



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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ICAN COMPENDIUM

Theme: A celebration of resilience in the face of a pandemic Contributors

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When women own goats, the family thrives

By Aretho Cecilia



Aretho and Apakwayo show off the goats Cecilia owns.

Aretho Cecilia lives with her husband Lojo Apakwayo in Lomejan village, Rengen sub county, Kotido District. USAID ICAN worked with Business service providers to engage experts to train them in basic hygiene practices when handling goat milk. They also learned about good feeding practices, and how to construct goat houses.

Aretho says, “Originally, both my husband and I believed only men can manage and own animals. But after the training, we realized that it is better for a woman to own and manage at least one goat—for the wellbeing and health of the family. My husband gave me one goat. I took care of it, and it multiplied and had four female goats. There are many other homesteads with women managing goats. And the

goats women are managing are doing even better than those that men are managing because USAID ICAN has given us knowledge to look after them.”

Aretho and Apakwayo are working elders to get BSPs to get them opportunities to crossbreed their goats for better milk production.

“My wife has control over the goats. We realized that feeding on goats milk makes a child healthy compared to cow’s milk. Just look at our beautiful children. My wife and I sit together and make decisions in harmony. Even when it comes to food and birds like chicken, she makes the decision. When couples make decisions together, they live in harmony and the family is healthy,” Apakwayo says.

COMPENDIUM

Dec 2020

ICAN Stories

USAID ICAN Mentor challenges social norms to run for councilor



When I decided to run for Woman Councilor, everybody asked: Why should we vote for a young unmarried woman. I faced a lot of sexual harassment and intimidation just because I am a woman. But as a USAID ICAN mentor, I learned a lot about standing up for myself, public speaking, taking control and convincing people to take on my ideas. As women, I will also work to see that the women in Kisoro live healthy, get an education and have more sanitary conditions.



After graduation from the AGYW camp, we determined that Bukimbiri group was strong enough to apply for funds. They were really well-known, and they had worked hard to save and invest in their business. This is an exceptional group that pushes hard and keeps setting ambitious goals. It is important that we link groups such as these to government opportunities. So we assisted them and the BSPs to apply for a UWEP grant to invest in their Irish potato farming. We supported the group to draft a constitution, register, and open a bank account. We brought government officials to talk to them, so they could have the best shot. And we recently received news that their grant application went through to the final round- Sunday Eriya, USAID ICAN Kisoro District Coordinator.

USAID ICAN ensuring education for resilience in the face of COVID-19

USAID ICAN, through partner Children of the World Foundation (COWF), has been partnering with the district education department to disseminate Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) study materials to children in candidate classes. COWF worked with 42 volunteer teachers in Acholi sub-region to follow up on 504 children in candidate classes to ensure that they are accessing and utilizing study material provided through the Education

Department. Of these, 241 follow ups were made in Lamwo, 213 in Nwoya, and 50 in Gulu. Volunteer teachers hold small study groups of five to 10 learners. These volunteers are from within the community. Some are parents who are teachers, others are teachers from private schools who have returned home because they are no longer employed due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, volunteer teachers reported that fewer children are studying at

home because they are getting involved in farm activities. COWF held awareness talk shows on the need for parents to ensure that children balance school work and house chores such as farming. The radio talk shows ran alongside small community dialogues (carried out in line with government COVID-19 guidelines). COWF facilitated volunteer teachers to reinforce talk show messages and check on children's progress.

Tackling floods and COVID-19

By Ninsiima Victor

During FY20, floods ravaged Kisoro, one of the districts in which USAID ICAN operates. USAID ICAN has been working with Hill Management Committees to dig trenches and plant trees in neighbouring villages. Trenches and vegetation help slow running water, prevent mudslides and preserve hills. A two-day flood, running from 7th to 8th May, hit Mt. Muhabura and surrounding hills in Muramba sub-county. The ferocious floods carried with them volcanic stones and caused mudslides that swept away 54 houses, destroyed crops and left a four-year-old dead.

An estimated 262 people, including children, were displaced. They had to camp at one of the schools partnering with USAID ICAN. Of those displaced, some were already vulnerable. For instance, 17 of them are widows, 20 orphans and seven are disabled. Twenty eight of those displaced are members of USAID ICAN's Saving With A Purpose (SWAP) groups and eight belong to our mother care groups. The people of Kisoro have to contend with not only the COVID-19 threat but also the impact of the floods that have left them homeless and

poorer. Without proper homes, flood victims do not have the luxury of social distancing or access to clean water to wash their hands. With government resources concentrated on COVID-19, help to victims has been slow. Those with savings, such as members of USAID ICAN's SWAP groups, at least had resources, kept aside for a rainy day such as this, to buy food and a few other items for survival after disaster. They also used money they withdrew to buy farm inputs and scholastic materials in preparation for school reopening.

USAID ICAN Mentor challenges social norms to run for councilor

When I decided to run for Woman Councilor, everybody asked: Why should we vote for a young unmarried woman. I faced a lot of sexual harassment and intimidation just because I am a woman. But as a USAID ICAN mentor, I learned a lot about standing up for myself, public speaking, taking control and convincing people to take on my ideas. As women, we thought that what society thinks we are is what we are. But USAID ICAN taught us that we are more than society's expectations. It has taught us that we can be in control of our lives and be leaders. By being a mentor, I understood the challenges young girls and women like me face. As councilor, I will start a counselling center where more girls can get ideas on how to make their lives better. I will also work to see that the women in Kisoro live healthy, get an education and have more sanitary conditions. I will push so that the entire district has their We Can Do 5 commitments and meets them—Juliet Kansime, 23, USAID ICAN Mentor.



A shop for farmers by farmers

My name is Nkuruziza Elias and I am a BSP and I run Kyakataragi input shop in Kihiki sub-county, Kanungu district, on behalf of our group of 30 people—28 women and two men. I sell to people farm inputs such as seeds and fertilizers. I teach farmers how to fight pests and get better yields. Some of the things I have learned, people have to go to university to learn. I am proud of my work. I have learned more than I ever thought I would learn from USAID ICAN BSPs training. USAID ICAN has taught us that our farm is our business, and it is our responsibility to make money from it. But there was one big problem when our group started farming. We realized we had to travel several kilometers to get inputs. We asked ourselves why we do not find a way to bring inputs closer to farmers. So, as a farmers group, we decided to start an input shop to help us. Everybody buys from our shop. We inspired farmers in other sub-counties to start input shops, and now we are their suppliers. We have sold stock worth 28 million shillings since January 2020, when we started. When COVID-19 came, we were a fresh business, and we were worried we would not survive. There was no public transport for us to move and go bring inputs. But USAID ICAN took it upon themselves to link us to boda bodas to deliver inputs. USAID ICAN BSPs stood by us and encouraged us to remain resilient even with COVID-19 looming over us. I know that from every sale of 300,000 shillings, I make 70,000 in profit. The records we keep are clear, and my prediction is that we shall have sold stock worth 50 million shillings by 2021.



Breastfeeding in times of crisis



VHT meetings ordinarily provide peer support to encourage women to breastfeed in spite of different societal pressures. It is at these meetings where women get information and support on minor and severe breast infections and other breast feeding challenges they may have. They openly discuss these challenges and are referred for medical help where necessary. COVID-19 presents new challenges to breast feeding. For instance, many women say that, for fear of COVID-19, they can no longer move with their children and breastfeed on demand. VHTs went door to door giving breastfeeding and nutrition information while following COVID-19 guidelines. VHTs reached and supported women in their homes and work places, ensuring they continue breastfeeding even in times of crisis.

Vegetable Farming for family health and lively-hood

by Sunday Alumo



BSPs sold us onion and eggplant seeds in April. There were no rains but, through dialogues on food security and nutrition that we attended, my husband and I got determined to make this work. BSPs and VHTs had already given us all

the knowledge we needed. We planted seeds in the nursery bed and continued to water through April, and when the rains started, we transplanted and maintained the garden through by weeding on time. There was high demand for onions, and we started selling onion leaves even before we harvested onions. A small pile went for 200 shillings, and we were able to get 12,000 shillings from the leaves only. So far, we have also sold eggplants worth 17,000 shillings. It may seem like little money, but it is because of BSPs support that I was able to buy sanitary towels for my 14 year-old daughter Regina. I also bought her a small lighting system so that she can continue studying while at home. All my plants are now ready for harvest. I expect to get 100,000 shillings from onions and 50,000 shillings from eggplants. I realize I can grow vegetables all year round. This means I have continuous business all year round. I am proud to be able to meet my family's needs and teach other community members that they too can grow a vegetable garden without totally depending on seasons- Achia Mary, 38 years, mother of eight and resident of Lomejan Village, Rengen Sub County, Kotido district.

Opportunity in crisis: Mother care group turns to soap making

By Ester Naluguza

USAID ICAN mother care groups usually come together to discuss breast feeding and how to improve nutrition of their children. However, in the face of COVID-19, and growing emphasis on hygiene, one mother care group in Kisoro saw a business opportunity. Kabuga Tukwatanise mother care group decided to start making soap after USAID ICAN field Officer, Julius Mujuni, advised that they should look beyond Maternal Infant Young Child and Adolescent Nutrition (MIYCAN) activities. Mujuni told them to, as mothers, think of something that can bring in income for themselves and their families. One of the group members, Sarah Rukundo, had previously trained in soap making under another NGO. She offered to train fellow

mother care group members. The field officer and Village Health Team members worked with Rukundo to mobilize group members and organize the training. After training, the mother care group (MCG) decided that each member should contribute 35,000 shillings as capital for them to start making soap. The 26 mothers each made their contribution, and the group managed to raise 910,000 shillings. Some of the women borrowed from their savings groups while others worked on farms to raise the money. The group recently made their first 215 liters of soap. USAID ICAN helped market the soap. It sold out within a week.

“It was the first time. Our hard work and savings enabled us start something to help us and our

families. We made enough money for us to start registration and formalizing our business. It is a good start, and we are proud that we have turned a crisis such as COVID-19 to make money,” Rukundo said.

The ambitious group of women have already drafted a Constitution and submitted it to the sub-county development officer as the first step towards formalization. USAID ICAN is supporting them in this process, as well as engaging with Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) to understand the necessary certification processes. USAID ICAN will continue to support the group to improve their products, access markets, formalize and eventually get official quality certification.

Acholi cultural leaders collaborate with government to plant more Food

by Olowoya Francis Chamalenga



Vicky with sacks of cassava Narocas I

In a bid to Foster resilience and promote natural resources management in the community, ICAN linked Kerkalkwaro (Acholi chiefs) to the government program Operation Wealth Creation. The chiefs received grafted mangoes and cassava Narocas I variety, and distributed them to their communities. Grafted mangoes mature quickly, while Narocas I one produces high yields and is drought resistant. Vicky, a member of Opapiwa Village Saving and Loans Association (VSLA) Group, and her husband Anywar Geoffrey were one of the nine VSLA group members to receive the improved crops. Kerkalkwaro Paicho Oywelomon and Business Service Providers (BSPs) gave Vicky eight sacks of cassava Narocas I and 140 seedlings of grafted mangoes. This is enough to plant two Hectares.

Ojok increases cabbage yield through technology

By Chamalenga Francis



In March, USAID ICAN Business Service Providers trained 23 people in the community VSLA called Watemogumwa in Akonyibedo village, Pakwelo parish, Unyama Sub county, Gulu district. BSPs taught some group members how to grow and manage vegetables to increase house hold income and improve their diet. USAID ICAN encourages communities to grow vegetables as a means of improving their income and improving family nutrition.

Ojok Robinson not only attended the training but also applied the technology he learned to improve his cabbage and carrot garden. The technology BSPs taught was on planting improved seeds varieties Gloria F1 in line 60cm by 60 cm, which gives enough space for growth and enables any other best agronomics practices such as spraying, weeding, fertilizer application, and pest and disease control in the garden — giving better yield and more income to meet family needs.

Ojok planted 1200 seedlings using the method he learned. He plans to plant half an acre of onions using the same method, buy an Ox plough and oxen for easy cultivation and a water pump so he can cultivate all year—especially during the dry season when demand is high but vegetable supply is low.

“With this technology, I look forward to earning more money and take care of my family. I will have more money for school fees and health, and my family will eat healthy and be happy and resilient,” Ojok said.

Lamwo group forms cooperative society

By Adongoiny Lilian

Opwonya Christopher, a Business Service Provider from Palabek Kal sub-county, supported five community groups. He received training under ICAN on VSLA approaches and agri-preneurship. He also participated in a number of trainings by other partners. For instance, IRC trained him in agronomic practice and collective market while RULNUC trained him in water source management.

Opwonya mentored and trained community groups, using the skills he attained as well as his innate persuasion talent. He trained the groups in VSLA methodology, agri-business, bee keeping business and collective market, agronomic practice. After the BSP

built their capacity, four groups (Dere ber, Kica ber, Gen yesu, Lanwang central United farmers group) united and formed a corporative society.

They are in the process of registering the group with the district. They have acquired land where they plan to build a cooperative store to help them implement collective marketing of agricultural products that include: simsim, maize, beans, soya bean, millet and honey. Currently these groups are planting simsim, soya and keeping bees for commercial purpose. They look forwarding to selling their products in bulk and earning more.

Model village mobilizes students to continue learning during lock down

By Orach Charlese



P.5 and P.6 pupils studying Mathematics in Lodi Village.

BSPs and VHTs established a model village that is determined that their children do not remain idle during lockdown. Lodi Village community located in Paromo parish. The model village came up with wealth creation, VSLA, keeping children in school, WASH and National resource as the “We Can Do 5” they committed to before their

LC I, Rwodi Kweri, and a cultural leader.

The model village successfully formed a cluster for children learning during this lockdown as a way of reducing idleness, children losing sense of studies and making sure they stay focused despite schools be-

ing closed. The Rwodi Kweri agreed and took lead to mobilize children in a clusters of 10 to start studying. Teachers from within the village take them through lessons.

VSLA collects money for vegetable growing

By Aber Miriam



Achan offloads her produce

Opit Kic is one of the VSLA group engaged in vegetables growing under USAID-ICAN Activity in Paloga Sub-county, this year March, 2020, the group grew tomatoes as one of the group incomes generating activity (IGA). Group members contributed 175,000/= to help them purchase improved tomatoes seeds, pesticides chemical and fertilizer. Group members provided labor and planted tomatoes on one and a half acers of land. The group BSP linked them to an agricultural extension worker and The HUB input dealer for training on how to plant, treat, spray, harvest and store tomatoes. By taking up utilizing skills from the BSP and taking up good agronomic practices such as use of improved seeds, fertilizers, and mulching, the group earned 1,120,000

in sales. The BSP linked them to market opportunities in Lamwo and Kitgum, and he earned 35,000 shillings in commission. Of the 1,120,000 shillings that the group made, 945,000 shillings was profit, and the group shared it among themselves—each member getting 200,000 shillings. The money was timely, and it enabled the group cop with the effects of a flood that destroyed gardens

during the previous season. The remaining capital was injected into planting tomatoes and sun flower. Again, the BSP linked the group to a field extension worker who provided improved sun flower seeds and Pur Ber agro dealers who provided improved tomato seeds.

The group was able to to maximised profit of 945,000Shs

which was shared among members each getting 200,000Shs, the money was shared to help members with the effects of flood that had destroyed garden and first season crop, The balance of money was injected into planting of Sun flower and more growing of tomatoes in the second season, the BSP linked them to Ngetta field extension worker for improved sun flower seeds and Pur ber Agro dealers for improved Tomatoes seed.

USAID ICAN works with partners and local structures to keep girls in school

By Aber Miriam

According to Human rights Focus, 4,000 school going girls in Acholi sub-region got pregnant during covid-19 lock down. Lamwo is one of the worst hit districts, with 1000 pregnant school girls. To address the high pregnancy rates in Lamwo, SASA Faith, a religious community that partners with Troicare trained four USAID ICAN local structures (LCI, parents, teachers and BSPs people from Paloga Sub County, Pawaja Parish) as community

activists using SASA kit for preventing violence against women and children.

After attaining the training, these structures gather Children under a big tree called Abil Nino and sensitized them on how to stay safe and guarding against pregnancy while at home.

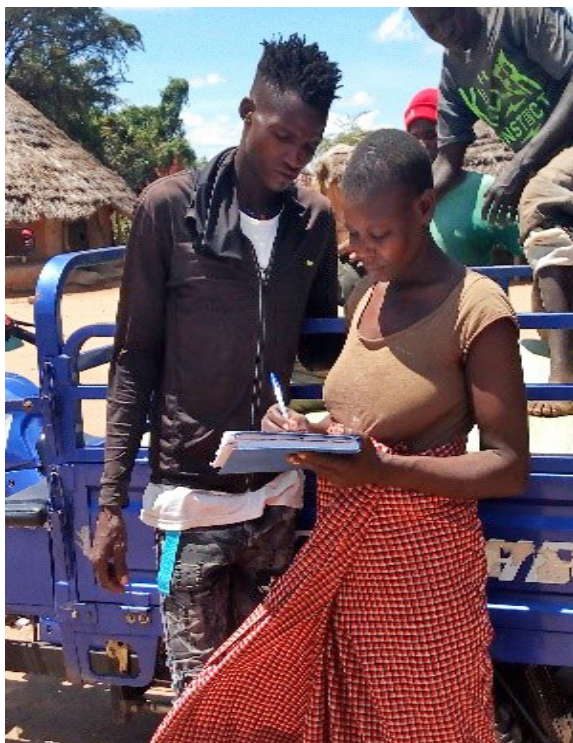
The facilitators (BSPs, parents, teachers and LCs) use the self-help learning materials distributed

by USAID ICAN. So far, a total of 38 pupils, 15 male and 23 female, have been reached. The children expressed enthusiasm in the training, saying it keeps them engaged. They say they look forward to returning to school where they will be safer. They also requested government to give them radios to better facilitate their learning.



Market Linkage through private sector

By Sunday Vida Alumo



My Name is Achan Christine, a homestead BSP identified and trained by Josto (a private service provider) in Um Um south, I and 24 other BSPs were also trained by ICAN in different business skills. Currently, I buy produce such as cow peas, green gram and ground nuts from farmers, and store it in bulk at a room I rent at the trading center. I started buying produce in September. I have produce worth 360,000 shillings. I expect to make 5000 shillings from each bag of grain. I will use the money to complete my house. I already bought iron sheets. I will also be able to pay school fees for my daughter in primary seven.

The thing that I love most about being a BSP is that farmers in the community know me. They contact me for advice, and I link them to markets. I feel happy that I am the one who brings the market closer to farmers and they make money on the spot. I like to see farmers being able to meet their basic needs—feeding their families, getting medical care, paying school fees on time. I encourage farmers to cultivate enough food for home consumption and sale. That way, they feed their families on healthy food while making money from the abundant market.



I learned to make masks overnight through the internet, then I taught my community

By Sunday Vida Alumo



Inspiration comes from the most unlikely place. On the night before the day I decided to learn how to make masks, there was *edonga*, a big social dance in the village. I was conducting my regular homestead visits when I found several teenage girls resting, exhausted, after attending *edonga*. When the USAID ICAN team arrived, they dragged themselves up and started singing the We Can Do Five commitments to impress us. They then complained that they do not have masks, and

they cannot access health centers without masks. They wanted USAID ICAN to give them masks.

Instead, in line with our journey to self-reliance, I saw an opportunity to train them on how to make masks. They expressed interest in learning and agreed to collect materials that they would use. We also discussed the dangers of going to large social gatherings such as dances during COVID-19, as well as associated risks such as early sexual activity, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. We agreed that the girls would dedicate their time to making masks instead of waiting for government or an organization to distribute them.

The only problem is that none of us knew how to make masks, and we needed to get a teacher.

That night, I went to the internet and took lessons on how to make masks using needle and thread. I then taught two VHTs who were set to facilitate the sessions in Lomejan and Um um South. The VHTs trained the young girls. Some elders and women joined too. They learned easily because women in Karamoja usually sew their own clothes. And now they are properly masked and in better position to protect themselves from corona virus.



A team posed for a picture from handmade masks.



Building an economically empowered community in Mpungu, Kanungu

By *Mayimuna Kabatooro and Cathbert Natukunda*

Beatrice Tumusime is a 57-year old VHT from Kanyashongye village in Mpungu sub county, Kanungu district. She is married with 7 children, the oldest is 31 years and the youngest 12. Tumusime says she is privileged to have joined USAID ICAN where she has attained diverse skills such as the importance of engaging in livelihoods oriented activities, adapting the practice of backyard farming with different types of crops for improved nutrition and the culture of saving with a purpose (SWAP) in groups. She is especially proud of the knowledge on nutrition and livelihoods she has acquired.

“For all the time I have served as a VHT, I had never got the chance to acquire basic knowledge and skills on nutrition and livelihoods. However, working with ICAN and its project implementers has equipped me with so many skills which I can ably share with my colleagues. I now know of backyard gardens, and I can save with a purpose. I’m considered an expert in the field, and other VHTs in my parish trust me to

train them and their household members on how to establish backyard gardens to ensure food security, obtain proper nutrition standards, boost immunity, and save to mitigate uncertainties.”

So far, Beatrice has been approached by three VHTs (not working with ICAN) and 19 other household members, including the LCI chairperson of Mpungu parish with training requests. Each VHT paid her UGX 20,000 to facilitate her transport and compensate her for the time she would spend teaching them. In total, she made 60,000shs which she used to buy four chickens for eggs that she plans to sell and consume the surplus at home.

“I appreciate ICAN for granting me the opportunity to work with them and transform my life. I will keep teaching more people so that we have an economically empowered and healthy community, she said.

Single father joins MIYCAN group

By *Mayimuna Kabatooro*

Mr. Stanslas Byarugaba is a 69- year old resident of Bwambala village in Rukungiri District. He is a single father of four children he raised on his own after his wife passed on. The oldest child is 12 years while the youngest is two. Raising the children became challenging as his

wife had been doing most of the child care work. Byarugaba did not know how to cook or even feed his youngest child. He had to look for money to cater for the family and also take care of the children.

He was in luck when one day USIAD ICAN officials went to his

village to find pregnant and lactating mothers as well as care takers of children under five. The village LC I asked him to join the MIYCAN group so that he learns the basics on nutrition of the vulnerable, especially children.

He quickly joined because he was in need of such information and knowledge which he hoped would salvage his current parenting situation.

“USAID ICAN came to save my family. My children were looking miserable and unhealthy. This bothered me as a father. Playing a double role is not easy an easy task since I'm the father and mother at the same time. All hope was lost because I didn't know what type of food I needed to feed my children on. I lacked knowledge on WASH practices and the importance of growing vegetables and how this can be an income generating activity. All this changed when I

joined a MIYCAN group discussing nutrition. The VHTs were great teachers. During this time, I learnt a lot pertaining the 1st 1000 days of life of a child and how this plays a critical role in child growth and development. In addition, I acquired knowledge on how to Save with a purpose (SWAP) and its benefits, how and why a kitchen garden is set up.”

His currently successes include, establishing a kitchen garden with egg plants, ‘dodo’ and green paper which he has already harvested and sold. This venture fetched him UGX 500,000. He has been able to sell two pigs. He used the money to purchase a motor cycle at 1.200,000

Shillings. He thus uses the motor cycle to transport his group mates’ crops as well as his to the market. “The bike came in handy because previously, we and my mates had challenges accessing markets given the remote communities that we come from because of inadequate means of transport,” he said.

Byarugabe also uses the motorcycle to transport friends’ wives to hospital for delivery of which he charges them hence making him an extra income. The children are healthy all thanks to membership into the MIYCAN group.

Ask your service provider

Mayimuna Kabatooro and Twesige Martin

USAID-ICAN employs several approaches to reach people in the community. For instance: IPC, Radio programs and distribution of IEC materials. Martin Twesige, a field officer from Buhunga sub-county, wanted to tap into those other strategies after realizing that he only uses the IPC approach when carrying out his day to day operations (communicating with people to create demand for behavior change). He thus came up with an approach he named ‘Ask your technical service provider in your area for an instant response’ In line with ICAN thematic areas of governance, Nutrition and livelihoods, Twesige gets an expert to attend a MIYCAN or farmer group meeting during which members are allowed to ask all the relevant questions beyond the knowledge of a VHT or BSP. The expert addresses the question on spot and entirety.

Following this strategy, there has been an increased adoption rate of innovations that ICAN promotes such as use of washable surface toilets, pic bags and Saving With a Purpose (SWAP). A total of 20 households in Mutanoga model village (Most of them from Mutanoga Mother Care group) so far have washable surface toilets. This group recently hosted a mid-wife who added her voice to that of the area VHT in reinforcing the WASH and nutrition campaigns. Most pregnant,

lactating and breastfeeding mothers adopted proper feeding practices such as preparation of ‘Kitobero’ for their children.

Over 17 households have established kitchen gardens through rotational support. This has led to the increased uptake of PHH techniques. This is proof that the ‘Ask your technical service provider in your area for an instant response’ strategy is effective. As of now, 17 members have already deposited their money on a service provider’s account for the pic bags of 50kg meant to store harvested. All the 30 group members have saved towards buying tarpaulin. Other members such as the LCI chairperson, Mutanoga village, appreciated the initiative.

He said, “ICAN is our organization that we feel proud of. We will support it in all aspects now more than ever with the new strategy of ‘Ask your service provider platform in our village’ which was for so long lacking. Community members in different groups will therefore benefit from this as an expert is booked to attend to their concerns or questions at their convenience on any of the thematic areas.”

ICAN text messages encourage farming for resilience

By Kenneth Mulonda

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in Uganda, ICAN has been sending messages twice a week to farmers to ensure they take advantage of the upcoming agricultural season and do not miss the planting window. To date, we have sent 5,841 SMS texts to ICAN frontline champions (including BSPs, VHTs, elders, and governance champions). The messages are to encourage the frontline champions to continue functioning and observing COVID-19 guidelines. These ICAN champions make

sure messages reach farmers even when it is hard to carry out regular field visits. Radio talk shows and DJ mentions fortify the SMS text messages. Through radio talk shows, ICAN links communities to local government and private sector, ensuring that business goes on and food security is maintained.

For instance, we have worked with radio stations in Kisoro and Kanungu to host the Resident District Commissioner, who answered numerous questions about farming's role as an essential

service during COVID-19. We also linked the Executive Director of Omukazi W'omutima, ICAN's new coffee partner in Kanungu, with Kanungu Broadcasting Service to participate in programming. She talked about how farmers can improve production and participate in coffee markets. ICAN is collaborating with Omukazi W'omutima to encourage more farmers to improve their income and strengthen resilience through coffee growing.

Green Generation Girls providing essential catering services in refugee settlement

By Borny Oola

In the face of COVID-19, the number of social parties for the Green Generation Girls cater within the district has declined. With support from their mentors, the girls concentrated on providing catering services for "essential workers" within neighboring refugee settlements. They found new opportunities and expanded their business to cook for NGO employees that work in the settlement neighboring Palabek Kal in Lamwo district. The success

of Green Generation Girls has inspired other AGYW in the district to explore catering businesses. For instance, Bream Girls in Paloga are also providing catering services to farming settlements. Other AGYW that joined aVSLA in Lokung and are supplying vegetables across Lacede sub-county. Another AGYW group in Paloga is growing vegetables, and one AGYW tailoring group has begun making masks for the local market in Padibe town. The SMSs to ICAN's mentors during COVID-19

has focused on mobilizing them to encourage the AGYW to remain resilient and adapt their businesses to changing circumstances. We are learning that, at least in the first six months after graduating from the Camps, girls need continuous encouragement to take control, make strategic choices, and use their voices to remain entrepreneurial and influence decisions that affect their lives.

Bringing inputs closer to farmers

By Borny Oola

Uganda's COVID-19 lockdown began at the beginning of planting season. Transportation was expensive and hard to come by, even though the government declared farming an essential service.

Farmers had to walk long distances to get inputs. In response, ICAN's BSPs stepped in to understand farmers' specific input needs and set up farm input selling points that community members could access

on foot. BSPs worked with boda boda drivers who delivered inputs to the village-based selling points. To date, more than 3,000 farmers have accessed input through this mechanism.

USAID ICAN scales up chili farming in Karamoja

By *Christabel Tumwebaze*

ICAN is working with NECPA to scale up chili growing in Karamoja. NECPA has mapped 2,577 chili farmers in Kotido and Kaabong districts. These farmers have grown chili for export, improving their incomes and lives of their families. Before this collaboration, farmers complained about finding a market for chili. Now, NECPA will buy chili at UGX 9,500 shillings per kilogram. Farmers will use some of the lower grade chili for fencing and making chili blocks to chase away wild animals such as elephants in areas around the national park. In case of threats from locusts,

communities will use chili to spray and protect other plants. NECPA will work through four local agribusiness stockists and 20 BSPs to provide seedlings and other support to farmers. BSPs will earn a commission of 500 shillings per kilogram sold.

“There is a strong element of ownership and viewing chili as business rather than a hand-out,” explains Helen Acham, Executive Director NECPA. “This is because farmers pay for seedlings. If they cannot afford to buy seedlings, NECPA supplies them and subtracts the cost at the end of the

contract after farmers have sold.” She adds that they formalize their transactions through professional contracts that bind both BSPs and NECPA. Farmers have cleared their land and are looking forward to planting. Acham also appreciates the partnership with ICAN in helping her scale up production with additional farmers in Karamoja. With more smallholder farmers showing interest in Lango and Acholi where NECPA produced most of its chili, competition is increasing. Karamoja has an opportunity to grow and expand chili production in partnership with NECPA.

USAID ICAN-trained teenager teaches community better WASH practices

By *Kabatooro Mayimuna*

Thirteen-year-old Muhumuza Norman from Kanungu has taught his parents and neighbors how to build a tippy tap, improving his community's hygiene during COVID-19. Muhumuza also worked with his father to dig a rubbish compost pit and grow a vegetable garden at home. All these he learned when the Village Health Team (VHTs) and Business Service Providers (BSPs) from USAID ICAN had a WASH campaign and trained him and other members of Kamahe primary school child rights clubs in February. USAID ICAN, through child rights clubs, targets school children who in turn influence their parents and communities to take on better hygiene, nutrition and resilience practices. In many cases, the children are the most educated in

the family. Parents and the community rely on them for information, including that on nutrition and WASH. USAID ICAN's messages and interventions carried out at the beginning of the term are now being transferred to parents and community during lockdown.

“When schools closed, I decided to help my parents and neighbours. I have so far built our tippy tap and one for the neighbour. I plan to reach more neighbours and share the knowledge on hygiene that I learned from USAID ICAN. I also want them to grow more vegetables so that children enjoy good nutrition and strengthened immunity while at home,” Muhumuza said.

From vegetable farming to money lending

NyekoBalokuc MIYCAN group in loc-ken-East Village, Wantiti Parish in Padibe East Sub County, Lamwo District is a group of 26 mothers and caregivers. They continued practicing vegetable growing after the training on backyard gardening by the ICAN VHTs and health assistant. The group has grown their income from the sale of vegetables

like tomatoes, cabbages, onion and local edible vegetables (“Boo” and “Otigo dii”). In the first season, the group earned 876,000/= . This money is being used as a revolving loan and capital to diversify member income sources for commercial farming. This has improved group and household income hence families becoming more resilient to

shocks like such as food insecurity, limited income sources for meeting basic needs like health, education and start-up capital for business and commercial farming. The group would like to continue with vegetable growing, especially during dry season where demand is high.

Leading by example: BSP makes 1.5 million from cabbages in one season

BY Innocent Jessie Aloyo



CAN Master trainers trained BSPs in Agripreneurship as a way of strengthening structures in working with community groups. This training was a turning point in my life compared to training received in VSLA methodology received earlier last year. I felt the training triggered my business sense in that I was able to make an informed decision on what kind of vegetable I needed to venture into to make money with the use of the skills and knowledge acquired during the 3 days' training. The training took us through different management practices in different vegetables' growing which I compared the costs involved in each vegetable production - tomatoes, egg plants, cabbages. I found out that tomatoes can fetch me more than 20 million from an acre of plot but requires a lot of close monitoring and care, spraying and intense labor while egg plants do not require so much on farm work once sprayed with chemicals. This vegetable however does not bring in much income as compared to tomatoes and cabbages. I realized that cabbages can fetch me about 20 millions shillings from an acre of land, the production is not so labor intensive and I don't need to use a lot of money in buying chemicals for spraying. In terms of market, cabbages are selling very well both from within the village and also in the towns. Tomatoes also sell very well but this requires me to have proper harvesting and transport facilities to avoid damages since it's more perishable than cabbages. I began consulting those already in its production and as you know not all wish you well. Some encouraged me to start and guided me on what to do while others simply discouraged me. I however took my stand and I have never regretted my decision of venturing into cabbage production since I will be selling every 3 months. The amount I have received now from my records of sale even before this training has reached over 1.5 millions and this is just in one season which

started from May 2020 to now as we are chatting. With this training I vision myself earning much more with use of skills, knowledge and constant consultation with master trainers on how best I can improve in production of cabbages. The production I was doing before was not based on any formal and practical training but rather on common knowledge just like any other farmer who is trying out what can work for him so I foresee much higher income now with the skills and knowledge acquired. This training has boosted my work as a BSP in executing my social responsibility as people now call me to seek advice on what quality of seeds to buy, others come to my garden to be taken through how to raise a nursery bed and some even come and buy the seedlings from my plots to go plant in their gardens.

At home, my wife and I are sharing roles in the production and sale of the cabbages. Many times, my wife goes to sell in the local market and provides accountability which I note down in my sales record. My mother helps with harvesting and some neighbors chip in when the work is overwhelming. To appreciate them I always give them some heads of cabbages to go prepare for their families. My sales record has helped me to know who my customers are especially for those who come to buy from home or the gardens because I take down their details but this is not easy when I come to the Market like here in Awach Center because I can't take down every persons' name because others buy one head. I usually record names of those who buy in bulk.

My work in the ICAN project has even supported me further to reach out to many community members within my sub-county since I am training 06 groups with more than 180 people. With the knowledge and skills I acquired previously, I am able to train others and some of these people now turn to me for advice. Almost 80% members of all these 6 groups have now taken to vegetable growing and I see this as a market opportunity for advisory services. In addition, the financial support I get at the end of every month is for transport costs incurred during movement to go train groups, and has helped me to pay some people to support me during weeding when my wife and I couldn't complete on our own. Now with linkage to different market opportunities, I will even realize more benefits.

The journey to date has not been very easy though because I do not have all that is required for the activity like water pump, Chain link to fence of my plots from stray animals and some pesticides but I also believe that ICAN still has big plans for BSPs and I am hopeful my engagement in this project will build on my business. I am also renting the plot I am utilizing now and as such, I didn't know the land is always prone to floods. I lost 03 plots of cabbages due to water flooding the plots