



"We believe organic agriculture can play a curial role in protecting food sovereignty and improving livelihoods of small-scale farmers especially women in rural areas"

Hakim Baliraine, National Chairperson – ESAFF Uganda

Opening Message

October has very important days that are commemorated by small-scale farmers in Uganda. From 14th to 19th October 2019, ESAFF Uganda together with partners organized the first Annual National Organic Week 2019 in the different regions of Uganda to celebrate and appreciate small-scale farmers especially women who are dedicated to organic agriculture. The week was also to popularize organic foods, products and services as dialogue on the challenges impacting organic farming hence generate a multistakeholder responsiveness on scaling up organic agriculture in Uganda.

The Annual National Organic Week 2019 had different events in different districts including Official Media launch, Press Conferences, Radio talk shows, Women Community Dialogues on Organic Agriculture, Organic Food Cookery, National Dialogue on Organic Agriculture, Organic Food Fair, School Quizzes and Public Awareness on Organic Farming practices.

As you enjoy reading this report, think about ways of supporting the dedicated small-scale organic farmers because organic agriculture champions livelihood sustainability and promotes healthy diets and ecosystems. The first step is asking this question when buying food, "What am I eating?".

Thank you to our friends and partners



Launch of the Organic Week 2019



On the 14th of October 2019, a Media Launch for the Annual Organic Week 2019 was organized in Kampala and different targeted districts. ESAFF Uganda shared the press release for the Launch for the Annual Organic Week 2019 with different media houses and social media. This created awareness about the then upcoming events in the different districts.

ESAFF Uganda also introduced the hashtag #OrganicWeekUg2019 to the public at the official launch of the Annual Organic Week 2019.

You can access the press release for the Launch for the Annual Organic Week 2019 <u>here</u>.

Women's dialogues on International Day of Rural Women

The Women's dialogues were held on 15th October 2019 in Nwoya, Mukono, Adjumani, Mubende, Omoro and Gulu district under the theme scaling Up the Role of Rural Women in Organic Agriculture on the International Day of Rural Women that was established to recognize the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty.

195 small-scale women farmers took part in these dialogues including local leaders. Smallscale farmers reported that they face challenges in practicing organic farming including limited extension workers to deliver organic knowledge to the farmers, limited knowledge on organic farming practices, propaganda on conventional agriculture and deride from people producing inorganic foods, limited land with poor land rights for women, limited government support toward organic agriculture as it concentrates on promoting conventional farming. Small-scale farmers also highlighted the lack of knowledge of policies and regulations in place on organic agriculture as well as the limited market to sell their organic products.

Women farmers called on government to increase funding to agriculture sector focusing on organic agriculture as well as increase the number of extensionists with technical knowledge on organic farming. They also recommended for training in organic agriculture and awareness creation for women farmers through organizing sensitization engagements. Women farmers also challenged their local leaders to be champions for organic agriculture and asked media houses in their districts to create radio programs that appreciate women farmers.





World Food Day Cookery and Seed Sharing



The celebration took place in Te-tugu "A" village, Ongako subcounty, Omoro district on 16th October, 2019. More than 88 small-scale farmers from Omoro and Gulu district including youths gathered and displaced the different organic foods that they grow including some Neglected and Underutilized Species (NUS) like cassava, peas, malakwang, boyo, millet flour, shearnut oil, pumpkin among others. Farmer prepared these meals together as they celebrate tradition foods and shared knowledge on how to protect and preserve them, both men and women took part in the cookery to commemorate the World Food Day. After cooking, small scale farmers happily served the food and ate as a community. Participants appreciated the importance of organic foods as being healthy and nutritious.

On the sideline of the day, small scale farmers from Gulu district visited farms where small scale farmers in Ongako sub-county are practicing organic farming. It involved visiting the cassava plantation and harvesting the tubers, peanut, pumpkin and sharing of the cassava stems and other seeds gardens. Smallscale farmers also visited Ongako Seed Bank in Ongako subcounty, Omoro district where they were trained in forming of groups, acquisition of seeds, seed bank management, seed borrowing and seed preservation. This created an opportunity for seed sharing and knowledge transfer.

National Dialogue on Organic Agriculture

The National Dialogue which was the main event of the Organic Week 2019 took place on 17th October, 2019 at Hotel Kakanyero in Gulu district. Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF) Uganda together with PELUM Uganda and other partners organized a National Dialogue on Organic Agriculture to promote and celebrate organic farming and products by small scale farmers in Uganda. The event was graced by 138 participants i.e. 79 males and 49 females from Pader, Omoro, Adjumani, Nebbi, Zombo, Nwoya, Amuru, Gulu, Arua, Amuria and Apac district. These included small scale farmers, woman member of Parliament Gulu district Hon. Betty Aol Ochan, CAO Gulu district, Chairperson LCV Omoro district, academia and the media. The objective was to create awareness on organic agriculture, share challenges and experiences associated with organic agriculture in Uganda. The different stakeholders were urged to celebrate the traditional foods and indigenous seeds that exist in the farming communities as they are nutritious and climate resilient.

The dialogue recommended that; Governments should mainstream organic agriculture in its policies as an effective strategy to reduce greenhouse gases by promoting Organic Agriculture through research and extension services; Government should enact the National Organic Agriculture Policy and come up with its regulatory frame work. Government should develop and table a bill on organic agriculture to protect organic small-scale farmers; Government and partners should invest in developing alternative cheap sources of energy to protect the environment and also protect wetlands; and Government should specialize in funding organic agriculture.

Inclusion, participants appreciated organic agriculture and acknowledged that the future for organic agriculture in Uganda is very promising hence stressing the need to speed up, scale out, share relevant knowledge and practices on organic agriculture and coordinate appropriate policies to boost ecological organic agriculture in Uganda.



Seed and Food Fair

During the National Dialogue which was held on 17th October, 2019 in Gulu district. Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF) Uganda, PELUM Uganda, IIRR and other partners organized a Seed and Food Fair. This attracted seed and food exhibitors from Gulu and Omoro districts. The traditional seeds and foods that were being exhibited included beans, cassava, pumpkin, amalakwang, boo, otigo among others. Exhibitors called on Ugandans to support organic farmers by consuming and promoting organic foods. The Exhibitors also called on the government to preserve indigenous seeds and foods.



School Debates and Quizzes

The School Quiz on Organic Agriculture was held on 18th October 2019 in different schools including Pagak Primary School in Amuru district, Rock Primary School in Kasese district, St. Mauritz Primary School in Gulu district and Otubet Primary School in Amuria district. These Quizzes were attended by 337 (236 females and 101 males) students and teachers. The pupils who participated were from Primary 5, 6 and 7.

In Amuria district the competition was phased in two, a school debate under the motion "Organic farming is better than modern agriculture" and the school quiz. The school science master was the examiner during the quiz and guided the correctness of the answers but also informing the right one in case of failure. In case the panelist failed questions it was then asked to the audience and whoever got it right was rewarded with a pen each time answered well. In Kasese district, each group answered a total of 8 questions and they were given 2 minutes to answer each question. The Judges considered confidence, smartness, fluency, correct answer and activeness of the pupils in order to get the winners for the school quiz. The best pupils were given bags, shirts and pens.

In Amuru district, it was revealed by the head teacher Mrs. Ataro Rose that as a government aided school they majorly follow the education curriculum which in most cases doesn't promote agriculture especially at primary level. During the discussion majority of pupils had a narrow understanding on Organic agriculture.



In Gulu district, the head teacher Rev. Sr. Rosetta Lanyero testified to the pupils that she is an organic farmer and she only eats organic foods and products hence urging the pupils eat healthy foods. The School Quiz created an environment for sharing of knowledge and experiences. Members of the school administration actively committed to sharing the knowledge and information on organic farming with the young generation.

Some of the actions agreed in these schools include starting up of the organic farms in the school, start Organic/Agroecology Clubs in schools and sharing organic farming information with parents and community members.

Community Awareness and Sensitization

The Community Awareness Event took place on the 19th October 2019, in Omoro district, Onagko sub county headquarters. The Gathering was attended by 113 stakeholders including Local leaders (LC 1 and 3), small-scale farmers and media. The major aim of this to ensure that small scale farmers in the northern region can acquire knowledge from experiences of small-scale farmers in other regions that have practiced organic farming for very many years. Mr. Wali Christopher a small scale farmer from Mukono district had a privilege to share some of his experiences with farmers in Ongako Sub County. In his presentation he explained organic farming and this facilitated interaction with the participants. He further discussed the benefits of organic agriculture such as providing nutritious foods, high market value for organic products. The practices are highly manageable by farmers as well adapting to the changes in climate as well making demonstrations on some of the practices under organic farming like making compost manure, mulching etc. during the discussion participants mentioned some of the challenges they face in Organic farming such as lack of specific organic market, lack of proper postharvest handling mechanisms, poor attitude among small scale farmers among others.



Media Engagements

Radio talkshows and press conferences

ESAFF Uganda in celebrating the organic foods, farming and products held radio talk shows on Radio Mega from 2:00PM to 3:00PM on International Day for the Rural Women and on Radio Rupiny from 8:00PM to 9:00PM on World Food Day. The talk show hosted small scale farmers including Mr. Baliraine Hakim from Mayuge district, Ms. Masudio Margaret from Adjumani district, Vicky Lokwiya from Gulu district, Komakech James Ojok from Gulu district, Regan Nyeko from Amuru district and Kisembo Moris from Gulu district. The discussions were all geared towards the up scaling of organic agriculture.

ESAFF Uganda and other partners also held a press conference during the National Dialogue on Organic Agriculture that was held in Gulu district. During the press conference, small-scale farmers read the communique to the media.



Media stories

https://chimpreports.com/farmers-want-organic-agriculture-bill-tabled-in-parliament/

http://earthfinds.co.ug/index.php/features/item/2566-government-must-support-rural-women-to-adopt-organic-farming-practices

https://www.busiweek.com/support-rural-women-to-adopt-organic-farming-practices-activists-ask-government/

https://www.watchdoguganda.com/business/20191015/80508/agricultural-activists-support-rural-women-to-adopt-organic-

farming.html

NEXT STEPS

Continue engaging local and national leaders to support and promote organic farming, foods and product through actions. Empower small-scale farmers to embrace and promote organic farming and products both locally and nationally.

Sustain the discussion on organic agriculture at local, national and regional level

Educating the consumers on the benefit for organic foods and products Support schools and other learning institutions to teach organic agriculture and create Clubs at schools to facilitate further learning.

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