thanks to [Latek Stay Alliance Uganda](#) for the financial support and resources provided for implementing the S.M Catalyst project. We would also like to appreciate [STINA FOODS](#) for joining hands with us to contract farmers to produce for them raw materials for producing *Amelia baby porridge*.



We equally appreciate [ENVenture](#) and [New Energy Nexus Uganda](#) for providing us with resources and technical support for running our Switch to Clean Energy program.



We appreciate the support and resources provided to us by, [USAID](#), [PEDN](#) and [MIIC](#).



THE PRIVATE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



Last but not least, we appreciate the technical support and resources provided to us by [UNMGCY](#).



UN Major Group for
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Annex1. Pictorials:











