



REPORT FOR

THE 3RD
NATIONAL
ORGANIC
WEEK
(NOW)
2021

"Go Organic, It's Only Natural"

18th - 22nd October 2021



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1. INTRODUCTION

Organic agriculture is described as a system that emphasizes environmental protection and the use of natural farming techniques. It is concerned not only with the end-product, but with the entire system used to produce and deliver the agricultural product and many Organic farmers rely instead on natural farming methods and modern scientific ecological knowledge in order to maximize the long-term health and productivity of the ecosystem, enhance the quality of the products and protect the environment."

Over time, ESAFF Uganda has organized different interventions that aim at promoting seed rights and organic agriculture such as creating awareness and enhancing farmers capacities on seed rights and organic agriculture, setting demos gardens, farmers seed sovereignty using different approaches like the CMSS model, FFS approach, CRAEM model among others as well as creating platforms for engagements with different stakeholders in development.

2. RATIONALE

Maintenance of genetic and agricultural diversity is also a key characteristic in the principle of ecology in attaining ecological balance. Since we can never restore species which have disappeared completely there is a need to act before the threat to diversity becomes too great. Furthermore, it is necessary with genetic diversity and the conservation of wild relatives in the surrounding ecosystem to maintain a genetic pool where you can find desirable traits for future breeding genetic material from crop wild relatives have been used for thousands of years to improve the quality and yield of crops and is still important in the development of plants tolerant and resilient towards different environments, pests and diseases. And some of these can be clearly addressed by ecological agriculture that ensures and sustains local food security and sovereignty, ecosystem services for rural welfare and biodiversity conservation. It is acknowledged that small-scale farmers already produce 70% of the world's food, and that following agroecological and organic principles and practices African small-scale farmers can produce adequate food to feed the continent sustainably, provided they have secure access to land, water, seeds/breeds and other natural resources.

It's on that note therefore that ESAFF Uganda organized the 3rd Annual National Organic Week 2021 from the 18th to 22nd October 2021 with an aim of raising awareness on farmer seed rights and the benefits of locally produced organic food and increase consumption frequency among small scale farmers and other stakeholders. This year's Organic Week was celebrated under the theme: **"Go organic, It's only Natural"**

3. OBJECTIVES

- **To increase understanding and create awareness among different stakeholders on ecological organic agriculture practices and consumption.**
- **To provide a platform for stakeholders to generate information that will inform the meaningful implementation of the National Organic Agriculture Policy.**
- **To provide a platform for SSFs to engage different stakeholders and exhibit how ecological agriculture systems are a critical solution to the realization and food and nutrition security amidst the climate change crisis.**

4. METHODOLOGY

The 3rd Annual National Organic Week 2021 employed a range of methods including Keynote presentations, panel and plenary discussions, tree planting, group meetings and storytelling sessions that enhanced learning and knowledge sharing. ESAFF Uganda further popularized the NOW 2021 on social media platforms and selected media houses.

5. DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The National Organic Week 2021 was attended by 331 participants (176 men, 155 women, 94 youth) who included small scale farmers, policy makers, civil society organizations, representatives from MAAIF and UGOCERT.



Radio Talk Shows

On 18th October 2021, 3 radio talk shows were conducted on Radio Buddu in Masaka, Baba FM in Jinja and Aulogo FM in Adjumani. The National Organic Week 2021 was officially launched on Baba FM where small scale farmers discussed the week-long activities and also called on fellow small-scale farmers to join the campaign on tree planting. In Adjumani, small scale farmers discussed the importance of Neglected and Utilized Species in improving food and nutrition security and the importance of involving the youth in preserving these species. In Masaka, small scale farmers shared their experiences in practicing Ecological Organic Agriculture practices and the benefits of consuming organically produced foods. The radio talk shows increased awareness among the public on the importance of consuming organic foods and the role of indigenous species in improving food and nutrition security.



The Tree Planting Caravan

The tree planting caravan ran from 18th to 21st October 2021. This caravan commenced in Mukono district through Jinja, Mayuge, Iganga, Manafwa and Kumi. Over 5000 fruit tree species were distributed to small scale farmers and local leaders and some planted at the district headquarters in the 6 districts. Some of the tree species that were planted include: cocoa, mangoes, tangerine, ovacado, oranges, soursop and jackfruit. Small scale farmers were sensitized on the great importance of fruit tree planting in terms of conserving the environment as well as their great role in ensuring food and nutrition security among small scale farmers.



Cookery Demonstration and Seed Fair

A cookery demonstration and seed fair were conducted in Adjumani district. Small-scale farmers showcased different varieties of indigenous seeds and preparations of different indigenous foods with an aim of creating awareness on indigenous food and seed systems and enhancing food and nutrition security among small-scale farmers. 48 seed varieties and local food plants were exhibited during the event and these included: Mugu, luge, kerekede, Anvara, Jiri, Aubi, Lonjokobi, Uruju, Onvoko, Otigo, Enuga among others. The cookery demonstration and seed fair were attended by 78 small scale farmers and other stakeholders and increased knowledge on preparation and usage of local food plants among small scale farmers especially the women.



Intergenerational Dialogues on NUS

The intergenerational dialogues were held in Apac and Amuria district. They aimed at creating awareness among the different stakeholders and age groups (generations). Small scale farmers especially the elderly shared their experience on NUS as well as the role of NUS in promoting environmental conservation and nutrition in the community and encouraged the youth to restore these species to improve their health. They further discussed the Challenges women face while restoring NUS in their communities and the role of youth in popularizing the NUS among fellow youth. The Intergenerational dialogues enhanced understanding and appreciation of the role of NUS among the youth.



The 3rd National Organic Agriculture Dialogue

The 3rd National Organic Agriculture Dialogue was held on 22nd October 2021 in Kampala. The dialogue focused on celebrating small scale farmers' dedication to organic agriculture as well as discussing key issues and to create a way forward to some of the challenges small scale farmers face in advancing to organic agriculture. The dialogue comprised of panel discussions on organic agriculture. This dialogue was attended by 47 participants who included small scale farmers, media, representatives from MAAIF and Civil Society Organizations as well as members of Parliament. The dialogue increased awareness on how small scale farmers can penetrate markets for organic coffee and horticulture, the role of Neglected Under Utilized Species in ensuring food and nutrition security as well as organic certification processes for organically produced foods.





6. Recommendations

- ✓ Government should meaningfully implement the National Organic Agriculture Policy (NOAP) to benefit the small-scale farmers in Uganda.
 - ✓ Government and line ministries should conduct inclusive research that focuses on organic farming and its products.
 - ✓ Government should promote organic farming and its products by putting up specific organic markets and stalls; development and strengthening coffee micro-stations and cooperatives in the coffee regions in Uganda.
 - ✓ Government should Develop and support the community seed banks as an approach to preserve seed security in the farming communities.
 - ✓ Small scale farmers should apply for certification as groups because it is easier to acquire a certificate as a group.
 - ✓ Media houses should give priority to adverts on organic agriculture inputs.
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7. Conclusion

ESAFF Uganda understands that farming thrives when it works with local ecosystems, for example, improving soil and plant quality through available biomass and biodiversity, rather than battling nature with chemical inputs. Ecological Organic Agriculture practices seek to improve food yields for balanced nutrition, enhance healthy ecosystems and build on ancestral knowledge and customs.

ESAFF Uganda believes that organic agriculture plays a crucial role in protecting food sovereignty and improving livelihoods of small-scale farmers, especially women in rural areas. Each year ESAFF Uganda and partners celebrate the National Organic Week (NOW) in different districts. ESAFF Uganda will organize its 4th National Organic Week 2022 which will celebrate and popularize organic foods, products and services as well as creating platform where small-scale farmers can dialogue on the challenges impacting organic farming for a multi-stakeholder responsiveness for scaling up organic agriculture.



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