



# **A WORKING FUTURE PROJECT UGANDA / 2019-2022 FINAL REPORT**

**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN PRIVATE ENTERPRISES AND NON-STATE ACTORS  
A PROJECT FINANCED BY THE NORWEGIAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AWF</b>	A Working Future	<b>OoS</b>	Out-of-School
<b>A2N</b>	Africa 2000 Network	<b>PEO</b>	Project Extension Officer
<b>CBT</b>	Community Based Trainer	<b>PIU</b>	Plan International Uganda
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization	<b>PM</b>	Project Manager
<b>Covid-19</b>	Corona Virus Disease 2019	<b>PN</b>	Peanut
<b>DIT</b>	Directorate of industrial training	<b>PY</b>	PY
<b>ED</b>	Executive director	<b>SP</b>	Sweet potato
<b>EP</b>	Export Market	<b>VEDCO</b>	Volunteer Efforts for Community Development
<b>FAAB</b>	Farming as a Business	<b>VC</b>	VC
<b>FFS</b>	Farmer Field School	<b>VCA</b>	VCA
<b>FI</b>	Financial Institution(s)	<b>VCP</b>	VC Players
<b>FL</b>	Financial Literacy	<b>VSLA</b>	Village Saving and Loans Association
<b>GAP</b>	Good AP	<b>USD</b>	US Dollar
<b>GC</b>	GC	<b>UWEP</b>	Uganda Women Empowerment program
<b>GHP</b>	Good Hygiene Practices	<b>YG</b>	Youth Group
<b>HACCP</b>	Hazard Analysis Critical point	<b>YLP</b>	Youth Livelihood Program
<b>HOP</b>	Head of Program	<b>YM</b>	Young Men
<b>HP</b>	Hot Pepper	<b>YPA</b>	Youth Producer Association
<b>KK</b>		<b>YVSLA</b>	Youth Village Saving and Loan Association
<b>LG</b>	KK Fresh Foods Exporters Limited Local Government	<b>YW</b>	YW
<b>MAAIF</b>	Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries		
<b>MER</b>	Monitoring Evaluation and Research		
<b>MGLSD</b>	Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development		
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information System		
<b>MOA</b>	Market Oriented Agronomy		
<b>NAADS</b>	National Agricultural Advisory Services		
<b>NARO</b>	National Agricultural Research Organization		
<b>NNO</b>	Norway National Office		

# 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

## PROJECT AGREEMENT DETAILS

1.1 Name of grant recipient	: Plan International Norway
1.2 Norad agreement number	: QZA-076: UGA – 18/0011 (2019-2022)
1.3 Agreement period	: 2019 – 2022
1.4 Reporting period	: January 2019 – December 2022
1.5 The type of report submitted	: Final Report

## DESCRIPTION OF THE A WORKING FUTURE PROJECT

The A Working Future (AWF) Project was facilitated by Plan International Norway with funding from the Norwegian Agency for International Development (Norad) from 2019-2022. The project was implemented by Plan International Uganda in partnership with local civil society partners namely; Africa 2000 Network Uganda, VEDCO and a private sector actor - KK Fresh Foods Exporters. The Nordic Accenture Development Partnerships (ADP) supported in the value chain analysis and market study for the project.

The overall objective of the AWF project was to improve linkages between production and market demands in the agriculture sector in eastern Uganda. The project had two outcomes:

1. **Increased export and domestic marketing volumes of selected agricultural commodities**
2. **Increased number of marginalized youths, especially young women, benefiting from export-oriented value chains of selected commodities**

The AWF project focused on strengthening linkages, coordination and networking amongst agriculture actors across four selected value chains (VC), i.e., green chili, hot pepper, sweet potatoes and peanuts. It targeted 24,000 youth (60% girls and young women) in the districts of Buyende, Kamuli and Tororo in Eastern Uganda.

The project mobilized and organized youth in eighteen sub-counties into Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA). Members of VSLAs were trained in the VSLA methodology and principles, financial literacy, agribusiness and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for the selected VCs, and later supported to transform into youth producer associations. Through a well aligned extension service system, the members of the youth producer group associations were further supported to adopt

good crop production and produce management practices to produce products that met the export market requirements in terms of volumes and quality standards. The project was divided into the following stages: Stage 0: Awareness and On-boarding (1-3 months), Stage 1: Becoming a VSLA (4-12 months), Stage 2: Running a VSLA + (12 months), Stage 3: Producer Group Establishment (15-24 months), and Stage 4: Producer Group Acceleration (24 + months).

The project used an approach called Participatory Market Chain Approach (PMCA), which focuses on developing innovations along commodity value chains for improved market access. It also used the Farmer Field Schools Methodology (FFS) – a participatory method of learning, technology development and dissemination based on adult learning principles developed by FAO. Finally, the AWF project applied a Gender Transformative Approach based on identifying and analyzing the root causes of gender inequality and addressing them in a holistic manner. The AWF project 2019-2022 was a scale-up of a pilot project supported by SIDA and Accenture and implemented by Plan International Uganda during 2012-2016.

Project's relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)  
The AWF project has been in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 which aims to end poverty in all of its forms. The project has contributed to expanding employment opportunities to 24,000 youth (60% girls and young women) in Eastern Uganda, directly contributing to SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth and SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The project has also contributed to SDG 2 on combating hunger, through increased income and purchasing power for the youth. The agronomic practices employed responded to climate effects such as drought and promoted conservation agriculture, thereby contributing to SDG 13 - particularly regarding reversing land degradation.

## 2. RESULTS

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF PROJECT RESULTS

The project can be considered to have reached its impact goal of improved linkage between production and market demands in the agricultural sector in Eastern Uganda. The set outcomes and outputs have all been partly or fully achieved.

The project aimed to reach a total of 24 000 youth (60 percent female) by the end of the implementation period. This target has been greatly overachieved, with 28 591 youth reached and linked to one or more value chain actors. Of these, 17 057 have been girls and young women, equaling 59,6 percent. This is attributed to effective mobilization work done right from the project's first year, also complemented by massive radio campaigns. The strengthened youth leadership structures both at parish and sub-county levels also played a key role in realization of this result.

One of the project's two desired outcomes was increased export and domestic marketing volumes of green chili, hot pepper, sweet potatoes and peanuts. The project was only able to meet 14% of the target volume of green chili sold to the export market, and there was no export of sweet potatoes, peanuts or hot pepper. This was mainly due to increased costs of freight by almost two-folds during the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting into reduced international demand and inconsistent orders. This affected production in the short term and medium term, until alternate local and regional buyers came into play.

The domestic market was able to absorb most of the produce that would otherwise be aimed for export. The overall domestic market targets for green chilis, sweet potatoes and peanuts were surpassed with 687% for chilis, 153% for sweet potatoes and 133% peanuts. The external end-line evaluation of the project found that prices the youth got on the export market were only slightly higher than those given by local traders and middlemen. The continued engagement by the project with different value chain players and increased number of local off-takers enabled the increased produce market absorption in the domestic and cross border market. The project's second desired outcome was an increase in the number of marginalized youths, especially young women, benefiting from market-oriented value chains. The target was 10 320 youth selling their produce to different marketing channels and benefit economically from the value chain by the end of the project. In total, 9,383 youth (5,640 female and 3,743 male) have been documented by the project to be able to sell one or more produce on the market and benefitting economically from participation in savings schemes and value chain activities. This equals

91 percent of the target. The end-line evaluation found that the project was effective in increasing employment opportunities and incomes for youth, with 97% of the youth interviewed reporting to be engaged in and making an income from agriculture in the previous season. Several outputs contributed to these results, including the building by the project of an effective and quality-controlled community-based extension team and training in improved farming methods and farming as a business. A total of 24,850 youth (14,826 female, 10,024 male) were trained, surpassing the overall target by 17%.

The project can be considered to have been particularly successful in (1) introducing and engaging young women and men in production and marketing of the selected commodities (2) improving linkage between youth and other value chain actors along the selected value chains (3) increasing the engagement of the various value chain actors such as the private sector market intermediary and input suppliers (4) increasing youths' access to investment capital, and in (5) formation, training and strengthening of Farmer Producer Organizations.

A total of 788,459 USD, which exceeds the overall target by 90%, were mobilized and accessed by 23,536 project youth (14,073 female 9,463 male). The project's youth groups transformed into producer groups, which further federated themselves into 18 sub county higher level youth associations. The associations serve as support mechanisms and focal structures for mediation and negotiation with other value chain stakeholders. Above all, the AWF youth groups have become community groups of choice for engagement by other partners including local government authorities.

No pack-houses or cold rooms were established by the project as initially planned. However, the project supported to improve the already established pack house owned by the private sector partner KK Fresh Foods. This was done by equipping existing the pack house with cold room facilities to increase the private partners' produce holding capacity before export so that farmers' produce is not rejected on grounds of inadequate holding facility. The project later supported the construction of one community-based collection facility with sorting and min-cold room facility for temporary holding of produce before offtake by the marketing intermediaries in Kamuli and one temporary collection facility in Tororo district.



## 2.1 OPERATING ENVIRONMENT IN THE FINAL YEAR OF THE PROJECT

The last year of the project witnessed the best produce marketing environment, that was characterized by (1) diversified marketable products of the main / selected value chain commodities (Fresh green, fresh Red and dry chili); (2) multiple buyers, a number of new exporting companies (including Tropical dynasty, Jona exotics, United Pearl Exporters, and Anchor foods) came on board and contributed to increased off-taking of all the produce offered by the producing youth to the market except for the month of July, September and October. Furthermore, engagement of the off-takers enabled produce sorting to be done at source in the communities where the youth are based; (3) efficient and friendly mode of payment as produce off-takers' agents offered direct cash payment settlement within 7 days in contrast to 30 days payment settlement period when there was only one active private sector actor off-taker; (4) direct engagement of youth associations with produce off-takers and or their agents. The participating youth continued to enjoy supportive relations and conducive operating environment with the district local authorities who regard the AWF youth groups as target groups of choice prioritized to benefit from all government interventions and priority grants for youth.

The final year of implementation was characterized by long dry spells that occurred between the period November 2021, continuing through April 2022 and the June - July, October -November.

As a result, establishment of new gardens out nurseries and large-scale production of the promoted produce was hampered contributing to lower volumes of the marketed produce. Areas with unreliable water sources to facilitate micro irrigation were not able to offer products to the market for enlengthened period.

Additionally, the rising global prices of fuel and the increasing cost of freight negatively affected the quantities sold to the export market through the designated off-taker of the produce, KK Fresh Foods. KK suffered unpredictable orders from its agent in the export market during the period. This dynamic along with low volumes of production gravely affected the realization of targeted export volumes of selected commodities.

Also, the final year witnessed increase in the prices of all essential products with costs of essential agricultural chemical, fertilizers and growth boosters sharply increasing by more than double. The sharp increase in the cost of production with unmatched increase in the prices offered on the market, reduced youth farmers' profit margin. Coupled with household food shortages resulting from food crop failure experienced in last season of 2021 and season one of 2022, producing youth spent most of their earnings on household food rather than reinvesting in production or other income diversification sources.



## 2.2 DETAILED RESULTS REPORTING

**Project Goal / Impact: Improved linkage between production and market demands in the agricultural sector in Eastern Uganda**

**Result:** 9,383 youth (5,640 Female and 3,743 Male) were able to sell produce to one or more of the market channels (91% of target)

Goal / Impact: Improved linkage between production and market demands in the agricultural sector in Eastern Uganda								
Impact Indicator	Number of youth (F/M) selling produce to one or more of the market channels Data count: cumulative							
	TARGET				RESULTS			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
a) Female	180	180	3480	6192	4	741	3005	5640
b) Male	120	480	2320	4128	23	701	1947	3743
<b>Total</b>	300	1200	5800	10320	27	1442	4952	9383

A total of 9,383 youth (5,640 female and 3,743 male), were able to sell different products of the selected VCs via the various marketing mechanisms during the life of the project. This represents 91% of the overall project target. Diversification of the green chili products that were sold (ie. dry chili, dry powdered, fresh red and green), the increase in the number and diversity of off-takers buying the multiple products, and the improved capacity of the youth leadership structure to self-mobilize, organize and interrelate with

off-takers, was responsible for the realization of the goal.

The project built strong youth structures i.e. Youth Village Saving and Loan Associations (YVSLA), Youth Producer Associations (YPA) and Parish and Sub County Youth Leadership Committees. The formed associations and committees have and will continue to play a vital role in mobilizing, engaging and interlinking the participating and prospective youth members with other value chain players (VCP).

### OUTCOME 1.

**Increased export and domestic marketing volume of a) Hot Pepper b) Green Chilis c) Peanuts and d) Sweet Potatoes**

**Result Export Market:** 274,159 kilograms of green chili sold to the export market (14,4% of target). No sweet potato and peanuts sold to export market through KK Fresh Foods

Outcome Indicator 1.1 Quantity in kg per year, sold by target youth to export market								
Produce	Data count: cumulative							
	TARGET (sales in kg)				RESULTS (sold in kg)			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
a) Hot pepper	0	0	6960	00	NA	NA	NA	600
b) Green chili	152 500	112 625	1 073 585	1 908 881	1745	98 004	242 065	274 159
d) Peanuts	0	0	72 500	00	N/A	NA	00	0
e) Sweet potatoes	0	0	26 754	00	N/A	NA	00	60

All together 274,159 Kilograms of green chili, representing 14.4% of the planned overall target, was sold to the export market. None of both SP and PN were sold to the export market through the designated private marketing partner (KK Fresh Foods). The realization of the targeted volume had been premised on three interconnected factors; (1) Export market demand for the selected VCs remaining high throughout the project life (2) the contracts between the designated private partner with produce off-takers remaining high above the anticipated weekly volume produced by

project youth, and (3) an increased production volume matching the market demand following adoption of recommended agriculture practices of the promoted VCs. Unfortunately, the interconnection was distorted by outbreak of Covid-19 in the early 2020 and the consequent effects of the pandemic that resulted into increased costs of freight by almost two-folds and the reduction in demand and inconsistency in orders for respective VC in the export market segments and hence the low achievement on the project target.

**Result Domestic and Cross Border Market:** targeted volumes for green chili, peanuts and sweet potatoes sold on the domestic market were fully achieved (surpassing the targets by 587%, 53% and 33% respectively)

Outcome Indicator 1.2 Quantity in kg per year, sold by target youth to domestic and or cross border market								
Produce	Data count: cumulative							
	TARGET (sales in kg)				RESULTS (sold in kg)			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
a) Hot pepper	00	00	4600	9120	NA	0	0	0
b) Green chili	00	5544	140 194	71 518	NA	79 601	273 215	491 362
d) Peanuts	00	00	20 880	55 728	N/A	0	12 746	74 082
e) Sweet potatoes	00	5400	52 200	116 100	N/A	81 218	146 218	177 736

A total of 491,369 kg green chili, 74,082 kg peanuts, 177,736 kg sweet potatoes and none for hot pepper were sold on the domestic market surpassing the project overall planned volumes. The over achievement on the domestic market sales was mainly due to the reduction and inconsistency in the volume, quantity ordered and delivered to the export market through the designated private partner. The domestic market was thus able to absorb part of produce that would otherwise be aimed for export. Consequently, the domestic/cross border market provided the lions' share of the market for produce sold by the project youth. The continued en-

gagement with other VCPs saw a number of local actors off-taking the youth produce overshooting the domestic /cross border market targets. This to a greater extent provided more confidence to the youth in the VCs knowing that there was alternative market for their produce. This also built a level of trust that there will be continuity of the VCs beyond the life of the current project.

**Intermediate Outcome 1.1: Increased linkage between youth and other actors along the value chain**

**Result:** 28,591 youths have been linked to other actors along the value chains (surpassing the target by 19%)

Intermediate Outcome Indicator 1.1.0 Number of youths who are linked to other actors along the value chains								
Produce	Data count: cumulative							
	TARGET				RESULTS			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Female</b>	3600	8790	12 390	14 400	4176	10 153	14 391	17 057
<b>Male</b>	2400	5860	8260	9800	3474	6844	9594	11 534
<b>Total</b>	6000	14 650	20 650	24 000	7650	16 997	23 985	28 591

The project established different marketing channels (export, local and cross border) for the selected commodities, surpassing the overall target of linking 24,000 youth to at least one or more VC actors.

Overall, 28,591 youth (17,057 Female and 11,534 male) were linked to one or more VC Actors (VCA). The over-achievement is mainly due to (1) more youth joined the project youth groups to replace the school-going members who had joined during the two-years of Covid-19 lock-down but later went back to school following reopening in January 2022, and (2) self-replication of youth groups in the target communities following the community-wide crop failure for the two cropping seasons of 2021 which

led many project youth to seek other climate resilient crops and investment options for survival. As a result, other youth took this as an opportunity to enroll in the project thereby increasing the number of youths linked to other VCAs.

Additionally, the strengthened youth leadership structure both at parish and sub-county levels in the last two years of project implementation, resulted into increased visibility of the youth groups and associations towards many other VCAs - including local government, other non-government extension service providers and other private VCAs.

**Output 1.1.1: Information on value chains is disseminated**

**Result:** 63,927 people received information on the selected value chains (representing a 178% achievement level)

Output Indicator 1.1.1 Number of people who have received information on selected value chains								
	Data count: cumulative							
	TARGET				RESULTS			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Female</b>	9000	10 800	19 800	21 600	10 658	26 020	29 688	36 776
<b>Male</b>	6000	7200	13 200	14 400	7346	18 874	21 800	27 151
<b>Total</b>	15 000	18 000	33 000	36 000	18 004	44 894	51 488	63 927

The project reached 63,927 young persons with information on selected VCs, against the planned target of 36 000. The project prioritized community awareness, sensitization and dialogue meetings. The community meetings/dialogues adequately provided information about the project VCs including; selected VC productivity, marketability (domestic/export market), profitability and the general

economic potential of the selected VCs. The sessions also provided information on the post-project prospects for the VCs and the need for community wide buy-in and support to the project youth leadership structure to sustain production of the selected VCs and market interlinkage beyond the project life.

**Output 1.1.2: Value chains established**

**Result:** 35 value chain actor meetings were held throughout the project life (surpassing the planned target of 17 engagements)

Output Indicator 1.1.1 Number of people who have received information on selected value chains								
	Data count: stock data							
	TARGET				RESULTS			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
# of meetings held	2	5	11	17	2	17	31	35

Creating and sustaining competitive and equitably-oriented VCs that support small-scale farmers, especially young women, requires engagement of various actors along the VC. For effective produce VC mechanisms, it is important that actors have a well-functioning platform that enables different VCAs to share, discuss challenges, opportunities and threats to the participation and benefit of the different VCA. Engagement meetings were organized by the project to enable the different VCAs to share and commit to manage the threats, challenges and to exploit the different opportunities.

35 VCA meetings were held throughout the project life. Among the key achievements of the engagement meetings were:

- 1. The introduction of an agent model to manage produce collection from the producing youth and delivering on behalf the designated exporter:** KK Fresh Foods (KK) selected one agent - GAPF agro-dealers - who spearheaded produce collection, sorting, aggregation, transporting and delivery to KK Fresh Foods on behalf of KK in the last year of project implementation. The agent further handled

the management of returns and payment to the youth under the supervision of KK. This saw reduction in volume lost by the producing youth between the time when produce is handed over and when the acceptance decision is made by KK based on sorting compliance market requirements; a reduction in the payment period to less than two weeks, a reduction in the transaction costs incurred by the producing youth and an overall increase in youth's trust in the collection and delivery process

- 2. Engagement of more VC produce off-takers:** In addition to the official agent (KK Fresh Foods), the engagement meetings helped to justify the need for allowing in other off-takers. A number of off-takers including Tropical Dynasty, United Pearl Exports, Jona Exotic, Dubai Handlers, GO FIRM, KIKEZ, Forty Miles, Anchor Foods and other local / cross border market players came on board, fully engaged with producing youths. The multiple off-takers also diversified the products bought, and opened some level of competition and competitiveness as well as more open discussion/information sharing and awareness.

**Intermediate Outcome 1.2: Increased quality and volume of produce in the value chains**

**Result:** Target for both green chili and sweet potatoes were fully achieved (with green chili at 100% and sweet potatoes at 104% achievement), while hot pepper had 40% achievement and peanuts 24%

Outcome Indicator 1.2.0 Yield kg/acre/ year								
Produce	Data count: stock data							
	TARGET				RESULTS			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
a) Hot pepper		914	3000	4500			1800	1800
b) Green chili		5000	5200	8900			8900	8900
d) Peanuts		1339	1500	1500			364	364
e) Sweet potatoes		2500	3000	3000			3120	3120

The project facilitated an increase in the volume and quality of commodities produced by the producing youth and access to markets by ensuring sound Agronomic Practices (AP) through extension services, facilitating sustainable linkages to trusted market channels and access to inputs. The productivity of both green chili and sweet potatoes were fully achieved with green chili at 100% and sweet potatoes at 104% achievement, while hot pepper at 40% and peanuts at 24%. Hot pepper was pro-

duced for only one year due to a self-imposed ban instituted by the government of Uganda on the production and export of hot pepper and therefore the project could not measure the productivity for the subsequent years. While for peanuts, the crop was not prioritized by participating youth. This was as a result of the low demand and market prices for the crop experienced during the project period and thus measurement of productivity was done on a one-off production.



**Output 1.2.1: Extension officers trained**

**Result:** 18 extension officers were trained, fully achieving the target. In addition, 24 local government extension workers were trained.

Output Indicator 1.2.1 Number of extension workers (F/M) trained								
Period	Data count: cumulative							
	TARGET				RESULTS			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Female</b>	3	6	6	6	3	4	4	4
<b>Male</b>	6	12	12	12	6	14	14	14
<b>Total</b>	9	18	18	18	9	18	18	18

Extension officers were the primary front-line staff located in the local CSOs partners, that were vested with the responsibility of providing extension services and training to build capacity of the AWF youth to apply correct farming practices for optimal harvests.

The project fully achieved on recruiting, training and deploying all the planned Project Extension Officers (PEOs) by the end of the second year. The PEOs underwent capacity building training in the areas of gender transformative extension service delivery; export-oriented market agronomy; international trade regulations on insect/pesticides and chemical residues; farmer registration

and certification processes for the export trade in vegetables and fruits, delivered in collaboration with the Uganda Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries.

In an attempt to build a buffer of support from extension services staff, the project further trained 24 local government extension workers in the respective sub-counties of project implementation. The above locally trained team of resource persons coupled with the strengthened household capacity, the formed youth governance structure, at the different levels will further contribute to the intervention continuing beyond the project support period.

**Output 1.2.2: Farmers trained**

**Result:** 24,850 members of Producer Groups trained (exceeding the overall planned target by 17%)

Output Indicator 1.2.2 Number of youth group members (F/M) trained								
Period	Data count: cumulative							
	TARGET				RESULTS			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Female</b>	2400	6706	10 306	12 316	4176	10 153	13 243	14 826
<b>Male</b>	3600	4470	6870	8880	3474	6844	8845	10 024
<b>Total</b>	6000	11 176	17 176	21 196	7650	16 997	22 088	24 850

The AWF project adopted participatory approaches of learning, technology development and dissemination based on adult learning principles of experimental learning, under the farmer field school approach (FFS). The FFS involved youth farmers meeting regularly for the duration of the entire cropping season to apply new methods/technology in farming, learn by observing, discussing in the groups, get hands-on practices from pre-planting to harvesting under the instruction of community-based trainers. Through group interaction, attendees sharpened their analytical abilities to make decisions based on real evidence derived from the learning sessions.

A total of 24,850 (14,826 female; 10,024 male) youth group members through the FFS approach underwent capacity building

training in the in different aspects of market-oriented agronomy, farming as a business (FAAB), Personal and Life Skills (P&LS), enterprise selection and development and leadership. Through the FFS and VSLA methodology, producer youth gained skills that have reinforced positive coexistence as a powerful collective youth force with shared interest for common good. The gained knowledge and skills have enabled the youth to mobilize resources within themselves, self-manage, participate and economically benefit from the different nodes of the selected VCs. Above all the AWF youth groups have become community groups of choice for engagement by other partners including local government authorities.

**Output 1.2.3: Community Based Trainers trained**

**Result:** 80 Community Based Trainers (CBT) were recruited and trained, with the target fully achieved

Output Indicator 1.2.3 Number of CBTs (F/M) trained								
	Data count: cumulative							
	TARGET				RESULTS			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Female</b>	20	30	40	40	7	24	32	32
<b>Male</b>	20	30	40	40	13	36	48	48
<b>Total</b>	20	60	80	80	20	60	80	80

CBTs played a critical role in participatory and experimental learning under the farmer field school (FFS) Approach. An entire cropping season long learning by youth were facilitated by community-based resource persons who were readily available and facilitated learning and application of new methods/technology at the convenience of the youth groups. The project through its partner CSOs employed services of 80 CBTs to facilitate learning at FFS.

All the recruited CBTs underwent capacity building training and gained skills in the different aspects of crop management and protection, minimized losses, agro-ecology intensification, financial literacy, improved agricultural practices, post-harvest handling technologies, and soil and water conservation practices. Notably, the CBTs demonstrated immense confidence, depicted in their capacities in mobilizing and managing production and VC processes with potential to self- sustain the activities of the farmers beyond the life of the project.



**Output 1.2.4: Farmers apply water harvesting and irrigation technology**

**Result:** 4,162 farmers apply the promoted water harvesting and irrigation technology, with target surpassed

Output Indicator 1.2.4 Number of farmers who apply the promoted water harvesting and irrigation technologies								
	Data count: cumulative							
	TARGET				RESULTS			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Female</b>	50	343	1444	2674	17	147	1816	2099
<b>Male</b>	36	229	936	1808	26	103	1749	2063
<b>Total</b>	86	572	2407	4482	43	250	3565	4162

Climate effects have affected the weather and rainfall patterns in general. Appropriate cost-effective water conservation, harvesting and irrigation technologies ensure sustainable production particularly during dry spells. This component has been delivered by enabling youth farmers on the project to access cost-effective technologies in water harvesting, irrigation and, to also apply effective soil and water conservation methods. Ensuring access to these technologies as much as possible increases the success and resilience of the engaged farmers on the project in as far as weathering the risk of poor or inadequate rains.

4,162 (93% of the overall project target) youth farmers adopted water harvesting and small-scale irrigation technologies promoted by the project. 2,099 females and 2,063 males adopted and applied the promoted practices. The increasing weather variability characterized by abnormally longer dry seasons, short intermittent rains proved inadequate to optimally support crops without irrigation intervention. Thus, the producer farmers who only relied on the natural rains faced crop failures season after season. The same is true of other farmers including families of AWF youth whose crop yields failed due to overdependence on rain-fed agriculture. As a result, many of the project youth used a great part of their gains from the AWF produce sales to provide food and meet other needs of their families rather than reinvesting in income generating activities. The effects of climate variability on rains and agriculture have pushed many farming households below the poverty line.

The demonstration of the water harvesting and irrigation technologies have resulted into a growing need and demand for water harvesting and small-scale irrigation technologies. Whereas it had been premised that the project youth through their VSLAs

and linkage to financial institutions (FI) would access products, this was not possible since most of the water harvesting and irrigation technologies required capital investment that most of the target age category would hardly make without the influence of their parents.

Alternatively, the youth had expected to benefit from the Uganda Government water harvesting and small irrigation program (where the Uganda government contribute 80% while the interested farmer contributes 20%.) being piloted in two of the target Districts of Kamuli and Tororo. The said government program though remained at mobilization stage for the last three years.

**Output 1.2.5: Pack house staff trained in respective codes of practice, Good Hygiene Practices (GHP), Hazard Analysis Critical Point (HACCP), Food Safety and Packaging for selected export produce.**

Pack houses play an important role in ensuring that produce is assembled, sorted and packaged correctly in line with the standard requirements of the designated markets particularly related to the export market including control among others of excessive use of pesticides, poorly handled / broken or spoilt produce not fit for the export market. Ensuring good hygiene practices during these processes is an important dimension to ensuring produce quality. It is therefore important that staff involved in packhouses understand and carry out the critical roles in ascertaining high quality product before it is dispatched to destination market. Exposing youth to appreciate produce quality considerations play a key role in ensuring produce quality right from source which also consequently reduce rejects and increase earnings by PY.

**Progress:** Target was fully achieved. 593 youth association, production and marketing committee members were trained on produce handling surpassing the overall project target by 37%.

**Results table:**

Output 1.2.5: Pack-House Staff Trained								
Output Indicator: OI 1.1.1	Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED/TARGET				ACHIEVED			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Female</b>	19	64	118	318	25	54	236	290
<b>Male</b>	13	31	67	115	7	39	218	303
<b>Total</b>	32	95	185	433	32	93	454	593

The project reached and surpass the target of training pack house staff in respective codes of practice [Good Hygiene Practices (GHP), Hazard Analysis Critical Point (HACCP) and Food Safety Packaging for export].

The overachievement on the target was as a result of change in approach, Initially the project had been planned to train staff at the private exporting company pack house. however, given the dynamics involved in collection, transporting unsorted youth produce and the associated post-harvest losses experienced during the first two years of project implementation approach was changed to a field-based approach of presorting. Consequently, the project trained youth associations marketing committee members who support in ensuring the quality practices right at community collection centers.

**Progress:** One packhouse at the private sector operator was operationalized; One community managed- low-cost cold room for short term storage was constructed in Kamuli and one collection facility in Tororo district.

**Results table:**

Output 1.2.6: Pack house operational								
Output Indicator O.I 1.2.6	Data count: stock data							
	PLANNED				ACHIEVED			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Units operational								
<b>Pack houses</b>	00	00	00	03	NA	NA	0	1
<b>Cold rooms</b>	00	00	01	01	NA	NA	0	2

One community-based collection facility with sorting and min-cold room facility for temporary holding of produce before offtake by the marketing intermediaries in one district (Kamuli); One permanent collection facility constructed in Tororo district. The project also supported to improve the already existing pack house owned by the private exporting partner KK fresh foods. This was done by equipping existing the pack house with cold room facilities to increase the private partners' produce holding capacity before export so that farmers' produce is not rejected on grounds of inadequate holding capacity and private sector facility. This is expected to encourage farmers in the long-term to continue producing more volumes of the selected VC crops even beyond the life of the project.

**2.2.**

**Outcome 2. Increased number of marginalized youths, especially women, benefiting economically, from market-oriented VCs.**

This outcome recognizes the important role of ensuring equal participation and enjoyment of economic gains of the profitable agricultural VCs by both YW and YM. Promoting access to investment capital, built on foundations of adequate financial literacy, saving and loan systems appreciation underpin the elements of this outcome. Furthermore, at intermediate level, establishment and ensuring strong farmer organizations, inclusive leadership especially ensuring women's leadership, engagement and appreciation of the target market requirements are important pillars that this result area hinged upon.

**Progress:** 91% realization of the overall target. 9,383 YP (5,640 girls and YW and, 3,743 boys and YM) benefited economically from the VCs.

**Results table:**

Outcome 2. Increased number of marginalized youths, especially women, benefiting from market-oriented VCs								
Outcome Indicator: O.I 2.0	Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED/TARGET				ACHIEVED			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Female</b>	180	720	3480	6192	4	741	2911	5640
<b>Male</b>	120	480	2320	4128	23	701	1921	3743
<b>Grand Total</b>	300	1200	5800	10 320	27	1442	4832	9383

9,383 YP (5,640 girls and YW; 3,743 boys and YM) benefited economically from their participation in saving and VC activities. The project realized a drastic increase in the number of YW and men benefiting from the selected VCs in the last two year of the project compared to the first two year. The achievement is attributed to the diversified products of GC<sup>1</sup> sold to the different marketing channels<sup>2</sup>, an increase in the number of off-takers (Local, Export and cross-border markets) and the improved capacity of the youth leadership structures to self-mobilize, organize and interrelate with off-takers. The project also registered a growing interest by LG actors and CSOs to promote the VC for example Buyende District farmers association with funding from FAO has prioritized

GC under their single commodity per district approach for two other sub counties outside AWF operational area. Additionally, Iowa States University in its Sustainable Rural Livelihoods program prioritized GC for their project aimed at supporting the less-privileged YP acquire school fees for their education. All this is a good trend and an indication of the VC enterprise sustainability beyond the life of the project.

<sup>1</sup> chili can either be sold fresh green, fresh red, dried red, and powdered or the seeds.

<sup>2</sup> Many young people sold even the smallest quantities of the different forms to the different directly off-takers. Unlike with KK less than three Kg would not be accepted unless they were bundled with others' supply to make one big volume together

2.2.1.

**Intermediate Outcome 2.1 Farmers access investment capital**

Access to investment capital is essential to ensure the farmers are able to procure the necessary input and other requirements needed to support their agri-business. The capital was envisaged to be sourced through building of young farmers own capital

mobilization and also enhancing their ability to grow and transition into trustable player in the money economy to access capital from formal FIs including available government grants targeting financially excluded categories for youth employment.

**Progress:** 190% Achievement towards the overall project target. The PY through their VSLA were able to mobilize and access an equivalent USD 788,459 investment capital.

**Results table:**

Intermediate Outcome 2.1 Farmers access investment capital								
Intermediate Indicator: IO 2.1	Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED TARGET(S)				ACHIEVED			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>UGA</b> Shs. accessed	74,000,000	450,150	1,321,599,300	1,535,999,500	75,032,300	474,484,300	1,607,816,250	2,917,297,650
<b>USD</b> Equivalent accessed	20 000	121 662	357 189	415 135	20 279	128 239	434 545	788 459

A total of 2,917,297, 650 Uganda Shilling (788.459USD) was mobilized by 23,536 youth (14,073 Female 9,463 Male) through the project life. This represents 90% above the overall project target. The realization of the project target under this output, was one of the least expected success on the project target. Especially considering that period was overshadowed by political electioneering where politicians manipulated youth engagement in the campaigns using hand-out offers as baits. The results also challenged the socially held believe that youth without formal employment cannot save.

The PY have used the accessed funds to invest in selected VC commodities production and other micro income generating activities such as animal production, vending road side stalls and retail shops. All these are expected to make life long decent employment opportunities for the PY families. The diversification of sources of income is also seen as a good approach in sustain-

able wealth creation as well as serving as a mitigation measure to reduce the risk of loss in agro-production usually associated to number of factors including weather and climate variability and market demand variability.

It should be noted that the PY are now more financially literate than they were before joining the project and are now in a better position to make rational investment and financial decisions with regard to their money. However, there is need for more mentorship and confidence building to ensure they stay on track to attain sustainable long-term financial independence. The project formed the youth VSLA groups into higher level associations with fully trained leadership that are expected to continue working with different actors including district/local government departments of trade and commerce, FIs and other non-government initiatives beyond the life of the project.

2.2.1.1.

**Output 2.1.1 CBTs trained on VSLA methodology**

The VSLA Methodology follows an approach that requires training of the facilitators to ably mobilize, provide training in various aspects of group dynamics, leadership, saving, loans, trust building,

FL, building capital and investing. The CBTs were the front-line community-based resource persons who interfaced with the youth in their various organization structures.

**Progress Status:** Overall project target was fully achieved. 80 CBTs were trained and gained skills as VSLA methodology and principle community facilitators and promoters not only limited to the project/community.

**Results table:**

Output 2.1.1: CBTs trained on the Village Savings and Loans Associations methodology								
Output Indicator: OI 2.1.1	Number of CBTs trained in VSLA Methodology							
	Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED				ACHIEVED			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Female</b>	10	30	40	40	7	24	32	32
<b>Male</b>	10	30	40	40	13	36	48	48
<b>Total</b>	20	60	80	80	20	60	80	80

The project achieved all the targeted training of 80 CBTs who were capacitated. The full capacitation of the CBTs and their subsequent continuous guidance and support to the PY resulted

into the realization of target of youth access to investment capital which was one of the least expected success of the project.

2.2.1.2.

**Output 2.1.2: Youth trained in financial literacy**

**Progress:** Target fully achieved surpassing the overall target by 14%.

**Results table:**

Output 2.1.2: Youth trained in financial literacy								
Output Indicator: OI 2.1.2	Number of Youth trained in Financial Literacy							
	Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED				ACHIEVED			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Female</b>	3000	7671	12 171	12 171	2803	10 153	11 249	14 073
<b>Male</b>	2000	5144	8114	8114	2482	6844	7498	9463
<b>Total</b>	5000	12 815	20 285	20 285	5285	16 997	18 747	23 536

23,536 youth (14,073 female and 9,463 Female) representing 116% of the overall project target, underwent capacity building training in financial literacy, FAAB, group dynamics and VSLA, group business planning, vision development and investment planning as well as resource mobilization methodology principles. The acquired skills further supported the individual groups and association to develop and operationalize group and individual investment plan. These are anticipated to remain useful resource guiding the operations of the youth groups and associations beyond the life of the project

Access to capital from the FIs is considered as a next stage in the journey of financial inclusion of the target project participants. Safeguarding the risk in accessing such capital is paramount to ensuring that the youth are both ready and able to make informed decisions and choices of the loans or financial instruments available on the market. The project therefore facilitated information dissemination about FIs, information in regards the available products, conditions to the PY (Participating youth) so that they are aware of the available opportunities to access finance from the various actors.

**2.2.1.3.**

**Output 2.1.3 Village Savings and Loan Associations access capital from FIs (FIs)**

**Progress:** the project under achieved here, only 32% of the overall target. The low progress toward the target is attributed to deep rooted negative cultural perception about loans and risk averseness to loans

**Results table:**

Output 2.1.3: Village Savings and Loan Associations access capital from FIs								
Output Indicator: OI 2.1.3	Number of Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA) that accessed Capital from FIs (FIs)							
	PLANNED				ACTUAL			
# VSLA accessing capital from FIs	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
	4	16	196	396	4	7	74	125

A Total of 125 VSLA groups representing only 32 % of the targeted 396 were able to access capital from FIs. USD 120,812. USD (Ug Shs. 447,005,800) was accessed by 41 groups from Buyende, 53 groups from Kamuli and 31 groups from Tororo. The deep rooted negative cultural perception about loans and risk averseness to loans are attributable to the low achievement. Further to that the target age group is composed of largely young adults who cannot independently make bold decision with regard to loan uptake beyond their groups.

Whereas the VSLAs generated relatively higher savings adequate to meet the PY financial needs. The project facilitated community level engagement meetings between the PY and FIs. YP were sensitized on the different products targeting both individual and groups (collective loan facility) that are offered by the FIs (Uganda Finance Trust Bank and Centenary Bank limited). It should also be noted that risk averseness in itself is not necessarily judged negatively as the project would not push youth into loans, they are not ready to take and repay.

**2.2.2.**

**Intermediate Outcome 2.2: Farmer Producer Organizations are formed and strengthened**

Formation and strengthening of farmer producer associations plays an important role in building strong farmer structures that benefit from collective bargaining, information sharing, establishment of effective communication channels, organization and

delivery of training and supporting the farmer interactions with the various actors on the VC. Furthermore, through well established and organized farmer groups, the PY become better able to deliver to the designated markets to scale, among others. Thus, the AWF project prioritized building strong producer organizations by ensuring that the foundations laid by the establishment of VSLAs, effectively enable the groups to form strong farmer organizations.

**Progress:** 105% achievement of the project target

**Results table:**

Intermediate Outcome 2.2 Farmers Form Producer groups								
Indicator: OI 2.2.0	Number of producer groups that are operational Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED				ACTUAL			
# Operational Producer Groups	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
	200	200	320	560	128	182	530	576

576 farmer producer groups, representing 103% of the targeted operational groups were realized by end of the project period. An operational YPG is a group that meets the following conditions; -

- 1) Has elected leaders in all the 11-key position with clear roles (chairperson, secretary, treasurer, two (2) money counters, three (3) key holders, marketing quality control and procurement);
- 2) Has and follow the constitution;
- 3) registered with the sub county;
- 4) Engaged in producing any one or more of the four enterprises,
- 5) Has MOU and market contract agreement;
- 6) 60% of the YW and girls in the top leadership positions and;
- 7) consents to the system of payment for maintenance of the pack house by the farmers.

**2.2.2.1.**

**Output 2.2.1 Village Savings and Loans Associations transition into producer groups.**

It is important that VSLA groups transition into operational producer groups so that they are able to commence their farmer operations, learning and exchange related to specific VCs of choice. The VSLAs provide a bedrock upon which the youth are mobilized and learn important skills such as financial literacy, learn and appreciate savings and loans to build own capital to invest in their farm operations. The project prioritized building of strong Village based loan and savings group to strengthen the financial aspects in the project, develop leadership and group dynamics skills as well as enable undertaking of farming as a business by the PY.

**Progress:** Target fully achieved. 105% attainment level.

**Results table:**

Output 2.2.1 Village Savings and Loans Associations transition into producer groups								
Indicator: OI 2.2.1	Indicator OI2.2.0: Number of VSLAs that transformed into producer group Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED				ACTUAL			
# VSLAs that formed into producer groups	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
	200	200	320	560	128	182	530	588

Altogether 588 VSLAs transitioned into producer groups representing 105% of the overall project target. The transitioned groups became fully operational by the end of the reporting period.

off-takers, input buyers and extension service providers (government departments). The collective space for the youth farmers ensures easy collaboration, coordination and networking with other VC actors.

**2.2.2.2.**

**Output 2.2.2 Producer groups trained in governance, collective bulking, negotiation and marketing**

Farmer Producer groups need a forum for mediation, negotiation and engagement with other VC actors such as private commodity

**Progress:** 105% attainment of project target, 588 VSLA were fully trained in governance, collective bulking, negotiation and marketing

**Results table:**

Output 2.2.2 Producer groups trained in governance, collective bulking, negotiation and marketing								
Indicator: OI2.2.2	Number of groups trained in governance, negotiation, and marketing Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED				ACTUAL			
# Groups Trained	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
	200	200	320	560	93	199	530	588



A total of 588 groups were fully equipped with skills on governance, negotiation and marketing. All the 588 producer groups federated themselves into 18 sub county higher level youth associations which serve as support mechanisms and focal structures for mediation and negotiation with other VC stakeholders. The associations have further undergone training on association/cooperative business visioning, planning, and financing the operations of their associations. The association management committees were also equipped with skills that they used to develop individual association business, savings, investment and production plans to guide their association business management during and beyond the project period.

Additionally, the district technical department of trade and commerce supported two district level associations to transform into district level youth farmers cooperatives. In this regard, the cooperatives have rights to legally transact as a profit-making

entity and able to generate income through business operations, for sustained the operations beyond the life off the project.

**2.2.2.3.**

**Output 2.2.3 Women hold leadership positions in the producer groups;**

As supported by the gender assessment at the inception of the project, YW and girls face different challenges to participate and let alone engage in leadership and decision-making positions of different types and structures due to social norms and marginalization. Economic participation is one area where women are sidelined. The AWF project prioritized championing women leadership in economic endeavors of this nature as the AWF project. To facilitate realization of this result under this output, the project carried out sensitization meetings via radio, community meetings and engagement of households to ensure support to YW. Furthermore, training in gender and vision mapping was provided to strengthen women’s abilities to engage and become leaders in the profitable agricultural VCs of the AWF project.

**Progress:** 175% achievement of the project target.

**Results table:**

Output 2.2.3 Women hold leadership positions in the producer groups								
Indicator: OI 2.2.3	Number of Girls and YW Holding Key Leadership Positions in VSLA and producer Groups Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED				ACTUAL			
# Girls & YW in Leadership positions	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
	152	600	960	1680	279	503	1260	2939

A total of 2,939 girls and YW who undertook leadership roles within their VSLA, producer groups and the 18 sub-county-based youth association. The project made positive progress in confronting marginalization of girls and YW due to deep rooted cultural beliefs and/or norms which place low value on ability of girls and or YW provide good leadership and or hold decision making roles. The special leadership training rendered to girls and YW in

leadership position enabled them to exhibit level of confidence in executing their roles, including ability to articulate and challenge issues (such as denied access to land and decision on how proceeds realized are used as well as being prohibited from occupying public spaces and restricted access to information among others) affecting their participation as YW and girls, in the selected profitable VCs.

**2.2.2.4.**

**Output 2.2.4 YW and girls participate in exchange visits**

Girls and YW struggling to overcome barriers to participate and economically benefit from agricultural VCs, are supported to visit colleagues who have successfully managed to minimize the barriers

and are able benefit from their participation. The peer- to- peer learning motivates and inculcate interest among struggling girls and young girls to squarely face and overcome the challenges.

**Progress:** Target fully achieved at 368% against overall project target.

**Results table:**

Output 2.2.4 YW and girls participate in exchange visits								
Indicator: OI 2.2.4	Number of YW and girls who participate in exchange visits							
	Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED				ACTUAL			
# YW	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
	200	260	320	400	229	904	1297	1470

A total of the 1,470 girls and YW participated in exchange learning visits. The over achievement on the target followed the confidence exhibited by the girls who participated in the first exchange visit and therefore adopted the approach to support all other struggling girls and YW through the same approach.

Additionally, 65 of the girls and young girls who participated in the learning visit were later provided a training by Anchor food leading to the Uganda Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT<sup>3</sup>) certification as certified export producing farmers who provide certification services and support to export producers who export a wide range of products including agricultural produce. The trained youth are now each using the gained skill to mobilize other girls and young girls into commercial production for export. Generally, exchange learning visits have given participating girls and YW opportunity to interact with other fellow girls and or YW that have

faced similar challenges and barriers to participation in the project but managed to set up gardens and have upheld good practices.

**2.2.2.5.**

**Output 2.2.5 YW trained on leadership and life skills.**

The A working Future project affirms the importance YW's leadership and their meaningful participation in decision-making in their youth VSLA, Producer groups and youth associations. Trainings were offered to YW and girls in leadership positions to enable them become effective leaders. By building YW's skills in leadership enables them to provide leadership on the issues that concern them. Through engaging in dynamic activities, YW are motivated to believe in their abilities to catalyze change and to mobilize others to do the same.

<sup>3</sup> www.dituganda.org – a department under the Ministry of Education and Sports Promote Employable Skills in Uganda

**Progress:** Fully achieved, at 343% attainment.

**Results table:**

Output 2.2.5 YW trained on leadership and life skills								
Indicator: OI 2.2.5	Number of YW and girls trained in Leadership and Life Skills Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED				ACTUAL			
# YW and girls trained	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
	152	720	1200	2400	304	980	980	8230

A total of 8,230 girls holding leadership positions within the VSLAs, Parish/Sub- County Association executive and the different committees received special training on leadership, challenges faced by girls in leadership positions, economic justice ( covering aspects such as promotion of equal access to education, property, and employment for women; enabling girls and YW to understand how the distribution of wealth and power affects ability to meet their basic needs and live with human dignity. The concept thus covered understanding of human rights associated with economic justice) and life skills. Participants gained more

confidence in asserting their roles in addition to articulating issues affecting the participation of YW and girls in VCs.

The Skills imparted have built participating girls and YW capacities to take charge of their lives, by making critical decisions to engage in income generating activities to raise their mandatory weekly savings. Additionally, the trained girls and YW used the gained skills to engage power holders in their households to enable them make decisions on access to production resources and the utilization of the proceeds of the VSLA activities.

### 2.2.3.

**Intermediate outcome 2.3:** Created an enabling environment for inclusion of women in VCs as identified by the analysis.

**Progress:** Fully achieved,

**Results table:**

Intermediate outcome 2.3 Create enabling environment for inclusion of women in VCs as identified by the analysis								
Indicator: OI 2.2.5	Percentage of girls and YW who report having an enabling environment to participate in the targeted AWF produce VCs Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED				ACTUAL			
# Girls & Young Women reporting to have an enabling environment	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
	00	60%	70%	80%	N/A	50%	75%	80%

85 % girls and YW reported having enabling environment to participate in VC. The four (4) years of deliberately engaging girls, YW, adult female households heads (especially aunties) and powerholders on females’ engagement in livelihood interventions has yielded positive results. A change in attitude and mindset of both male and female community members regarding their appreciation of the participation of YW and girls in all project activities. This has supported Participating female youth to gain confidence without fear of punitive actions from the respective power holders to independently and unhinderedly make decisions regarding their participation in the selected VC, as well as on how they use proceeds from the VSLAs and production related activities.

**2.2.3.1.**

**Output 2.3.1 Boys, YM and men support YW and girls’ participation in agricultural VCs**

Garnering support of boys and YM enables instilling new gender dynamics in target communities where YW take a back stage as defined by social norms. The project mentored boys and YM to be a valuable support to ensure girls and YW to effectively participate and benefit from the VCs.

**Progress:** Target fully achieved at 125%

**Results table:**

Output 2.3.1 Boys, YM and men support YW and girls’ participation in agricultural VCs								
Indicator OI 2.3.02	Number of boys, YW and men supporting YW and girls’ participation in agricultural VCs							
	PLANNED				ACTUAL			
# Boys/YM provided support to Girls / YW	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
		00	2160	4320	8640	00	6341	9378

10,794 boys and YM reported to have supported girls and YW in their households to participate in agricultural VCs. This has seen more YW participating in the different nodes of the VC due to the created conducive environment by empowered boys and YM.

The male positive deviants continued and will continue challenging and inspiring other boys, YM, and powerholders in their communities to support YW and girls to effectively participate and benefit from the VCs.

2.2.3.2.

**Output 2.3.3** Awareness raised on roles of women in enterprise and economic development

**Progress:** Target almost achieved at 98%

**Results table:**

Output 2.3.3 Awareness raised on roles of women in enterprise and economic development								
Output Indicator: OI 2.3.1	Number of people taking part in the gender awareness / dialogue meetings Data count: cumulative							
	PLANNED				ACTUAL			
# People attended dialogue meetings	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
	9000	27 000	42 000	50 000	12 814	20 627	44 951	49 108

A total of 49,108 community members participated in the major channels for awareness raising which included; awareness and dialogue meetings, radio talk shows and spot messages aired on local radio stations organized by the project throughout the project life

These engagement with communities, decision makers and families enhanced male and power holder to support girls and YW as demonstrated by their improved confidence and decision-making ability by the participating girls and YW within their groups and on a personal level.





## REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLE(S) OF RESULTS

### **The Story of Namwase (22) from Kagumba in Kamuli district**

My name is Namwase Miria, 22 years old from Busige women's group in Kasolwe Parish, Kagumba Sub County, Kamuli District. I joined the group in 2020, when the project was extended to our sub county. The project staff mobilized the community and invited both girls and boys from the age group 15-24 to participate in the project. We were told that the project aimed at empowering youth producers economically by linking production to marketing. We were also guided on how to start a youth group. We formed a youth group and we were trained VSLA methodology and eventually started saving. We were also introduced to four agricultural enterprises to boost our incomes, the enterprises included green chili, hot pepper, peanuts and white skinned sweet potatoes.

As a group, we developed our constitution and agreed each member should save at least UGX 1,500 (USD 0,40) per week.

By the end of the first cycle, I had saved UGX. 70,000 (USD 19). I used this money to buy a piglet, took good care of it and later farrowed 12 piglets. I raised the piglets and all of them survived. I sold the male piglets (4) each at UGX 80,000 at 7 weeks. I remained with 3 female piglets which I have maintained as breeding stock. The older sow farrowed again with a litter of 9 in September 2022. I now have 13 pigs, and 3 sows. I am happy that I now own livestock which has always been my dream. I continued to save on a weekly basis with the group, I have established my own green chili garden (0.25 acre) with the money earned from the sale of piglets and use proceeds from the garden to feed the piglets.

I am so grateful to AWF Project and its staff who have continued to mentor us to become responsible youth leaders and leading by example. I now own assets and feel I'm in charge of my life and my future looks bright.



**Story of Alupot Anna (17) female, from Mella in Tororo district**

My name is Alupot Anna, 17 years old and a mother of one 3-year-old baby girl. I stopped going to school in senior two when my husband forced me to marry him after knowing I was pregnant with his baby. From that time, I knew my future was blown out because I was now like any other housewife who is expected to depend on her husband for every need. Moreover, I started living a dependency lifestyle from a very young age.

Since my education was already interrupted, I was approached by my friends who told me about the A working Future Project where they had also just enrolled into a saving group. I enrolled

and started saving, I also attended several trainings after which I established my first chili garden.

I was surprised to find out that chili generates more money than the onions which my parents used to grow as a cash crop. Instead of always depending on my husband, I managed to sell my chili every week for about two months, and contributed money to the construction of our house.

Am not worried anymore the way I used to because I can defend my livelihood as opposed to the way the community views girls like me who dropped out of school.





**4.**

**OPERATIONAL  
FACTORS AND  
PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT**

## 4.0. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RISK FACTORS

The project successfully delivered and achieved on most of its objectives as per the results framework, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated effects on the costs of flights and fluctuations in the export market demands and prices, as well as the Russia - Ukraine war in the last year of implementation, leading to high inflation including high prices of fuel subsequently affecting markets for all products including farm inputs and the ability of households to survive.

The project continued to strengthen its relationship with stakeholders at all points of the value chains which ensured continued linkage to markets. The continuous community and gender dialogues greatly contributed to sustained support to the participation of girls and young women (YW) to take up the project VCs and thus realization on the project goal.

### 4.1. UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

#### UNINTENDED POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES

Due to school closures as a result of second wave of Covid-19, we witnessed an increase in school going youths joining the AWF project. Whereas the initial project design was to target only out-of-school youth, the in-school youth exploited the opportunity to raise extra income through engagement in the AWF project in order to support their scholastic requirements and fees when school re-opened. The project has seen that embracing participation of in-school youth as a positive dimension of securing opportunity and access to income and education.

The AWF project has had strong emphasis on creating an enabling environment for young women (YW) and girls. Increasingly, the families and communities have realized the importance of involving YW in income generation. A positive consequence of taking a household approach when conducting awareness raising on gender equality, has been that particularly many paternal aunts have come out to denounce harmful practices affecting girls and committing to continue giving space for participation of YW in agribusiness.

Additionally, the project has created a demonstrated change in the young women and men's definition of work. Having earned an equivalent and in most instances more money than their counterparts in the area who are in professional employment in the education sector or local government, the youth's perception of work has changed into positive regard for agriculture-based employ-

ment from looking at work as having an office (white collar job). Chili growing has gained popularity and high adoption levels as one of the decent works in which unemployed can be engaged in. Furthermore, the certification of selected girls and YW by the Uganda Directorate of Industrial Training is a demonstration that one can have academic progression through participation in agri-business. The Uganda government under the traceability policy have certified young women in the project. This makes it easy for exporters to work with the women and present their details at processing export permit and therefore giving them first priority by exporting companies to pick products from them.

#### Unintended Negative Consequences

Due to lack of a national policy guiding the operations of VSLAs, cases of improper closure-out of VSLAs have been reported to have caused some project youth to loose-out on their savings. The project needed to have worked with the local administration and technical departments of community development and social services of the district and sub counties to provide an oversight in auditing the VSLA books of accounts and to hold defaulting youth members accountable by refunding amount being defaulted. This approach was later adopted and applied.

Due to increasing demand to raise funds to meet the mandatory weekly savings of the VSLAs, excessive exploitation of the environment through cutting of trees for charcoal by project youth was reported in some instances. As a mitigation measure, the project sensitized participants on the negative effects of this practice as well as extensively promoted climate change mitigation and environmental conservation practices, including tree planting.

## 4.2. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

This section briefly outlines Plan International's added value in the AWF project.

#### 4.2.1. PLAN INTERNATIONAL NORWAY'S ADDED VALUE

Plan International Norway (PIN), provided a strong technical backstopping and continuous capacity building to the Project team evident in follow-up on budgets, financial reporting and audit findings. As an example, PIN in collaboration with Plan International Global Hub facilitated SAP system training for project and Plan International Uganda staff. PIN also continuously provided guidance on project result tracking, reporting, and digitalization and ensured sound project data management. PIN created

value adding relationships for the project, including facilitating the engagement of Accenture Development Partnerships (ADP) who conducted the project's value chain analysis and market assessment, and the implementation of a pilot with the Norwegian company Farmforce on a digital monitoring and support system. Finally, PIN has ensured lessons learned from the AWF project has been shared across the Plan International federation to improve future youth economic empowerment programming.

#### 4.2.2. PLAN INTERNATIONAL UGANDA ADDED VALUE

Plan International Uganda (PIU) strengthened project partnerships through effective implementation of the partnership strategy and follow-up to ensure high compliance to internal, partner and

donor agreements while reducing duplication. In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, PIU ensured strict compliance to the Plan International Standard Operating Procedures by the project team during project implementation that ensured that life is protected and the desired project objectives were achieved. The organization further maintained good working relations with both the central and local government, CSO, and private sector actors that ensured smooth implementation of the project. PIU took leadership in documenting project learnings and disseminating them to key stakeholders for increased support, adoption and replication. Country level support to the project implementing team was strengthened through timely reviews and approvals.





## 5.0. COOPERATION WITH OTHER DONORS, OR NATIONAL / LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The AWF project worked with the Uganda government line Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Industry by aligning to the National Development Plan for the agricultural sector, whose objective is to promote both middle and large-scale agriculture while emphasizing food and income security.

In the last year of the project, the government of Uganda through the same ministry rolled out a parish development model targeting youth with horticulture. The project worked with the district

local government Office of Production to orient all the young groups under the project on the model and present to them the areas of opportunity to benefit from the model.

### 5.1. ANTI-CORRUPTION

The project has continuously monitored the project risks related to fraud and implemented the mitigation measures identified. Throughout the reporting period, no case of fraud has been reported/



registered in the project. The project team has undergone several trainings on budget management and detection, prevention and response to corruption during the project's lifespan. Project staff have signed Plan International's fraud and anti-corruption policy and completed Plan International's online course on counter fraud.

## 5.2. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The project employed environmentally sound practices, minimizing negative impact to the environment while ensuring sustainable use of natural resources. Project youth were trained on sustainable soil and water management practices including use of mulches, micro irrigation technologies, water retention trenches/ditches and micro ponds for use during periods of water stress. The project applied ethical practices in the production by using only recommended pesticides and chemicals, produce handling and transportation (applying good hygiene practices) and observing the required Hazard Analysis Critical points.

The project also worked with the District Production Office and created awareness about climate change and its implication on agri-business. As a result, the project youth farmers have been able to detect but also adjust to the everchanging weather patterns, apply good agriculture / climate smart practices and maximize their farming activities during favorable weather.

## 5.3. HUMAN RIGHTS, AND SAFEGUARDING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH AND THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

The project upheld and used Plan International's global purpose and value that emphasizes on equality for girls and inclusiveness and empowerment as the key guiding principle to safeguarding rights of children and youth, including the rights of people with disabilities. The project promoted the participation of youth with disabilities (YWDs), and activities were adapted to YWD's individual needs. There were no human rights and business ethics violation issues encountered during the reporting period. The project continued to enforce and comply with Plan International's rights-based approach; and standard tools for children and young people safeguarding; whistle blowing, anti-corruption and conflict of interest policies that are well defined in operational guidelines for all staff and partners.

## 5.4. WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

The project applied a Gender Transformative Approach based on identifying and analyzing the root causes of gender inequality and addressing them in a holistic manner. The project disentangled power centers in the girls and young women's families, and raised communities' awareness on the dangers of the cultural practices that generally undermine women. During the course of the project, changes in mindset were documented among the families, exemplified with aunties openly denouncing their influence on their nieces to marry at an early age to obtain dowry to be shared with the aunt. Plan International's Gender and Inclusion Policy was disseminated to all project staff, children and young people participating in the project. The Safeguarding Policy was also disseminated as part of entry protocol with individual/ entity that enter into any form of engagement or contract with the project e.g., consultants.

## 5.5. COLLABORATION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

While the project started out with one major private sector player (KK Fresh Foods), the project brought on board more than 15 additional private sector players. These include agro-input dealers, financial institutions, local buyers and exporters, among others. The project youth through their youth association marketing committees were introduced to and actively engaged with a number of local, cross border and export off-takers including Tropical Dynasty, United Pearl Exports, Jona Exotic, Dubai Handlers, Forty Miles, and Anchor Foods.

The project upheld the private sector as an important stakeholder for maintaining the profitable VCs. The project created spaces for decentralized services of the private sector, for example outreaches to deliver the inputs like pesticides and seeds to central places in the communities to reduce on transport costs.

The project benefited from the support of the private sector in ensuring adherence to quality control and further obliged the district local government (LG) office of production to work with the private sector to ensure quality control measures are ensured for sustenance of the export markets beyond the life of the project. The project also shared with the district LG the experience and the added value of private sector in agro-VC promotion and provided orientation to the private sector on the new parish development model being promoted by the government of Uganda on the Horticulture VCs.

# 6. COST EFFICIENCY

Implementation of AWF project activities was based on the project objectives, and efficiency was achieved in project targeted reach. The project fairly achieved the set objectives and targets.

An example of cost efficiency, is the project's engagement with 28,591 youth who were mobilized for effective engagement in profitable VCs. The reach was much above the target. Using the ground level CSOs, the project youth's capacity was built to engage effectively on the VCs and with the private sector actors. This role would otherwise be a daunting and expensive task if the private sector alone were to embark on it. Moreover, by using the

VSLA platform for engagement, efficiency was realized with less resources used to deliver the required intervention compared to if the approach had been targeting individual youth.

The project acquired all needed resources by rigorously applying Plan International's and other implementing partners' financial and procurement policies that provide for segregation of duties in all the procurement processes, competitive bidding and quotes for all procurements above 5,000 Euros for Plan International Uganda and 270 USD for all other partners.





# 7. SUSTAINABILITY OF RESULTS

The project has taken multiple measures to ensure sustainability beyond the support period. These include establishing VCs' operational mechanisms, strengthening roles and interactions of various stakeholders across the VCs and strengthening the youth's capacity in agriculture production, quality assurance and engagement in the VCs.

The project employed a well aligned extension service system, composed of a mix of professional staff and farmer – to - farmer learning facilitators. Most of the employed field staff are locally based and permanent residents of the target districts and communities. These, together with community-based trainers and group leaders, will continue to use the acquired knowledge and skills to guide their communities even after the end of the project. Government extension officers engaged by the project will also be able to continue guiding the youth. The promotion of only a few selected crops by the project, has ensured youth mastery of the crop life and market dynamics. This has strengthened uptake to a level of youth farmer self-support in managing particularly the chili business.

The VSLA mechanisms put in place have not only proven to be popular but have also proven to be a foundational platform for financial inclusion and economic empowerment of project youth. This has enabled the youth to mobilize and grow their savings and productively invest the same for their own livelihood support. The project youth are more financially literate than before joining the project and will be in better position to make rational financial decisions including accessing loans from FIs. The VSLAs consist of members from the same geographical location, who self-selected themselves based on good knowledge and trust amongst themselves. There is thus cohesion and trust amongst the VSLA youth, increasing the likelihood of their continuation beyond the life span of the project.

The project youth groups have formed themselves into parish and sub-county level-based associations. These are governing bodies charged with the responsibility of ensuring continuous production and strengthening and maintaining linkages with stakeholders in the value chain. The capacities of these associations in leadership and management have been enhanced, making them able to engage directly and independently with other VC actors. As mechanisms of engagement between the youth groups and private sector actors are already in place and functioning well, it is likely that information sharing and quality assurance support provided by the private sector actors will continue.

The project provided capacity building and exposure of girls and young women to various processes of the VCs, developed their leadership potential and facilitated support for their participation in production of various crops. Supporting young women to take up influential leadership positions in the groups has remained a platform for winning more women to remain in the groups and to benefit economically from engaging in the VCs.

The project continuously engaged with local leadership (both technical and political leadership), the project enjoyed very good working relationship with the technical departments of trade and commerce, production and marketing, community and social development and the entire political leadership of the district and lower LGs of the target districts. The district LG has increasingly appreciated the need to mainstream engagement of youth producers in agricultural VCs. All the district LG have started prioritizing and mainstreaming youth in their community engagement and extension service delivery. Additionally, AWF youth VSLA and producer groups now stand out as community groups of choice for any form of support that require organized community movements.

# 8. LESSONS LEARNED

The project garnered a number of lessons throughout the implementation period. Most importantly, we have confirmed that with good organization, capacity building and support/ networking and linkages, youth can be a powerful force in providing the missing linkages between the medium and large-scale enterprises and local population groups in ways that enhances efficiency of operations, expanded opportunities for supply sources for the private sector and consequent contribution to income and financial inclusion for the rural remote youth and their families.

We have also observed that engagement of many private sector actors creates healthy competition and efficiency of all actors in the VC. Popularization of new crops with high export but low domestic potential became possible through mass awareness raising and also effective capacity building and farmer support mechanisms. Validation of the market was important to ensure alignment between production and market absorption. The AWF project experienced no critical challenges in as far as market availability was concerned. Strengthening productive capacities was a more significant dimension that needed strengthening to ensure sustained quality and volumes to meet market demands.

Ability to manage risks especially climate related risks is an important dimension that required constant response and led to farmer behavior adaptation to expand income opportunity mechanisms beyond farming. Preparing farmers to engage in climate resilient and climate responsive methodologies was also an important consideration in agricultural related initiatives. Other key lessons and building blocks drawn from and applied in the project include:

- **Adopting a phased mobilization and organization of youth into groups:** A phased group formation and transition approach allowed ample time for group establishment, support and guidance provision before the groups transitioned to become operational producer groups. The project was able to realize this by organizing different project teams to focus on different stages of the organization and production process, whereby for instance, one team focused on mobilization, recruitment and training of youth into the groups while another team focused on mentoring of existing groups and VSLAs to support their transition into producer groups.



- **Mobilization of family support to complement mass awareness sessions:** High buy-in on the project was achieved through deliberate outreach to households and other influential actors in the target communities. Ensuring clarity and early engagement of households and families of the young women, provided a positive approval for their engagement in the VCs and enabled the young women to access productive resources such as land.
- **Engagement of influential players in government, and communities:** The involvement of local government, community and cultural leaders was an important aspect that promoted project ownership and enhanced AWF youth and young women's participation in the project. Through this engagement the AWF project youth were able to access important information and opportunities from mainstream government programs.
- **Enabled access to productive resources and land:** Land is a scarce and valuable resource in Uganda. Landowners, usually household heads, are skeptical to allocate productive land resources particularly to unmarried, young women and girls. However, continuous dialogues with household heads and other power holders enabled young women to access this resource in the AWF project. The stereotype and negative perceptions to land access by youth particularly young women has slowly diminished. The project continuously engaged in periodic dialogues on land matters to ensure timely allocation of land to the targeted youth, thereby eliminating loss of time for planting in the respective crop production seasons.

- **Facilitating linkages:** CSOs play an important role in brokering stakeholder relations and harnessing the power and potential in youth into bankable and trusted target group and pave way for establishing linkages with other programs and in establishing private sector connections. The VSLA modalities played a significant role in trust and confidence building among target youth.

The VSLA supported groups have shown ability to manage money and are thus considered a bankable and an eligible target for many financial inclusion funds of the local government. The government department of production, trade and commerce, and gender and community development remain positive to continue working with the project.

Furthermore, facilitating the young farmer's access to input supplies and financial services are important factors that can allow young farmers to make timely arrangements to prepare for production thereby maximizing on their returns.

The multi-stakeholder engagement platforms provided opportunities for trustful engagement between agricultural produce off-takers and youth producers. This approach was more effective than bilateral engagement with one stakeholder.

# 8.

## RESULTS MONITORING AND EVALUATIONS

During the last year of the project, an external end-line evaluation of the project was carried out. The evaluation report will be submitted to Norad for review. An external mid-term review of the

project was also conducted and shared with Norad. The mid-term review triggered knowledge sharing and learning across different Plan projects and offices.