



## OUR VISION:

*A leading research, advocacy and community development organization in Uganda.*

## Editorial

### Dear esteemed reader,

In this edition of our newsletter, we shine a spotlight on the remarkable initiatives led by KRC-Uganda and her partners, driving positive change in the Rwenzori region and beyond. These initiatives are not only transforming the lives of small-holder farmers but also contributing to the broader goal of sustainable food systems, market systems, improved nutrition and livelihoods in Uganda.

### LEVERAGING VSLA METHODOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

KRC-Uganda with support from organizations like HUMUNDI, is implementing a microfinance program in the Rwenzori region. The program aims to empower smallholder farmers by utilizing the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) approach. VSLA involves organizing 25-30 community members from the same village to save money weekly, access loans at agreed-upon interest rates, and obtain emergency insurance.



Fig.1

The broader context of this initiative is the need for sustainable food systems (SFS) that ensure food security and nutrition for all while safeguarding future generations' economic, social, and environmental needs. Challenges in the current food system include limited community awareness of SFS, the high cost of food production, and inadequate financial resources for farmers.

To address these challenges, KRC-Uganda is advocating for the introduction of agricultural products, such as the Seed Bag, among 50 VSLAs in various districts. The Seed Bag initiative aims to provide farmers with affordable loans for purchasing viable seeds and Agro inputs during planting seasons. KRC-Uganda plans to encourage and support VSLA groups in developing innovative financial products to boost investment in sustainable food systems.

## Combatting Monocropping with Integrated Farm Management

In the lush landscapes of Uganda, smallholder farms have long relied on traditional farming practices, particularly the method of monocropping. However, this approach has been branded as a “disastrous agriculture system” by Ocean Robbins (2022), and its detrimental effects on land productivity and food security are becoming increasingly evident. Monocropping, the practice of cultivating a single crop repeatedly, offers neither the dietary diversity we need nor the ecological balance our ecosystems crave. As a result, farming families are grappling with pronounced nutritional and food insecurities, exacerbating the economic and social challenges they face.



Fig.2

In the early 1990s, the Ugandan government initiated a shift towards early maturing crops, diverting attention from diverse staple crops like tubers, legumes, and cereals. Moreover, there has been a growing trend towards purely commercial farming ventures, such as tea and sugarcane production, which fail to ensure sufficient and nutritionally balanced diets for the nation. To combat this looming crisis, KRC Uganda has taken proactive measures. Through their agriculture extension programs, they are employing the Integrated Farm Plan Approach

(PIP) to train family farmers in adopting agroecological practices for food production. These practices not only promote crop and dietary diversity but also work to regenerate the natural ecosystems essential for healthy food systems.

In conclusion, monocropping continues to be a “disastrous agriculture system” in Uganda. To convey this message effectively to smallholder farmers still practicing it, education is key. Farmers need to understand that monocropping is detrimental both to the land and to food security. The solution lies in supporting local, organic, diverse farms that produce the variety of foods we need without leaving the environment in a deteriorating state. It’s time to embrace sustainable farming practices for a brighter, more food-secure future in Uganda.

## The Supremacy of Nutrition Education and Counselling

Nutrition holds a central role in our daily lives, impacting our health, growth, and overall well-being. Proper nutrition is essential in preventing chronic diseases, fostering development, and enhancing our quality of life. However, many individuals face challenges in making informed dietary choices due to a lack of knowledge or misinformation. Nutrition education and counseling serve as potent tools to equip individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to make healthier food decisions.



Nutrition education involves providing information, knowledge, and skills related to nutrition and dietary choices to individuals or communities. On the other hand, nutrition counseling is a personalized approach, conducted through one-on-one or group sessions with registered dietitians or nutritionists. It focuses on assessing an individual’s dietary habits, addressing specific nutritional needs, and offering tailored guidance and support to promote healthier choices. In conclusion, continuous efforts to provide people with the knowledge and skills for making healthier food choices can alleviate the burden of chronic diseases, enhance overall well-being, and create healthier and more vibrant communities. Prioritizing nutrition education and counseling brings us closer to a world where everyone has the opportunity to lead healthier lives.

## IMPACT OF THESE APPROACHES ON INDIVIDUALS

### HEALTHY WEIGHT MANAGEMENT:

Personalized guidance helps individuals set realistic goals and learn strategies for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. This includes understanding food labels, portion sizes, and making informed decisions while grocery shopping or dining out.

### IMPROVED DIETARY CHOICES:

Individuals become more aware of the nutritional value of foods and the importance of a balanced diet, leading to healthier food choices and improved overall nutrition.

### PREVENTION OF CHRONIC DISEASES:

Education about the relationship between nutrition and chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity motivates individuals to adopt healthier eating habits, reducing their risk of developing such conditions.

### LOWER HEALTHCARE COSTS:

By reducing the incidence of diet-related diseases and conditions, nutrition education and counseling contribute to lower healthcare costs.

### ADDRESSING NUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES:

Counseling sessions identify nutrient deficiencies and modify dietary plans to ensure individuals meet their nutritional needs.

## FROM STRUGGLES TO SUCCESS:

### *Katukole Kikinda Farmers Group's Remarkable Journey to Prosperity*

Katukole Kikinda Farmers Group in Kukuube District, part of the Young Africa Works (YAW) Markets for Youth project, began their journey from scattered and unprofitable enterprises. Through KRC-Uganda's capacity-building training, they received comprehensive business skills training, leading to individual and household improvements. A pivotal moment occurred during a joint monitoring visit with the Kukuube district local government, where valuable advice propelled them towards substantial ventures and mixed farming.

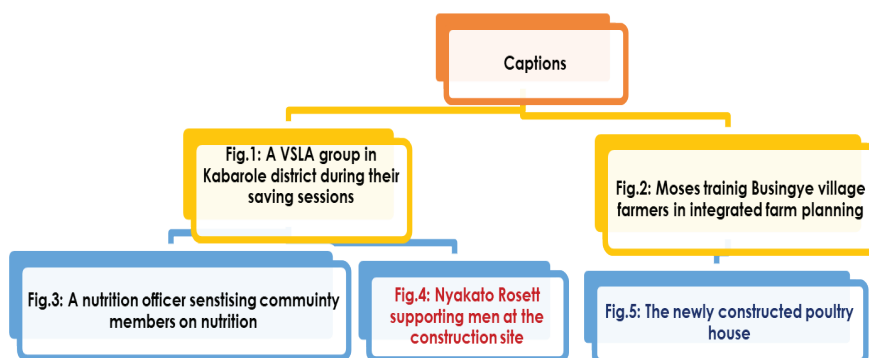


Their progress continued when they received specialized training in poultry farming, management, and entrepreneurship from Enabel. Thirty members underwent this transformative experience and received a poultry kit, boosting their poultry project significantly. Inspired and equipped, the group committed to improving their poultry house, turning it into a learning center for fellow members and facilitating knowledge transfer at the household level.



This story highlights the power of education, mentorship, and collaboration, showcasing the remarkable transformation of the Katukole Kikinda Farmers Group from struggling enterprises to successful participants in agriculture and entrepreneurship.

*Our Moto: Empowering People for prosperity*



*We are grateful to you all for supporting our noble cause. Thank you for touching lives!*

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