



YOUTH EFFORT FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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2021 ANNUAL REPORT

1ST JANUARY 2021-31ST DECEMBER 2021



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Introduction:

This report presents the impact and progress of our community 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:

2021 marks our **4** years of existence as we strive to achieve an economically empowered society free from gender-based violence.

Just like 2020, **2021** has been a year full of uncertainties due to the Covid-19 crisis that has affected not only Uganda but the world at large. The communities continue to adopt the ***new normal*** so as to curb the spread of the novel virus though household income has dropped drastically due to country lock down

Just like 2020, a series of unexpected events happened such as closure of schools, markets, public transport, non agricultural businesses, places of worship. The lockdown was lifted in shifts until the end of the year. This continued to create 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 **25%** of young girls between 14 and 17 years were either married off or pregnant and had no hopes of resuming school.

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

De-forestation is still on the rise in an attempt to burn charcoal for sale 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. We also organized a tree planting campaign to restore the eco system.

In the course of the lockdown, many households were subjected to extreme poverty as their revenue streams were interrupted by the closure of markets, businesses and restrictions on the number of employees at work places. 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 while others resolved to pause savings until the economy is opened.

Projects:

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

1. S.M Catalyst Project (Organic cereals program):

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 with emphasis on climate-smart agriculture. 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 **40 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 off-grid rural communities with access to affordable renewable energy solutions. The program is currently funded by [ENVenture](#), a [New Energy Nexus Uganda](#), program. They have since supported us with technical support and resources needed for our program to run successfully. The project has supported over **4,500** 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 **1,500** smallholder farmers and **5** farmer cooperatives. This was made possible through funding from [USAID](#), [PEDN](#) and technical support from [MIIC](#).

4. The 1Million Youth Actions Challenge 1MYAC.

We are proud to be [partners](#) of the [1 Million Youth Actions Challenge \(1MYAC\)](#) an initiative by the [Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation](#). We mobilized 50 young people aged 10-30 to take part in the challenge where we organized to donate at least 50,000 Eucalyptus seedlings by September 2022 to individuals in heavily degraded areas in Kumi District, Eastern Uganda.

Our program was featured in the [2021 action of the month](#) for October on the [1MYAC website](#).

We welcome other organizations to [join the 1MYAC](#) and help mobilize young people around the world to explore the options and [choose an action](#) as we fight climate change and make the world a better place.



5. The Bright Dada project.

We are thrilled to be part of the **Bright Dada** project, an initiative by the [Enlight Institute](#) and funded by [Signify Foundation](#).

The project aims at increasing access to affordable renewable energy solutions to the rural and urban poor. The project is currently promoting the use of energy saving LED Phillips bulbs.



Beneficiaries:

A majority of our projects support 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. **40** vibrant groups using developed and functional business plans to conduct farm business.
2. **1,300** smallholder farmers able to use knowledge and skills gained to increase production and productivity.
1,300 farmers able to use and adopt technologies demonstrated on the learning platform with a **30%** improvement in production.
1,300 farmers report reduction in post harvest losses.
3. Community members able to access affordable renewable energy solutions for lighting and cooking.
4. **40** 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. Community members able to access tree seedlings for restoring their eco-system.
6. **1,400** farmers report increase in market opportunities and able to sell through established bulking centers with increased prices.
7. **40** VSLAs saving regularly with results showing the recommended practices followed.

8. Reported increased internal savings of the 40 VSLAs..
9. **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 while others paused saving due to the effect of the lockdown. The members could not afford saving basing on the prevailing economic crisis caused by **Covid-19**.
- b) Gender-based violence was on the rise 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 cooperatives to scale up the farming as a business program.
- e) There is a need to continue training smallholder farmers on making of organic pesticides and fertilizers using the locally available resources to reduce the cost of production and promote sustainable/climate-smart agriculture.
- f) There is a call to empower more women and youth with hands on skills for self reliance. This is aimed at unlocking reliable income streams to improve livelihood.

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.

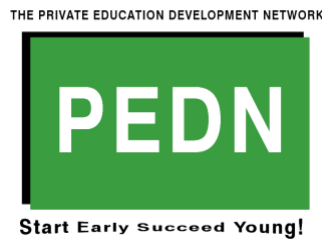


We are grateful to [Signify Foundation](#) and [Enlight Institute](#) for the funds and technical support for the implementation of the **Bright Dada** project.

signify foundation



We appreciate the support and resources provided to us by, [USAID](#), [PEDN](#) and [MIIC](#) for implementation of our farmer support database project.



We appreciate [Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation](#) for initiating and engaging us in the [1 Million Youth Actions Challenge](#).



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



UN Major Group for
Children and Youth
the space for children and youth in the United Nations

Annex1. Pictorials:













