

Promoting Integrated Sustainable Vegetable and Fruit Production for Poverty Reduction

Background and challenges:

Agriculture is the leading sector in Uganda's economy and is central for sustaining the livelihoods of poor rural people. In Soroti, agriculture supports over 90% of the rural population. However, production has declined due to the limited capacity of farmers, their poor access to markets, farm inputs and credit, use of inferior crop varieties, drought, poor crop management and soil infertility. Thus they are unable to re-initiate the production cycle or expand the area under cultivation and grow cash crops to raise income. The decrease in production and incomes has especially hurt households affected by HIV/AIDS who are finding it increasingly difficult to care for orphans and vulnerable children.



Passion fruit trees affected by drought

Project: Promoting Integrated Sustainable Vegetable and Fruit Production for Poverty Reduction project responds to these challenges by empowering smallholder households to scale up agricultural production and market access for improved food security and income generation. The project will address the farmers' livelihood needs by enabling them to: (i) access relevant information, improved seeds and inputs such as pesticides and farm tools; (ii) acquire and apply new knowledge and skills in modern agriculture, including appropriate farming practices, post-



Improved crop variety of groundnuts

harvest handling and quality control skills through training; (iii) access accurate and timely market information; (iv) organise themselves into groups to take advantage of economies of scale; (v) understand basic savings practices; and (vi) get introduced to solar-powered water pumps, which are economical, reliable, easy to sustain and necessary for growing crops during the dry seasons.

Impact: The expected impact includes: (i) increased production and incomes through transformation of

subsistence farming into agribusiness and better access to markets; (ii) food security; (iii) self-reliance and strengthened capacity of households; (iv) improved nutritional benefits and reduction of disease; (v) environmental protection due to improved practices; (vi) improved knowledge, skills, social networks, self-esteem; and (vi) overall poverty alleviation and wellbeing.

Risk: To mitigate any internal risks, proper coordination of timing of funds with planting season is pertinent. Other risks might include climate and beneficiary engagement, all of which are addressed and mitigated by the project.

Sustainability: Sustainability of the project is ensured by the participatory approach and training of beneficiaries, and involvement of local people in the implementation. Moreover, the project responds to the needs of the local community, voiced during the rural participatory appraisal, community engagement and consultative meeting organised by Innovative Youth with Action Uganda (IYAU) in May 2015 in the project area, and it complements the Government's development programmes aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Based on experiences, lessons learned and consultations with local people, the project could eventually be replicated in other villages with similar agro-ecological characteristics and problems.

Duration: 3 years

Cost: \$58,847

Project area: the Eastern Ugandan Aukot, Awaliwali and Gweri parishes, Gweri Sub-county, Soroti county of Soroti district.

Target group: 450 poor, smallholder women farmers, 150 households from each parish, including woman-headed households, single mothers, widows and HIV/AIDS affected families. More than 5,000 people are also expected to benefit indirectly from the project. These will include: about 3,150 children including orphans; participants in awareness seminars and workshops; and local people visiting project sites.

Phases: preparatory (1 month); implementation (2-12 months); evaluation and reporting (1 month).

Partners: IYAU, Gweri Neighbours and Friends, local people, and Local Council Administration

Personnel: The activities will also include the necessary management and coordination functions such as technical supervision and coordination, financial management, work plan, reporting functions and monitoring and evaluation of the project. This will be covered primarily by the steering committee, consisting of five members - one IYAU member, one Local Council representative, two community members, and a project coordinator – who will oversee, guide and direct the project. Other technical staff will be hired on a volunteer basis.

IYAU: Innovative Youth Action for Uganda (IYAU) is a non-profit community-based organisation registered with the Soroti Municipal Council dedicated to promoting sustainable socio-economic development in Uganda, using a participatory approach, that is socially acceptable, gender sensitive and environmentally friendly. The programme areas are: environment and production, education and training, livelihoods and economic empowerment, public health and sanitation, job creation and enterprise development, gender issues, and orphans and vulnerable children, while focusing on local participation, sustainability and replicability.

