



## VEDCO ANNUAL REPORT



2020

## **Introduction**

Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO) is a not for profit agricultural organization founded in 1986. VEDCO is legally registered, as a non-governmental agricultural organization under the Non-Governmental Organizations Registration Statute 1989. It is also registered with the Ministry of agriculture, Animal industry and fishery, NGO board in the ministry of internal affairs as well as with the National NGO Forum.

In 2020, VEDCO launched a new strategic Plan (2020-2025) whose focus is towards community transformation hinged on sustainable production, inclusive markets and finance as well as innovative systems leadership.

## **VEDCO's Vision, Mission and Strategic objectives**

### **Vision:**

“Poverty free and well-nourished farming communities with environmental consciousness”

### **Mission:**

“To make agriculture practices work for farming communities achieve; prosperity, food and nutrition security, economic competitiveness and Ecosystems balance.”

The new strategic plan focuses on the following result areas:

1. To improve Food and Nutrition security
2. To deepen Agricultural Trade and Business Development
3. To improve natural resource management
4. To improve farmers' Public Policy Engagement and Advocacy
5. To enhance Response to Humanitarian, Disaster and Emergencies
6. To improve VEDCO's capacity to deliver agricultural services

## **VEDCO's Outreach in 2020**

With support from Partners, VEDCO successfully implemented 10 livelihood projects in 22 districts in Northern, Eastern, and Central regions of Uganda, directly supported 40,328 small holder farmers with male 11,519 and female 28,809, reached out to 43866 (19,989 Males and 23,877 Females) children under five through their care takers, 22,208 women of reproductive age and 9000 youth (60% women). The detailed list of VEDCO's projects is in appendix 1.

This report presents the achievements made in 2020, challenges and lessons learnt

## FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY COMPONENT

The objective for this thematic area is to improve Food and Nutrition security which will lead to increased agricultural production and food supply, as well as enhanced food utilization, increased agricultural production, food supply and enhanced food utilisation

### **Participatory needs assessment through rapid and diagnostic surveys conducted**

To set baseline values for monitoring production of diversified crops, a baseline study for the Action of Building Resilience to Enhance Food and Nutrition Security, Incomes and Health in Northern Uganda was conducted in partnership with IITA. The base line study was conducted in the sub regions of Lango (Amolatar, Apac, Kwanja, Dokolo, Otuke districts) and Teso (Amuria, Kapelebyong districts). The target respondents for the study were small holder farmer households (men, women, youth and children) extension officers, processors, agro dealers, aggregators, transporters, community facilitators, peer educators. The study was conducted in 119 villages and 1,600 households were interviewed. The study findings in the 7 districts revealed that: in the last 12 months 49.58% of the respondents had received trainings in Good Agronomic Practices (GAP), (13) technology demonstrations were established, 22 community development promoters and 49 community livelihood groups existed, only 9 farmer field days on the Maize, Cassava and Vegetables value chains conducted in the last 12 months in 5 districts of Amolatar, Otuke, Dokolo Amuria and Kapelebyong . Feedback from the 27 focus group discussions conducted revealed that, four (4) major types of inputs had been accessed and these include Herbicides, Fertilizers, Pesticides and Seeds and only six (6) villages had accessed inputs. Only 191 households (11.94%) received trainings on saving and credit, 110 respondents (57.59%) accessed credit from financial institutions of which 6.88% got credit to support farming.

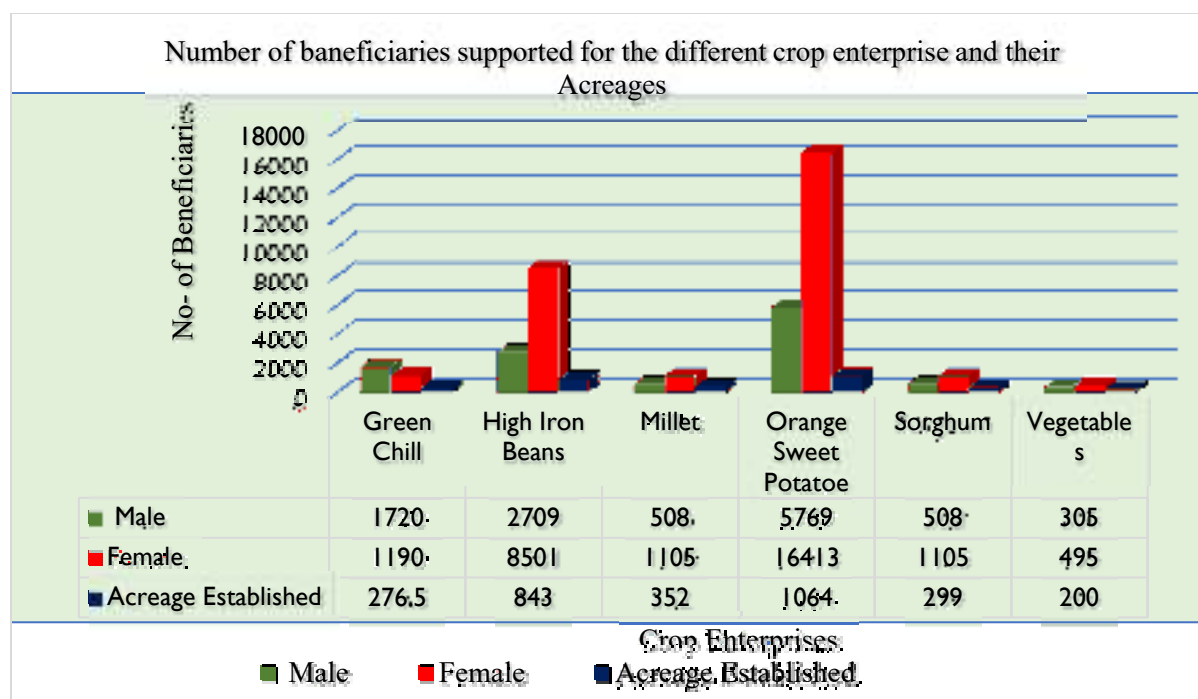
### **Increased adoption of productivity enhancing and climate resilient technologies**

To empower and organize farmers to take on productivity farming enhancing technologies and practices, experience- based, innovative, participatory and interactive way of learning were embraced through use of farmer field schools and community led demonstrations. VEDCO supported the establishment of 275 learning centers for knowledge and technology transfer in sweet potato, high iron beans, green chill, sorghum and millet, ground nuts, local vegetables. A total of 3,662 farmers with male 1,465 and female 2,197 were trained and acquired practical knowledge and skills on Good Agronomic practices. Learning and knowledge sharing on the demonstrations and field schools resulted into reduction in the level of pest and disease attack on the crops, improved soil fertility, increased yield, improved produce quality and uptake of improved crop varieties by farmers.

Smallholder in Uganda farmers produce far below their potential yields, often due to poor farming practices. To produce a variety of crops and realize high yields, VEDCO trained and supported 12,782 farmers (male 4,415 and female 837) in good agronomic practices (soil fertility management, planting, pest and disease management and harvesting) for sweet potato, green chilli, high iron beans, millet, sorghum and vegetables. However, the learning on the demonstration was interrupted by limitations on social gatherings and movements resulting from COVID 19 pandemic. The group trainings were done in small groups of 5-10 farmers and safety measures of

social distancing(1meter), open space, wearing of face masks, sanitizing and regular washing of hands with soap and flowing water were observed to reduce the risks of transmission of theCOVID-19 virus among the beneficiaries. As a result of the training, 2,910 youth farmers (male 1,720 and female 1,190) in Kamuli and Buyende districts bought seed and established 276.5 acres of green chilli, 1,109 youth farmers (male 654 and female 455) marketed 69,381 kgs (13,876.2 boxes) of quality green chilli. In addition, farmers who effectively cultivated their crops following the recommended agronomic practices increased their harvests for example in Iganga district, farm yields for OSP improved from 2 basins to 5 bags of roots in  $\frac{1}{4}$  an acre of sweet potato and from 1kg of iron beans received farmers harvested between 20 -27kg. More to that, 246 youth (137 males and 109 females) from the refuge and host communities who were trained in GAP for vegetables are meaningfully employed in production of cabbages, tomatoes and poultry production, 10 youth are engaging in tomato & cabbage production 2 seasons a year which wasn't the case before.

Access to quality planting materials is still a challenge to many farming communities in Uganda. VEDCO addressed the challenge by supporting 40,328 farmers (male 11,519 and female 28,809) to access improved and quality planting materials for high iron beans, groundnuts, green chilli, sorghum, millet, vegetables and sweet potatoes. VEDCO distributed 1,497 kgs of improved sorghum varieties (Seso 3, Narosorg 2, Mak 56 and Candidate) and 1,056 kgs of improved millet varieties (Seremil 2, Naromil- 1 Naromil-2) from NaSARRI to 1,613 farmers (male 508 and female 1,105). 25,314 kg of high iron rich beans (Narobean 1,2 and 3) were given to 11,210 farmers (2709 male and female 8,501), 15,958 bags of OSP vines (Nasspot 8, 13, Kabode and Kakamega, Vita, Ejumula) were distributed to 22,182 farmers (male 5769 and female 16,413). In addition, 2910 youth (male 1720 and female 1190) bought their own seed chilli seeds and 800 youth (male 305 and female 495) in the host and refuge communities received vegetables seeds for (okra, cow peas, African egg plants, onions and tomatoes) and 2000 kgs of maize. The action resulted into increased access to planting materials by farmers, increased acreage under improved seed (as indicated in the table below), increased yields for example in Iganga district Farm yields for OSP improved from 2 basins to 5 bags of roots in  $\frac{1}{4}$  an acre of sweet potato and from 1kg of iron beans received farmers harvested between 20 -27kgs.



The interventions gave an opportunity to farmers to test the improved varieties in their contexts and selected the most preferred and suitable varieties for food and market. For beans, Naro Bean 1, 2 are the most preferred varieties by farmers because of the bigger grain size and palatability (30-50 ponds), OSP Naspot 8, 13 and Ejumula are liked because of their high yield, good palatability, high growth vigor for sorghum and millet Seremil2 & Seso3 are the best preferred due to their early maturity, highly marketable, striga resistance and good taste for food

However, COVID 19 restrictions in Uganda were announced at a time of the first rains and planting season. This is the time when farmers were demanding for Agricultural Extension Advisory Support services like planting materials and agricultural trainings. Efforts were made by VEDCO to reach out to farmers, developed and operationalized COVID response strategies and followed the Government of Uganda Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs). The distribution of planting materials was very expensive and time consuming, very many delivery points were created to enable 5-10 beneficiaries access the planting materials.



### ***Atiya's Story of Change***

*Mrs. Babiwemba Atiya is a resident of Nakisenyi village, Bulongo subcounty in Luuka district. She is a widow with six children*

*Atiya was inspired after attending an awareness creation meeting which was organized by*

*VEDCO in the 1<sup>st</sup> season (2019A) of the year 2019. She was trained in the best agronomic practices of Orange sweet potatoes and iron beans. She was given half a bag of OSP vines (Naspot8) and planted as trained, she harvested 2 bags of OSP roots from 176 heaps/mounds. She testified that orange sweet potatoes have a good taste than other varieties," They are palatable, tender and get ready faster than other varieties" she explained*

*In the second season of 2019 B, she expanded the orange sweet potato garden from quarter an acre to one acre after taking back 1 bag of vines as seed loan. From the one acre, she harvested 10 bags (600,000) of OSP roots and 230 bags of OSP vines (2,300,000) which she sold to Little bit of hope Uganda and to Kiyunga market and to some schools in Luuka.*

*Currently, she can at least have 3 meals in a day, sale OSP tubers to the neighboring communities and get money to pay school fees for her children and have her daily needs.*

*She is also constructing a four roomed permanent house which is at window level. Her health has improved and rarely visits the health center.*



Climate change has a significant impact on agricultural production, hence the need to set up community seed banks that may help resource constrained farmers to acquire varieties that are adapted to local conditions, get access to seeds for the next planting season in times of seed crisis. In addition, investments in the breeding of improved sorghum and millet varieties will not be leveraged without the appropriate seed production and delivery channels.

Community-based approaches have been advocated as promising ways to engage farmers as private entrepreneurs who could provide key connections between the formal and informal sectors (FAO [2015](#)). With support from ISSD and McKnight foundation, VEDCO supported 23

community seed producer groups to establish 115.5 acres of different seed enterprises: Naro beans, Ground nuts, Soy bean, Cassava, millet and sorghum. The seed producer farmer groups were linked to research Institutions and accessed Foundation seed. Field and seed inspections for Fifteen (15) seed farmer producer groups in the North Busoga Cluster was conducted and their QDS for groundnuts (serenut 4) and beans (NARO bean 1,2 &3) was certified. These initiatives increased the production and access of seed by farmers, improved household incomes and linkages with actors in the seed value chain as indicated in the table below



*DAO of Kamuli district inspecting the Naro bean seed field for Nakulyaku farmers group*

#### Quality Declared seed production and sales in FY 2020

| Crop and variety            | No. of seed producers | Quantity of foundation seed procured | Source of Foundation seed | Acreage Planted | Quantity of QDS Harvested | Quantity of QDS sold | Average unit price per kg/ bag | Income earned (UGX) | Market                               |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Beans: Naro bean 3 ( kgs)   | 8                     | 900                                  | NaCRRRI and IkulweZardi   | 27              | 11967                     | 8500                 | 4500                           | 38,250,000          | Community level, DLG & NARO holdings |
| Soya bean: Mak Soy 3N (kgs) | 1                     | 45                                   | Makerere University       | 1.5             | 250                       | 100                  | 3000                           | 300,000             | Local market                         |



|                                   |           |            |              |    |        |        |       |                    |                                           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|----|--------|--------|-------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Ground nuts : Serenut 14 R (bags) | 5         | 42         | Serere / NHL | 42 | 492    | 432    | 5000  | 2,160,000          | Local market, DLG & NARO holdings         |
| Cassava: Naro Cass (bags)         | 1         | 72         | IkulweZardi  | 16 | 230    | 230    | 10000 | 2,300,000          | Local market                              |
| Millet:                           | 2         | 5          | NaSARRI      | 2  | 494    | 400    | 3500  | 1,400,000          | Local market                              |
| Sorghum                           | 2         | 15         | NaSARRI      | 2  | 888    | 850    | 900   | 765,000            | Local market                              |
| Sweetpotato: OSP vines            | 4         | own garden | own garden   | 42 | 13,394 | 13,394 | 8000  | 107,152,000        | MUCOBADI, IOWA, Little bit of hope Uganda |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>23</b> |            |              |    |        |        |       | <b>152,327,000</b> |                                           |

COVID 19 also opened new market opportunities and increased interest in health foods and demand for OSP and iron beans by the COVID 19 response taskforce teams and NGOs like IOWA Uganda program, Little bit of hope Uganda and MACOBADI.

VEDCO established and strengthened community food and nutrition security structures for effective coordination of food and nutrition security efforts. VEDCO uses the Community Based Trainers' extension approach to reach out to a large number of farmers. From each farmer group, one farmer is selected and trained to offer basic extension services to fellow farmers in his/her group. In 2020, 353 Community based trainers (209 Males, 144 Females) were equipped with basic knowledge and skills in crop production, food and nutrition, agricultural marketing Village savings and Lending Associations (VSLAs). The CBTs were facilitated with bicycles to ease community outreach. The CBTs used the Knowledge and skills acquired to train 3,662 farmers with male 1,465 and female 2,197 on basic agronomic practices.

Agricultural research plays a key role in fostering innovation and productivity. However, there are pitfalls especially in transferring technologies from research to farmers. To bridge the gap, VEDCO connected researchers to farmers. In 2020, VEDCO strengthened linkages with 4 agriculture research institutions: worked with NaSARRI for millet and sorghum technologies, Makerere University and NARO- Agricultural Engineering and Appropriate Technology Research Centre (AEATREC) on Post-Harvest Handling technologies, IITA on seed and disease management. These linkages resulted into joint fundraising and project implementation, enhanced VEDCO's experience in implementing research for development project, increased access to quality seed, improved nutrition and PHH technologies by farmers, increased institution base finance base (VEDCO is implementing 4 projects with research agencies: DINU, PHH- FRN Uganda, Foodland, Cereal FRN)

In addition, VEDCO improved relationship with 12 reputable agro-input companies to increase farmers' access to quality seed, and other agro-inputs. 2,910 youth farmers (male 1,720 and female 1,190) in Kamuli and Buyende districts were linked to KK Fresh foods and accessed green chilli seeds, established 2,986 nursery beds and 276.5 acres of chilli. 1,855 farmers (671 males and 1,184 females) in Lango and Teso sub regions were linked to agro input dealers and accessed seed, pesticides, farm tools, soya bean, beans, cassava, groundnuts.

### **Increased adoption of Post-harvest handling and loss reducing technologies and practices**



Reduction of postharvest food losses is a critical component of ensuring future global food insecurity. While there is extensive knowledge about recommended production and PHH practices of different crops, adoption of these recommendations by smallholder farmers is low. The reasons for low adoption are as varying as the available technologies and practices, ranging from technology mismatch, high technology costs, limited skills, knowledge/information to exclusion of socio-economic considerations.

To harness local and scientific knowledge in postharvest handling, VEDCO in partnership with NARO- Agricultural Engineering and Appropriate Technology Research Centre (AEATREC) - and Makerere University with funding from McKnight Foundation is implementing a project aimed at Scaling Up Access & Use of Postharvest Handling Interventions using Farmer Research Network Approach in the Districts of Kamuli, Buyende And Pallisa. At the start of the project, a baseline Survey was conducted to obtain baseline information about current farmer's PHH practices which would be useful in aligning the identified practices with appropriate proven PHH interventions using farmer-led research

The survey findings indicated that: for **transport technologies**: 38% of the respondents (n=270) still use elementary methods like human head and bicycles while 0.4% used improved technologies like Bicycle, Ox-carts, Motor-cycle, Tricycle and Motor vehicle for transporting produce from the garden to homes and to the market. **Drying technologies**: On drying, majority (66.3%) use rudimentary technologies like bare ground, followed by tarpaulins (30 %) and very few (0.4%) use different technologies like cemented screed and raised platform and clothes depending on the availability. **Shelling technologies**: majority (61.9%) of small-scale farmers commonly use hands to shell their maize while only 0.4% agreed that they use variety of technologies including hands, palm, bench and motorized sheller. Farmers involved in processing cassava into floor commonly use hand knives and pangas (53.7%) to chip the cassava into chips before drying and very few use hand knives and manual chippers (0.4%). **Shelling technologies**: For millet and sorghum processors, 65.6% use rudimentary methods of sticks and bare ground to thresh their produce while very few 0.4% use variety of technologies like sticks and bag, stick and bare ground and Manual thresher. **Storage facilities**: For storage, majority (51.5%) of the respondents noted that they use normal storage bags to store produce compared to (30.4%) who use both normal storage bags and heaping in one corner storage method. The rest use other technologies like metallic/plastic silo and triple bag, granary, joint group store, wooden crates in a storage room and old jerricans for storage. **Milling technologies**: For milling, majority (37.8%) of the respondents use stationary motorized miller and the rest use technologies like milling stone, stationary electricity miller, motor and pestle for processing their produce.

The study also established the technologies that farmers would prefer to use in period of 3 years (2020-2023): Transport technologies: majority (26.3%) would prefer using motor cycles or tricycle, followed by oxcarts (12.6%) and bicycles (12.2%) as opposed to use of human head. Drying technologies respondents noted that they would prefer drying on tarpaulins (58.5%), cemented screed (21.5 %). Shelling technologies: the respondents would prefer using motorized shellers (73.0%) an indication that farmers prefer motorized shellers to other shelling technologies. For chipping, majority of respondents (35.9%) want to totally shift from rudimentary ways of chipping to motorized chippers while 18.1% prefer using both mortised and manual chippers depending on their location and capacities. Respondents (31.1%) noted that they prefer using

motorized thresher while very few (0.8%) insisted on using a stick and bag plus a manual thresher. For storage, majority (41.9%) of the respondents would prefer to use modern technologies like metallic/plastic silos and (15.2) metallic/plastic silo and triple bag.

To reduce post-harvest losses, 36 farmer groups were supported to access appropriate food handling and storage technologies (40 tarpaulins, 8 cemented yards, 15 bench shellers, 3 portable Motorized shellers, 3 Motorized maize mills, 5 plastic silos and 40 triple bags). Practical training sessions to demonstrate the use of the PHH technologies were conducted. In addition, one seed producer group (Nakulyaku Cooperative) was supported to complete the seed store.

As a sustainability strategy, PHH-FRN (U) developed and is piloting the PHH business model for selected PHH entrepreneurial groups. The capacity of six (6) PHH entrepreneurial groups was built to operate Post-Harvest Handling interventions as business. The PHH entrepreneurial groups were supported to develop a snapshot of their businesses using the business canvas model. 6 farmer group PHH management committees were formed. The value propositions for the Farmers' PHH businesses include production and sale of quality flour & nutritious mixtures and provision of maize shelling services at a competitive price. The PHH entrepreneurial groups were further supported with motorised maize sheller and motorised micro mill to run their businesses. It is anticipated that the action will lead to increased farmers income and access to appropriate postharvest handling and processing interventions, reduction in postharvest losses and improve food safety.

Two hundred and eighty-eight (288) post-harvest handling and value addition training were conducted for 4698 farmers (male 1684 and female 3014). The action resulted into marketing of 69,381 kgs (13,876.2 boxes) of high quality green chill that meets the standards of the export by 1,109 youth farmers (male 654 and female 455), reduction in post-harvest losses for example only 10.9% (7301.55 kgs) of the 69,381 kgs of green chilli sold, Increased incomes earned by the youth (100,094,500 Ugx), establishment of small scale businesses by farmers, job creation for youth, women and men, reduction in cases of domestic violence (stabilized families), preservation of local vegetables (dry leaves) for household consumption during the dry season, improved quality of QDS.

### **Adoption of recommended feeding practices for children under five (5), Women of Reproductive Age, and People Living with HIV (PLHIV) strengthened**

VEDCO complimented the Government's efforts on nutrition by creating awareness and promoting the utilization of nutrient dense bio-fortified (OSP and high iron beans), this greatly contributed to increased consumption and demand for OSP vines and roots. The awareness campaigns were majorly done through radio talk shows (5), radio spot messages (206), drama skits on radios and 150 community sensitization meetings for 4044 community members (male 1258 and female 2,786).

Community nutrition education trainings on good nutrition and recommended feeding practices were conducted for 4304 care givers (1080 Males, 3224 Females). The trainings focused on food values and their nutritional importance and recommended feeding practices for children under 5 and women of reproductive age. To improve the quality of meals at household level, practical cookery and utilization demonstrations using locally available foods were also conducted. The nutritional education trainings resulted into adoption of proper feeding practices for children by care takers like balanced diet, feeding children on at least 3 meals a day, establishment of backyard

vegetable gardens to improve on household nutrition requirements, improved general hygiene of targeted households (with improved pit latrines, rubbish pits for wastage disposal, plate stands).

Linkages with 5 health nutrition and health service providers of Kiyunga HCIV, Kitayunjwa HCIII, Namwendwa HCIV, Namugalwe HCIII, Namungalwe sub county headquarters in Kamuli, Luuka and Iganga districts were created to increase access to nutrition services in the community.

## **INCLUSIVE AGRICULTURAL TRADE AND FARMER INSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

The objective for this thematic area is to deepen Agricultural Trade and Business Development which will lead to market access, value addition and inclusive finance.

### **Enhanced capacities of Small holder Farmers to run sustainable and profitable Businesses**

A total of 101 farmer producer groups with a membership of 2,288 farmers (male 1,062 and female 1226) were formed and trained in organizational development for effective management of the farmer producer groups. The trainings focused on group governance, records keeping and business plan development.

With support from ISSD, Nakulyaku Twekembe cooperative was supported to construct a seed bulking center /store. The cooperative collectively bulked 4000kgs of beans seed, 2500 kgs of ground nut seed and 10,000,000 kgs of maize grain

For efficient and effective delivery of extension services in value chain development, the capacity of eight (8) VEDCO staff (2 female and 6 male) was enhanced in agri- business entrepreneurship. The trained extension officers used the acquired skills to train 30 community-based trainers and 4,816 youth (F-2564 and M-2252) on market-oriented farming with a focus on farming as a business, business planning and record keeping. The action resulted into development of 235 business plans for youth groups, more 9.000 youth got engaged in production of green chilli for export market.

VEDCO linked farmers to government agencies to access government services. In Lamwo and Agago districts, 60 youth (30males and 30females) engaged local government authorities and lobbied for their involvement in different government programs. This has strengthened the relationship between the youth and local governments. In addition, seven (7) youth groups in Kamuli and Buyende districts with a membership of 210 youth (F-126 and M-84) accessed Youth Livelihood funds worth 24,200,000 Ugx, used the funds to purchase Chili seeds and pesticides, hired land and boost VSLA activities (lending and borrowing) in their groups. Technical support on chili production and management was received from the subcounty Agricultural officers in Kamuli and Buyende districts. District agricultural Officers supported the inspection process of farmer produced seed (QDS).

### **Strengthened farmer's institution capacity to participate in agricultural value chains**

For farmers to participate in profitable value chains, there is need to build their capacity in value chain mapping, analysis and selection. 200 youth groups were supported to select and engage in 2 profitable value chains (green chilli, white skinned sweet potato). The groups were also supported to develop 200 production and marketing plans to inform the production and marketing initiatives.

To develop and promote the green chilli and sweet potato value chains, VEDCO organized 2 strategic value chain actors' meetings to bring farmers closer to buyers and input stockiest. The buyers provided market information to farmers on quality and standards required to meet the demands of the market. This engagement strengthened the bond between buyers and farmers, broadened the market base for farmers produce, increased the volumes of agricultural produce marketed by farmers.

### **Strengthened farmers' participation domestic and export market**

The capacity of farmers in marketing and negotiation skills was enhanced during the year and these increased farmers participation in national, regional and international markets, increased household income, increased access of biofortified products (OSP and Iron rich beans) in the market, increased participation of women in agricultural marketing as indicated in the table below

| Crop enterprises                               | Quantity sold | Unit cost | Income earned      | Market/Buyer                                          | Male        | Female      | Total       |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Green chilli (kgs)                             | 69381         | 1450      | 100,602,450        | Export and domestic market                            | 654         | 455         | 1109        |
| Sweetpotato vine (bags)                        | 13,394        | 8000      | 107,152,000        | NGOs (MUCOBADI, IOWA, Little bit of hope) and farmers | 162         | 459         | 619         |
| Beans(kgs)                                     | 17,487        | 2500      | 43,717,500         | Local traders                                         |             |             |             |
| Sweetpotato roots (OSP and white skinned)-bags | 1,008         | 50,000    | 50,400,000         | Local traders, community members, schools             | 229         | 526         | 753         |
| Cabbages (bags)                                | 10            | 40,000    | 400,000            | Refugee and host community                            | 1           | 0           | 1           |
| Onions (kg)                                    | 680           | 3,000     | 2,040,000          | Refuge and host community                             | 15          | 15          | 30          |
| Sukuma (bundles)                               | 640           | 500       | 320,000            | Refuge and host community                             | 1           | 0           | 1           |
| Cassava tubers (bags)                          | 150           | 30,000    | 4,500,000          | Local traders                                         | 20          | 15          | 35          |
| <b>Total</b>                                   |               |           | <b>309,131,950</b> |                                                       | <b>1082</b> | <b>1470</b> | <b>2548</b> |



However, the closure of schools and village markets in March 2020 when COVID was announced in Uganda greatly affected the market for agricultural products as selling points like schools were closed and with tight restriction in the markets there was less demand agricultural products.



*“My name is Kwagala Racheal, I am a young girl aged 19 years. Am a member of Elite WhatsApp group found in Buganza parish in Kitayunjwa subcounty in Kamuli district”. Before the intervention of the AWF project which was brought in by VEDCO with support from Plan-International- Uganda, my life was a mess, full of miseries to the extent that I could not afford buying Vaseline, pads, Knickers and clothes for myself and thought that it is not possible for girls to speak in public, I had a mindset that girls were not entitled to earn any money and ever since my child hood stage I all knew that farming is a waste of time and not money paying. Besides it was a tag of war for my family to raise basic needs for my siblings and school fees was also a hard off too.” **INFACT LIFE WAS FULL OF MISERIES TO THE EXTENT THAT I REGRETED THE DAY I WAS BORN**”*

*When I had about the intervention of AWF and its objectives, I was very excited and eager to join the project since I knew it could be a life changing opportunity for me. Immediately we formed a group of 30 youth members aged 15-24 years, started saving and it was through the VSLA that I managed to get a cash loan of 50,000/- from which I was able to buy chili seeds worthy 37500/- and i planted a quarter an acre of chili, and I used the rest of the money to buy some home necessities. Through the different trainings that VEDCO delivered to our group like VSLA methodologies, farming as a business, GAPs, financial literacy, I have now gained the momentum to speak in public, I now know and am convinced that farming is a well-paying venture and it is a*

*great employment opportunity to our category of the school drop outs, I now have the confidence that girls also deserve equal opportunities and have the same rights compared to boys. In March 2020 I started selling my chili from my small garden. On a weekly basis am able to sell 50kgs of chili from which I get 75000-100,000/-, I used part of the money to buy myself Knickers, pads, good smelling Vaseline, trending clothes, support my parents to buy food for the home and saved the balance in my VSLA. "LONG LIVE AWF, LONG LIVE PLAN, LONG LIVE VEDCO"*

### **Improved farmers' access to agricultural financing**

VEDCO supported the development of farmers' saving and credit schemes as a way of farmers building their own financial base. A total of 12,634 farmers (F=6,625 and M=6009) were equipped with knowledge and skills in VSLA methodology and financial management. The trainings resulted into formation of 2,164 VSLAs, with a membership of 7,321 youth members (male 3714 and female 3,607) saved 231,958,700 Ugx and a total of 172,786,300 Ugx was borrowed to raise capital to buy agricultural inputs like Chili seeds, pesticides, packaging materials, hire land, invest in livestock projects like piggery, poultry and off farm small businesses. The VSLAs increased investment in agricultural projects, increased community finance base, contributed to increased agricultural production & volumes marketed and enhanced the capacity of farmers to save and borrow.

161 producer groups with a membership of 2,909 farmers (male 1578 and female 1331) were linked to 5 viable agricultural financial institutions (Centenary Rural development bank and Finance Trust Bank in Kamuli district, Postbank and Ikweru SACCO in Dokolo and Lira districts) to enable them access financial services. The linkage resulted into 296 youth (Male 156 and female 140) opening bank accounts with Finance trust and Centenary Rural development bank in Kamuli district. The increased number of youths with bank accounts has greatly improved the payments for youth farmers produce (green chilli) by KK Fresh Foods Ltd. The youth farmers are also using their accounts to access other bank services like mobile money platform, hence no need to come to the bank to make financial transaction but rather do it remotely from their respective villages. The VSLA youth groups have made amendments in their constitutions to start borrowing funds from these financial institutions using their savings history and group cooperation as security.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

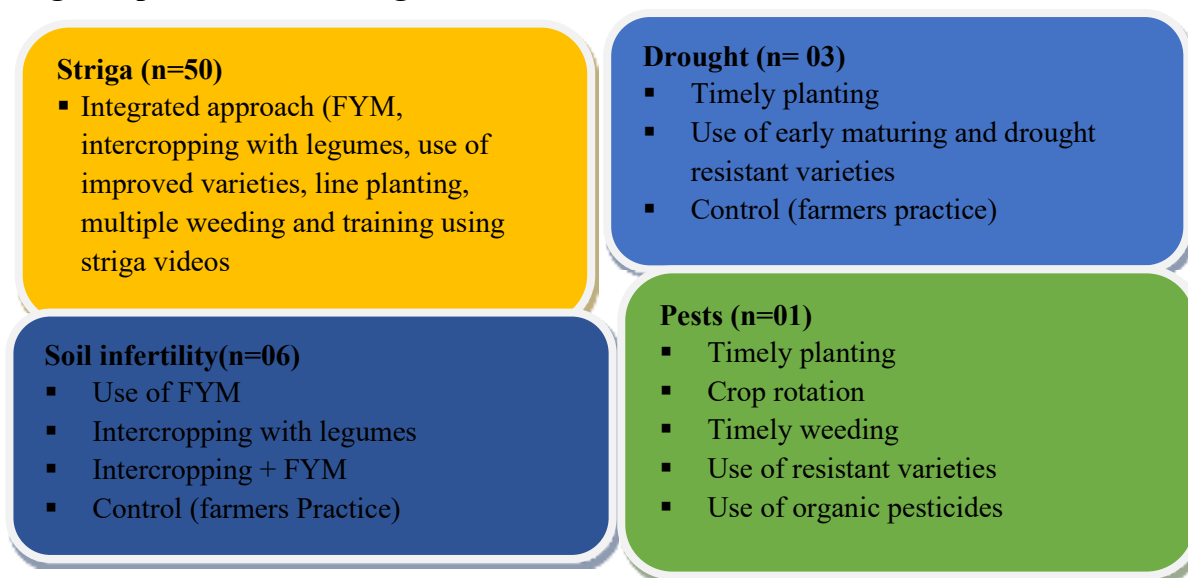
The objective for this thematic area is to improve natural resource management this will lead to sustainable production practices, agro-ecological regeneration, reduced pollution

### **Reconstruction of agricultural related ecosystems supported**

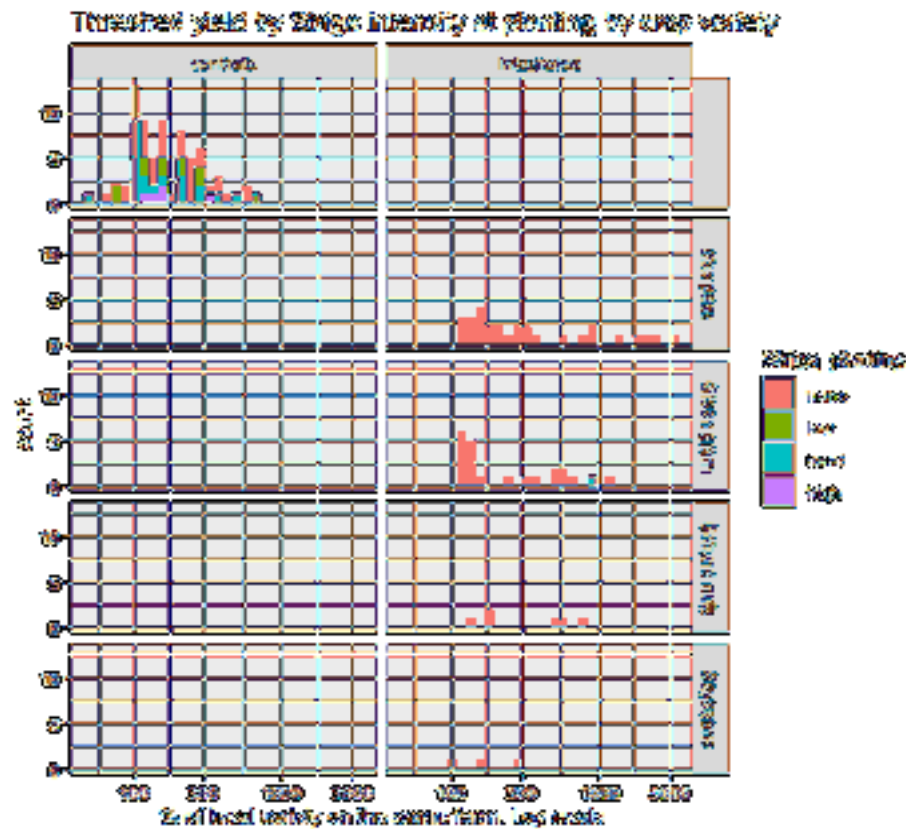
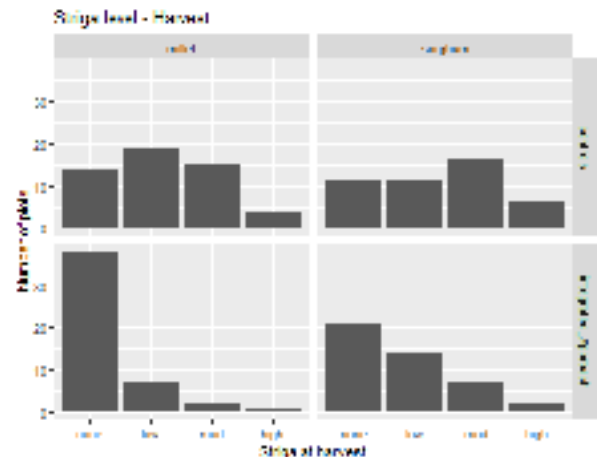
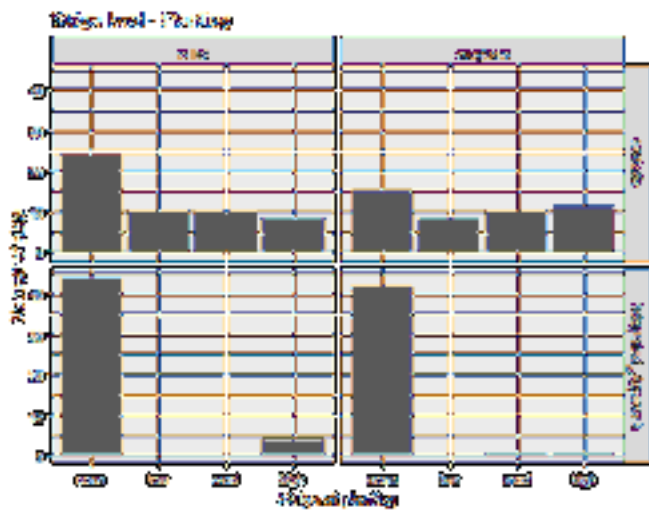
To achieve sustainable agricultural production, there is need to support reconstruction of agricultural related eco systems. VEDCO promoted planting of multipurpose indigenous and improved trees species in the communities. A total of 80,656 trees were planted by 40,328 farmers (male 11,519 and female 28,809). In addition, Farmer's knowledge on local waste management, swamp reservation, good farming practices, agroforestry, soil erosion control by contour ploughing was enhanced through training of 78 farmers (males=28, females=50).

Soil fertility depletion and soil quality decline are threatening the ecological and economic sustainability of crop production in Uganda. Using the Farmer Research Network Approach that was developed by the McKnight Collaborative Crop Research Program, On-farm farmer managed striga and soil fertility management (ISFM) trials were established to evaluate the effects of farm integrated approaches (Farm Yard Manure+ legumes+ multiple weeding +line planting) on striga intensity and millet and sorghum yield. The participatory research with farmers was informed by farmers prioritization of production challenges for millet and sorghum. Out of the 60 farmers groups engaged in research, 83.3% prioritized striga weed, 10% soil infertility, 5% drought and 1.7% pests. Participatory selection of research options / solutions to address the production challenges was done as indicated in the figure below

**Fig 1: Research options/solutions evaluated by farmer groups to solve millet and sorghum production challenges**



Twenty-four (24) striga management trials were established following a similar design and using Integrated approaches. The integrated approach to striga management involves the use of Farm Yard manure, intercropping with legumes, use of improved and resistant sorghum and millet varieties, line planting and multiple weeding. Learning and knowledge sharing on the farm demonstrations was complimented by striga management trainings on local radios. Results: At 2-3 weeks after planting 50% of the millet and 60% of the sorghum control plots had striga, and less in the integrated plots. For millet, the integrated approach maintained most plots without striga up to harvest time. In most of the integrated plots where cow peas, Green gram and Ground nuts were used, the yields were significantly more than the average local yields as indicated in the figures below

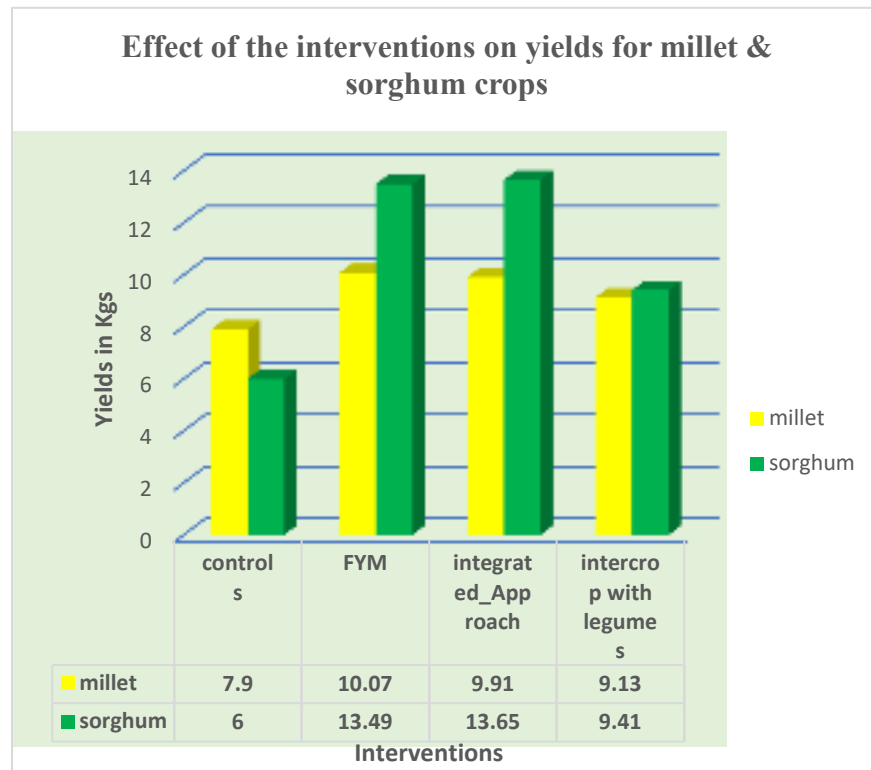


The figure plots the impact of the different legumes on the effect of striga on yields of improved varieties as compared to the percentage yield of the local. Under control plots where no legumes were applied, cases of low and moderate striga manifested and as a result, some of the plots yielded less than the average of the local variety yields. Whereas under integrated, most of the plots where cow peas, Green gram and Ground nuts were used, the yields were significantly more than

the average local yields. It is only for plots where soybeans were used that had yields slightly less than the average yields of the local variety. This might imply that cow peas, green gram and ground nuts respectively, were the most effective legumes in fighting striga weeds during the season.



In addition, four on farm Integrated Soil fertility management trials were established and four treatments were evaluated: control (farmers' practice), intercropping with legumes, use of FYM, and integrated approach (FYM+ legume intercrop). The results are indicated in the figure below:



The graph is assessing the level of response of millet and sorghum to the different interventions, with respect to yields. From the presentation, sorghum is more responsive to the effects of these interventions as compared to millet, as it is seen that there are quite higher levels of yields in sorghum plots under intervention as compared to millet.

To promote irrigation-based farming among youth farmers, Plan- Uganda supported 50 youth producer groups with water irrigation systems to demonstrate continuous production of chilli all year round. A total of 234 (F=124 and M=110) youth are using the small-scale irrigation technologies (drip irrigation, use of Sprinklers, watering cans to collect water from the nearby water wells and constructed water ponds) to produce chill all year round. In addition, 589 farmers with 133 males and 456 females in Gulu district adopted techniques of producing fresh local vegetables and seeds in the dry season using local irrigation methods which led to continuous production of cow peas, egg plants and Okra during the period.

VEDCO incorporated a series of messages on natural resource conservation and management like tree planting in the various trainings and discouraged communities from engaging in practices which contribute to climatic changes; like cutting down trees, farming in wetlands and swamps, improper disposal of waste especially plastics and polythene. Good Agronomic Practices (GAP) like intercropping, integrated nutrient management especially organic manure and mulching are promoted to increase soil fertility. Post-harvest handling practices like drying and storage of indigenous vegetables and other food stuffs for consumption during times of scarcity (dry season) are also promoted.

### **Climate change adaptation (CCA) technologies and practices promoted**

Crop diversity is central to food security. To fight food security, contribute to nutrition security, end hunger and mitigate climate change, VEDCO is embracing diversity in terms of crop enterprises and varieties promoted. VEDCO promotes cereals (millet and sorghum), legumes

(Soybean, Cowpeas, Lablab, Groundnuts, Green gram, beans, Lablab), vegetables (local and improved), roots and tubers (sweet potato and cassava) which are early maturing, drought and flood resistant and nutrient dense (as indicated in the table below). A total of 40,328 farmers (male 11,519 and female 28,809) farmers accessed the mentioned crop varieties in 2020.

| TYPE OF ENTERPRISE | CROP ENTERPRISE       | VARIETIES                                                                                         |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cereals            | Sorghum               | 1.Seso3<br>2.Narosorg2<br>3.Mak56<br>4.Edeidei<br>5.Ekoli<br>6.Ilodir                             |
|                    | Millet                | 1.Seremil2<br>2.Naromil2<br>3.naromil3<br>4.Ekama                                                 |
| Roots and tubers   | Sweet potato- white   | 1.White skinned Sweet potato                                                                      |
|                    | Sweet potato-OSP      | 1.Kabode<br>2.Naspot13<br>3.Naspot8                                                               |
|                    | Cassava               | Naro Cassava                                                                                      |
| Legumes            | Beans                 | 1.Narobean1<br>2.Narobean2                                                                        |
|                    | Groundnuts            | 1.Naronut1<br>2.Naronut2<br>3.Naronut3<br>4.Naronut4<br>5.Naronut5<br>6.Serenut11<br>7. Serenut14 |
| Vegetables         | Indigenous Vegetables | 1.Egg plant<br>2.Cow peas<br>3.Okra<br>4.Otigo diri                                               |
|                    | Other vegetable       | 1.Tomatoes<br>2.Onions<br>3.Green gram                                                            |

The capacity of VEDCO staff was enhanced in Agroecology (AE). The trainings and workshops deepened the understanding of AE among staff and enhanced integration of the AE principles into VEDCO's extension work. Seventy-three (73) farmer groups were fully equipped with knowledge on Agro-ecological principles and are integrating it in their farming systems to maximize production.

## PUBLIC POLICY ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

The objective for this thematic area is to improve farmers' Public Policy Engagement and Advocacy This will lead to farmers' participation in policy processes, and influencing development agenda.

### **Vibrant farmer-based structures built to influence agriculture policy processes and programs**

VEDCO uses diet champions, Community Resource person (CRPs) and Community Based Trainers (CBTs) as community advocacy champions. One hundred and eighteen (118) advocacy champions influenced communities to produce and consume nutrient dense foods (OSP, Iron rich beans and Local vegetables). In addition, the advocacy champions drew clear advocacy issues from their communities and engaged the duty bearers

With support from PELUM, 2 VEDCO staff (F=1, M=1) gained knowledge and skills on budget advocacy, analysis and monitoring of public expenditure. The staff used the skills acquired to train 110 advocacy champions (55 females and 55 male) on advocacy to influence budgeting and budgeting processes in their communities. The training equipped advocacy champions with skills in identification of key advocacy issues; advocacy techniques, evidence-based approach for appropriate response, advocacy messaging and packaging and development of advocacy strategies and how to convey the message. Forty (40, male 20 and female 20) advocacy champions in Gulu district developed an advocacy message (in the table below) on indigenous vegetables which they used to engage local leaders in the sub county and district budget conferences and sectoral committee meetings to include indigenous vegetables in the FY 2020/2021 budget.

*'According to Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2016, the stunting prevalence is still disturbingly high in Acholi (36.9%) compared to Lango (27.1%). Gulu district with the highest stunting prevalence rate at 2.58% in Acholi sub region. As diet champions we are promoting community-based nutrition initiatives that are fostering production and consumption of traditional indigenous and nutritious vegetables. We therefore request you the sub county and district local governments to prioritize indigenous vegetable production and consumption so as to reduce the stunting prevalence rate in Gulu district by increasing the budget allocation to support production and consumption of local vegetables and access to quality seed and by continuously sensitizing the households to at least consume local vegetables on a daily basis'. The advocacy message was used during the dialogue sessions at sub county and district levels.*

In addition, 60 youth representatives (males 30 and females 30) from the host and refugee communities in Lamwo and Agago districts participated in 3 sub county and district budget formulation meetings with the objective of influencing inclusion of youth livelihoods issues in

2020/2021 financial budgets and implementation plans. The youth were promised to be supported in the next budget (FY 2021/22)

With support from HarvestPlus, VEDCO developed a drama skit that was played on local radios to create awareness on the nutrition benefits of iron beans and orange sweet potatoes in the fight against COVID-19. In addition, 224 radio spot messages were re-run and 7 radio talk shows were conducted on local radios in eastern and northern Uganda to sensitize the community to safeguard against the COVID 19 virus and to prioritizing health and access to nutritious food

***Organize synergy building meetings to develop an advocacy agenda on issues affecting agriculture.***

VEDCO is an active member of the district Covid 19 task forces in her area of operation and actively participated in the COVID 19 regular meetings organised by the task force. In addition, VEDCO attended quarterly technical planning committee meetings at the sub county and district levels and updated stakeholders on the progress of her project activities and future plans. VEDCO is also a member of the livelihood sector group in Palabek settlement and at national level, participated in the monthly livelihood meetings and took part in making resolutions. From her engagements with UNHCR, two (2) tonnes of maize seed was allocated to VEDCO and distributed to youth who established 200 acres of maize.

***VEDCO subscribed and participated in key strategic networks and alliances***

In 2020, VEDCO remained an active member in key strategic networks and alliances: UFAAS, PELUM, FRA and UWASNET

In partnership with SG2000, Farm radio, Makerere University, Uganda Land care, Farmer's media and AFAAS, VEDCO actively participated in organizing the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Agricultural Extension Symposium that was held as an e-Event ***for resilient agriculture and food systems***. The e-symposium week included synergetic Webinars, discussions on different media channels and launch of the e-Registration for AEAS actors, among others. The e symposium provided space for the different AEAS actors and stakeholders to deliberate on how AEAS can effectively and efficiently contribute to national agriculture and food systems, amidst the natural calamities of COVID-19, Floods, Landslides, Desert Locusts among others.

VEDCO took part in a regional meeting for UWASNET members in the Central region that took place on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 at Golf course Hotel in Kampala to draw a road map for the 2020 National WASH CSO Forum that was scheduled for September 2020 and this promoted partnerships between members and other stakeholders in the sector.

In addition, VEDCO participated in national agroecology Symposium that was organised by PELUM and the On-line virtual Community of Practice organized by the McKnight regional team for East and southern Africa.

***Participation in formulation, analysis and review of agriculture related policies and agenda***

VEDCO participated in the National stakeholder's consultation meeting on the draft Climate Change Bill 2020 that was hosted by PELUM and partners for resilience (Cordaid) at Hotel Africana. The aim of the meeting was to review the latest draft of the National Climate Change



Bill and seek for stakeholders' input. The bill was first read in Parliament on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2020. Currently, the bill is before the cabinet of Uganda pending to be tabled before parliament for voting to be passed as an act.

**Facilitate farmers' participation in key national, regional and international events (agricultural trade shows, international year of family farming, National Environment day).**

3 farmer market days for fresh and diverse foods and seeds were organized in the parishes of Bardege, Owor and Laliya, with the objective of marketing local vegetable seed producers and fresh seeds for local vegetables. This was the first of its kind in the region where only local vegetables were exhibited in rural setting unlike other exhibitions that are normally conducted in urban areas. The activity also involved visiting stalls with different local vegetable varieties. The events provided a platform to local vegetable seed producers to explain to the stakeholders the importance of using quality seed, practices of seed production, production and marketing challenges and picked lessons from the successes and good practices of other farmers. The event was graced by 338 participants with 108 males and 230 females and these included district and sub county officials, farmers, and value chain actors.

VEDCO participated in the national celebrations for International Women's Day celebration took place on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020 in Palabek Gem Sub County, Palabek Gem primary school, Lamwo district. The event was jointly organized by the refugee settlement and the district local government to celebrate the amazing social, cultural, economic and political achievements of women and campaigned for greater progress towards gender equality. Though the global theme was "An equal World is an Enabled World", the theme selected for the national celebration was "Celebrating 25 years of the 1995 constitution: Milestones on Promoting Gender Equality and Women empowerment in Uganda".

## **HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO DISASTER RISKS AND EMERGENCIES**

This objective for this thematic area is to enhance Response to Humanitarian, Disaster and Emergencies. This will lead to an early warning system and contingency plans in communities to handle shocks and risks.

Since the outbreak of violence in South Sudan in July 2016, Uganda has been receiving an unprecedented number of refugees fleeing from fighting, violence, drought and famine. As of April 2018, a total of 1,462,886 refugees and asylum seekers are recorded in the country, making Uganda the largest refugee hosting country in Africa and one of the world's fastest-growing refugee crises. Most of these refugees (1,061,892) come from South Sudan and are mainly settled in West Nile districts.

However, the refugee caseload and new arrivals continues to put enormous pressure on the country's resources, in particular on land, basic service delivery systems (including health, education, water and sanitation). Refugee hosting districts face general challenges in responding to the refugee crisis, mainly as a result of limited resilience to shocks (due to poor planning, coordination, management and delivery capacities) and insufficient economic opportunities. Financial resources at local government level are unavailable to cater for the recovery and development needs of the rapidly growing populations. At the same time, the humanitarian

response efforts remain insufficient to provide emergency assistance to the increasing numbers of refugees, as well as opportunities for their self-reliance.

to strengthen the resilience of refugees, host community members, district local government to cope with and recover from the impact of the large influx of refugees, Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns- with support from APT and funding from DFID, is implementing a project aimed at Skilling youth for sustainable livelihoods in refugee hosting communities, Uganda.

At the start of the project, a baseline assessment was conducted in Lamwo district among the refugee and the host communities where VEDCO is implementing the project. The aim of the assessment was to assess the current status of beneficiaries that will provide a basis for evaluation of the project in meeting the initial objectives and impact of the project on individual beneficiaries and their communities.

The findings revealed that with an exception of the host community of Lamwo, more than 54% of the respondents reported that they accessed information though the percentage is high among the refugee community of Lamwo (82.6%) compared to 54.5% host community in Agago. Agago district had the highest number of respondents who participated in the extension activities on average 1.9 compared to 1.6 and 1.3 among the refugee and host communities in Lamwo respectively.

The baseline findings furthermore showed that, less than 25% of the respondents in all the study areas had some business skills training. Among those with business skills training, 33.3% had been trained in book keeping and VSLA in Lamwo refugee community, while in the host communities of Lamwo and Agago, respondents had been trained in marketing (20%), Business planning and development (10.5%) and Business planning and development (42.9%) & business expansion (28.6%) respectively. The major provider of business skills training among the refugee communities in Lamwo was CESVI (80%), while in the host communities of Lamwo and Agago 30% and 71.4% respectively.

Overall, the majority (more than 80%) of the respondents in the focus areas had not received apprenticeship; especially among the Lamwo host community all the respondents had not received any apprenticeship while the refugee community in Lamwo had received some apprenticeship training in bakery. Meanwhile in Agago, the youth respondents had received apprenticeship opportunities in saloon, computer and welding skills.

More than 93% of the respondents in all the study areas reported that they had not attained leadership skills, the less than 10% of the respondents who had attained training skill in leadership reported receiving leadership mentorship in Leadership management for the refugee community in Lamwo and business planning and development for the community in Agago district.

Among the host communities of Lamwo the major livelihoods in descending order are crop production (41.2%), Local brew processing (26.5%), livestock production and trade and charcoal burning as reported by 5.9%, 2.9% and 2.9% respectively. In the host community of Lamwo and Agago the major two activities include crop production accounting for 87.5% and 78.8% followed by Livestock production (12.5% and 12.1%), respectively.

The proportion of the unemployed was high in host community of Lamwo with all not employed followed by Agago (75.8%) and Lamwo refugee community (70.6%). The contributors to the

income in the year are; cow peas and goats each at UGX 280,000 and UGX 180,000 respectively among the male refugee community in Lamwo. In the Lamwo host community the major two contributors include; simsim at UGX 21,000 and UGX 19,000 and maize at UGX 17,200 and UGX 16,140 for male and female respectively while in Agago it is simsim contributing UGX 200,000 and UGX 300,000 to male and female's income respectively and goat at UGX 290,000 to males incomes only. In regard to off farm activities, casual labour and local brew are the major contributors each generating UGX 600,000 and UGX 511, 200 for the male refugees community in Lamwo, while among the female refugees, its local brew with UGX 423,300r whereas in Agago, the major contributor are saloon (UGX 480,000) among the females and brick laying (UGX 450,000) among the males.

All the host community of Lamwo rated their product market to be excellent where the refugee in Lamwo community rated it as unsatisfactory (52.4%). In Agago, an equal proportion rated it satisfactory and unsatisfactory (36.7%). In addition, Agago district still had the highest proportion of respondents who rated the product market poor.

With an exception of Lamwo refugee community, more than 50% of the host community in Lamwo and Agago reported that their food situation was satisfactory, although higher in Lamwo host community compared to Agago that was 71.4% and 51.5% respectively. The major coping strategies among the refugee communities in Lamwo included; provision of labour (38.2%), those that relied on relief (29.4%), on market (23.5%) and those that sold local brew (14.7%. In the host community of Lamwo the major coping strategies included; provision of labour (85.7%) followed by those who sold household items (14.3%). In Agago district, the major coping strategies included provision of labour (54.5%) and those who relied on market as reported by 57.6% of the respond, Majority of the respondents in the study areas received credit from informal sources and received short term credit of 1 to 6 months as reported by all the respondents in the refugee community of Lamwo and Agago district. It only in the host community of Lamwo that the respondents majorly received short term from 1 to 6 months (66.7%) and medium term between 6 and 3 years (33.3%).

Less than 30% of the respondent in the refugee community of Lamwo owned assets and they owned the following assets as mentioned in descending order that is mobile phone (26.5%), trading stock (14.7%), mattresses (8.8%), bicycle (5.9%) and lastly radio (2.9%). The host community of Lamwo reported owning only mobile phone and was reported by less than 10% of the respondents. There for there is need to empower the communities to gain various skills but not limited to business skills, apprenticeship, mentorship, leader skills but also in information access.

VEDCO intervened and supported 400 youth (M=200 F=200) from the refugee and host communities to identify the best work placement opportunities. The youth were placed by 26 businesses. The placements enhanced the practical experience of the youth in tailoring (12), hair dressing (64), business mentor (1), shoe repair (1), hair cutting (49), horticulture (133), poultry (55), Motor cycle repair (23), Capentary and joinery (12), Piggery (5), and welding (4). The businesses will be supported with appropriate equipments, tools, and materials for training the youth. MoUs were signed with businesses to ensure that the working conditions are in line with existing labor law and that youth are not exploited, but receive equal treatment and opportunity. 400 youth, were clustered into 14 VSLA and by the end of the year saved Ugx 24,397,500 and borrowed Ugx 31,414,500. To increase access to financial services, the youth VSLA groups were linked to 4 financial institutions: DFCU, Bank of Africa, Centenary bank and Palabek refugee

settlement SACCO. The capacity of 66 youth representatives (M=34 F=32) was enhanced in advocacy and actively engaged local government stakeholders on inclusion in Youth Livelihood Program, product and marketing grant support, Coffee Development project, operation wealth creation, commercial services support, Micro small and medium enterprise development, livelihood restocking, community driven development grant, special grant for people with disabilities. 391 youth with 200 males and 191 females in business and entrepreneurship skills

Skilling for the betterment!! I am Rackara Willy from Patongo town council, AGAGO DISTRICT. "I am 20 years old. I was mobilized by the chairperson LC1 of my village who forwarded my name to the sub county for verification and profiling. After selection we were given different courses to be trained on. I decided to go for motor cycle repairs because there is ready market for motorcycle spare parts and the workshops are nearer to my home. I was trained at Celest and sons motor cycle garage where I was given employment after the placement. Am currently paid Ugx 125,000 per month. Am also paid daily allowance and at times motivated by clients financially for good work done. I am happy that I can also train other youth from the community, this is the right payback I can give to my people. Willy wants to establish his own garage and spare parts business in future so that he can be wealthy and employ more people in his community just like other businesses are doing. Willy is so grateful for the project for coming to his rescue and for giving him the future.



## **VEDCO INTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (SYSTEM LEADERSHIP)**

The strategic objective for this thematic area is to improve VEDCO's capacity to deliver agricultural services. This will lead to an effective, and efficient Organisation performing all its functions

### **Institutional policies and systems developed and strengthened**

To ensure VEDCO's completeness in the market, a safe guarding policy was developed for her commitment to prevent harm, and to promote the health and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The policy was designed to inform, guide and direct VEDCO's staff and volunteers to ensure that they do not expose children, young people or vulnerable adults to the risk of discrimination, neglect, injury or abuse (harm) and that any concerns/issues of discrimination against children, young people or vulnerable adults are addressed and reported to the appropriate authorities. A total of 15 staff (male 10 and female 5) were oriented on the safe guarding policy

2 staff orientation meetings were held in Kamuli and Dokolo regional offices for both the old and new staff. A total of 24 staffs (F=5, M=19) were oriented on all VEDCO policies, procedures and systems. Staff adherence to institutional policies and systems greatly improved and contributed to better employee performance

To ensure quality service delivery, three (3) monitoring visits/meetings were conducted in 3 regions of VEDCO operation areas by Management team (F=3, M=1) to follow-up on staff adherence to VEDCO policies and systems. This continued to strengthen the organization's policies and systems put in place.

With the strengthened relationship with donors/partners and strategic networks/alliances the capacity of 35 VEDCO's staff (Male 30 and female 5) was enhanced in data management, agro ecological intensification practices, mainstreaming gender and climate change in projects, Advocacy & budgeting monitoring, good agronomic practices on biofortified crops, Farming as a Business (FAAB), VSLA methodology, Nutrition, marketing and negotiation. This greatly enhanced the staffs' skills and competencies to deliver effective and efficient extension services to farming communities.

### **Board of Directors support to VEDCO on delivering its mandate**

Due to the out-break of covid-19 in march 2020 only 3(three)board of director's meetings were held. The meetings were held online via zoom(virtually) and were attended by Five (5) members of the Board (F=2, M=3) and four (4) members of the management team F=3, M=1). During the meetings the board approved VEDCO's five (5) year Strategic plan 2020 - 2024, the workplan and budget for 2020, VEDCO's safeguarding policy and commissioned VEDCO's new home in Kamuli on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

On 16<sup>th</sup> December,2020 while observing the standard Operating procedures, a staff reflection and learning meeting was organized in Kamuli district and 2(two)representative of the VEDCO Board of Directors (F=1, M=1), a former Chairman Dr. Ssewanyana Livingstone a human rights activist and 42 staff (F=12, M=30) from different regions shared different developmental issues and new ideas.