



Eastern and Southern Africa
Small Scale Farmers' Forum

ESAFF - UGANDA

THE EXODUS TO ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

**SMALL-SCALE
FARMERS' STORIES**

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INTRODUCTION

Ecological Organic Farming is a dependable form of farming to guarantee sustainable ecosystem management and food security through agricultural production activities that positively influence sustainable production by taking into account the environmental, social, and economic elements.

Since 2019, ESAFF Uganda has been documenting information on EOA best practices in form of brochures, videos, podcasts, articles, and training manuals. These have been physically shared with small scale farmers and shared on the website and different social media platforms. ESAFF Uganda documented stories on the use of this information among small scale farmers and assess the contribution of this information in transitioning to organic farming.

THE JOURNEY TO PROCESSING MY ORGANIC COFFEE

Unlike most coffee farmers who shifted from ecological organic practices to conventional agriculture, Fred Ddamulira, continues to grow his coffee using these very practices and shows no signs of changing. Artificial fertilizers and pesticides have never been a welcome idea to him because organic farming ways are not only more reliable in ensuring quality yields but also more affordable. He is disappointed that the unhealthy conventional ways have taken over the farming industry. Despite the good coffee yields Ddamulira was realizing, the struggle to process it at factories, because of the high costs involved proved a challenge. However, he got training from **ESAFF Uganda** on adding value to coffee and later received a processing machine from the district local government under the **"Omulimi Asinga"** Program. The machine now does the shelling of the coffee beans instead of having to take them to the factory for the same service. Ddamulira has also welcomed fellow small scale coffee farmers to process their coffee using the same machine in order to increase their profits.

“

Previously, I had to pay for transport, pay the coffee berry sorters before my harvest was even put in the coffee processing machine and wait in very long lines and then after, I would have to pay for the electricity consumed while processing my coffee.”

Since Ddamulira received this machine at his home, his earnings have improved tremendously as he now carries out process himself. His sales have grown from **700** kilograms a season, to 1,000 kilograms. At a cost of Shs 7,000 a kilo, the returns are more promising for Ddamulira. He even plans on extending training on coffee value addition to other coffee farmers in his community as well.

Fred Ddamulira, 68

*A Small-scale Coffee Farmer in Kibaale Village,
Ssaayi Parish, Mukono South Constituency, Mukono district*





LEADING BY EXAMPLE IN ORGANIC FARMING

Ddungu, a small scale farmer is passionate about a bright future for farming. In his capacity as a community, political and church leader in Masaka district, Ddungu spends many of his days mobilizing people to that cause. With that determination and set of skills, he has found it easy to lead the ecological organic agriculture crusade through his zealous radio shows facilitated by **ESAFF Uganda**, particularly on Radio Buddu, where he is a regular guest.

Ddungu's extensive work has been able to capture people in Buwunga and Mukungwe sub-counties (Kimaanya and Kabonera divisions) where he has been able to mobilize and train more small scale farmers on ecological organic agriculture.

“ In those particular localities, I have encouraged farmers to make sure that alongside growing crops for subsistence and commercial purpose, they must do piggery, cattle keeping, rabbit farming and poultry. That is the complete ecosystem, because each of those activities supports the other in one way or another, either as fertilizers or pesticides.”

In light of Ddungu's passion to spread awareness about ecological organic agriculture, his deep conviction to engage in it himself, he has set up model demonstration farms where coffee and bananas (Matooke) are grown. He has also emphasized the need to plant onions, green pepper, maize and beans all of which, he proudly added, would generate a sizeable income for any farmer.

Gerald Ddungu, 55

A small-scale Farmer in Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, New Kumbu LC 1, Masaka district



REVIVING INDIGENOUS POULTRY BREEDS HAS GREATLY INCREASED MY INCOME

Having been part of the Ecological Organic Agriculture initiative since inception, Kabwama noted earlier that organic farming can only be successful if he integrated indigenous poultry with animals on his farm. Ever since he introduced local poultry on his farm, every year, Kabwama hatches over 8000 chicks from the incubators. In fact, **8000** about how many chicken he sells every year. This has made him one of the most successful poultry farmers in Mukono district. All that Kabwama rears is local chicken which has to be so popular these days. Having received training on ecological organic agriculture and understanding the role of indigenous poultry in having a successful organic farm and improvement in health, Kabwama has fully embraced the idea that local chicken rearing is the way to go.

“

Considering how heavy the demand for local chicken is today, I could not have picked a better trade. Local chicken range from Shs 30,000 to shs 100,000. A tray of local chicken eggs is so rare, that the cheapest can only go for shs 20,000, because of their nutritional value. They are also used as medicine in treating different ailments like cough among others.”

Kabwama added that the advantage with local chicken like his, which are on free-range, they find food in the different wild plants rich with the vitamins needed to boost their immunity.

Finally, because of what his chickens eat, a lot of the waste he collects from their enclosures is priced highly, because of the nutritional value they add to the soils. Since exotic chicken feed on salty food, their waste degrades the soil because of the acidic component in their food.

Paul Kabwama, 40

*A Small-scale Farmer in Kawuna Village,
Kiyanja Parish, Mpatta sub-county, Mukono district*

I MANAGED TO RESTORE THE NATURALNESS OF MY COFFEE GARDEN

Back in the day, coffee growing used to be perceived as a trade for mostly men but now, more women like Kamukama have embraced this aspect of farming with a passion. There has also been a dangerous misconception, that to succeed in coffee growing one is required to use a lot of artificial pesticides. Kamukama, a small scale farmer had a change of heart after attending various trainings organized by **ESAFF Uganda** and an EOA champion in Mukono. With this, she has managed to restore the naturalness of her coffee garden just like her forefathers did. Making trenches, to retain water for her coffee farm, mulching to protect the soil and the coffee roots from being hit hard by the sun are some of the things that Kamukama has been dedicated to doing. On top of that, Kamukama has devised modern ways of fighting coffee attacking pests, by placing red bottle trappings on her coffee trees because many pests are attracted to red coffee berries. Kamukama ties the coffee trees with red plastic bottles that are filled with the "**waragi**" scent that attracts the pests only to be drowned and killed.

“

We used to spray to kill the weed that was in our coffee farms but we stopped that. However, we have also realized that digging out the weed is not necessarily a good thing because that same grass protects the coffee tree roots and the soil especially in the dry seasons. This weed collects enough dew during the night, which is water for the soil and the coffee.”

Kamukama has been able to realize some good harvests. As an instructor in coffee growing, a host of women have benefited from Kamukama's experience. Kamukama empowers fellow women in the Kulubbi Women's Group on the best EOA practices in coffee growing.

Patricia Kamukama, 55

*A Small-scale Farmer in Bunakijja Village,
Katosi Town Council, Mukono South Constituency,
Mukono district*





ORGANIC PRACTICES SAVING FARMS

Dropping the spray pump is not a habit that is common, especially when one considers how easy it has made farming for young farmers. The thought of clearing weeds in a garden by having to dig or slash them out, is much harder than just having to spray them in a flash.

On receiving hands-on training on ecological organic agriculture from ESAFF Uganda, Kato has been instrumental in ensuring that the youth he leads drop the pump in order to advance the ecological organic agricultural practices instead for safer and healthier yields.

“*My message to the youth farmers has been very simple. Crops that are sprayed are a great danger to people's lives because of the chemicals used. Once we consume them, they affect our lives by causing us life-threatening ailments.*”

Furthermore, spraying kills bees and the termites as they get much of their food from the plants in the garden. It must be noted that pollination done by bees is important too. Therefore, Kato said that as a youth group, they had set up demonstration sites for coffee and vegetables in Namayiba subcounty on which they could carry out regular training.

These sites are aimed at teaching more young farmers how to grow coffee and vegetables organically and also use natural (organic) pesticides and fertilizers to eliminate pests and boost productivity respectively. Poultry and goat waste, which many young farmers have adopted, have proved efficient in ensuring good soil performance and productivity.

Notably, growing tomatoes organically is still an uphill task. This is because organic pesticides to protect tomatoes remains a challenge and because of that, Kato believes that the youth they have been training in ecological organic agricultural practices, have instead concentrated on growing **Nakati** and other sorts of green vegetables, whose pests can easily be dealt with by using rabbit urine, onions, ash and pepper.

Moses Kato, 42

*A Small-scale Farmer in Namayiba Village,
Nakisunga Sub-county, Mukono district*



THE DEMONSTRATION GARDEN WAS OUR MAGICAL BULLET

After training over 30 young farmers in Masaka about growing pineapples using ecological organic agricultural practices, Kisekka is proud to see most of them starting gardens of their own. In the past they could not do something like that largely because they were scared of that they had to invest heavily in buying artificial pesticides and fertilizers from the shops. However, following the **ESAFF Uganda** training on ecological organic agriculture practices of pineapple growing in 2020, Kisekka was facilitated to host a pineapple demonstration garden. It's on this garden that Kisekka was able to train fellow youth ten (10) of whom have been able to start up organic pineapple gardens with free pineapple suckers from Kisekka's garden.

A portion of his other garden has pineapples that have been grown using artificial fertilizers and pesticides but at harvest, he observed a distinct difference:

“First of all, the inorganic pineapples took a little longer than 18 months to mature. Also, the taste is so different from the organic pineapples which have such a rich sweet taste with more natural sugar than the others.”

Interestingly, Kisekka disclosed that the organic pineapples have been grown using chicken waste, coffee husks and cow dung. This has not only made the produce rich in nutrition and taste, but also pests resistant. Kisekka adds that his sales have greatly increased with higher prices on the organic pineapples.

Ibrahim Kisekka, 39

*A Small-scale Farmer in Pineapples
Bulando Ward, Masaka district*



ORGANICALLY GROWN COFFEE INSPIRING MANY YOUNG FARMERS

From the age of 15, Miiro has been involved in coffee growing. It has become an integral part of his livelihood; therefore, any developments geared towards ensuring better coffee productivity have his undivided attention.

For a while now, Miiro has been growing coffee following Ecological Organic Agricultural practices. After realizing how expensive it was to depend on artificial fertilizers to grow coffee, Miiro chose to go the organic route. It has proved to be more affordable especially because it is easy and gives a farmer desired produce.

“

It is also important to note that because of its natural composition, coffee grown organically has a very nice aroma, which makes it most sought after on the international market.”

Miiro attributes his success in coffee growing, to the in depth training he has received from ESAFF Uganda and has also dedicated a lot of his time to training several youth in organic coffee growing using the coffee demonstration garden that was established with support from **ESAFF Uganda**. He has encouraged many to open up coffee plantations alongside bananas (Matooke) and Beans , because these crops (coffee, bananas and beans) share an inter-dependent relationship. This guarantees steady nutrient sharing and therefore would guarantee good yields.

James Miiro, 52

A Small-scale Farmer in Mukono district



ORGANIC FARMING HAS BECOME A NORM IN MY FAMILY

Transitioning to organic farming on the family farms has been an easy process for Mpungu. This is because everyone in her home, including her children and grandchildren have been interested in learning organic farming methods. Back in the early 1980s, when the Mpungu's decided to focus on agro-business, they only knew one thing; to be successful as farmers in maize, beans and matooke growing, they had to use artificial fertilizers and pesticides. Close to 20 years, they followed that course, yet, they did not reap as bountifully as they had projected.

It was then that ESAFF Uganda's arrival on the scene set a paradigm shift in their thinking. ESAFF set them on a course to drop the use of artificial fertilizers and pesticides, and instead resort to the ecological organic agricultural practices. Without looking back, Mpungu and her family a new lease to life as these practices have helped her production capacity to transition into a force to reckon with.

“

Artificial fertilizers and pesticides were quite expensive especially because they have to be used perpetually. Yet, the absurdity was that we never harvested as much as we hoped most times. One time, we lost a whole acre of maize, yet we had put all kinds of pesticides. However, when ESAFF came and gave us new orientation, we realized that the organic methods of farming we had neglected as a family were quite effective and rewarding.”

There has, as a result been a mindset change in the whole of the Mpungu household. She explained how all her children and grandchildren in Masaka and Entebbe have adopted ecological organic agricultural practices. As a family, the transition to organic farming has become a norm. Right now, the Mpungu family realizes plentiful harvests. The beans, maize and matooke are not only big in size because of using organic farming methods, but they are also nutritious healthy looking. This is because the soils are pregnant with the organic fertilizers made from poultry and animal waste from the animals that are reared.

In addition, Mpungu's grandchildren have started their own personal gardens, on the family land, where they grow different crops especially green vegetables like doodo, nakati, ensugga, esunsa, ejoby and bugga. Buying greens from the market is a thing of the past in the Mpungu household. Even pesticides are made at home. The urine from the animals (cows, goats or pigs) is also harvested, to produce pesticides. This is kept for three weeks at least, and once it is combined with tithonia and other wild plants like kayovu, kawunyira, tobacco, ash and pepper, pests are eliminated. The one thing Mpungu now boasts of is the unending supply of all sorts of food (paw paws, avocado, jackfruit and mangoes) on their farm. She is convinced that with ESAFF Uganda's orientation to Ecological Organic Agriculture, they can never go hungry. Even the maize they harvest today, simply produces the best flour for posho and her family enjoys it unreservedly.

Betty Mpungu, 74

A Small-scale Farmer in Nyendo - Mukungwe division, Kako Village, Masaka district



This comes with adverse effects to productivity. In addition, the chemicals that are sprayed on the foods most people eat today have also proved dangerous. They have been cited as major contributors to the weakening body immunities.

That is why, Muwanga does not spray. Instead, she said:

“ I use ashes to keep the pests that attack my greens and sugarcane away. You see, termites enjoy feasting on sugarcane. And to keep them away, we put ashes on the cane. This means that I do not have to kill the termites, because they are important to the ecosystem. The burrows they make in the soil, enable easy water movement, which the plants need.”

Furthermore, problems like the banana wilt have been eradicated using ash, animal urine and the tithonia plant, which is a fertilizer, but also a pesticide. She also emphasizes the need to give the farm land at least six months, if the farmer has been using artificial fertilizers and pesticides, to rid it of the chemicals and their effects.

In a nutshell, Muwanga encourages all farmers, many of whom she has trained in groups, like the Kyannamukaaka youth, to go organic, because it is the way to go.

Olivia Muwanga, 76

A Small-scale Farmer in Kaddugala - Nsangamo LC1 Village, Masaka district

MINDSET CHANGE EASING TRAINING

Mrs. Muwanga, an advocate for and key trainer of Ecological Organic Agricultural practices and one of the TOTs continuously trained by ESAFF Uganda, has championed training in her community as a means to widening the scope of people adopting the healthy farming measures. Realigning farmers' mindsets to the ecological organic farming practices has become Muwanga's point of call.

She grew up seeing her parents use organic measures to support their farming endeavors, which ensured healthy feeding for their family but that is probably not the case today, where weeds are sprayed as are pests. This, according to Muwanga, has affected the quality of the soils. Also the under-life in the soil, including the role of different insects, which play a major role in the ecosystem, has been distorted.



SEEING THE YOUTH PRACTICE ORGANIC FARMING IS MY PASSION

Nagawa, an EOA champion and TOT in Masaka has proven to be a true inspiration to fellow youth, following her extended involvement in organic farming after the training and receiving information on Ecological Organic Agriculture. It is because of her dedication to it for many years now that she has turned her parents' home into a model farm.

“Most youth in my home area were hesitant to adopt Ecological Organic Agriculture practices because they did not know that it was profitable. However, two years ago, ESAFF Uganda trained me on organic farming which completely changed my perception. With the increased interest in organic farming, I wrote a proposal, lobbying friends from South Korea for support to my community in organic farming. I received Shs 65 million, part of which I used to acquire six acres of farm land on which the youth have established demonstration plots of organic food.”

On top of that, Nagawa has been training the youth in Buwunga sub-county on how to practice organic agriculture to great effect. Many have started practicing the same by growing oranges, coffee, bananas and many other crops. Others are rearing chicken, pigs and cattle, to support the cause. Nagawa also does bee-keeping too, and she is reaping big.

Milly Nagawa, 35

A small-scale farmer in Buwunga Sub-county, Masaka district



CONSUMPTION OF ORGANIC FOODS HAS IMPROVED MY HEALTH

While Ecological Organic Agriculture has a wide range of aspects, Nakiguli's focus has been on vegetables and greens. Nakiguli's perspective is that vegetables are helpful in treating different ailments. Nakiguli, having suffered from different body complications; she attended one learning visit that was organized by ESAFF Uganda at St. Jude Family Farm on production of organic pesticides.

“ I used to suffer from joint and back pains until I started consuming specific greens, prepared in a special way. Things like sukuma-wiki, doodo, nakati and katunkuma are real medicines against things like hypertension. Others like okra, ekinyanya and a kitafeeri have high nutritional value too. After attending the training at St. Jude, I returned home and started making my own pesticides which I apply on my vegetables and my health greatly improved since then.”

However, Nakiguli added that one must understand that all these vegetables and fruits have an element of sophistication if one is to get extraordinary nutritional value from them. For example, Nakiguli advised that greens should be eaten exclusively before the main meal. However, before that, Nakiguli noted, vegetables must be handled well. They must not be exposed to too much sunlight otherwise the heat depreciates their nutritional value. In addition, Nakiguli discourages cooking greens and vegetables together with the main meal this is because the greens end up getting overcooked and lose their natural green colour. This compromises their nutritional value. That is on top of the dangers that result from spraying of chemicals, to kill pests that attack the vegetables while still in the garden.

Leticia Nakiguli, 45

A Small-scale Farmer in Kimaanya - Kabonera division, Kimaanya B LC1 Village, Masaka district



IMPROVING SOIL HEALTH WITH BIOCHAR AND ANTHILL MOUND SOIL

One of the major proponents of the Ecological Organic Agriculture crusade in Mukono district has been Nakijoba. She is a master of the whole concept; she boasts of knowing it like the back of her hand. Having attended one of the trainings on production of biochar and use of anthill mound soil, Nakijoba has therefore transferred this knowledge into her maize garden which has really shown great results.

Biochar is a charcoal-like substance that is made by burning organic material from agricultural and forest wastes (also called biomass) in a controlled process called **pyrolysis**. While biochar looks a lot like common charcoal, it is produced using a specific process (one that Nakijoba is an expert at training in), to reduce contamination, but safely store carbon.

“

Biochar is mostly used during the dry season, because it enables the retention of water in the soil. Once you cover your garden with it, there is a boost in crop production, because of what it is composed of. It has carbon-dioxide, nitrogen, phosphorous and sulphur. The purpose of mixing it with anthill mound soil, is because the anthill soil is composed of ants' saliva, it is sticky and helps to hold together the biochar. On top of that, the anthill soil has iron, calcium, magnesium and zinc, which boost crop growth.”

Nakijoba added that biochar, mixed with liquid manure and composite manure is a good intervention for times when the earth is faced with climate change effects. She adds that through using biochar, her maize yields have greatly improved. However, more importantly, now she has delved into the greater science aspects of Ecological Organic Agriculture. She has got a special inclination towards encouraging more farmers to adopt the production of Biochar and the use of anthill mound soils to restore soil capacity for small-scale farmers.

Irene Nakijoba, 38

A Small-scale Farmer in Kigombya Village, Ggulu Ward, Mukono Municipality



WATER HARVESTING IN ORGANIC FARMING

The adage, water is life, is true as both Nakuya and her family have come to realize. As residents of a hilly Kiwanyizi village, whose soils also have a generous amount of natural reddish stones entrenched within and this has made the soil less arable. That obviously means, it requires lots of water to support the growth of flora and sustenance of fauna.

The nearest well, which is over one and a half kilometers away collects water but it cannot sustain the demands of the farmers in the community. The National Water and Sewerage Corporation grid connected and provided piped water for the community but it was rather expensive; each jerry can would go for Shs 500. At the same time, there were times they spent two weeks without supply. Nakuya's cow alone needed two 40 litres of water every day to live off. Her close to five-acre farm also basically thrived on water. This was overwhelming for Nakuya.

Something had to give. Fortunately, **ESAFF Uganda** had trained them on rain water harvesting and Nakuya realized a turnaround in fortunes. She said:

“ We decided to start saving money a few years ago, after our training, and constructed a water tank using bricks. It is 8 feet deep, 15 feet long and 13 feet wide. It collects 30,000 litres of water when full. We now have enough water to take us through a period of over three months, before the next rains come. Our farming has been so successful, as both our crops and animals are in good stead.”

Joweria Nakuya, 65

A Small-scale Farmer in Nyendo - Mukungwe Division, Matanga Ward, Kiwanyizi LC1 Village, Masaka district



CHEMICAL ADVERTS HAD OUR ATTENTION

Artificial farming practices used to cost Nalwadda a lot of money. A 25 kilogram bag of artificial pesticides would cost her at least Shs 150,000 plus the labor force to administer it. Nalwadda gave in to the stretch but the harvest was not commensurate with her investment. Instead, she spent a lot of her dividends from the harvest paying back loan sharks.

“

I projected 15 bags of maize from my one and a half acre land, but ended up with 9 bags. This always compelled me to harvest fast, before the maize was dry enough, to make flour for posho because I wanted to pay back the money I had borrowed. However, since I started using rabbit urine, pepper, ash, bombo and mululuuza as pesticides, my expenditure has reduced tremendously.”

In addition, because of the Ecological Organic Agriculture practices, which entail mechanisms of fighting pests, for example, their efficacy has been remarkable, enabling Nalwadda's maize to grow well and to full term. These natural pesticides have also come much cheaper than the artificial ones. In a nutshell, Nalwadda has now started reaping big from her farm in terms of harvest after attending various trainings on production of organic fertilizers and pesticides by **ESAFF Uganda**. She is now using the different training materials on Ecological Organic Practices. Her projections are being realized. She does not even have to rush to harvest, in order to pay back loans.

Rehemah Nalwadda, 44

A small-scale farmer in Kiyanja Village, Mpatta sub-county, Mukono district



MY SMALL DEMONSTRATION PLOTS HAVE MADE ORGANIC FARMING EASY TO ADOPT

Training of small-scale farmers on the Ecological Organic Agriculture practices has been made easy due to the existence of practical learning methods at the Namboowa's demonstration garden which she set up after attending various training by ESAFF Uganda. There, she has been able to inspire other farmers, who have witnessed the strides she has made and the results she has realized.

“ I have a magical concoction that I call “plant tea”, which I give my crops every morning. It is breakfast to them. It includes natural pesticides like Ennanda, Luwoko, tithonia, “sunsa” from the pumpkin, “akabombo” and “kamyu”. These have cleared and chased pests for good and neither the crops nor the soil have been affected in any way.”

This has been quite an experience for Namboowa, who, in essence, could conclude, has learnt the hard way, the effects of using artificial pesticides and fertilizers. They killed the underground life, which affected the productivity of her garden but ever since she went organic, the results of harvest have been tremendously good because of how the ecosystem has been respected.

Catherine Namboowa, 54

*A Small-scale Farmer in Kitebe - Namaliga Village,
Nakisunga Sub-county, Mukono district*



WOMEN ARE THE KEY CHANGE AGENTS FOR ORGANIC FARMING

Women in small-scale farming are more vigilant to learn about Ecological Organic Agriculture farming in their respective communities according to Nantongo. As it has turned out, Nantongo reasoned that this notion has been inspired by the fact that most of them have found it more convenient. Nantongo, as an advocate of Ecological Organic Agriculture, spends much of her day meeting women, both young and old,

encouraging them to adopt the same practice she has carried out for the last ten years. She could not be more pleased about the strides she has made.

“

Since I started spreading the word on Ecological Organic Agriculture that I received from different training from ESAFF Uganda, I have interfaced with at least fifteen different community groups dominated by women. There has been at least 450 women, who have been touched by the message, and have started doing both commercial and subsistence farming while following basic Ecological Organic Agriculture values.”

According to Nantongo, the reason more women are engaging in EOA is because it provides both food and an income. It has helped create employment particularly for the youthful women, who have struggled to find jobs. On the other hand, these women have now also realized how marketable organic harvests are, compared to their non-organic counterparts. That has increased their passion for Ecological Organic Agriculture. Although the women's vigilance to organic crops keeps growing, their biggest challenge has been the ever changing seasons, because of climate change.

Despite that, the women have widely reverted to planting the local matooke as opposed to the genetically modified one. Also, these women have taken to rearing local chicken, because of how quickly they reproduce, while also bringing in quick money. This, according to Nantongo has resulted from the training she has conducted

Nantongo Eva, 50

A Small-scale Farmer in Kyetume, Mukono district



WORKING WITH MY GRANDCHILDREN HAS INCREASED THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF ORGANIC FARMING

After several trainings and learning visits that Nassozi has attended on organic and family farming, in more ways than she has imagined, continues to propagate the cliché that the children are the leaders of tomorrow. In fact, as a proponent of Ecological Organic Agricultural practices, she has also inducted her grandchildren into it.

“*Together with my grandchildren, we work in the garden, and I have taught them the meaning of Ecological Organic Agriculture. For example, they now know that onions have a scent that chases pests from the garden. That is why they now deliberately plant onions around the garden to protect other plants and crops from being attacked by pests.*”

Because of the ideas Nassozi has extended to her grandchildren about Ecological Organic Agriculture, they now take care of the gardens on their own, even when she is away. They have equally become passionate about the whole practice.

Every time they return from school in the evening, they go straight to the garden to inspect the different crops they are growing, from Nakati, bananas, onions, maize and beans. They also rear pigs and poultry using the very organic practices their grandmother has taught them over the years.

Kezia Nassozi, 60

*A Small-scale Farmer in Kisoga Central Village,
Ntenjeru-Kisoga Town Council, Mukono district*

THE MIDAS TOUCH OF ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

As an extension worker, Ssebwalidda has been equipped with knowledge on Ecological Organic Agriculture by ESAFF Uganda, to motivate uptake among small-scale farmers.

“*I have received extensive training from ESAFF Uganda about the purpose of tree planting in the greater scheme of things regarding Ecological Organic Agriculture. For example, trees add nutrients to the soil. Soil management, which requires adding manure, land management, with particular emphasis on how to control soil erosion, are pertinent facets in ensuring that one is successful in administering Ecological Organic Agriculture.*”

Those are among the key highlights that Ssebwalidda engages small-scale farmers in. He encourages them to try and apply, when they embrace Ecological Organic Agriculture. Despite how hectic it can be sometimes; it is effective in realizing good harvests and markets for their produce. Ssebwalidda emphasized that from his experience, as a proponent of Ecological Organic Agricultural practices, it is without doubt, that the **only** way for most farmers to overcome the challenges of climate change, is by going organic.

Right now, he says, in Mukono, their recent survey shows that close to 60% of small-scale farmers have now adopted Ecological Organic Agriculture practices. This is because most of them have realized that the reason why some of Uganda's food exports have not met international standards is because they have been sprayed so much in the past. There is therefore an urgent need, to drop artificial pesticides.

Peter Ssebwalidda, 57

An Assistant Agricultural Officer in Namataba Town Council, Mukono district





ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES SAVING FARMING

Wali, a key EOA facilitator in Mukono district has concentrated on growing Matooke, coffee and vanilla. He has coupled this with rearing poultry, keeping cattle and piggery. He is one complete farmer and this is all for a good cause. As a generational farmer, Wali has advanced the production and application of organic fertilizers and pesticides.

By engaging in both crop and animal husbandry, Wali has shown a high sense of purpose and has been about ensuring that there is an improvement in not only his yields, but also those of other small-scale farmers.

“

These animals and birds provide organic fertilizers through their waste (dung) while at the same time providing supplementary pesticides through their urine. That is on top of other organic pesticides like tobacco, pepper, garlic and "luwoko".

As a profound organic farming facilitator, Wali has shared all the aforesaid experiences with great effect, becoming an instrument for mindset change. Particularly for those who need assurance that Ecological Organic Agricultural practices to which Wali is a walking testimony are real, authentic and resoundingly effective!

Chrsitopher Wali, 62

*A Small-scale Farmer in Kisoga Village,
Ntenjeru - Kisoga Town Council, Mukono district*

CONCLUSION

Ecological organic agriculture has the capacity to feed the people sustainably while recovering the degraded agricultural ecosystems, including loss of biodiversity, according to ESAFF Uganda. This is mainly because organic farming makes it easier for small-scale farmers to coexist peacefully with nature, to profit economically from their land, to improve ecosystem health and services, to be more resilient to changing climatic conditions, to mitigate climate change, to achieve multiple SDGs, and to realize Uganda's Vision 2040. We think that these tales will inspire small-scale farmers and encourage them to adopt ecological organic farming.

About ESAFF Uganda

Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF) Uganda is a small scale farmer initiated and farmer-led movement formed to facilitate processes through which small-scale farmers' development concerns can be solicited, articulated and ultimately addressed through local, national, regional and international policies and programmes.

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