

Catalysing the Enhancement of Livelihoods in West Nile and Acholi Subregions



**Stories of Increased Production, Markets and Better
Maternal, Child Health and Nutrition Outcomes**

Implemented by



THE
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FEDERATION



A MAP SHOWING DINU-LEWA AREAS OF OPERATION

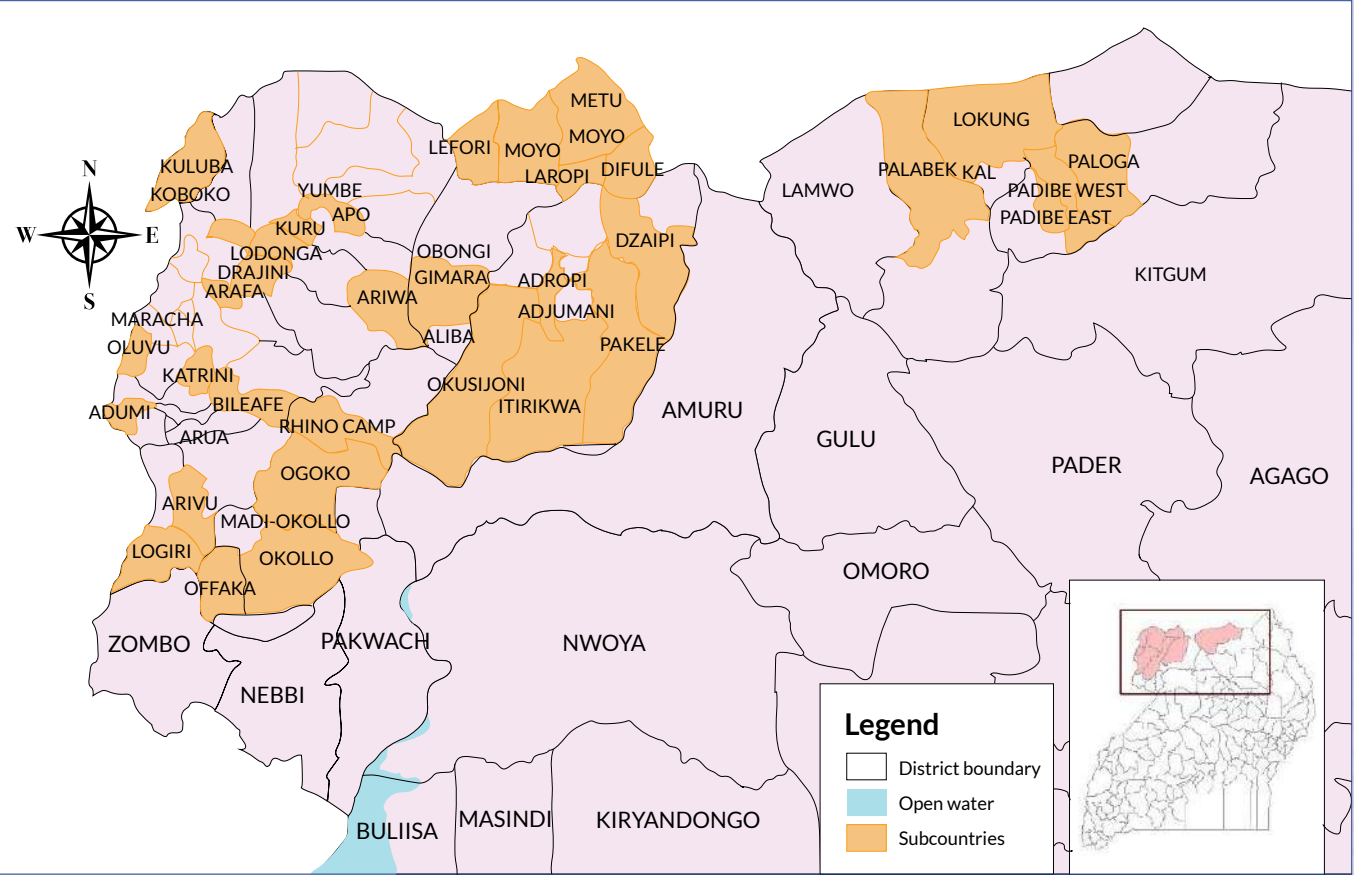


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Entrenching the Culture of Farming as a Business

Engineers from Musa Body Machinery demonstrating to farmers how a thresher machine operates. Throughout the project, such initiatives geared towards orientating farmers organised under their respective farmer groups towards elevating from peasantry to farming as a business have been done. From introducing basic mechanisation such as this thresher machine, to consolidating and supporting farmer groups where they access quality assured seeds, collectively bargain for better prices for their produce and farming inputs as well as peer to peer learning and mentorship, more and more farmers are now able to earn a decent income for their labor and are now providing better livelihoods for their families.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEW	Agricultural Extension Worker
BoQs	Bill of Quantities
BMI	Body Mass Index
CIP	International Potato Centre
COVID-19	Corona Virial Disease 2019
DCA	DanChurchAid
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DINU	Development initiative for Northern Uganda
Demo	Demonstration
EU	European Union
E-Voucher	Electronic Voucher
FM	Frequency Modulation
FP	Family Planning
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation
HCT	HIV Counselling and Testing
HH	Household
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency syndrome
HPA	Humanitarian Partnership Agreement
ICT	Information, Communication Technology
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
ISSD	Integrated Seed Sector Development
LEWA	Livelihood Enhancement for West Nile and Acholi

LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MIYCAN	Maternal, Infant, Young Child, and Adolescent Nutrition
mls	Milliliters
MUAC	Mid Upper Arm Circumference
NARO	National Agriculture Research Organisation
No	Number
PHH	Post-Harvest Handling
PG	Producer groups
PWDs	Persons With Disabilities
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
SMS	Short Message Services
SoPS	Standard Operating Procedures
ToT	Trainer of Trainees
NDP III	National Development Plan III
UGX	Ugandan Shillings
UNAP II	Uganda Nutrition Action Plan 2
UPMB	Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau
VEA	Village Enterprise Agents
VHT	Village Health Teams
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
ZARDI	Zonal Agricultural Research Development Institutions



Construction of valley dams to provide water during droughts



Valley dams have been constructed across all areas where the DINU-LEWA project is being implemented. While most parts of Northern Uganda support crop cultivation, the dry spells hit very hard with crops drying up and livestock lacking water. The valley dams are a key intervention to support irrigation as well as ensure a steady supply of vegetables such as boo, okra, tomatoes, egg plants, etc., which are critical in supporting good production and nutrition practices. For example, Ribebe Women’s Group VSLA is happy with the valley dam. To ensure good maintenance, they have formed a sub committee enforce proper and sustainable use of the dam so that it can serve them for long.

FOREWORD BY THE COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE



Ms Adriana Franco Chitanana
Country Representative, LWF

In January 2020, under the DINU-LEWA project with support from European Union (EU) and Government of Uganda (GoU), Lutheran World Federation (LWF) alongside consortium partners, Danish Church Aid (DCA), Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau (UPMB), and Mukwano Industries Uganda Limited (MIUL) embarked on a journey to inspire communities for inclusive sustainable development by contributing to stability in Northern Uganda, eradicating poverty and undernutrition and strengthening the foundation for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development. It therefore, gives me great pleasure to present to you our project report which highlights success stories from the communities, and resultant outcomes that the project has created since January 2020.

“Throughout the project, we deliberately sought to identify, train and work with community champions to ensure that every intervention is owned by the community.”

I am happy to report that throughout the project, we consistently achieved and caused real impact among the beneficiaries, despite starting out under the very challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated containment measures. As you will read in this report, most of the successes achieved were a result of collaboration and building synergies between partners, projects and programs; working with and through established government structures. Active participation of private sector helped accelerate adoption of farming as a business especially for farmers involved in oilseed.

From the onset, we were cognizant that support, goodwill and buy-in for the project—from village level to the highest levels of government—were key because any impactful intervention had to be buttressed in the communities. Consequently, interventions were whenever deemed fit continually adjusted to reflect new realities in the field as well as feedback from the community and our field officers.

Throughout the project, we deliberately sought to identify, train and work with community champions to ensure that every intervention is owned by the community. As such, we

are confident that the changes we have catalyzed can be sustained beyond the duration of the project. Despite the achievements, we acknowledge that more still needs to be done. We are hopeful that the successes, learnings, challenges, and mitigations applied shall contribute to a body of knowledge which other like-minded actors can utilize to design even better interventions as we work towards enhancing livelihoods.

I also wish to express our sincere appreciation to the government of Uganda, the European Union and the relevant local governments, staff from the respective consortium partners and all partners and collaborators who made this possible. In a special way, I salute the people of West Nile and Northern Uganda for their remarkable resilience and zeal to usher in a new chapter of progress after many years of interrupted development due to instabilities.

SYNOPSIS OF DINU-LEWA CONSORTIUM AND THEORY OF CHANGE

PROJECT

Livelihoods Enhancement for West Nile and Acholi (LEWA)

SLOGAN

Inspiring communities for inclusive sustainable development

OVERALL GOAL

To contribute to stability in Northern Uganda, eradicate poverty & under-nutrition & strengthen the foundation for sustainable & inclusive socio-economic development.

TOTAL DURATION

36 Months

FUNDING

EUR 5,578,948.00

PROJECT TARGET

56,000 Households

TARGET GROUPS

- Smallholder Farmers
- Youth (18-30 years)
- Children under 5
- Women
- Farmers' groups
- Private sector players
- Other Vulnerable households affected by nodding disease, HIV/AIDS and the disabled.

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

LWF (Lutheran World Federation)
UPMB (Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau)
DCA (DanChurchAid)
MIUL (Mukwano Industries Uganda Limited)

FACT SHEET

Result 1

Increased production of diversified food among smallholder farmers

Intermediate Results

- ▶ Increased adaption of modern practices for enhanced production & productivity of diverse food crops & livestock
- ▶ Enhanced access to agricultural inputs & output markets for small-scale farmers
- ▶ Increased capacity & participation of farmer groups & other small market operators along the value chain in saving & credit schemes

Result 2

Increased market accessibility for smallholder farmers & other value chain

Intermediate Results

- ▶ Enhanced linkages between smallholder farmers, agro-processors and market operators.

Result 3

Improved Maternal, Child Health & Nutrition

Intermediate Results

- ▶ Increased adoption of good nutrition and health practices in the communities
- ▶ Increased access and utilisation of family planning services among 56,000 households.

Additional Notes: Understanding the theory of change

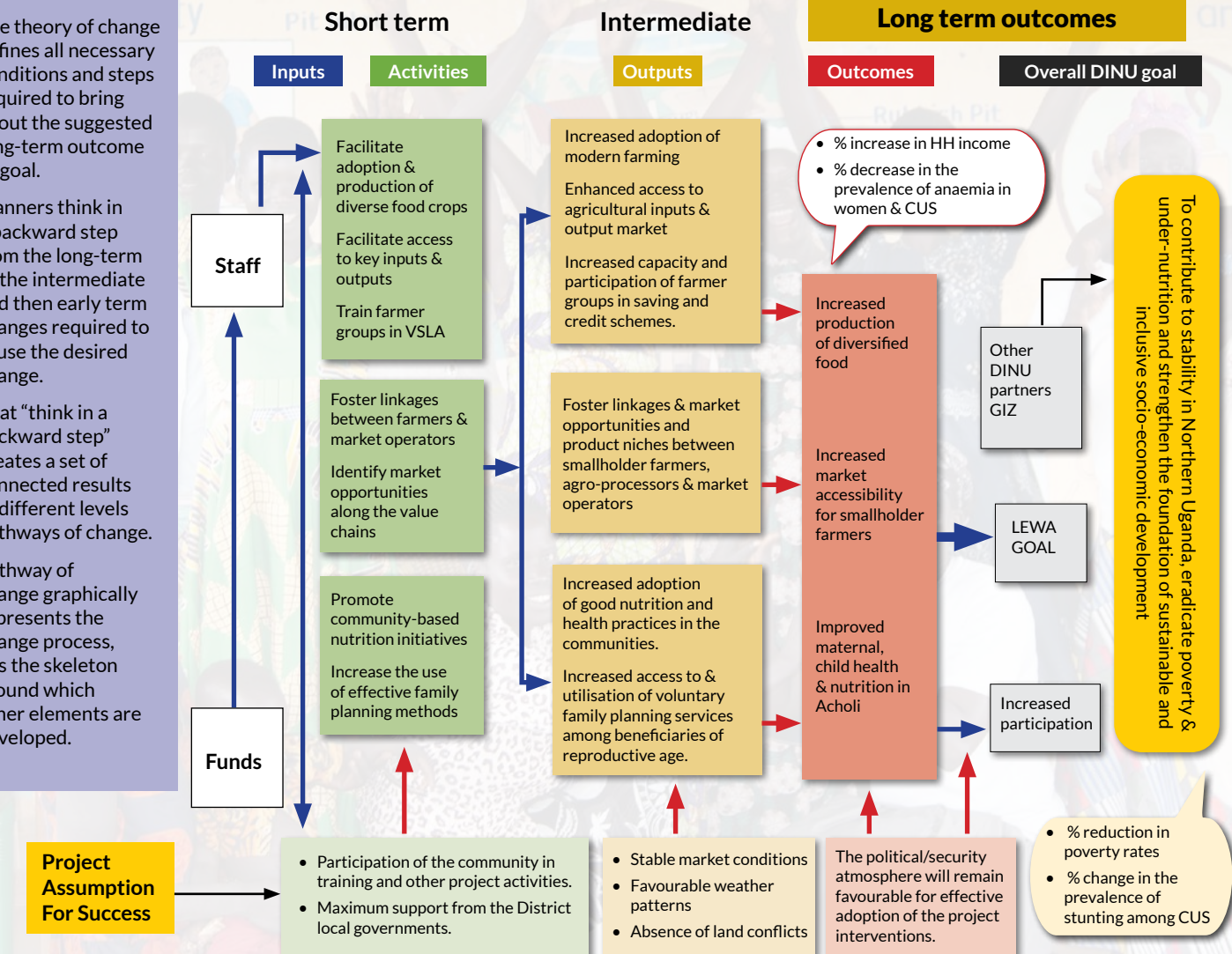
The theory of change defines all necessary conditions and steps required to bring about the suggested long-term outcome or goal.

Planners think in a backward step from the long-term to the intermediate and then early term changes required to cause the desired change.

That "think in a backward step" creates a set of connected results at different levels pathways of change.

Pathway of change graphically represents the change process, it is the skeleton around which other elements are developed.

DINU-LEWA THEORY OF CHANGE



Market Stalls as Enablers of Enterprise Opportunities and Inclusivity for Women and PWDs

Jeniffer Lamara, 43, is one of the women operating a stall at the recently opened Ribebe market in Lokung subcounty. As a PWD, she is happy that the newly constructed market has a ramp and is accessible and user-friendly for people like her.

'My small business is helping to provide for me and my family's basic needs. Before the market was constructed, I used to operate under a tree by the roadside. Stray animals used to eat my goods. I also missed work on rainy days and my customers ran away because I was inconsistent. Now that I am settled, I am working hard and expanding my business because I have no more excuses for missing work.'

Construction of the markets by DINU-LEWA has provided a lifetime opportunity for Jeniffer and many other women, most of whom are hitting two birds with one stone—from their own backyard gardens, they are able to have a balanced diet to keep their family healthy and as well sell the surplus vegetables in their own stalls without need for middlemen who would otherwise deplete their earnings.



Vegetable Backyard Gardening: A potential game changer for maternal, child health and nutrition outcomes in Northern Uganda

Forty six-year-old George Enyang, a VHT member from Paloga subcounty in Lamwo District is perhaps best-placed to visualise for us the impact of backyard vegetable gardening.

"Before this project, there was little or no vegetable gardening. Customarily, our cultivation lands are usually some kilometres away from our homesteads, therefore, we left our livestock to freely roam around the homesteads. From the training and sensitisations we received about balanced diet under our care groups, there was attitude and mindset change. When our members started fencing off little plots in the backyards to grow different vegetables, pumpkins, paw paws and other healthy foods that take a short time to mature, our children, as well as, pregnant and lactating mothers became healthier. Community members who do not belong to care groups have since adopted the practice, while others are able to sell the surplus vegetables to earn an income." According to Etyang, if the gospel of vegetable backyard gardening can be spread far and wide, a generation of children in northern Uganda shall be saved from malnutrition and stunted growth.

RESULT 1

We set out to achieve

Increased production of diversified food among smallholder farmers

Intermediate Results

- Increased adaption of modern practices for enhanced production & productivity of diverse food crops & livestock
- Enhanced access to agricultural inputs & output markets for small-scale farmers
- Increased capacity & participation of farmer groups & other small market operators along the value chain in saving & credit schemes

Project Results at a Glance

Planned Outputs	Status of Implementation		
Output	Target	Achieved	%
OUTPUT 1: Increased Adaption of modern practices for enhanced production and productivity of diverse food crops and livestock			
Smallholder farmers trained in modern farming practices (GAP, PHH, FAAB)	25,200	23,510	93
Farmers' demonstration sites established	840	824	98
Smallholder farmers receiving agricultural farm inputs	25,200	20,163	80
Extension workers trained in modern agriculture	90	90	100
Rain water harvesting systems constructed	26	22	85
Smallholder farmers supported to establish kitchen gardens	14,501	12,549	87
OUTPUT 2: Increased access to key input and output markets for women and men small-scale farmers			
Seed multiplication gardens established	123	154	125
Quality Declared Seed (QDS) producer groups and farmers identified and profiled	123	25	20
OUTPUT 3: Increased capacity in community saving and credit schemes of farmer groups and small market operators along value chains			
No. VSLA supported to register	840	840	100
No VSLAs Digitized	400	317	79
VSLAs linked to financial service providers	400	268	67

KICA BER: IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH SAVING

“Whenever any of us has a problem, members respond faster than they usually would”

Kica Ber is a village savings and loans association (VSLA) in Padibe Subcounty, Lamwo District. The group was formed two years ago with the support the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), DanChurchAid (DCA), the Uganda Protestant Medical Bureaus (UPMB) and Mukwano Industries Uganda Limited (MIUL), through the Development Initiative for Northern Uganda Livelihoods Enhancement for West Nile and Acholi (DINU-LEWA) project, to increase farmers' access to finance and markets.

The group aims at empowering its members to become large-scale individual commercial producers of both soya bean quality declared seed and sunflower. Towards this end, the group dedicated one and two acres, respectively for soya bean seed and sunflower demonstration farms for its

members to get a hands-on experience on good farming practices for optimal yields in their private engagements.

In its first year of production in its demonstration farms, the group reaped 355 kg of soya bean seed from a single harvest, and 900 kg in the first harvest of sunflower, and 700 kg in the second. The soya bean seed is sold to farmers, while the sunflower is sold as grain to Mukwano Industries Uganda Limited.

From similar ventures at individual level, members of the group have been able to significantly boost their livelihoods. Seventy-nine-year-old Pasca Aya, a founding member, has been able to acquire livestock and construct a tin-roofed house. The group, she particularly points out, has fostered a sense of unity among its members. “Whenever any of us has a problem, members

respond faster than they usually would,” she says.

Joseph Okeny, a 42-year-old founding member of the group, says, besides the skills they have acquired to produce sunflower and soya beans, the group has made it very easy for him to pay school fees for his two children.

“The group allows me up to three month to pay back any money I borrow. So, whenever, I do not have money for school fees, I borrow from the group”.

Maureen Amiru, a 75-year-old member of the group always faced challenges in getting foodstuff. “But after the first disbursement from the VSLA, I was able to restock food”, she says. “I was also able to borrow from the group to invest in my private production”.

Sharon Lamaro, a 24-year-old member is now able to pay her children’s schoolfees in time. She has also been able to purchase a bicycle which has eased her means of transport.



Fifty-five-year-old Nora Aya Leo (R) of Padibe Subcounty, Lamwo District is a founding member of Kica Ber VSLA. She thinks of the VSLA as her life. Since joining Kica Ber VSLA two years ago, she has not only been able to comfortably pay her children’s fees, but has also acquired livestock and a bicycle.

THE POWER OF NUMBERS: ACT SEED DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Aliamu, Cupiria, Timbakwa (ACT) Seed Development Group is a community-based organisation in Yumbe District that engages in the production of high quality declared seed. The group, a merger of three independent farming groups from the villages of Aliamu in Arubako Parish of Drajini Subcounty, Cupiria in Aupi Parish of Arafu Subcounty, and Timbakwa in Yiba Parish of Lodonga Subcounty, was formed in 2012 under the advice of the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) to increase farmers’ production capacity, access to markets and attract partners. The group comprises a total of 104 members, 67 of whom are men, 37 women, out of these, 35 are youth and 5 PWDs.

The group receives foundation seed from breeders (research centres) which it sells to its member farmers to multiply, before then selling them to majorly the local government and non-government organisations. Through its production manager, the group offers advice to its member farmers on the optimal farming practices of each crop seed being developed. “I visit each of

our member farmer’s gardens two weeks from the time of planting, and one last time just before harvesting. In these visits, I am accompanied by an agricultural officer, who offers technical

support to the farmers”, explains Patrick Ayikobua, the current production manager.

In 2015, the group put up a 50 metric ton storage facility for its produce. To ensure quality of the seeds produced and stored in the facility, the seeds, upon receipt, are checked for impurities and tested for moisture levels before storage. Despite this, the farmers continued to suffer losses due to the poor condition of the facility. In 2020, for instance, the group lost over two tonnes of beans due to high temperature in the facility. At the time, the facility had no ceiling and its roof was leaking.

With support from the project, the dilapidated storage facility has since been renovated. Not only was it reroofed, a ceiling was added, the floor screeded and the entire facility repainted. DCA provided over 30 pieces of pallets to reduce the risk of contamination of the produce in the facility. Through trainings, the group’s capacity to engage in value addition of crops such as soya bean, whose foundation seed DCA provides, has been built. This is in addition to the group’s capacity to mill between one to three tonnes of cassava.

DCA has also incorporated the idea of a savings and foundation seed loan scheme to the group. According to Isaac Tooko, the group’s general secretary, in the last declaration of its funds to its members, the group had raised seven million shillings in savings up from three million shillings in the previous declaration. The farmers who save with the group automatically qualify to receive foundation seed for the equivalent of their savings. The group also extends monetary loans to its members from these savings.

“DCA has also incorporated the idea of a savings and foundation seed loan scheme to the group.”

HOW KOJIBA CARE GROUP IS WORKING TO CHANGE ENTRENCHED CULTURAL PRACTICES TO IMPROVE LIVELIHOODS IN GOJURU WARD, YUMBE DISTRICT

Blackman Sadiq Swaid is a VHT in Gojuru ward. He takes his volunteer role very seriously. He is very committed and enthusiastic to see his community prosper. He knows that the family unit is the gateway to unlocking the good life including good nutrition practices, family planning, household income as well as general well-being. But he is not yet happy with how his community is responding to programs such as DINU-LEWA that are looking to actualize the enhancement of livelihoods.

‘When we go out to sensitise members in our community, it is mostly only women that are cooperative. The men are mostly a no-show.’ He adds that, ‘when you invite the men to the meetings, they simply cry of poverty and claim that the ‘useless meetings’ will waste their time instead of being at work looking for money. I also apportion a big share of the blame to politicians. I think they have worsened the situation because they always pay something for their political meetings, so men are not interested in our kind of meetings because they do not expect to receive anything. They do not value the knowledge.’

Despite the slow adoption by men, the care group is none the less registering positive outcomes.

‘Before this project, whenever a family cooked some precious dish like meat or fish, the children would be lucky to feed on only soup. The meat was strictly for adults. But nowadays the children are also enjoying the meat. We have learnt how to prepare a balanced diet and malnutrition has reduced in most of the homes that are cooperating with the care groups,’ says Wafoyo Lily, a member of the care group. She is also an LC3 councillor.

Ikoru Hamida, the chairperson of the care group adds that, ‘We received MUAC tapes in May 2022 and we regularly go around the village checking the

“When we go out to sensitise members in our community, it is mostly only women that are cooperative”



Review of progress: An interactive session of consortium partners and members of Kojiba care group, Gojuru ward in Yumbe district

children and for those we find underweight, we advise the mothers accordingly and sometimes demonstrate to them how to prepare a balanced diet. We haven’t found any severe case so far and all cases we have found are manageable.’

They advise organisations that when designing projects such as DINU-LEWA, there should be special interventions that target men to unlearn some of the negative cultural misconceptions so as to change their behaviour and know that helping out their wives and being supportive does not make them less of a man.

Lily also reported a big challenge with family planning adoption because of religious reasons. The area is predominantly Muslim and the religion forbids it. The few women that practice family planning do so in hiding without the knowledge of their husbands and this has greatly affected its effectiveness.

Cognizant of this hurdle, UPMB devised some measures to counter the circumstances that they found in the field. Nuturinda Penlope of UPMB

says, ‘we have trained some VHTs in simple family planning methods like Sayana which they can give out discreetly because the women need it.’

To further encourage the community’s acceptance and adoption of family planning, UPMB is working with some people of influence to help in the advocacy.

‘We have identified and trained family planning champions including VHTs, political leaders and religious leaders such as Imams and sheikhs to help diffuse the message in the communities. We hope that through continuous messaging at public meetings, places of worship, burials and other public gatherings, the men will step by step become convinced to adopt family planning,’ says Penelope.

She believes that they have already started registering some wins because some Imams are openly encouraging family planning in the mosques – a small step in encouraging change of some cultural practices on the journey to improve livelihoods.

RESULT 2

We set out to achieve

Increased market accessibility for smallholder farmers & other value chain

Intermediate Results

- Enhanced linkages between smallholder farmers, agro-processors and market operators.

Project Results at a Glance

Planned Outputs	Status of Implementation		
Output	Target	Achieved	%
OUTPUT 4: Increased market accessibility for smallholder farmers and other value chain actors			
Market infrastructure constructed/ Rehabilitated	18	15	83
Farmers supported to add Value to their products	2,700	3,360	124
Farmers engaged in Contract Farming.	25,200	21,420	85

ABUNDANT LAND, PLENTIFUL OPPORTUNITIES:

HOW DINU-LEWA'S OPENING OF CULTIVATION LAND IS CREATING NEW COMMERCIAL FARMERS IN NORTHERN UGANDA

‘Even if you told me right now that the DINU-LEWA project has been terminated, I will have no regrets. I have already benefitted in terms of knowledge and skills to set me and my community on the path of prosperity,’ says Jimmy Kamuntu, 31, a member of KicaBer VSLA in Paloga subcounty. He is also the LCI chairperson.

‘As KicaBer VSLA, we have already instituted our own self-governing measures to ensure that we continue with our savings practice and development, long after the project ends,’ Kamuntu says.

Kamuntu does not say all these out of ‘niceness’. He is a true program beneficiary who has witnessed a near paradigm shift both in mindset and practice. He is steadily navigating his

transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture. There are several interventions that he names – transitioning to growing quality declared seeds, local to improved soya bean varieties, that yield more, exposure visits to successful farmers in Lira District and getting advice from agricultural extension workers to specialise in growing two or three crops, instead of jumping from this to that crop every season.

Jimmy Kamuntu in his soya beans garden. His yields are now better after taking advice from the extension workers to focus and growing a few crops



‘Out of the technical advice by the agricultural extension workers, I have zeroed in on commercially planting only maize, beans and soya beans for now,’ Kamuntu adds. But what perhaps is his biggest benefit is the push he is getting from the project to open up more acres of land for cultivation.

‘We own well over 50 acres of land, but I used to cultivate on less than an acre before. More acres have been opened up for me and in just two seasons I am now cultivating on five acres. I intend to keep increasing by three acres every season till all this land is put to productive use.’

Kamuntu is planning to acquire the oxen to help plough more land and also hire the ox plough to other farmers in his community. He is already reaping the benefits and encourages his peers, who are languishing in towns and trading centres

to return to their home villages and put their land to good use.

‘Farming pays,’ he says with a smile. ‘They will not regret.’

Besides the farming knowledge, Kamuntu has also received training and sensitisation on issues such as domestic violence, early marriages, HIV/AIDS and keeping children in school. He is now able to use his position as LCI chairperson to deliver exemplary leadership to his people.

“Kamuntu is planning to acquire the oxen to help plough more land and also hire the ox plough to other farmers in his community.”



Jimmy Kamuntu in his newly opened garden. He aspires to prepare more land and increase the acreage of his land under cultivation every season.

ALIORU JANE BECOMES ‘MAMA CHANGE’

Story Compiled by: Robinson Muzungu, Production and Marketing Assistant DINU-LEWA

Jane Alioru is the wife of David Aguma of Ajiraku Parish, Bileafe Subcounty in Terego District. They have three children who are all in school. Alioru is the chairperson of Nzayia United Farmers Group. The group boasts a total of 30 members. Of these, five are male and the 25 are female.

The members of the group were previously subsistence farmers, growing crops such as cassava, beans, maize and sesame, with limited knowledge and skills, and mainly for consumption. Their idea of farming, at the time, was not as a business. They did not care much about the quality of the seeds they used and only sold the surplus. But even then, their limited access to markets meant that they were always exploited by the middlemen

who would purchase from them at lower prices compared to the market price.

The DINU-LEWA project, for Alioru, came with many changes. When the project started in her community, she immediately developed interest and joined as a participant. She was elected chairperson of her group.

“This was now the start of real change for us women whose place had for long been the kitchen. As chairperson, I chair group meetings, mobilise members for activities, make decisions and govern the group,” she explains.

The group was trained on proper agronomy skills, financial literacy, VSLA establishment and

Left: Mama Change showing the newly-constructed valley dam in her village. **Middle:** Mama Change talks to the project team as other members look on. **Right:** Mama Change stands in her second season’s sunflower field.



management, leadership and group dynamics. They were also supported with quality seeds and to open six acres of farmland, and with market linkages to Mukwano, agro-input dealers and GEOFFMAN.

In 2021, she earned more than Shs 3,000,000 from her sunflower production. She used Shs 2,570,000 to roof her four-roomed permanent tin-roofed house, Shs 130,000 to buy a she-goat and saved Shs 300,000 in the group's saving account. Her husband, on the other hand, met the education needs of the children.

As a practical leader, she explains that she no longer has to wait for her husband to take all the decisions for the family but only consults him where there is need. She encourages other members to do the same.

"I may ask him what plans he has for a piece of family land. If he says he has none, I inform him of mine and proceed with it," she says.

Alioru has attended various functions at regional, district and sub-county levels, where she has shared her experiences as a leader of a farming

group. She has also travelled to other districts and regions to represent farmers and women. Although she desires to get a better understanding of parish development, she points out that many people now visit her home and group in order to learn from them.

"They believe that I have brought change in the community and that is the reason why some members call me 'Mama Change'".

She is grateful to DINU, the government, European Union for the modern farming skills she has since acquired and adopted to increase her production. She feels empowered by the leadership skills and is glad to contribute towards bringing meaningful change to her community, including championing gender inclusivity, equality and equity. She calls upon fellow women not to shy away from assuming leadership positions in the communities and not to leave all the toiling to their husbands alone.

The project has overseen the construction of a valley dam in the parish to ease production during the dry season and provide water for the animals.



Left: Mama Change posing with cash she received from the sale of her sunflower grain.

Middle: Mama Change cheerfully points to her newly-roofed house. She says this is her biggest achievement so far.

Right: Mama Change posing with the goat she bought from the sale of her sunflower grain

Aggregation centres are boosting commercialization of agriculture

Aggregation centres are a vital cog in enhancing linkages between smallholder farmers, agro-processors and market operators. With the increasing yields from both farmer groups and individual farmers, aggregation centres ensure that all the produce is stored in a central place where it is easy to conform to proper post-harvest handling practices and also exploit the power of numbers to bargain for the best prices.



▶ Sunflower drying by a farmers' group

▶ Weighing produce for sale



RESULT 3

We set out to achieve

Improved Maternal, Child Health & Nutrition

Intermediate Results

- Increased adoption of good nutrition and health practices in the communities
- Increased access and utilisation of family planning services among 56,000 households.

Project Results at a Glance

Planned Outputs	Status of Implementation		
Output	Target	Achieved	%
OUTPUT 5: Increased access and adoption of maternal and young child feeding practices, hygiene and sanitation and child care.			
Individuals who received community-based nutrition services (Infant, Young, child feeding)	55,020	48,120	87.5
OUTPUT 6: Increased use of planning methods with the aim of decreasing the number of teenage pregnancies and increasing child spacing			
Individuals supported with family planning services.	56,000	48,300	86.3
Project average performance			88

IMPROVING HEALTH THROUGH COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

“Now, even if I sell off all the produce from the large gardens, I do not worry about food because my kitchen garden keeps me stocked up in food stuff.”

Nancy Adongrac of Paloga Subcounty is a care group mother. She is one of the 15 mothers supported by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) to improve maternal and child health and nutrition. The mothers are trained on optimum nutrition and health practices which they, in turn, teach to other mothers within the community. When recently we sat down with her for a chat, this is what the 28-year-old mother of three had to say:

On the situation before the intervention

Before the coming of LWF, many of us within the community did not know how to take care of our babies. We would just get up and go off to the gardens. The little children left at home would have to

wait for us to come back from the gardens before they could breastfeed. This affected the health of our babies and many suffered from malnutrition.

On what has since changed

We, care mothers, have been taught to make enriched porridge and foods for our babies before we go off to the gardens at six in the morning. And when we return at around midday, we are encouraged to make for them milk, for instance. We have been taught to identify cases of malnutrition in the community using MUAC tapes and refer them to the health centre for management.

We have also been taught not only how to bathe our babies regularly, but to also change them into clean clothing after bathing. We have equally been



Adongrac Nancy (sixth from left) and her fellow caregroup mothers pose for a photograph at Paloga Health Centre. The mothers meet monthly and are supervised by a VHT attached to it. The caregroup model, supported by the LWF and partners, aims at strengthening systems of healthcare delivery in rural hard-to-reach communities.

taught to ensure that the children's bathing areas are clean and hygienic.

We have also been taught to make hand washing tanks and most importantly, how to make kitchen gardens. As a care group mother, I move from door to door sharing with other mothers in the village these skills and knowledge.

On the benefits of a kitchen gardens

A kitchen garden is a small garden around the homestead where I mostly grow vegetables such as boo, tomatoes and nakati, which take a

very short time to grow and are easy and fast to prepare for the children. Because it is just around the homestead, I can easily water and weed my garden. This means that even in times of drought, I can still be able to harvest food crops.

Now, even if I sell off all the produce from the large gardens, I do not worry about food because my kitchen garden keeps me stocked up in foodstuff. Moreover, I can also sell the surplus from the kitchen garden in the market for money that I can use to buy household items like soap and salt, among others.



Infant and Young Child Feeding Corner

One of the innovations of the DINU-LEWA project that has become a mainstay in the communities and shall be long after the project lifespan is the Infant and Young Child Feeding Corner (IYCF). Usually located at a health centre, these spaces are a haven where pregnant and lactating mothers, as well as, young children can feed, relax and refresh before or after seeing a medical worker. The spaces are also used by VHTs and care groups for training and meetings.

'The area is good and friendly. There are unique play items and children enjoy it here. Before the IYCF spaces, we weren't aware of certain feeding and nutrition practices that boost immunity. Sometimes, we missed immunisation because we couldn't leave the older child alone at home, but one can now come with all the young children because there is a safe place where they can play and wait as one receives medical attention,' says Mercy Aber, a mother of three-month-old baby.

GOVERNMENT HEALTH OFFICIALS PERSPECTIVE ON DINU-LEWA'S IMPACT: ONE ON ONE WITH LOK OROMA, HEALTH INSPECTOR AT PALOGA HCIII AND DR DENIS OMOYA OCULA, DHO, LAMWO DISTRICT

Lok Oroma, Health Inspector at Paloga HCIII

On if the DINU-LEWA project has worked well with and alongside the established government health systems

'I believe this has been done fantastically well. Other organisations should borrow a leaf. We were involved straight from the beginning and we knew that the project has come to support and complement our efforts because we couldn't reach everybody with government's limited resources. We have supported them without reservations. For example, we have 84 VHTs in my subcounty but the DINU-LEWA project supports only 10 of them. Because we have integrated the project in our activities, we have convinced other VHTs who are not directly supported to also join in and collect the WASH and nutrition data and submit to the 10 for compilation. I recommend that if this program is to be renewed, consider supporting more VHTs to ease the program implementation and, therefore, achieve even better outcomes.'

On what he finds to be the project's most significant intervention on the community

'As a health inspector, I have witnessed first-hand the positive

impact of this project on our people. For me, there are two interventions: vegetable backyard gardening and cooking demonstrations. These are things we never had or did before the project and we shall use all our power to ensure that these practices are sustained even when the project ends.'

We have demonstration backyard garden at the health centre IIIs, where we train and do demonstrations on the same. I am happy that almost all members of care groups have adopted the practice in their homes and, subsequently, motivated and inspired others in their communities to follow suit.

The cooking demonstration is another seemingly simplistic practice, but I can tell you it is such a transformational idea. Previously, if a home had a meal of meat and posho, they regarded that as a change of diet and, therefore, believed that they had practised balanced diet. From the demos, the community has now learnt about the three categories of food, that is, Grow, Glow and Go foods and how to prepare a meal with the three colours of food, including fruits, which are abundant in this area throughout the year. The



results show that the numbers of malnourished children continue to reduce significantly.

On recommendations on how to do better for this project or subsequent projects

We have received orange flesh potato vines from CIP. They are wonderful and very nutritious. However, we have been informed that they can be planted for only one season. I urge organisations like LWF and partners to bring together agricultural experts and our own agricultural officers to modify the vines so that they can be replanted after one season. Otherwise, the wonderful orange flesh potatoes may not be sustainable. The traditional practice of how we cultivate potatoes is to simply pick vines from a garden and replant, we, therefore, run a risk of our people innocently replanting such vines which will not yield, and this may put our communities at the risk of hunger.

Dr Omoya Denis Ocula, DHO, Lamwo District

On what the district health sector has benefitted from the DINU-LEWA project

As a district, and indeed region, we have several tangible benefits to show. Our health systems in terms of conduct, access and availability of health workers are much stronger than before. When you visit a health centre, you will access a service, or know of a particular week day when the health team is available in your area. Such evidence of our health systems strengthening is spread across the district. Our statistics show that out of this partnership, interventions such as care groups have contributed to a rise in the uptake of services, notably family planning, both

in the health centres and communities.

The VHT and the attendant training in reporting has boosted our data banks and enabled us to be more surgical and cost-effective, especially in our community outreaches. From the data and daily registers, we are able to map and ascertain which areas need more support or services in a given area and we plan accordingly, instead of roaming around the district and wasting time and resources in areas which may not require a given intervention.

Similarly, we have finalised the district nutrition action plan. The coordination committee is also very strong, and we are now moving to empower the subcounty nutrition committees.



On improvements he would like to see in project delivery

We have these wonderful orange flesh potatoes which to my knowledge are a short-term intervention strategy to fight against malnutrition. My idea is that the health centres at the district and subcounty levels should become the multiplication or distribution centres. Under this program-based approach to a community-owned approach, the officials at the health centre would then be able to prioritise mothers with children suffering from malnutrition as primary beneficiaries of the scarce potato vines.

INNOVATIONS AND OTHER UNINTENDED RESULTS

Unorthodox and Creative Means of Community Mobilisation & Sensitisation: DINU-LEWA's use of Puppetry

'Over time, the people develop fatigue and get tired of the trainings and other activation programs. They may not outright tell us, but we can see the complacency and apathy written on their faces,' says Jackline Kusiima, Program Assistant, UPMB.

Henry Turinawe is a Project Officer-Nutrition, LWF. His opinion is not different from Jackie's. He says: 'We usually use the normal methods such as dialogues, meetings and group discussions, and people were beginning to get bored and driving home our sensitisation messages was becoming a more arduous task.'

Since adopting the use of puppetry, there are noticeable differences in how the members react and participate in the trainings and

other meetings. It is also easier to mobilise for meetings by doing a drive or roadshow around the community with the giant puppets.

'The element of entertainment helps to capture and sustain the people's interest and attention. Even others who are going about their routine activities get attracted and end up staying and benefitting from the messages,' says Jackie Kusiima.

Agaba Denis, a puppeteer with Ad Creatrix, believes that puppetry is one of the most effective community mobilisation and sensitisation vehicles. 'When we receive a topic or theme from LWF, we study the issues and come up with a script which is performed by the puppets. While writing the

scripts for puppetry performances, we structure them in a way that is provocative to trigger audience discussion on the issues presented therein. The audience is compelled to discuss and suggest solutions to the problem presented to them in the drama skits. Inadvertently, they are suggesting solutions that they later apply in their daily life, thereby changing behaviour.'

Indeed, puppetry works because of its element of bottom-up approach, whereby the problem is presented to the community and they themselves suggest possible solutions, which are then discussed. The project officers simply become facilitators, who do not have to enforce their own preconceived 'solutions' on the community.



Using Religious Leaders as Champions of Change

Rev. Beatrice Aber, The New Champion Of Family Planning
Story compiled by: Jackie Kusiima, Program Assistant UPMB



Reverend Beatrice Aber was enrolled as one of the religious leaders to champion family planning in the Kitgum diocese community among other 89 religious leaders as Trainer of Trainees (TOTs) in family planning messaging. This empowered her to rightly package and deliver family planning messages and influence family planning uptake and utilization among her congregation.

Apart from her church, Reverend Beatrice has been able to reach out to fellow clergy, youth and women groups and sensitize them on family planning. She implores parents to be role models in the upbringing of their children, noting that parents need to deliberately mentor their children on healthy sexual and reproductive choices. Beatrice mainstreams family planning messaging in her church summons, using biblical quotations such as; 1st Timothy 5:8 which says, "he who does not care for his own relatives is worse than a believer and I have been telling youths to honour their parents there they will live a long life." 1st Timothy 3:1 -7, Proverbs 31:10 - 31 say that a leader should have one wife and one husband, to be exemplary, to be noble, be able to plan for the family and live a happy life.

With such biblical quotations, Beatrice attests that at the beginning, many people were negative about family planning but with consistent sensitization, many families are willing to positively

listen to her family planning messaging. She notes with profound gratitude that a number of couples have approached her and confided in her on their family planning issues. Beatrice has been able to guide such couples, referring them to health facilities that can give them appropriate support on their family planning and other reproductive health issues. "I have been able to reach out to over 500 youth and women with positive family planning messages, in addition to my church that has a congregation of 268 people". Men and women can now freely and mutually dialogue on family planning choices for their families.

All over ten districts, the project trained religious leaders continue to reach out to communities using "Channels of Hope" approach not only on family planning using biblical and Quran teachings on safe spacing of children but also early/teenage pregnancies, prevention and response to HIV /AIDS among couples, prevention and response to Sexual Gender Based Violence and better parenting practices among others. In addition, radio talk shows as well as spot messages on Sexual Reproductive and Maternal Health Rights have been employed.

Health Workers, VHTs, Religious Leaders and Peer Educators among others from the target districts have been trained and equipped to provide comprehensive community/facility-based family planning service delivery enhances the sustainability of the project interventions.

The low levels of family planning uptake coupled with unmet needs continue to be higher in rural areas (37%) than in urban areas (23%). This coupled with the gender practices necessitated a need for a project that promotes increased access and utilization of family planning services through establishment of or working with several community-based structures such as Village Health Teams (VHTs), Youth Peer Educators, Health Workers, Family Planning Champions and Religious Leaders through "Channels of Hope" approach.

Adoption of Orange Flesh Sweet Potato cultivation is guaranteeing food and nutrition security in the districts of Lamwo, Adjumani, Moyo and Obongi

Like other districts in the northern Uganda, Lamwo, Adjumani, Moyo and Obongi grapple with food insecurity mostly due to extended droughts and other climatic crises. The lack of sufficient nutritious food has manifested into high levels of malnutrition in the area with Vitamin A deficiency a notable concern. As part of the action of the DINU- LEWA to increase the production of diversified foods and improve maternal child health and nutrition, LWF, in partnership with the International Potato Centre (CIP) has promoted and scaled up the cultivation of Orange Flesh Sweet potato (OFSP) as a long-sustaining intervention against malnutrition.

Under this intervention, beneficiaries receive the OFSP vines through their respective care groups. Besides the care group approach, the project has also supported the

establishment of multiplication centres at various health centres in the districts.

“Before the drought, the garden used to serve 5 to 10 pregnant and lactating mothers that visit the antenatal and postnatal clinics with enough OFSP vines to plant at least 20 heaps. While growth of OFSP vines at the health centre was disrupted in the dry season, after the LWF and CIP’s training on OFSP vine preservation, we as Paloga HC III decided to use the riverbank in our neighborhood and have maintained access and distribution of the vines even in the harshest drought,” says Patrick Lok Oroma, the Health assistant at Paloga Health centre III.

Mr Manubhai A Mansur, a farmer in Aliba Bitu Parish, Ewafa Subcounty, Obongi District has cultivated a one-acre multiplication garden which has turned out to be a good

source of income. He sells the OFSP vines to the project, WFP and other interested individuals.

Many other farmers have also taken on this for both income and food security. Mr Alfred Lutoo from Ongalo village, Pawaja parish in Paloga sub-county is one of them. He has planted 300 heaps with OFSP which will in 90 days provide his home with enough food rich in vitamins and other nutrients.

With support from the European Union (EU) and the Government of Uganda (GoU), the DINU-LEWA project continues to equip individuals, groups, and structures with knowledge and skills on food security strategies coupled with pieces of training on maternal and child feeding, food and cooking demonstrations among others for better health.



LEARNING AND SHARING

Best Practices

- ▶ Collaboration, and building synergies with other partners, projects and programs – DRDIP, PDM
- ▶ Working with and through established government structures e.g with DLGs- Agricultural extension workers, VHTs and Health Workers
- ▶ Working with and involvement of private sector actors from the start of the project (Mukwano, Ensibuuko, HAMWE, Geoffman Enterprises)
- ▶ Several community-based structures established and or strengthened as change agents; Infrastructure Management Committees, Village Health Teams, Village Enterprise Agents, Care groups, FP Champions
- ▶ Digitalization and VSLAs linkages to financial institutions with establishment of Digital Community Entrepreneurs (DCEs)

Key Challenges in Implementation, Including Mitigation Measures

- ▶ Irregular rainfall patterns and weather conditions.
 - » **Mitigation:** Encouraged farmers to practice climate smart agriculture and embrace utilization of the water harvest systems for continuous vegetable production throughout the year.
- ▶ Very low Digital Literacy; Many of the VSLA members selected for training lacked basic knowledge on how to use and operate the smartphones.
 - » **Mitigation:** Recruitment of DCEs among the groups to continuously take members through the ICT usage
- ▶ Disruptions from COVID-19 restrictions; a cause for delayed achievement of the planned targets.
- ▶ The high inflation rate affected the prices of commodities.
 - » **Mitigation:** Negotiation was done and amendments made to facilitate the completion of works
- ▶ Creation of new administrative units over stretched project staff and stakeholder engagement;
 - » **Mitigation:** Adoption of integrated approach to project implementation for all administrative units.

Left: Mansur and the community members picking vine for planting **Right:** Nutrition officer during the field inspection visit



Lessons Learnt During The Implementation Of DINU-LEWA Project

- ▶ Periodic reviews and joint monitoring exercises are key for accountability to key stakeholders, bridging information gaps, and sourcing feedback for improved action implementation.
- ▶ Joint stakeholder participation in the course of the implementation of this action has enhanced visibility and buy-in to the action. It has facilitated collaborations and leveraged the depth and breadth of technical expertise from districts.
- ▶ Collective marketing with guaranteed markets through contract farming contributed significantly to a higher level of active community participation, and attracted large numbers of unintended beneficiaries enabling the project to easily spill over and reach more individuals in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.
- ▶ Environment protection and conservation are critical requiring integrated efforts by all actors so as to effectively mitigate the effects of climate change.
- ▶ VSLA schemes are instrumental in fostering cohesion among group members in the pursuit of common socioeconomic goals. They are also critical in the acquisition and diversification of productive assets at the household level.
- ▶ The use of demonstration gardens as centers of peer-to-peer learning helped increase the adoption of the recommended practices among households. This is further strengthened by the use of community-owned structures like CBFs, VEAs, and lead/model farmers.
- ▶ Selecting and training producer group members as ToTs consolidated peer to peer learning, transfer and ownership of knowledge. This has improved their efficiency and effectiveness as they train and support their members at no cost to the project.
- ▶ Using e-voucher made it easier to track the producer groups' whose land was tilled since they were the ones who received and redeemed the e-vouchers after full satisfaction of work done by the tractor tillage service providers. This also made it easier to track the expense on the tillage services at the different locations.
- ▶ Involvement of cultural leaders, religious leaders, men and youths in sexual and reproductive health interventions is a promising practice in increasing demand for voluntary family planning services in West Nile and Acholi Sub-regions. Both categories of leaders have proved instrumental in demystifying cultural misconceptions about family planning.
- ▶ Registration of LSBs as associations is cost effective and more efficient than registering individual LSB groups.

MONITORING & EVALUATION (M&E) PLANS AND OUTCOMES

	Adjumani	Arua	Koboko	Lamwo	Madi okollo	Maracha	Moyo	Obongi	Yumbe	Overall performance
Smallholder farmers trained in modern farming practices (GAP, PHH, FAAB).										
Average	96.0	89.0	90.0	96.0	91.0	95.0	97.0	88.0	95.5	93.1
Farmers' demonstration sites established.										
Average	96.0	96.7	100.0	108.0	97.0	100.0	95.0	89.0	100.0	98.0
Smallholder farmers receiving agricultural farm inputs (Seeds, agro chemicals, tools etc)										
Average	82.0	79.0	83.0	93.5	66.5	76.0	95.0	61.3	85.0	80.1
Extension workers trained in modern agriculture.										
Average	100.0	60.0	83.0	100.0	100.0	60.0	100.0	133.0	100.0	100.0
Smallholder farmers accessing water for production (Rain water harvesting systems)										
Average	100.0	80.0	100.0	100.0	30.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	90.0
Smallholder farmers supported to establish kitchen gardens.										
Average	90.0	98.1	82.5	92.0	91.0	60.0	100.0	96.1	101.0	90.1
Result area Overall performance	96.4	84.8	91.1	99.2	81.8	83.0	98.4	101.2	99.3	91.0
	Adjumani	Arua	Koboko	Lamwo	Madi okollo	Maracha	Moyo	Obongi	Yumbe	Overall performance
Seed multiplication gardens established (certified seed producers)-each year 6 and 7										
Average	83.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	25.0	0.0	20.4

	Adjumani	Arua	Koboko	Lamwo	Madi okollo	Maracha	Moyo	Obongi	Yumbe	Overall performance
Quality Declared Seed (QDS) producers and farmers identified and profiled.										
Average	200.1	97.0	80.0	150.0	78.0	66.5	175.1	75.0	200.0	124.6
VSLA supported(Registered, digitized,linked)										
Formed	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100
Digitized										
Average										79.2
Linked										
Average										67.0
Market infrastructure constructed(stalls, pit latrines, renovations, shades etc)										
Average	100.0	50.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	50.0	50.0	100.0	100.0	83.3
Farmers supported to add Value to their products										
Average	90.0	125.0	90.2	100.3	90.0	98.0	79.0	75.0	78.1	91.7
Farmers engaged in contract farming(farmers signing contracts with Mukwano)										
Average	81.3	87.0	100.0	82.3	82.0	79.0	75.1	80.1	97.5	85.0
Result area Overall performance	91.9	67.4	70.9	82.3	57.5	58.9	77.7	68.2	99.6	97.9
	Adjumani	Arua	Koboko	Lamwo	Madi okollo	Maracha	Moyo	Obongi	Yumbe	Overall performance
Individuals who received community-based nutrition services (Infant, young, child feeding)										
Average	90.3	125.3	95.9	72.5	68.7	134.7	74.6	66.9	58.3	87.5
Individuals supported with family planning services.										
Average	59.7	106.9	78.8	87.8	84.0	84.4	70.2	82.2	123.1	86.3
Result area Overall performance	75.0	116.1	87.3	80.2	76.3	109.5	72.4	74.5	90.7	86.9

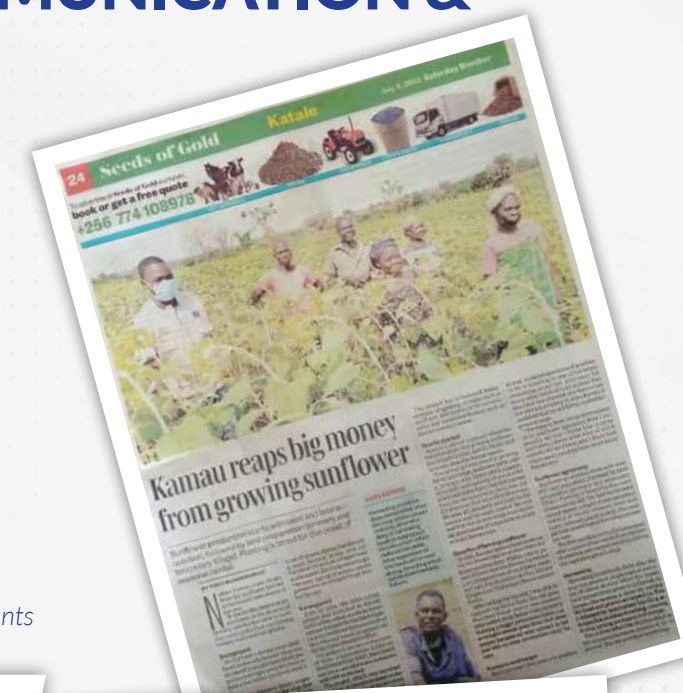
OUTREACHES, COMMUNICATION & ADVOCACY

As part of our comprehensive strategy to inspire communities in West Nile and Acholi subregions to contribute to stability in Northern Uganda, eradicate poverty and undernutrition and strengthen the foundation for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development, we proactively sought to reach out and engage as many stakeholders as possible. Through using various media and community outreaches, we were able to engage and create buy-in with various members of the community, policy makers, political leaders, government officials, religious leaders, the donor community and the general public. Here, we relive some of our notable outreaches, communication and advocacy interventions.

OPM-DINU Regional Program Coordinator addressing participants during LEWA review and reflection meeting



Village Health Teams (VHTs) from Abuku SC, Koboko district during a Focus Group Discussion on IYCF



A talkshow at Arua One Radio Station under the topic nutrition and breastfeeding



Project officials interact with Madi-Okollo District CAO



Bringing local governments on board: Consultation meeting with the CAO, Koboko District



Meeting various stakeholders

DINU-LEWA IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Rukanda Grace, Consortium Coordinator LWF
Odumuna Anthony, MEAL Coordinator LWF
Mulungi Grace, Agribusiness Coordinator LWF
Achiro Enid, Nutrition and Health Coordinator LWF
Taaka Sharon, Finance and Compliance Coordinator LWF
Robert Adwek, Field Operations Manager MIUL
Edoni Bruhan Nasur, Project Manager DCA
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Olum Timothy Ojwi, Project Manager LWF
Okiring Hassan, Project Manager LWF
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Opiyo Daniel, Production Officer LWF
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Lulu Jordan, Production and Marketing Officer DCA
Otim Patrick, Production Officer LWF
Ebwor Oliver, Production Officer LWF
Oleku Christopher, Production and Marketing Officer DCA
Aliowaku Sunday, Production and Marketing Officer DCA
Ogwang Julius Peter, Zonal Officer MIUL
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