

*Assessment of the Inclusivity,
Accessibility and Capacity
of Rural Advisory Services*
for Smallholder Farmers in Abim,
Lira & Soroti Districts, Uganda

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Civic Engagement Alliance


EDUKANS

 COOPERATION

*Assessment of the Inclusivity,
Accessibility and Capacity
of Rural Advisory Services*
for Smallholder Farmers in Abim,
Lira & Soroti Districts, Uganda

———— September 2018 ————

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ATAAS	Agricultural Technology and Agribusiness Advisory Services
CDO	Community Development Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FFS	Farm Field School
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
PAG	Pentecostal Assemblies of God
RAS	Rural Advisory Services
ICCO	Interchurch Cooperation
ISSD	Integrated Seed Sector Development
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NARO	National Agriculture Research Organisation
OWC	Operation Wealth Creation
PWDs	Persons Living with Disabilities
SAO	Share an Opportunity
SAS	Senior Assistant Secretary
SOCADIDO	Soroti Catholic Diocese Development Organisation
UWEP	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
YLP	Youth Livelihood Programme

Keywords

Rural advisory services: This study adopted FAO's¹ definition where RAS refer to all the different activities that provide information and advisory services needed and demanded by farmers and other actors in agro-food systems and rural development. These include technical, organisational, business and management skills and practices which improve rural livelihoods and well-being. This definition of RAS recognises the diversity of actors in advisory service provision (public, private, civil society and farmer organisations) and the much broadened support to rural communities, which goes beyond conventional technology transfers and dissemination of information.

Persons with disabilities (PWDs): Persons with a substantial functional limitation of daily life activities caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment and environmental barriers resulting in limited participation.

1 FAO (2015), Enhancing the Potential of Family Farming for Poverty Reduction and Food Security through Gender-Sensitive Rural Advisory Services

Executive Summary

This study was commissioned by Advance Afrika with support and funding from ICCO and Edukans to assess the inclusivity, access and outreach of rural advisory services (RAS); the quality, relevance and delivery of the skills; and opportunities for private-public actors to increase the accessibility of RAS in Abim, Lira and Soroti districts. The study was conducted using a mixed methods approach based on a cross-sectional design. Data was collected from smallholder farmers, relevant district and sub-county officials and private RAS providers both from NGOs and private-for-profit organisations using questionnaires and interviews.

The study found that there were different RAS providers in the districts but that they were still very inadequate in terms of number, given that agriculture is a major occupation in the rural areas of Uganda. Women, youth and persons with disabilities (PWDs) experienced similar and different challenges of accessibility. These included lack of information about the RAS training, long distances to training areas, socio-cultural challenges that affect accessibility to productive resources and, in turn, affect decision-making, besides the negative perception of both service providers and youth towards inclusion and accessibility to RAS. It was discovered that women, youth and PWDs faced numerous challenges to accessing agricultural financial services and instead depended on the largely undeveloped Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA). PWDs had limited access to RAS because the design of the services largely does not cater for their needs in terms of instructors, venues and devices training, among others.

The study also found that there was limited coordination between local government service providers and non-governmental providers, which created problems such as duplication of services and beneficiaries, the presence of counterfeit products from the private sector and limited sustainability of development projects.

The delivery of RAS was by the use of different methods, mainly following the government policy of group approach, although some farmers were yet to join groups and the fact that many of the existing groups did not focus on agriculture and some were reported to die off before they even started.

The study recommends that RAS providers should work closely with the Community Development Officers (CDOs) at the districts and sub-counties and should be trained in gender dynamics and in working with youth and PWDs. The government needs to consider prioritising the needs of PWDs in RAS by recruiting sign language instructors, providing necessary devices, and ensuring that RAS training is undertaken within the community and that all buildings are easily accessible by PWDs. There is need to mount a strong advocacy campaign and mentoring of youth, who are reported to have a largely negative attitude towards agriculture and to change the structural barriers that affect women, youth and PWDs in accessing RAS.

Finally, there is need to ensure not only that farmers have access to inputs but also that there exist effective storage facilities and markets for their produce in order for them to benefit from the sector.

SECTION ONE:

1 Introduction and Background

1.0 Introduction

This report presents the findings from the study commissioned by Advance Afrika with funding from Interchurch Cooperation (ICCO) and Edukans aimed at contributing towards strengthening the capacity of local CSOs through a programme focused on promoting civil society engagement in dialogue with policy-makers to lobby for an effective policy environment. The programme is composed of three main outcomes:

- A vibrant civil society in which women, youth and PWDs find space to manoeuvre and ably engage duty bearers for the benefit of their communities.
- Marginalised smallholders, especially women and youth in Lango, Teso and Karamoja sub-regions, are food- and nutrition-secure, based on the development and implementation of inclusive action plans and budgets for establishing resilient and sustainable food systems and consumption patterns.
- Women, youth and PWDs in Teso, Lango and Karamoja sub-regions have improved livelihoods as a result of accessing viable local agricultural markets for food and input supplies.

The report is organised in sections. Section 1 focuses on the introduction and background, the purpose and the methodology; section 2 focuses on the presentation of the findings in line with the objectives; and section 3 focuses on the conclusions and recommendations.

1.1 Background

Agriculture is the core sector of Uganda's economy and presents a great opportunity for poverty eradication because it employs over 80% of Uganda's labour force and contributes 40% to the total goods export earnings, with 22% to GDP.² The 206/2017

2 The Republic of Uganda (2017) State of Uganda Population Report 2017

Uganda National Household Survey reports that among households headed by subsistence farmers, the percentage of the poor increased from 20.3% to 38.2% between 2012/13 and 2016/17; in particular, poverty increased from 23% to 36% among those reporting crop farming/subsistence farming as their main source of income.³ This means that concerted efforts in agriculture are crucial to propel Uganda to the middle-income status envisaged in Vision 2040.

The youth form a significant proportion of the country's total population; 18.4 % of the populations are youth aged 18–30 years, while 16.6 % are aged between 15–24 years.⁴ It has been noted that as Uganda strives to reach middle-income status, youth unemployment has remained one of the greatest challenges and any efforts to tap into the potential of the youth will go a long way in contributing to the national objectives. It is also noted that while the majority of women (about 73%) in Uganda⁵ are employed in agriculture as primary producers, gender inequality is still a development challenge that Uganda continues to grapple with. It is further observed that Uganda ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and its Optional Protocol in 2008 without reservations and by so doing committed herself to according all the rights stated in the UN human rights instruments to PWDs like all other citizens; and has made headway by making relevant laws and policies to ensure that PWDs are not discriminated against. However, PWDs still face a plethora of challenges related to inclusivity and accessibility to different services in Uganda. Focusing on improving inclusivity, accessibility and quality of RAS by women, youth and PWDs contributes positively to the achievement of the national goals and, specifically, the welfare and empowerment of the groups.

Advance Afrika is aiming at contributing towards the improvement of RAS in Abim, Lira and Soroti. With funding from Interchurch Cooperation (ICCO) and Edukans, under the Convening and Convincing Programme, Advance Afrika will contribute towards strengthening the capacity of local civil society organisations (CSOs) through a programme focused on promoting civil society engagement in dialogue with policy-makers to lobby for an effective policy environment in order to empower stakeholders to be better advocates for skills for RAS. This relates directly to the objectives of the National Agriculture Extension Strategy Objectives (NAES)⁶: (i) To establish a well-coordinated, harmonised pluralistic agricultural extension delivery system for increased efficiency and effectiveness; (ii) To empower farmers and other value chain actors (youth, women and other vulnerable groups) to effectively participate in and benefit equitably from agricultural extension processes and demand for services; (iii) To develop a sustainable mechanism for packaging and disseminating appropriate technologies to all categories of farmers and other beneficiaries in the agricultural sector; and (iv) To build institutional capacity for the effective delivery of agricultural extension services.

3 UBOS (2016) Uganda National Household Survey 2016/2017

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (2016), National Agriculture Extension Strategy

Advance Afrika is a not-for-profit organisation that gives priority to innovative approaches of creating opportunities for sustainable sources of livelihood through life skills and entrepreneurship development in order to reduce vulnerability and contribute to social justice in Uganda. Advance Afrika envisions building a society where young people live with dignity and realise their full potential. Advance Afrika's work with the criminal justice system in Uganda prioritises the rehabilitation and reintegration of prison inmates and ex-inmates.

1.2 Purpose of the assignment

The consultancy was guided by Advance Afrika's stated objectives of:

1. Assessing the inclusivity of access to and outreach of agri-skills, training services and agricultural extension services in the target areas, particularly opportunities for reaching out to women, youth and PWDs.
2. Examining the quality and relevance of skills and delivery of training in the target areas with specific focus on cassava, millet and maize in a bid to improve access to quality and relevant public extension services.
3. Exploring the complementary opportunities of public-private actors to increase accessibility and quality of agri-service and training skills to smallholder farmers.

1.3 Methodology

This study used a mixed method cross-sectional design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative methodology focused on an in-depth narrative approach with strong emphasis on respondents' citations with due regard to the thematic aspects of the study derived from the objectives. The quantitative methodology focused on numerical data to generate relevant figures and charts or tables to show the magnitude of the relevant issues emerging from the study. The study used stratified sampling of two sub-counties per district, basing on rural-urban categories (Lira: Barr and Agweng sub-counties; Abim: Lotukei and Awach sub-counties; and, finally, Soroti: Asuret and Kamuda sub-counties). In-depth interviews with key informants drawn from among the district and sub-county officials were conducted to obtain detailed information about financing resources and district policies on RAS targeted at smallholder farmers.

Researcher-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from individual farmers, private RAS – which included Share an Opportunity in Abim; AVSI, Concerned Parents and Nyekorac in Lira; and Pentecostal Assemblies of God and SOCADIDO in Soroti. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the agricultural officers at the sub-counties, and district and sub-county chairpersons of youths and leaders of PWDs, in addition to some financial institutions, including THUR and DFCU in Abim and Post Bank and Centenary Bank in Soroti. Finally, document review was done to collect secondary data on policy, financing and the provision of agricultural extension

services. The qualitative data was analysed using content and thematic approaches and, for the quantitative data, Excel was used to generate relevant statistics.

Table 1: Summary of respondents that participated in the study per district

Category	Abim	Lira	Soroti	Total
District Production Officer	01	01	01	03
Agricultural officer	01	01		02
Commercial officer	01		01	02
Community Development Officer (CDO)	01	01	01	03
District Secretary for Production	01		01	02
OWC coordinator	01			01
Youth Council chairperson		01	01	02
Women Council chairperson		01		01
Council representative for PWDs		01	01	02
Sub-county				
Senior Assistant Secretary (SAS)	02	02	02	06
CDO	02	01	02	05
Agricultural officer	02	02	02	06
Women Council	02	02	02	05
Youth Council	02	02	02	06
Council representative for PWDs	02	01	02	05
NGO officials and private service providers	03	07	03	13
Financial institutions	02		02	04
Farmers	21	25	26	72
Total	44	48	48	140

1.4 Challenges and limitations of the study

The field data collection coincided with the annual agricultural show in Jinja and, therefore, some relevant respondents were not accessible and the researchers could not make callbacks, given the short period of time in which the study had to be completed.

The study used an approach of sub-county officials mobilising farmers (those in groups and those not in groups) to interact with the researchers at one central location. This could have affected the sampling and representation of the respondents. Nevertheless, the researchers tried to mitigate this challenge by obtaining information from different sources.

SECTION TWO:

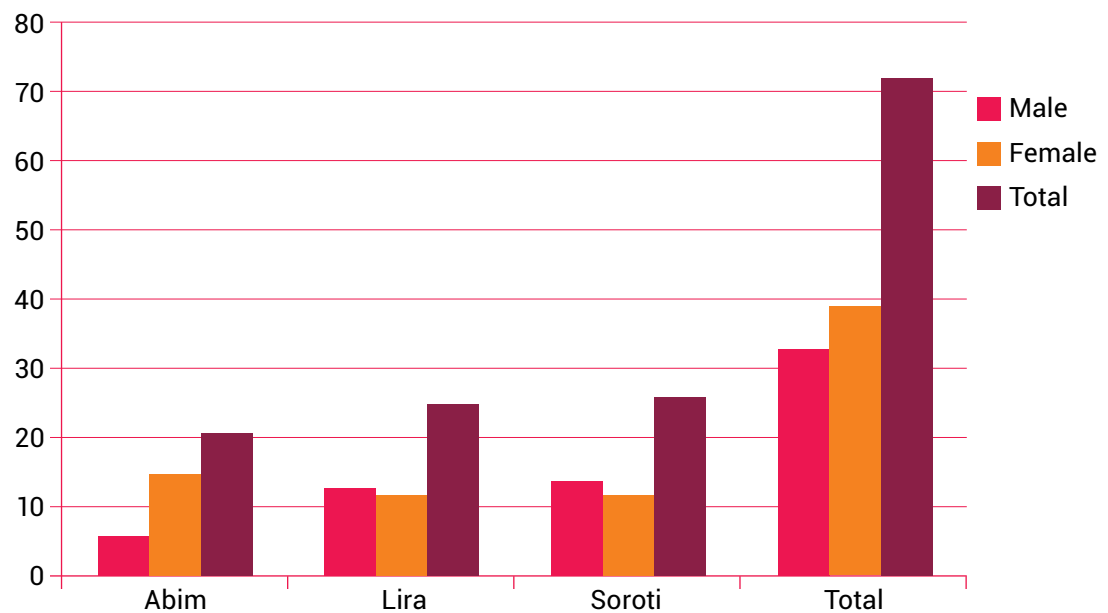
Findings

2.1 Basic information

2.1.1 Sex of farmers who participated in the study

As seen in Figure 1 below, Abim had significantly more female than male respondents in the study while Lira and Soroti had slightly more males than females. This was partly due to the time of day when data was collected in both Lotukei and Awach in Abim, i.e. from 11.30 am to 2.00 pm, which was reported to be a favourable time for women to attend community activities.

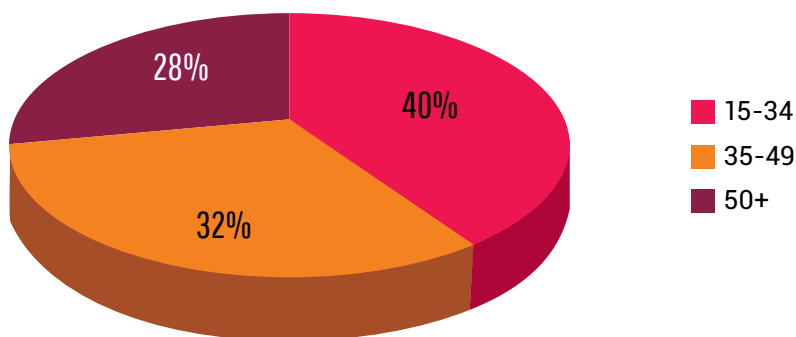
Figure 1: Sex of farmers who participated in the study



2.1.2 Age of the farmers who participated in the study

The study targeted smallholder farmers who were 15 years old and above. Most of the respondents were 15–34, as depicted in Figure 1 below. It is noted that this is line with the demographic characteristics of the Ugandan population, most of whom are below 30 years old.

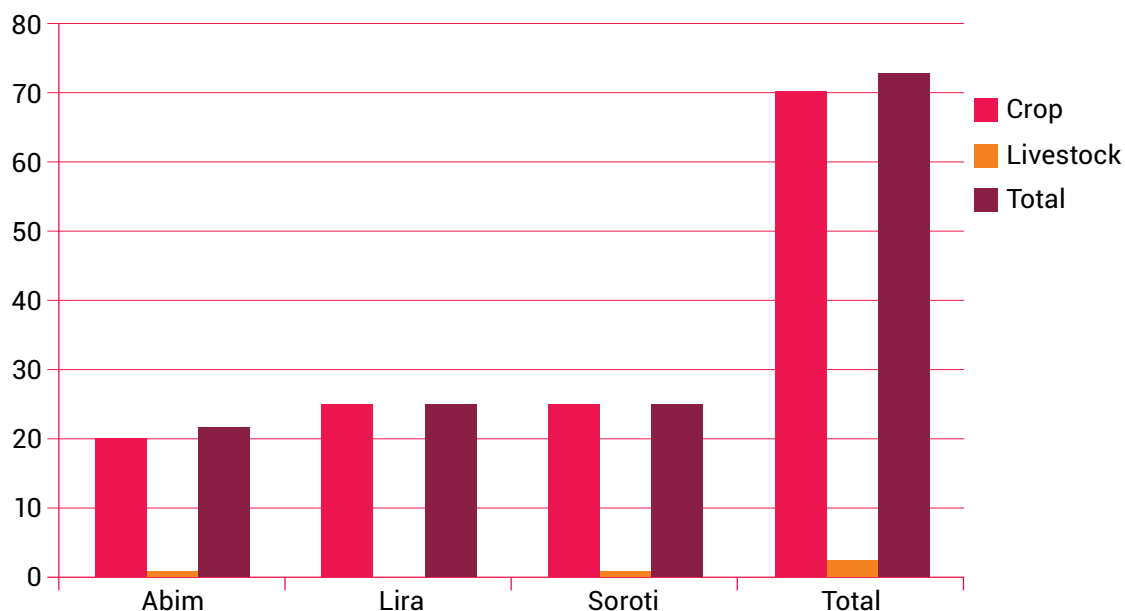
Figure 2: Age groups in percentages of farmers who participated in the study



2.1.3 Major type of farming engaged in by farmers in Abim, Lira and Soroti

Most of the farmers who participated in the training, as indicated by the graph below, were engaged in crop farming and very few in livestock rearing. This was corroborated by the key informants, who said that most of the farming in the study area was actually crop farming. This, therefore, means that interventions in improving RAS in crop farming would have a greater impact on smallholder farmers than in livestock rearing.

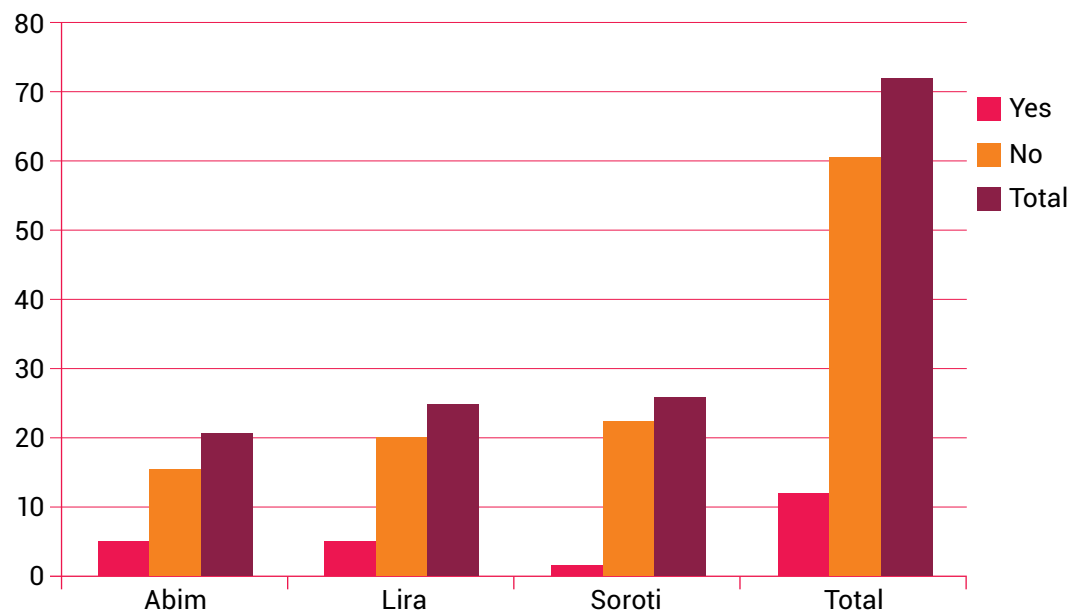
Figure 3: Reported major type of farming by respondents



2.1.4 Participation of youth, women and PWDs in smallholder farmers groups

RAS service providers from the districts, sub-counties and NGOs reported that they encouraged farmers to include all the different interest groups in their groups. However, it was noted that most groups were having women and some youth due to the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP). It was also noted that out of the 72 farmers who answered the questionnaire, only 12 respondents were in or knew of groups with PWDs, indicating limited participation of this category of people. This has implications for accessibility to RAS by PWDs since the services are mostly provided using a group approach.

Figure 4: Reported participation of PWDs in smallholder farmers groups



2.2 Major RAS service providers in Abim, Lira and Soroti

2.2.1 RAS providers' context

Davis (2009)⁷ notes that today's understanding of extension goes beyond technology transfer, to include facilitation, and beyond training to involve learning, and includes assisting in the formation of farmer groups, addressing marketing issues, and partnering with a broad range of service providers and other agencies. According to the study, the major RAS providers reported by farmers and key informants were NGOs and sub-county agricultural officers (check Appendix A for the list on p.37).

It was noted that Abim district smallholder farmers had fewer formal service providers than Soroti and Lira because they had fewer NGOs, no formal private providers apart

⁷ EPRC (2016) Uganda's Agricultural Extension Systems: How Appropriate Is the Single Spine Structure?

from some farmers who reported obtaining advisory information from their fellow farmers and fewer sub-county agricultural officers (for the seven sub-counties and one town council, Abim had four extension workers for crops; Soroti had six agricultural officers for the seven sub-counties; and Lira reported having agricultural officers in all the nine sub-counties). The production departments in all districts reported coordinating with the NGO RAS providers through quarterly sector working group meetings where the work plans are synchronised.

However, it was not possible for the study to ascertain the exact number of NGOs and private providers offering RAS in each district. This was because the researchers managed to obtain the information only by word of mouth from the farmers, production and commercial officers at the district, sub-county officials and the NGOs that participated in the study. It is very important for the production department and the commercial offices, in collaboration with the DCDO at the districts to profile all the non-governmental RAS providers in the different areas in their districts in order to have more effective partnerships.

Furthermore, it was noted that there was limited monitoring of the RAS activities by the district officials. For example, a district official in Abim noted:

Our working style with our NGO partners is not very good; some partners tend to do what they feel. For example, some partners come and form their own groups without any input from the district and, as such, there is some duplication on beneficiaries.⁸

This means that the production office at the district must be empowered to effectively act on their mandate as stated in NAES,⁹ especially on coordinating all stakeholders in the production, processing and marketing of agricultural products.

In addition, the sub-county officials expressed concern that since they were more on the ground than the district departments, NGOs operating in their sub-counties needed to have a closer relationship with them so that they could create synergy in ensuring that farmers have broader and quality advisory services. For example, one of the agricultural officers had this to say:

NGOs normally implement short-term projects; two to three years and they are gone. There is need for a more decentralised approach from the partners because many of them come and sign a memorandum of understanding with the district and by-pass the sub-county and start their implementation. So in most cases we at the sub-county do not know what they are doing and yet the district rarely comes to the ground to monitor their activities...¹⁰

The district and sub-county officials only mentioned that there were some private service providers, especially in oil seeds production in Lira, who trained farmers in relation to specific crops and in Soroti some citrus dealers were reported to be training farmers. However, since they were operating in a liberalised economy, no relationship existed between them and the government officials. This exposes the smallholder

8 Interview with the district official on 24 July 2018

9 Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (2016), National Agriculture Extension Strategy

10 Interview with agricultural officer in Lira, 19 July 2018

farmers to the possibility of exploitation by the private actors. The government actors should be interested in what the private providers are doing and monitor their activities for the sake of improving the welfare of the farmers.

2.2.2 Different sources of RAS information to farmers in Abim, Lira and Soroti

Both farmers and service providers were asked about the different sources of RAS information to farmers in the area. Table 2 below indicates the multiple responses to this question.

Table 2: Summary of sources of RAS information to farmers

Variables	District			Total
	Abim	Lira	Soroti	
Farmer organisation/SACCO	2	0	2	4
Fellow farmers	3	2	1	6
Local government extension workers like agricultural officers, veterinary officers and CDOs	4	7	8	19
NAADS service providers	2	4	0	6
Newspapers and magazines like Etop and New Vision	1	1	2	4
NGO/CBO like SOCADIDO, World Vision, CIDI, Plan Uganda, Concern Parents Association, Sasakawa Global 2000, VSO, VEDCO, UOSPA	4	4	7	15
Public agencies like Cotton Development Organisation	0	0	1	1
Radio like Etop, Mega, Voice of Teso, Radio Wa FM, Delta FM, Radio Veritas	2	2	2	6
SMS messages on phones	1	1	0	2
Total	19	21	23	64

It is noted that local governments and NGOs are the major RAS providers and that even the information on radio is still delivered from NGOs in partnership with the local governments. This means that interventions should be focused on improving the frontline service providers in local governments and NGOs for maximum benefits.

2.3 Inclusivity, accessibility and capacity of RAS in Abim, Lira and Soroti

2.3.1 Inclusion of PWDs, youth and women in RAS

FAO (2013) noted that a fundamental issue in analysing RAS is related to how users of the services are defined, as well as the providers' perception of who should receive services, and who are the legitimate clients. Some studies¹¹ have noted that there is a

11 Bello-Bravo and Agunbiade, 2011; FAO, 2011; Farnworth and Colverson, 2015; GIZ, 2013 in FAO (2015). Enhancing the Potential of Family Farming for Poverty Reduction and Food Security through Gender-Sensitive Rural Advisory Services

tendency by RAS providers to skew their interventions towards the household heads and leave other members with the view that RAS advice will ‘trickle down’ from the male household head to all other household members. Though this was not entirely obtaining in the study area since most of the respondents reported having more women in the training, it was noted that the trickle-down approach is preferred by some policy-makers and implementers. For example, the Abim district chairperson had this to say:

Our mode of planning has been vague because we have been targeting the extremely vulnerable. In Abim we want to change this approach whereby whether you are rich or poor you will get government intervention as long as you are progressive.¹²

Another key informant in Abim echoed this view when he said:

The government has focused so much on the vulnerable groups. I think we need to rethink and focus on the most active who are specialising in specific enterprises, give them incentives and then we scale up later.¹³

This perception arises out of frustration due to the limited success of government programmes, such as the YLP. However, it is likely to entrench inequality in accessibility to RAS by some vulnerable groups such as women, youth and PWDs, who may be struggling and have limited voice to demand accessibility.

In the entire study area, it was noted that women were the most active in training because many of them belonged to groups. However, PWDs seemed to be largely bypassed by RAS because of several challenges, which will be discussed in sub-section 2.4. For example, a private service provider in Soroti commented:

I have actually never facilitated any training where there is a person with serious disabilities; just one where the PWDs had just maybe a shorter leg.¹⁴

And a district official in Abim said:

I do not know of any PWDs running a serious agricultural project in Abim, maybe apart from political reasons.

The above statements are very indicative of the extent of participation of PWDs in RAS.

The study noted that PWDs are largely neglected at various levels. For example, at the central-government level, PWDs’ representatives complained that women have UWEP and youth have YLP, but PWDs have nothing. The CDOs in different districts also noted that PWDs are given a very small budget per year which, in most cases, just covers the allowances of their representatives. At the community level, there is a general feeling that PWDs cannot be part of production. For example, a key informant in Barr sub-county commented:

There are still people who really think that PWDs are not supposed to access development intervention projects because they are not able.¹⁵

12 Abim district LC V chairperson during SAO community dialogue, 18 June 2018

13 A key informant in Abim in an interview on 25 July 2018

14 A key informant in Soroti in an interview on 26 July 2018

15 A key informant in Barr sub-county Lira on 19 July 2018

It is necessary for different stakeholders to work together to change this attitude.

In terms of youth, largely, the perception of RAS providers, whether private or government, in the whole study area is that this category is not interested in agriculture. A service provider in Lira said:

Youth are a very difficult group, unreliable and lazy and not interested in long-term projects like agriculture. They want quick money and that is why they go for betting and gambling.¹⁶

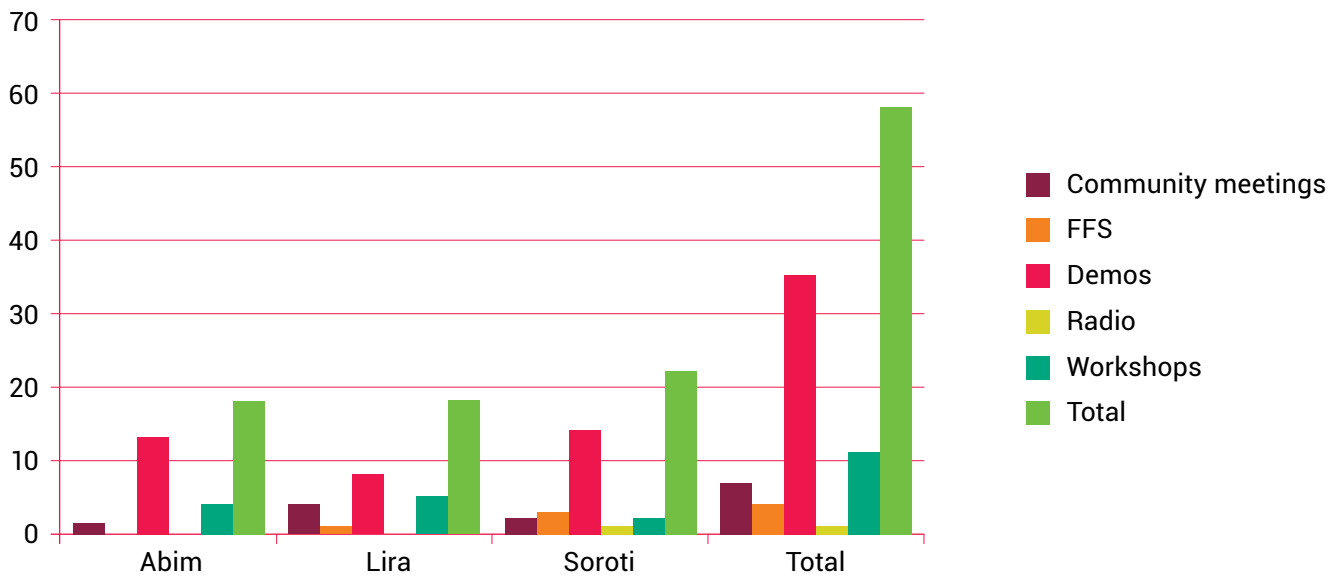
On the other hand, youth feel that the government service providers do not take them seriously and do not give them timely information. In Soroti, the youth leaders said that the NGOs focus on women while leaving them to their own devices. The study concluded that there exists mistrust between service providers and youth. It is necessary to create opportunities for RAS providers to be trained in dealing with the youth in development interventions and to motivate youth to embrace agriculture as a means of their economic empowerment.

Women were commended by different service providers for being very active in training and having a better adoption rate for new knowledge and technology despite the several challenges they face, which will be discussed in sub-section 2.4.

2.3.2 Approaches used by RAS providers

Farmers were asked how they gained access to RAS services and their responses (multiple responses) are shown in Figure 5 below.

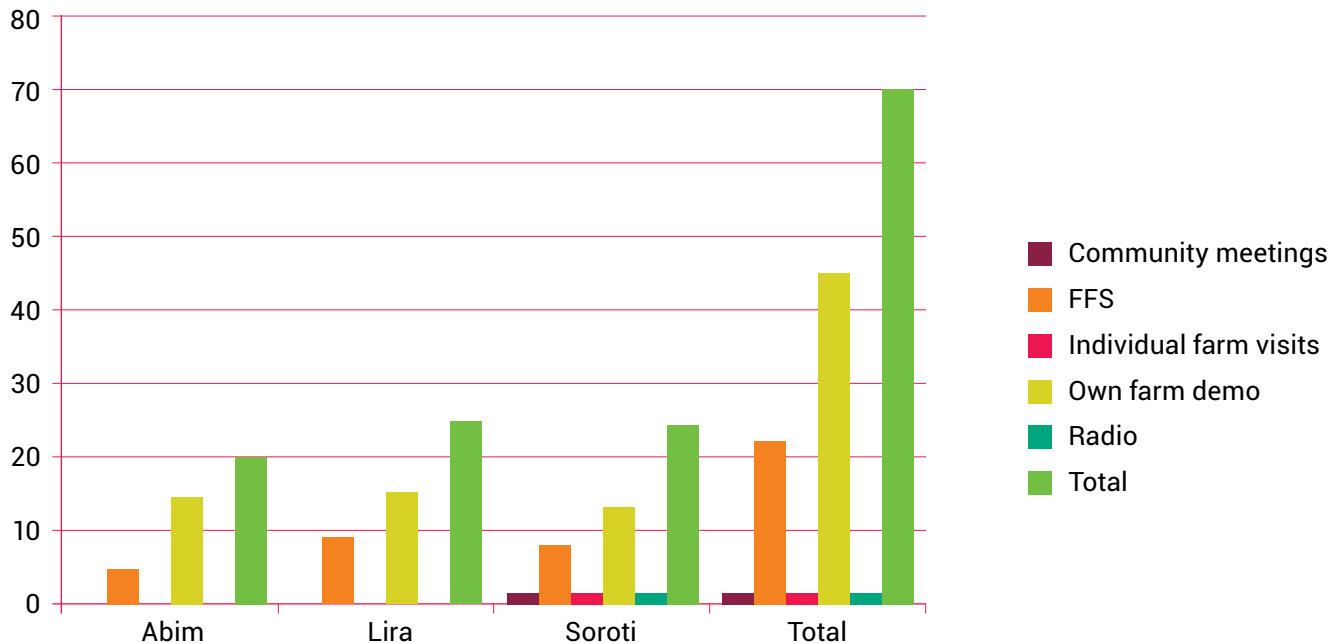
Figure 5: Reported participation of PWDs in smallholder farmers groups



16 A key informant in Lira district on 20 July 2018

Farmers were asked which methods/approaches of RAS they preferred and their responses are presented in Figure 6. It was noted that farmers preferred demonstration farms, followed by FFS, and not workshops or community meetings.

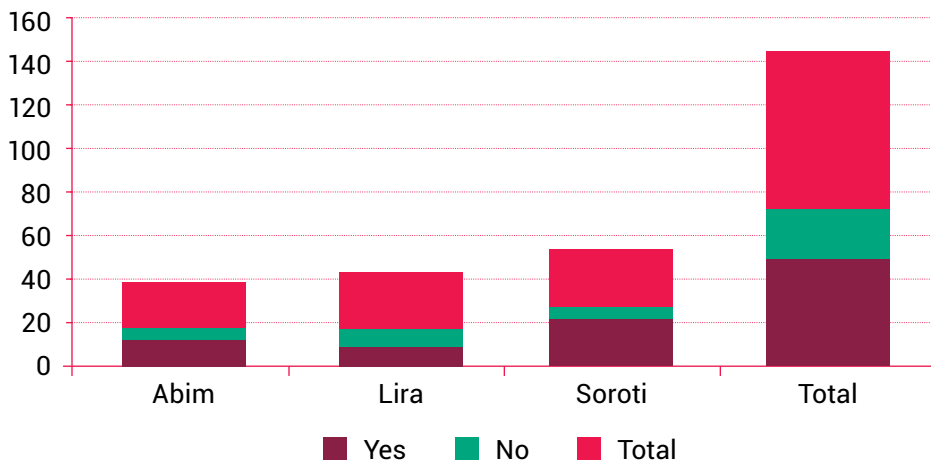
Figure 6: Farmers preferences regarding delivery of RAS



Group approach

As mentioned earlier, the districts follow the government approach of delivering RAS largely using a group approach. Even the NGOs reported that their development interventions are more effectively delivered using a group approach since farmers can learn from and help each other. This implies that smallholder farmers who do not join groups find it hard to access RAS. It is noted that there are some farmers who did not to groups, as indicated by the responses below:

Figure 7: Farmers who responded as being or not being in groups



It was also noted that some groups register but do not take off. For example, a key informant from Soroti reported that there were only two known registered farmers' groups that were active, that are Katine Cooperative and EWALA Multipurpose Cooperative. There is need to facilitate farmers' groups for sustainability.

Table 3: Reasons why some farmers are not in groups

Variables	District			
	Abim	Lira	Soroti	Total
Farmer groups are formed for a short time to get materials from NGOs and the government and later they disband if the projects end	1	0	0	1
Farmer groups are not helpful in any way	3	2	0	5
Farmer groups favour commercial farmers only	0	0	1	1
Government workers are not bothered about making farmers form groups	1	0	0	1
Groups are not for farming but savings only	3	1	1	5
Membership fees are costly for farmers	4	3	3	10
Mistrust and bad behaviour of some members	0	0	1	1
Most group targets are only money and handouts	1	1	0	2
No farmer groups in this area	0	0	2	2
No invitation to be part of the farmer group	2	0	1	3
People come with personal interests and spoil the group	0	1	0	1
Preference to work as an individual	1	3	1	5
Total	16	11	10	37

The study examined why some people were not in groups. Table 2 below indicates the responses of those who were not in groups. (They were asked to give multiple responses.)

The outstanding issue was the membership fees that some farmers could not afford followed by farmers' groups not being helpful and groups not being for farming but saving. There is a possibility that if the farmers realise the importance of groups in improving their productivity and accessibility to markets, the fees for membership could not be a major issue. RAS providers need to focus on facilitating groups to be focused and effective such that different community members can be encouraged to actively participate in them.

Mixed or specific groups?

The technocrats at the districts and sub-counties reported that they did not have specific groups for specific categories of people except for what comes when already earmarked, such as the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) (for women) and the Youth Livelihood Programme (for youth) and some aspects of Operation Wealth Creation which have specific focus on youth or women. The RAS providers also reported that they guide groups on forming all-encompassing groups

that include different interest groups. For example, the project manager in SOCADIDO had this to say:

We want each and every community to benefit. We engage all relevant stakeholders from the village, parish, sub-counties and district to select participants in our projects but we emphasise that the target should be the marginalised interest groups including women, PWDs and the elderly.¹⁷

Besides, the technocrats argued that mixed groups of participants of men, women, youth, the elderly and PWDs are more likely to succeed than demographic-specific groups since the members can build on each other's strengths and mitigate each other's weaknesses. For example, a respondent from Asuret commented:

Depending on an enterprise that a group is engaged in, it is better to have both men and women; for example, men can offer manual strength in carrying the produce while women are good at post-harvest handling like sorting seeds.¹⁸

However, the study found different perspectives from different farmers and representatives of the different interest groups. Youth and PWD respondents preferred specific groups targeting them while women largely favoured mixed groups. For example, a PWDs' representative in Soroti made this comment:

Sometimes it is OK for PWDs to be in a group with members who are not with disabilities for all of them to learn from each other and it could be a way of addressing stigma when the group members realise the capabilities of the one with disabilities; however, without careful monitoring, the group may fail the PWDs. Besides, the needs of PWDs in RAS are different [so] that extension workers need to consider the uniqueness of such members....¹⁹

The youth respondents also largely preferred to be in their own groups rather than be part of mixed groups. They reasoned that it is easier for them to handle fellow youth. For example, a youth leader in Lira district commented:

People use the failure of the YLP to marginalise us. This programme did not fail because we as youth cannot manage our group projects; it failed because of inadequate training and limited awareness. If youth are first trained before an intervention and then closely monitored, we can realise development.²⁰

Mixed groups including youth, men, women and PWDs were considered a better approach in RAS delivery. For example, literature indicates that mixed-sex groups can give women access to men's networks, resources and information, which are often better in quantity and quality, but they may reproduce gendered patterns of behaviour. Much as the majority of service providers thought mixed groups are better in delivering services, the youth and PWDs thought that, depending on the focus of RAS, sometimes mixed groups are better and sometimes youth or PWDs-specific groups are better. The success of the group approach will largely depend on ensuring that the concerns of

17 SOCADIDO Project Manager in an Interview on 27 July 2018.

18 Asuret sub-county CDO in an interview on 27 July 2018

19 Kamuda sub-county representative for PWDs in an interview on 26 July 2018

20 Youth leader in Lira in an interview on 20 July 2018

the youth, women and PWDs are integrated into the design and implementation of the services in addition to the governance and management of the groups by the group leaders.

Workshops and community meetings

All the service providers reported using training in a specified location such as a sub-county headquarters or a recognised location in the community. This approach is workshop-based, where sometimes selected members of the groups, such as group leaders, are trained in selected topics so that they can train others. Generally, some service providers cautioned that this approach is likely to focus on theory rather than practice if it is not appropriately delivered using audios, videos, pictures and illustrations and written material that is translated into the local languages. The respondents also reported that the selection of the training should be made carefully, preferably in the villages not sub-county offices that may be 12-15 km for some farmers, and that the topics to discuss should be relevant to the farmers and timely and should not take up more than three hours in a day.

Women

Specifically, women were reported to be very actively involved in such training albeit facing some challenges, such as lower literacy levels, limited time to attend the training due to domestic roles and care activities, besides the socio-cultural context in which women may not be allowed by their husbands or in-laws to go for community activities. Furthermore, if the training was taking place at a sub-county, the cost of transport may hinder women from going for such training since some villages are very far from such venues. Some service providers also noted that, depending on how the training is conducted, in most cases women do not ask questions. For example, a key informant said:

Women are not boldly demanding for extension services. It is hard to find a woman demanding; they front their interests through men.²¹

This implies that women need to be empowered to voice their interests in RAS in addition to advocating change in the socio-cultural context that relegates women to purely domestic roles. Different stakeholders need to address issues of location of training, taking into consideration the time and distance involved as well as transport availability.

Youth

Despite youth being considered the most mobile and flexible category of the population, it was reported that there are fewer youth active in RAS training. The reasons for this are many, including youth not being interested in agricultural activities, youth not being informed about the training, and, in some locations, the YLP experience, which lead

21 A key informant in Abim on 25 July 2018

some youth to fear engaging in similar programmes. For example, a key informant from Abim remarked:

The design and implementation of YLP has affected youth participation in agribusiness extension services. Some youth are on the run and when we go to communities even for different programmes they run away thinking we have gone to recover YLP money.²²

In line with accessibility to information about RAS training, a service provider in Abim commented:

Reaching the youth is very difficult. They do not attend community meetings and activities where information about training is given; they rarely listen to radio programmes because during peak times for news and announcements, youth are busy with corporate meetings.²³

While the providers perceive youth as not being easy to interest in RAS information, the youth themselves felt that service providers were not giving them information for them to be interested. For example, a youth leader in Soroti said:

NGOs prefer working with women and we do not have a lot of information from the district...²⁴

PWDs

Much as PWDs may want to attend the training, there are several challenges, such as movement to the venue which may be far, the venues not being appropriate for certain types of disability, the lack of technologies to cater for PWDs, and the lack of instructors with appropriate skills to deal with those with hearing and speaking disabilities. For example, a RAS provider in Soroti commented:

There are those not able to walk and lack tricycles to move and a child has to stay home to help an aunt/uncle to go for the public meetings and if the child is not there or refuses, that person cannot attend trainings or public meetings.²⁵

These issues were similar in all the study locations and need to be focused on for interventions to facilitate PWDs to access RAS.

Demonstration farms and farmer field schools (FFSs)

Agricultural officers in all the sub-counties reported using this approach, which many felt was more effective for farmers to adopt the information than the theoretical ones. This was largely the view of even the non-PWD respondents. For example, a farmer in Lira said:

NGOs should stop wasting funds in hotels for workshops but use them directly to support farmers through inputs and on-farm training.²⁶

22 Key informant in Abim in an interview on 25 July 2018

23 Key Informant in Abim in an interview on 25 July 2018

24 Youth leader in an interview in Soroti on 27 July 2018

25 Key informant in Soroti in an interview on 27 July 2018

26 A farmer in Agweng sub-county in an interview on 20 July 2018

And another one said:

Extension workers should be field-based not office-based to support us the farmers.²⁷

Despite the strengths of demonstration farms, they were still very few in the study area. It was also noted that demonstration farms and farmer field schools (FFSs) may not be the panacea to RAS training needs owing to limitations such as ownership of land and limited decision-making power by women, youth and PWDs. It was largely noted in the entire study area that women, PWDs and youth mostly do not own land and cannot make decisions on having a demonstration farm. A key informant in Soroti advised:

At the beginning we had demonstrations here at our office; but now we have demonstrations at village level. The groups we work with are central in choosing the site; they know their own people, otherwise you can identify somebody who is not friendly.²⁸

Use of the media

Information and communication technologies (ICTs)

Both NGO and government providers mentioned the use of radio as a means of communication to farmers in terms of radio talk shows. Although radio is one of the mass communication media prevalently accessed by the communities in which the study was carried out, RAS providers need to be mindful of the average number of hours available to women and youth to listen to different programmes. Women are hindered by the shortage of time to listen to the radio owing to the different responsibilities they perform in and outside the household while, according to service providers, at peak times, when talk shows normally take place, the youth are busy in social activities ('corporate activities'). PWDs, specifically those with hearing impairment, are left out if the communication or information is only passed out using radio.

Mobile phones are a potential means of communication in RAS, especially in groups, since they are increasingly being used in rural areas. However, most women, poor youth and PWDs still do not have personal phones. But with increasing literacy among children, phone messages can help even PWDs and illiterate women to get messages for meetings, market information and training. Increasingly, the phone is becoming a major means of communication that RAS providers need to strategically consider in communicating to the farmers, especially on market information and training.

Field visits

Some RAS providers reported use of field or exchange visits where farmers from one location go and learn from another within or outside the community to share best practices. In the entire study area, there were farmers who had been sent to the annual agriculture shows in Jinja by different stakeholders though the impact of these visits was not assessed.

27 A farmer in Barr sub-county in an interview on 19 July 2018

28 Key informant in Soroti in an interview on 27 July 2018

2.4 Capacity of RAS in Abim, Lira and Soroti: Training gaps and challenges

2.4.1 Training gaps

Agriculture officers and extension workers

It was reported that despite the government recruiting extension workers countrywide and NGOs and some private organisations filling in some gaps, the RAS providers were still inadequate. For example, Abim was reported to have four agricultural officers out of the eight needed and in Soroti, the production department reported unfilled positions at the district and sub-counties. But even where all the sub-counties had agricultural officers, such as in Lira, it was noted that since agriculture is the main occupation for people living in rural areas, only one person could not help all farmers effectively. This is made worse by the limited facilitation that the RAS providers get to work in the communities. For example, one of the key informants in Abim commented:

The agricultural officer serving Lotukei is based in Awach and has no motorcycle. So in as much as the production department would like to monitor the extension services by the different providers, there is minimal money allocated for this.²⁹

Some farmers reported that accessing the few RAS providers was a challenge. For example in Barr, a farmer said:

It is not easy to access extension workers unless government and NGOs send them. As local farmers, we don't know where to go or who to go to for extension services. We hear that there are extension workers at the sub-county but they are rarely in office and we do not have their numbers.³⁰

Another respondent, in Soroti, commented:

Extension workers offer specific services on demand and at a cost and the youth have no money.³¹

There were similar reports in Lira where some respondents, in groups, said that when the government RAS providers are requested to visit their farms, they request fuel.

It was noted that in the entire study area the RAS providers from the government were male; only a few from the NGOs were female. This has implications for women's accessibility since some studies have indicated that, among other benefits, some women express themselves better with female colleagues in service provision.

Much as RAS providers need to be supported with continuous training in new technologies and knowledge, there is limited availability of training opportunities for them, given the inadequacy in the number of agricultural institutions. Furthermore,

29 A key informant in Abim in an interview on 25 July 2018

30 A farmer in Barr sub-county in an interview on 19 July 2017

31 A youth respondent in Soroti in an interview on 27 July 2018

much as the Ministry of Agriculture is reported to have organised some training jointly with Makerere University and the National Agriculture Research Organisation (NARO), it could be helpful if training institutions were located within the communities for easy accessibility. Abim district lacks any institution of that kind; and while Soroti has Busitema University (Arapai Agriculture Institute), it has limited connection with the community. Lira has some training institutions that can help to train RAS providers, including ZARDI (government) - Ngeta, PAG, which has two schools, Fountain Head Institute, and Ave Maria Vocational Training and Youth Development Centre. These can be explored as potential providers of training to RAS providers in the districts surrounding Lira.

RAS gaps for women, youth and PWDs

Responses from the key informants and farmers in all the three districts indicated that farmers need training in market information systems, post-harvest handling, especially bulk storage and selling, value addition, appropriate technologies like rainwater harvesting, financial literacy and group dynamics, plus addressing the issue of fake seeds on the market. Table 5 below indicates the responses from farmers about RAS needs in the studied area.

Table 4: Main training aspects required by farmers in Abim, Lira and Soroti

Variables	District			
	Abim	Lira	Soroti	Total
Access to loans	0	0	1	1
Agribusiness and marketing	2	2	1	5
Control of pests and diseases	4	3	2	9
Crop diversification	2	3	2	7
Crop varieties	1	2	2	5
Disaster management	1	0	0	1
Financial literacy and record-keeping	1	2	2	5
General good agronomic practices	2	4	0	6
Group dynamics	3	2	2	7
Livestock management	0	0	1	1
Post-harvest handling/processing/value addition	2	2	1	5
Soil fertility management	2	3	2	7
Use of agricultural technologies	1	3	2	6
Total	21	26	18	65

In addition, farmers were asked to identify their training needs in maize, cassava and millet. Tables 5, 6 and 7 below summarise their responses in Abim, Lira and Soroti. (Farmers were asked to identify as many gaps as possible.)

Table 5: Training needs in maize production as reported by farmers

Variables	District			
	Abim	Lira	Soroti	Total
Access to credit	2	4	3	9
Control of pests and diseases	0	3	4	7
Post-harvest handling	3	4	2	9
Agribusiness and marketing	1	0	0	1
Control of pests and diseases	2	0	0	2
Fertiliser use	2	1	3	6
Group dynamics	1	0	0	1
Marketing and access to market	2	1	2	5
Method of planting	1	2	1	4
Preparing land for planting	1	0	1	2
Selecting and buying inputs	1	3	2	6
Soil fertility management	1	0	0	1
Use of new agricultural technologies	3	1	4	8
Water management /irrigation	1	2	3	6
Total	21	21	25	67

Table 6: Training needs in cassava production per district

Variables	District			
	Abim	Lira	Soroti	Total
Access to credit	1	1	3	5
Control of pests and diseases	3	4	1	8
Fertiliser use	2	1	3	6
Group dynamics	1	0	0	1
Marketing and access to market	1	1	3	5
Methods of planting	2	3	1	6
Post-harvest handling/processing/value addition	2	2	3	7
Preparing land for planting	1	1	2	4
Selecting and buying inputs	3	4	2	9
Soil fertility management	1	0	0	1
Use of new agricultural technologies	2	2	3	7
Water management /irrigation	1	2	4	7
Total	20	21	25	66

Table 7: Training needs in millet production per district

Variables	District			
	Abim	Lira	Soroti	Total
Access to credit	2	1	0	3
Agribusiness and marketing	1	0	0	1
Control of pests and diseases	2	3	4	9
Fertiliser use	3	3	5	11
Marketing and access to market	1	1	0	2
Methods of planting	2	1	4	7
Post-harvest handling	2	3	3	8
Preparing land for planting	1	1	3	5
Selecting and buying inputs	3	3	6	12
Soil fertility management	1	0	0	1
Use of new agricultural technologies	1	1	0	2
Water management/irrigation	2	2	0	4
Total	21	19	25	65

2.4.2 Challenges to accessing RAS by women, youth and PWDs

Accessibility to productive resources

FAO (2013) notes that constraints lessen women’s ability to acquire an education, to earn and control their personal income, to buy or access productive inputs, to have enough free time to participate in organisations providing services and/or lead groups or organisations, to establish linkages to other service providers, and so forth. Such constraints, in turn, influence their access to RAS and their ability to contribute to the productivity of their family farms.³² Indeed, throughout the study area, women found themselves facing similar challenges. For example, a key informant noted:

Most women do not own property like land and valuable assets like cows, so they are unable to easily gain access to credit facilities that could improve farming. And in Karamoja region, land belongs to a man and a woman is part of the property.³³

The influence of patriarchy is noted as the major cause of women’s difficulty to own resources, limitations in their mobility by disallowing them to go for community activities and powerlessness in decision-making.

32 FAO (2013) Enhancing The Potential of Family Farming for Poverty Reduction and Food Security through Gender-Sensitive Rural Advisory Services

33 Key informant in Abim in an interview on 25 July 2018

It was equally noted that youth and PWDs do not easily own land which is the major productive resource in Uganda. For the youth, the general response is that they are dependents on their fathers and in some cases parents have not given them land for fear that they might sell it off. It was generally noted that PWDs are neglected from childhood, that they have inadequate or no education, and that their families do not prioritise them in resource allocation.

Time and mobility constraints

The gendered division of labour in family farming results in women having multiple responsibilities in the household, which restricts the time they have available to participate in other activities, including attending RAS activities.³⁴ This was the reality in the study area as it was noted that women are burdened with a lot of work, which limits the time they have to access training, while men do a lot of ‘non-work’ activities. In addition, long distances to training centres, especially at the sub-counties, hinder women, PWDs and youth owing to lack of transport. For women, the cultural norms may be an added constraint since it was reported that some men do not allow their wives to attend such meetings or to even be part of groups. As for PWDs, in all the locations, it was reported that mostly they did not have easy access to the RAS activities. For example, those with physical abilities might lack tricycles, wheelchairs, crutches, or white canes, and some venues did not have user-friendly facilities for them such as ramps on buildings.

Education and literacy limitations

According to UBOS,³⁵ Karamoja sub-region, where Abim district is located, has the lowest literacy rate of 33.6% while Teso, where Soroti is located, has 71.7% and Lango, where Lira is located, has 85.7%. It is a fact that PWDs and women have worse literacy rates than the rest of the population. This limits their participation in RAS involving written materials. It has also been noted that less education affects adaptability to new technologies. Increase in women’s education in the long run can have a positive impact on RAS. Besides, agricultural officers and extension workers need to adopt methods of delivery that are consistent with the learning needs of the targeted population. It was noted that demonstration farms at village level and farm schools plus graphic illustrations would be more helpful in delivering agricultural information than just lecturing in workshop settings.

Furthermore, much as the agricultural officers at the sub-counties and district and in NGOs reported using the local languages during training, it is very necessary that the training materials be translated into the local languages since not all farmers can read and understand English, which is the official language used in Uganda.

34 Ibid.

35 UBOS (2017), the Uganda National Household Survey 2016/2017

Voice and representations

Various studies on community development and agriculture extension have noted the importance of voice of different categories of the population in articulating their demands. Even the Ugandan government has long since embraced representation of the various interest groups in their development interventions. It was noted that since the interventions are mainly group-based rather than individual, most groups were dominated by females as members. However, numerical strength was not capitalised on to demand women's interests in RAS services; the key informants from service providers argued that women are not making demands and instead wait for the men to demand the RAS. This means that women's interests may not be prioritised even when they are participating in groups. There is need to empower women to take up leadership positions in the groups and to be at the forefront of demanding the necessary information concerning RAS.

It should also be understood that most of the functional groups in Soroti, Lira and Abim were not really producer or farmers' groups but VSLAs that are not really focused on agriculture. RAS providers need to take a keen interest in having strong agriculture-focused groups that have the capacity to improve voice and representation of women, youth and PWDs. Diversifying the VSLAs to include agriculture would be a good starting point to capitalise on the already existing capital within the groups.

Apart from the youth-focused development interventions such as YLP that had a specifically youth focus, the other groups had fewer youth as members. Youth leaders in all the three districts felt that they were not being prioritised by the service providers in terms of accessing RAS information, and others felt that they were being sidelined so that they could not be part of the development interventions.

The PWDs largely have no voice owing to several factors, such as lack of information, since few of them attend meetings. Even when they have representatives at various levels, such as the district or sub-county, council sits once in two months and the agenda is determined by the chair and the speaker, so their representation is really not felt.

Access to financial and credit facilities

The study noted, and this is in line with UBOS,³⁶ that the financial facilities most easily accessible to smallholder farmers in the study area were VSLAs and that there was a very limited number of banks (in Abim there was only DFCU Bank and one SACCO called THUR Rural Development Co-operative Savings and Credit Society). Even in Lira and Soroti, where there were a number of banks, smallholder farmers were rarely accessing them owing to stringent conditions for opening accounts and getting loans, besides their being geographically inaccessible for those farmers who live far away from the main towns where these banks are located. For example, a respondent from Agweng sub-county decried the unfavourable terms of some credit service providers:

36 UBOS (2017), the Uganda national Household Survey 2016/2017

We have some financial service providers like BRAC, Vision Fund and FINCA but the interest rate is too high and the grace period is too short. For some service providers, if they give you a loan today Thursday, after one week, that is, next Thursday you are supposed to begin paying back and with a lot of pressure. If you do not get their money they can easily grab anything from you including mattresses, hoes, axes, cows, goats, anything.³⁷

Related to the above, a commercial farmer in Abim commented:

I am a member of Abim District Leaders Farmers Association. We went to Centenary Bank sometime back for 84 million [shillings], but the security and interest were very challenging and the repayment period unrealistic and we decided not to take it.³⁸

In Soroti, a district official said:

We have been clamouring for a credit institution that can give favourable loans to farmers in vain. We have requested government several times to enter an agreement with a bank to help farmers and we have not yet succeeded.³⁹

It is worse for women, youth and PWDs engaged in agriculture which is considered to be risky since it depends on weather conditions and since these categories lack the productive assets to provide to financial institutions as loan security. It was also reported that VSLAs are plagued by several challenges, among which is poor leadership and management, which has sometimes resulted in loss of money. The respondents argued that women, youth and PWDs need a lot of financial literacy because many simply spend their savings in December during Christmas without making any investments. In addition, RAS can provide farmers' groups with bank literacy or link them to the banks to obtain clear information about the possibilities of gaining access to different appropriate facilities.

Post-harvest handling and accessibility to storage facilities

The respondents generally reported a lack of proper post-harvest handling and bulk storage. In Soroti it was reported that farmers did not have access to stores where they could keep their produce safely. A district official reported that there was a store located in Arapai but that farmers were not using it because they did not like the location. In Lira, agricultural officers reported that some stores existed in the sub-counties but farmers were not using them because of concerns about the security of their produce. There was need to build capacity and advocate bulk storage and cassava drying facilities so that farmers do not lose the value of their produce or sell their produce at giveaway prices to middlemen.

37 A farmer in Agweng sub-county in an interview on 20 July 2018

38 A key informant in Abim in an interview on 24 July 2018

39 A key informant in Soroti in an interview on 26 July 2018

Market linkages

As noted before, farmers need to be facilitated to access different markets, maybe to processors or consumers. It was noted that the transport network in some areas was very poor, making it hard for the farmers to move their produce. Abim did not report any existing produce buyer groups or company located in the district while Lira and Soroti were reported to have several produce dealers in different crops including maize, cassava and millet. One way of improving the market linkages is to add value to the produce through processing the raw products and also for the RAS providers to connect farmers to processors or produce dealers. It was noted that Abim district cannot link farmers to the market without effective road networks and transport facilities. Otherwise the cost of transport to the market hinders farmers from reaching the market and instead opt for middlemen who find them in their homes. The respondents also noted that farmers' groups should be specialised in specific crops in order to easily engage in bulk selling and accessing markets. A district representative for the elderly expressed the frustrations of farmers in trying to access produce buyers in Abim:

I had some bags of cassava in my house. I called several service providers and I was not helped. Others would ask me how much quantity do you have and stop at that. The middlemen you are blaming came to my doorsteps and gave me 500/= per kilo.⁴⁰

Gender-based violence (GBV)

All the RAS providers, both governmental and non-governmental, reported gender-based violence (GBV) affecting women and men partly as a result of disagreements related to produce selling or participation in RAS activities. The respondents connected this to alcoholism and drug abuse among the youth in these districts. For example, UBOS⁴¹ indicated that Karamoja had the worst indicators of alcohol and substance abuse among people aged 16 and above; while Lango and Teso were also among the four top-ranked sub-regions in connection with alcohol and drug abuse. Some key respondents observed that this is a problem for both men and women. There is serious need for RAS providers to integrate GBV into their training programmes and also to work hand in hand with other stakeholders to address GBV.

Human resource and staffing

In all the sub-counties where the study was conducted, all the agricultural officers and the relevant district technocrats in the production departments and commercial offices were male apart from Soroti, which had a female commercial officer. And yet the contextual factors, such as the inadequate transport facilities and poor roads, make it harder for women to perform the RAS effectively. For example, all the agricultural officers complained about the limited number or total lack of motorcycles to facilitate movements to the field and poor roads, especially during the rainy season.

40 Abim district representative for the elderly, during SAO community dialogue, 18 June 2018

41 UBOS (2017), the Uganda National household Survey 2016/2017

This has some socio-cultural implications for individual female service extension workers in conditions where women may need individual access. Some socio-cultural studies have noted that some women find it more comfortable to interact with fellow women in service access and also that some husbands may not approve of their wives frequently interacting with male service providers, hence may ask them not to participate in RAS activities. It is necessary to train the service providers, especially the sub-county agricultural officers, in gender mainstreaming of the activities of RAS.

There is also need to consider training and recruiting female RAS staff, while taking cognisance of the factors that hinder women from delivering RAS. For example, AFAAS (2011) identified the following set of challenges that limit women's participation in in-service training activities: giving short notice for fieldwork, making it hard for women to plan for the welfare of their families during their absence; lack of provision of childcare facilities; non-availability of special meals for pregnant women; and the need for separate boarding and sanitary facilities for male and female participants. The study also found that fieldwork that was not planned with sufficient lead time often ended up creating high emotional and social costs to the female RAS advisors and their families.⁴² The government and development partners need to address such challenges while supporting women to train and work as RAS providers.

In terms of delivering services to PWDs, it was noted that the service providers generally do not have the knowledge, skills and concrete ability to deliver RAS to PWDs. The agricultural officers in different organisations at different levels do not have sign language competence or assistants to render that kind of service to people with hearing disability.

Accessibility to agri-technologies

Most farmers in different areas requested tractor hire schemes to be made available by the government at the sub-counties in order to increase productivity. A service provider from PAG suggested that in terms of weather vagaries, farmers could be trained in water harvesting instead of sophisticated irrigation and farmers sensitised to agronomic practices that require few resources.

Corruption

Corruption was highlighted by farmers as one of the major problems affecting farmers. Some farmers reported that the relevant officials engage in corruption when selecting groups that should benefit from development projects and some groups bribe such officials in order to benefit. The political leadership of Abim complained about the losses the government had incurred in the process of helping farmers. He decried the loss of money given to different groups without satisfactory results. There is need for

42 AFAAS [African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services] (2011) A review of case studies on targeting women advisory service providers in capacity development programmes. Final report. A consultancy report prepared for AFAAS by Margaret Najingo Mangheni. AFAAS, Kampala, Uganda and Accra, Ghana. Retrieved from: www.afaas.africa.org/media/uploads/publications/afaas_review_of_case_studies_women_whole_book.pdf

proper design and close monitoring of agricultural projects in order for results to be attained. For example, one of the respondents advised:

We could do a mid-term review of the YLP to find out what really went wrong. How can the programme be redesigned to benefit the youth?

2.5 Public-private actors in RAS

The major providers of RAS, as reported in the study area, were NGOs, the government, and in Soroti and Lira, a few private-for-profit companies. It was noted:

Actors in the agriculture sector are weakly regulated; among the implications of weak regulation and monitoring is the presence of counterfeits and sub-standard agro inputs on the market.⁴³

The study noted that there is need for the different partners to work together to avoid duplication and to learn from each other. For example, it was reported that, owing to inadequate coordination, there exists community fatigue:

Several people have come and trained but there are no inputs or if I struggle and produce, the market is not there. These people will come and talk and after they will go away.⁴⁴

It was also noted that there were unrealistic expectations from the community and government RAS providers. A key informant noted that the community members:

..want sitting allowance, refreshments, transport allowance and ojonny-pyer – you have been sitting for a long time and your back is hurting [so] you need support to lift you up.⁴⁵

While an NGO service provider complained:

District officials are interested in allowances, without which you fail to get them to participate in community development activities.⁴⁶

43 The Republic of Uganda (2017) State of the Population

44 Youth leader in Soroti on 27 July 2018

45 District official in Abim during an interview on 25 July 2018

46 NGO service provider in Soroti in an interview on 27 July 2018

Recommendations

3.1 Women

In order to enhance effectiveness, RAS providers need to develop relevant skills to understand both gender roles and women farmers' diverse needs and demands in order to design appropriate programmes. Given that being female does not imply gender-sensitivity, and given that today the vast majority of RAS staff members are still male, both male and female RAS advisors and managers must be trained in gender issues so that the relevance and quality of information and knowledge provided to women can be improved.

RAS providers need to understand women's daily and seasonal calendars and schedules so they can adjust RAS activities to suit women's availability. The duration of the activity can also be adjusted to enhance participation: for instance, training could be delivered in modules so they require less time commitment for each session. Arranging on-site childcare or other community services (health centres, eldercare, water infrastructure etc.) may also be vital for ensuring women's participation. The venue is equally important. Women may be unable to travel long distances from home owing to cultural barriers or time constraints. In such cases, it may be better to provide training directly on women's plots or close by.

In general, video, audio and visual materials should be provided in support of face-to-face provision of services to overcome literacy constraints.

RAS providers and all partners should prioritise supporting women, youth and PWDs to organise into producer, processor or service provision groups or cooperatives, in order to better access private and government resources and to learn from each other. There is need to strengthen the existing groups through training and creating linkages and networks for producers, processors and markets.

All partners in the different study locations need to address the socio-cultural gender issues that marginalise women in land ownership, decision-making and accessibility to credit facilities through gender sensitisation campaigns. In addition, women and women

groups need financial and bank literacy, as well as business and entrepreneurship skills as part of RAS, plus close monitoring to ensure that they are able to manage themselves.

3.2 Youth

It is important to note the heterogeneity of youth as a group in terms of age, being in school and out of school, being literate and illiterate, those living with parents and those living on their own or with partner and children. These segments of youth have some unique needs in accessing RAS and providers and programmes should take this heterogeneity seriously in order to have tailor-made RAS.

There is need for serious sensitisation to change the mindset of the youth who are largely reported to have apathy towards agriculture and community activities but also RAS providers who have a negative attitude towards the youth. The sensitisation should be undertaken alongside designing projects which are unique to youth needs in order to encourage them to participate in agriculture, for example, innovative projects with regular financial opportunities

RAS providers should be trained in youth engagement so that they can work with the youth to identify opportunities with the potential for sustainable income generation and technological innovation across the entire agricultural value chain – from production, through the goods and services required to support production, to storage, transport, processing, marketing and sale.

Community leaders should engage the youth in career guidance and devise possibilities of mentoring them.

3.3 PWDs

RAS information needs to be disseminated in a disability-friendly manner. It is noted that most PWDs are illiterate and, therefore, reading and writing is a problem to them; that accessing RAS facilities and training is a challenge due to their disability; that there are no facilities such as Braille; and that there is a general lack of basic infrastructure for PWDs at the training venues. NGOs and the government need to focus on aiding PWDs by ensuring that they have the needed facilities and assistive devices such as wheelchairs, tricycles, hearing aids, Braille and white canes, among others.

All the districts need sign language instructors – with every sub-county having at least one – to help with communication with persons with hearing disabilities not only for RAS but even to help access other services, such as health.

Furthermore, there is need to strengthen community rehabilitation of PWDs and to support children with disabilities right from childhood.

3.4 Stakeholders

- The extension budget should include CDOs at the sub-counties to mobilise farmers and there is need to increasingly involve the DCDO to target farmers for specific training.
- NGOs need to support the government in advocacy to popularise extension services.
- There is need to build people management skills among extension workers through training in order for them to effectively train farmers.
- The RAS training should be practical training rather than theoretical; emphasis should be put on demonstrations, at least in every parish and in farmer field schools. Training should be dictated by farmers. There is need to flexible; for example, if pests and diseases are the major problem and you planned post-harvest, change accordingly.
- There should be more practical, participatory and experiential learning, such as demonstrations of row planting versus broadcasting. Instruction materials should have some illustrations and extension service providers need to do the training in the homes or village locations instead of the centralised locations.
- Banks need to design specific products to target farmers and to go to the communities instead of being urban-based. Better still; the government should engage SACCOs to prioritise agriculture in extending financial services to the smallholder farmers' groups. Furthermore, groups need to be constantly trained in financial literacy.
- The government and development partners need to construct storage facilities and encourage or support farmers to engage in bulk post-harvest handling and selling.
- In the same vein, there is need for the production departments and commercial offices at the districts to encourage farmers to register their associations with the sub-county and the districts and link up with the Ministry of Trade in order tap into marketing opportunities not only at national but also at international level.
- Farmers' groups and cooperatives need training in governance and group dynamics since weak leadership and poor governance lead to group failure.
- There is need to harmonise RAS provision by all the actors, including the government and NGOs. This will require more decentralised cooperation among the various actors, at least up to the sub-county level.
- The groups that are organically formed without handout incentives should be empowered through training, and should be supported to have exposure visits and to access funds from financial institutions. In this respect, local governments/NGOs could contact banks with friendly services.

- The farmers agreed with the different key informants that agricultural extension training should take place in the community rather than at sub-counties. Different identified leaders in the community should also be involved in the training and management of training so that they can act as community-based facilitators.
- The government still needs to recruit more extension workers for the different aspects of production.
- There is need to train the women, PWDs and youth in enterprise selection, agronomic practices and marketing.
- There was emphasis on government providing tractors and supporting the private sector to develop processing industries for perishables. Some respondents suggested that if there are at least two tractors per sub-county in the study districts, it can encourage smallholder farmers to work in groups and hire the tractors, which will increase productivity.

3.5 Way forward for Advance Afrika and partners

- A robust campaign where all stakeholders should be involved to provide agricultural information to every woman, man, the youth and PWDs.
- Community profiling to identify those who have never benefitted from any programme and to find out what enterprises they would be interested in. There is need to lobby partners to fund specific projects of interest to the farmers instead of thinking for the farmers. RAS providers should instead provide information about the market opportunities presented by different enterprises so that the farmers can make an informed choice.
- Dialoguing frequently with youth, women and PWDs to seek out things that can affect them, especially PWDs. There should be broad inclusion of PWDs in terms of identifying their needs; at least one representative per village/parish should be involved in drawing up interventions.
- Civil society is better placed to do budget advocacy with the central government on youth, women and PWDs. There is need to advocate improvement in transport facilitation of RAS providers, extension workers and CDOs, especially in Abim. Some extension workers do not have a motorcycle and the DCDO has no vehicle.
- There is dire need to dialogue with men to empower them to understand that they are equal with their wives, including with regard to ownership of property and shared decision-making in household management. The woman who is not empowered at the family level cannot even provide appropriate nutrition for the children, let alone voice her RAS concerns in community engagements.
- All the partners need to work hand in hand with the government at all levels to help smallholder farmers, right from production to market accessibility.

- Farmers' associations and groups which are strong can access markets and credit facilities. DFCU and other financial institutions can easily work with groups rather than individuals. There is, therefore, need to involve financial institutions in RAS provision to handle financial and bank literacy aspects so as to create a relationship between farmers and those institutions.
- Sensitisation of farmers by different stakeholders to change the mindset for them to embrace agriculture. Sensitisation should also target reducing the dependency syndrome characterised by waiting for handouts. There is also need to create awareness about the existing opportunities from the government and other development partners.
- There is need to develop a robust training curriculum for agribusiness that takes into consideration the local context. This curriculum should emphasise agronomic practices, business and marketing skills, group dynamics and financial literacy.
- There is great need to develop and strengthen market linkages with farmers through farmers' and market networks.
- Farmers need to be empowered to demand information about the extension fund since each sub-county will be given a direct budget to control to ensure that it is adequately used. Besides, there is need for increased facilitation of the current extension workers, especially in terms of transport, and to fill the recruitment gaps
- Farmers' groups should be facilitated to register as organisations and commercial farmers to register as companies so that they can take advantage of market networks and agricultural development opportunities.

Appendix

Appendix A: The different service providers of agricultural extension services

Name of the service provider	Category	Major activity	District and Sub-county
Goal, Mercy Corps, World Vision and Restless Development (Dynamic Project)	NGOs	Mobilised and formed youth groups and trained them in agribusiness	Abim – whole district
Share an Opportunity	NGO	Lobbying and advocacy for agricultural extension based on farmers' demand Training in livestock management, input selection and post-harvest handling	Abim (Lotukei, Awach and Morulem)
Sub-county officials (agricultural officials, Senior Assistant Secretaries and CDO)	Local government	Working with and training farmers in agriculture Coordinating with partners and sometimes supporting partners in implementation and mobilisation	All districts
Department of production and marketing	Local government	Coordinating the sectoral partners, regulation, e.g. ensuring quality assurance of inputs and extension services, helping farmers' groups to draft the MOU in case an NGO is training and linking farmers to markets	All districts
Operation Wealth Creation	Central and local government	Majorly focuses on inputs but also does some training	All districts
International Aid Services (IAS)	NGO	Targeting mainly women's groups to enhance food security, education and addressing challenges of alcoholism	Abim (Alerek, Morulem, Nyakwæ)
Community Action for Health (CAfH)	NGO	Focusing on nutrition of children at health centres, kitchen gardening and at markets on market days	Abim – whole district

Arid Land Development Project (ALDP)	NGO	Training adolescents and women groups in apiary and cassava processing Training adolescents how to fabricate bicycles locally to ease transportation of produce (bicycles for humanity)	Abim (Lotukei and Awach)
Caritas and Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	NGOs	Livelihood – conducting baseline surveys at the moment and not yet operational	Entire Abim district
Awotit Uganda	NGO	Women-led organisation focusing on livelihood alternative to crops (piggery and goat rearing) Training youth and women	Abim
ADRA	NGO	Training groups in food security, VLSA and helping them to register	Abim (Morulem and Lotukei)
Abim District Farmers Association	Registered farmers' group	Youth group to help them increase productivity and access markets	Very few youths are members owing to annual subscription of 100,000/=
Abim Farming as a Business	Registered farmers' group (December 2017)	Engaged in farming but mainly targeting district leaders	Elite-focused (LC5, RDC, district technical staff)
African Innovations Institute (AfrII)	NGO	Research, making available inputs and training	Lira (Barr sub-county)
Sasakawa Global 2000 (SG2000)	NGO	Training smallholder farmers and extension workers in sustainable value chains in selected enterprises	Lira
Soroti Catholic Diocese Development Organisation (SOCADIDO)	NGO	Enhancing income and food security	Soroti (Kamuda, Arapai and Turur)
Church of Uganda Teso Dioceses Planning and Development Office (COU-TEDDO)	NGO	Training farmers in disaster risk reduction practices	Soroti
Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation (TPO)	NGO	Agro-inputs and agronomics to enhance food security	Soroti and Lira
ACILA enterprises	Private	Agro-inputs and market linkages (maize, millet and soya beans)	Soroti
ARIET enterprises	Private	Agro-inputs	Soroti
SOCA-JIPIC	NGO	Food security enhancement	Soroti
World Vision	NGO	Livelihood capacity-building	Abim and Soroti
Centre for Development Innovation (CDI)-ISSD	Private/public partnership	Seed sector development (major actor in Asuret)	Soroti, Asuret

Soroti Rural Development Agency (SORUDA)	NGO	Reported to be phasing out	Soroti, Asuret
Farm Africa in partnership with the WFP	NGO	Farming practices, simple processing and advocacy	Soroti, Asuret
Pentecostal Assemblies of God	NGO	Group support-based production, processing and marketing	Soroti (Asuret, Kamuda)
Private Sector Foundation	Government	Used to be very active in linking farmers to credit institutions	Soroti
Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO)	NGO	Livelihood support and micro-business development	Lira
Rural Enterprise Development Services (REDS)	Private	Consulting firm in commercialisation of enterprises	Lira
Mukwano	Private	Seeds, farm inputs, training and outgrower programme in maize and oil seed crops (sunflower and soya)	Lira
North East Chilli Producers Association (NECPA)	Membership producers' association	Commercial production of high value crops	Lira
Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD)	NGO	Food security (provision of farm inputs)	Lira
Concerned Parents Association	NGO	Livelihood support to parents' groups	Lira
Lango Child and Community Development Federation (LACCODEF)	NGO	Livelihood support	Lira
World Education Bantwana	NGO	Livelihood skills development among the youth	Lira
AVSI	NGO	Livelihood support, agri-skilling and capacity-building of RAS providers	Lira
Mid North Private Sector	Private company	Entrepreneurial and business development services	Lira
World Vision	NGO	Livelihood capacity development	Lira
Adina Foundation	NGO	Livelihood support (child-focused)	Lira
CARITAS	NGO	Livelihood capacity-building	Lira
Facilitation for Peace and Development (FAPAD)	NGO	Livelihood support	Lira
Uganda Oil and Seed Producers and Processors Association (UOSPA)	Private (producers and processors)	Oil production and processing	Lira

Appendix B: Interview guide for the agricultural extension officers at the sub-county

Introduction to the study

The following is to be read by the researcher/research assistant to the study participants.

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. I would like to briefly introduce ourselves, explain the purpose of this study and provide some information on how to complete it.

My name is and I will be helping to facilitate this study along with my other colleagues (mention them). We are part of a team of people recruited by Advance Afrika to assess the inclusivity, accessibility and capacity of agri-skills extension service training of farmers in Abim, Lira and Soroti districts of Uganda. The overall purpose of the study is to inform the Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA) Programme meetings with expert groups, local skills platforms, and ongoing dialogue processes to improve access to and quality of agri-skills for the empowerment of smallholder farmers, and particularly women, youth and people with disabilities (PWDs). The study will facilitate different stakeholders to better understand the agri-skills training needs and extension services of the targeted communities to address the knowledge gaps and challenges faced by women, youth and PWD farmers so that they can improve their livelihoods.

You have been chosen purposively to participate in this survey because you are a focal person dealing with agricultural issues in the sub-county. As you can see, we do not ask you to put your name on the survey paper so that the information cannot be traced back to you as an individual. Your participation in the survey is voluntary and you are free to stop the survey at any time or skip any questions you do not want to answer. However, it may be impossible to withdraw your responses after data has been analysed and report findings reported.

We request you to allow us to voice record you as we also note down your responses. If you have any doubts or questions during the interview, please ask the researcher/research assistant. In cases where you feel the researchers have not acted ethically, please contact the Advance Afrika Director of Programmes (satukunda@advanceafrika.org; 0755144876 or 0785144876), or your district authorities. The interview will take about 45 minutes to complete. We really appreciate your time, and we thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to our study.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Respondent: I have understood the objectives of the study and I am willing to participate as a respondent
(thumbprint/signature of respondent)

Date:

District:

Sub-county:

Opportunities and challenges of youth, women and people in accessing agri-skills and extension services

1. What activities does your office focus on to help smallholder farmers in this sub-county?
2. How has the sub-county engaged the youths, women and PWDs to develop their agri-skills?
3. What are the main providers of agri-skills training and extension services in this sub-county?
4. What credit financial institutions targeting farmers are available in this area and what challenges do smallholder farmers face in dealing with such institutions?
5. What organised commercial or trading groups exist in this sub-county to provide market opportunities to farmers?
6. What types of farmers' groups exist in this sub-county and what challenges do they face?
7. What are the major challenges you face in facilitating youths, women and PWDs to gain agricultural skills?
8. Suggest recommendations of what should be done to improve accessibility to agri-skills training and extension services by the youths, women and PWDs in this area.

General comment

9. What suggestions can you make to the different stakeholders to support youths, women, and PWDs in smallholder farming to improve their livelihoods? (Central government, local government, NGOs, private-for-profit)

Appendix C: Interview guide for district and sub-county officials

Introduction to the study

The following is to be read by the researcher/research assistant to the study participants.

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. I would like to briefly introduce ourselves, explain the purpose of this study and provide some information on how to complete it.

My name is and I will be helping to facilitate this study along with my other colleagues (mention them). We are part of a team of people recruited by Advance Afrika to assess the Inclusivity, accessibility and capacity of agri-skills extension service training of farmers in Abim, Lira and Soroti districts of Uganda. The overall purpose of the study is to inform the Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA) Programme meetings with expert groups, local skills platforms, and ongoing dialogue processes to improve access to and quality of agri-skills for the empowerment of smallholder farmers, and particularly women, youth and people with disabilities (PWDs). The study will facilitate different stakeholders to better understand the agri-skills training needs and extension services of the targeted communities to address the knowledge gaps and challenges faced by women, youth and PWD farmers so that they can improve their livelihoods.

You have been chosen purposively to participate in this survey because you are a district or sub-county official deemed relevant to smallholder farmers' activities. The answers that you provide will be kept confidential. As you can see, we do not ask you to put your name on the survey paper so that the information cannot be traced back to you as an individual. Your participation in the survey is voluntary and you are free to stop the survey at any time or skip any questions you do not want to answer. However, it may be impossible to withdraw your responses after data has been analysed and report findings reported.

During this interview, we shall ask questions related to district or sub-county programmes and projects to support farmers plus extension services. We request you to allow us to voice record you as we also note down your responses. If you have any doubts or questions during the interview, please ask the researcher/research assistant. In cases where you feel the researchers have not acted ethically, please contact the Advance Afrika Director of Programmes (satukunda@advanceafrika.org; 0755144876 or 0785144876) or your district authorities. The interview will take about one hour to complete. We really appreciate your time, and we thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to our study.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Respondent: I have understood the objectives of the study and I am willing to participate as a respondent
(thumbprint/signature of respondent)

Date:

District:.....

Sub-county (for sub-county officials)

1. How many agricultural extension service providers are in this area? (Public, private, and NGOs)?
2. How does the district/sub-county work with the different service providers of agricultural extension services?
3. What programmes/initiatives has the district/sub-county put in place to target women, youths and PWDs to access agricultural extension skills?
4. Are there credit facility institutions existing in the district/sub-county targeting farmers? (How are they operating? What challenges do farmers face in accessing credit facilities?)
5. What are the challenges that the district/sub-county face in supporting the youth, women and PWDs in agri-skills/agricultural extension training?
6. What are the general problems that face smallholder farmers in this district or sub-county and how is the district/sub-county addressing them?
7. Please make recommendations to partners like CEA in their aims of supporting smallholder farmers, especially youth, women and PWDs to access agri-skills training.

Appendix D: Interview guide for the chairpersons of farmers' groups

Introduction to the study

The following is to be read by the researcher/research assistant to the study participants.

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. I would like to briefly introduce ourselves, explain the purpose of this study and provide some information on how to complete it.

My name is and I will be helping to facilitate this study along with my other colleagues (mention them). We are part of a team of people recruited by Advance Afrika to assess the Inclusivity, accessibility and capacity of agri-skills extension service training of farmers in Abim, Lira and Soroti districts of Uganda. The overall purpose of the study is to inform the Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA) Programme meetings with expert groups, local skills platforms, and ongoing dialogue processes to improve access to and the quality of agri-skills for the empowerment of smallholder farmers, and particularly women, youth and people with disabilities (PWDs). The study will facilitate different stakeholders to better understand the agri-skills training needs and extension services of the targeted communities in order to address the knowledge gaps and challenges faced by women, youth and PWD farmers so that they can improve their livelihoods.

You have been chosen purposively to participate in this survey because you are the chairperson of a farmers' group in the sub-county or district. The answers that you provide will be kept confidential. As you can see, we do not ask you to put your name on the survey paper so that the information cannot be traced back to you as an individual. Your participation in the survey is voluntary and you are free to stop the survey at any time or skip any questions you do not want to answer. However, it may be impossible to withdraw your responses after data has been analysed and report findings reported.

During this interview, we shall ask questions about your group in terms of members and activities; we shall also ask you to give suggestions on how farmers should be helped to improve their productivity for consumption and selling. We request you to allow us to voice record you as we also note down your responses. If you have any doubts or questions during the interview, please ask the researcher/research assistant. In cases where you feel the researchers have not acted ethically, please contact the Advance Afrika Director of Programmes (satukunda@advanceafrika.org; 0755144876 or 0785144876) or your district authorities. The interview will take about one hour to complete. We really appreciate your time, and we thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to our study.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Respondent: I have understood the objectives of the study and I am willing to participate as a respondent
(thumbprint/signature of respondent)

Date:

District:

Sub-county:

Name of farmers' group:

Group membership

1. Total number of members: [----] Females [----] Males [----]
2. Do you have people with disability in your group? Yes No
3. If yes, how many people with disability are in your group? [----]
4. Do you have any youth in your group (15-29 years)? Yes No
5. If yes, how many youth are in your group? [---]
6. How do you recruit members in your group/association?
7. What activities does your association do?
8. What challenges does your group face?

Agricultural activities

9. What are the main agricultural challenges you face as farmers in this area?

Access to extension services

10. What are the main providers of agri-skills training and extension services in your area?
11. What are the major challenges of your farmers in accessing extension services?
12. Suggest recommendations on what should be done to improve accessibility to agri-skills by farmers in this area.

General comment

13. What suggestions can you make to the different stakeholders to support farmers in this area? (Central government, local government, NGOs, private-for-profit)

Appendix E: Interview guide for PWD chairpersons at district/sub-county

Introduction to the study

The following is to be read by the researcher/research assistant to the study participants.

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. I would like to briefly introduce ourselves, explain the purpose of this study and provide some information on how to complete it.

My name is and I will be helping to facilitate this study along with my other colleagues (mention them). We are part of a team of people recruited by Advance Afrika to assess the Inclusivity, accessibility and capacity of agri-skills extension service training of farmers in Abim, Lira and Soroti districts of Uganda. The overall purpose of the study is to inform the Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA) Programme meetings with expert groups, local skills platforms, and ongoing dialogue processes to improve access to and the quality of agri-skills for the empowerment of smallholder farmers, and particularly women, youth and people with disabilities (PWDs). The study will facilitate different stakeholders to better understand the agri-skills training needs and extension services of the targeted communities in order to address the knowledge gaps and challenges faced by women, youth and PWD farmers so that they can improve their livelihoods.

You have been chosen purposively to participate in this survey because you are a representative of PWDs at the sub-county or district. The answers that you provide will be kept confidential. As you can see, we do not ask you to put your name on the survey paper so that the information cannot be traced back to you as an individual. Your participation in the survey is voluntary and you are free to stop the survey at any time or skip any questions you do not want to answer. However, it may be impossible to withdraw your responses after data has been analysed and report findings reported.

During this interview, we shall ask questions about opportunities and challenges faced by PWDs in accessing agri-skills training and extension services plus your recommendations on how to have inclusive services for PWDs. We request you to allow us to voice record you as we also note down your responses. If you have any doubts or questions during the interview, please ask the researcher/research assistant. In cases where you feel the researchers have not acted ethically, please contact the Advance Afrika Director of Programmes (satukunda@advanceafrika.org; 0755144876 or 0785144876) or your district authorities. The interview will take about 45 minutes to complete. We really appreciate your time, and we thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to our study.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Respondent: I have understood the objectives of the study and I am willing to participate as a respondent
(thumbprint/signature of respondent)

Date:

District:

Sub-county:

Opportunities and challenges of PWDs in accessing agri-skills and extension services

1. How many people with disabilities are in this sub-county or district? [----]
2. What are the main providers of agri-skills training and extension services in your area?
3. What are the major challenges of PWDs in accessing extension services?
4. Suggest recommendations of what should be done to improve accessibility to agri-skills training and extension services by PWDs in this area.

General comment

5. What suggestions can you make to the different stakeholders to support PWDs in smallholder farming to improve their livelihoods in this area? (Central government, local government, NGOs, private-for-profit)

Appendix F: Interview guide for the chairpersons for youth local council at district/sub-county

Introduction to the study

The following is to be read by the researcher/research assistant to the study participants.

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. I would like to briefly introduce ourselves, explain the purpose of this study and provide some information on how to complete it.

My name is and I will be helping to facilitate this study along with my other colleagues (mention them). We are part of a team of people recruited by Advance Afrika to assess the Inclusivity, accessibility and capacity of agri-skills extension service training of farmers in Abim, Lira and Soroti districts of Uganda. The overall purpose of the study is to inform the Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA) Programme meetings with expert groups, local skills platforms, and ongoing dialogue processes to improve access to and the quality of agri-skills for the empowerment of smallholder farmers, and particularly women, youth and people with disabilities (PWDs). The study will facilitate different stakeholders to better understand the agri-skills training needs and extension services of the targeted communities to address the knowledge gaps and challenges faced by women, youth and PWD farmers so that they can improve their livelihoods.

You have been chosen purposively to participate in this survey because you are a youth chairperson at the sub-county or district. The answers that you provide will be kept confidential. As you can see, we do not ask you to put your name on the survey paper so that the information cannot be traced back to you as an individual. Your participation in the survey is voluntary and you are free to stop the survey at any time or skip any questions you do not want to answer. However, it may be impossible to withdraw your responses after data has been analysed and report findings reported.

During this interview, we shall ask questions about opportunities and challenges faced by youths in accessing agri-skills training and extension services plus your recommendations on how to have inclusive services for the youths. We request you to allow us to voice record you as we also note down your responses. If you have any doubts or questions during the interview, please ask the researcher/research assistant. In cases where you feel the researchers have not acted ethically, please contact the Advance Afrika Director of Programmes (satukunda@advanceafrika.org; 0755144876 or 0785144876) or your district authorities. The interview will take about 45 minutes to complete. We really appreciate your time, and we thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to our study.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Respondent: I have understood the objectives of the study and I am willing to participate as a respondent

(thumbprint/signature of respondent)

Date:

District:

Sub-county:

Opportunities and challenges of youth in accessing agri-skills and extension services

1. How has the district/sub-county engaged the youths to develop their agri-skills?
2. What are the main providers of agri-skills training and extension services in your area?
3. What are the major challenges of youths in accessing extension services?
4. Suggest recommendations of what should be done to improve accessibility to agri-skills training and extension services by the youths in this area.

General comment

5. What suggestions can you make to the different stakeholders to support youths in smallholder farming to improve their livelihoods? (Central government, local government, NGOs, private-for-profit)

Appendix G: Questionnaire for private/NGOs service providers

Introduction to the study

The following is to be read by the researcher/research assistant to the study participants.

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. I would like to briefly introduce ourselves, explain the purpose of this study and provide some information on how to complete it.

My name is and I will be helping to facilitate this study along with my other colleagues (mention them). We are part of a team of people recruited by Advance Afrika to assess the Inclusivity, accessibility and capacity of agri-skills extension service training of farmers in Abim, Lira and Soroti districts of Uganda. The overall purpose of the study is to inform the Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA) Programme meetings with expert groups, local skills platforms, and ongoing dialogue processes to improve access to and the quality of agri-skills for the empowerment of smallholder farmers, and particularly women, youth and people with disabilities (PWDs). The study will facilitate different stakeholders to better understand the agri-skills training needs and extension services of the targeted communities to address the knowledge gaps and challenges faced by women, youth and PWD farmers so that they can improve their livelihoods.

You have been chosen purposively to participate in this survey because you are providing services to farmers. The answers that you provide will be kept confidential. As you can see, we do not ask you to put your name on the survey paper so that the information cannot be traced back to you as an individual. Your participation in the survey is voluntary and you are free to stop the survey at any time or skip any questions you do not want to answer. However, it may be impossible to withdraw your responses after data has been analysed and report findings reported.

This questionnaire is divided into six sections. The first section asks about basic information, including age, education and years of farming experience. The second section asks about the main crops grown in this area. The third section looks at the agricultural extension and the methods of extension used by your organisation to provide services to the farmers. The fifth section focuses on the agri-technologies, and the final section provides a space for you to comment on building partnerships between public and private organisations to facilitate smallholder farmers. We will go through the survey with you step by step to help you complete it. If you have any doubts or questions during the survey, please ask the researcher/research assistant. In cases where you feel the researchers have not acted ethically, please contact the Advance Afrika Director of Programmes (satukunda@advanceafrika.org; 0755144876 or 0785144876) or your district authorities. The survey will take about one hour to complete. We really appreciate your time, and we thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to our study.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Respondent: I have understood the objectives of the study and I am willing to participate as a respondent.....

(thumbprint/signature of respondent)

Preliminary information

Date:

District:

Sub-county:

Name of the organisation:

Type of service providers Private-for-profit NGO

1.0 BASIC INFORMATION

Please tick one box only in each of the following questions

1.1 What is your gender? Male Female

1.2 What age group do you belong to?

15-25 26-34 35-39 40-49 50-59 60 and above

1.3 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

No formal education

Not finished primary school

Completed primary school

Completed O' level

Completed A' level

Vocational education

Tertiary education

1.4 How long have you worked with farmers in this area?

Less than 3 years

3 to 5 years

More than 5 years

2.0 Common crops grown in this area

2.1 What agricultural crops are mainly grown by smallholder farmers in this area? (Circle 3 main crops grown by respondent)

Maize Cassava Millet Vegetables Fruit growing

Others (specify)

2.2 What is the main purpose of smallholder farmers? (Tick only one)

- For home consumption For selling For both home consumption and selling

2.3 What are the main problems farmers face in this area? (Tick 4 main problems)

- Lack of capital and credit
 Lack of planting materials and inputs (seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides etc.)
 Lack of markets/information about markets (I do not know where to sell)
 Low prices
 Low prices (middlemen traders with low prices)
 High cost of inputs
 Poor or insufficient training
 Lack of improved tools and equipment (tractor services)
 Lack of knowledge about how to use fertilisers
 Lack of access to extension services
 Changes in weather
 Poor soils
 Poor transport systems
 Poor storage facilities
 Drought
 Others (specify)

3.0 Outreach of Agri-skills Training Services/ Agricultural Extension Services

3.1 How do you target farmers who access your agri-skills training services?

- Demand-driven work with the district/sub-county to identify trainees
 Through needs assessment Others (specify).....

3.2 How many farmers have benefited from your training for the last 5 years?

Total [-----] Males [-----] Females [-----] youths [-----] PWDs [-----]

3.3 Apart from your organisation, what are the *other sources* for agricultural information/ advisory services to farmers in this area? (Tick all that apply)

- Fellow farmers
- NAADS service providers
- Other local government extension workers (specify)
- Researchers
- Other public agencies (specify)
- NGO/CBO (specify)
- Farmero/SACCO
- Private sector service providers
- Traders/ input suppliers
- Newspapers and magazines
- Radio
- SMS messages on phone
- Call centre

3.4 What kind of training do you provide to farmers in this area? (Tick all that apply)

- Crop husbandry
- Animal husbandry management
- Crop varieties
- Animal breeds
- Pest and disease control in crops
- Pest and disease control in livestock
- Soil fertility management
- Post-harvest handling/processing/value addition
- Agribusiness and marketing
- Group dynamics
- Use of agricultural technologies
- Others (specify)

3.5 What methods of training do you use to facilitate farmers?

- On-farm demonstrations Farmer field school Workshops
 Individual farm visits Radio programmes Community meetings

3.6 What time do you usually provide agri-skills/extension training?

Time of year (tick one)

Time of day (tick one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dry season | <input type="checkbox"/> Early morning (before 10.00 a.m.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wet season | <input type="checkbox"/> Late morning (10.00 a.m.-1 p.m.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Harvest time | <input type="checkbox"/> Early afternoon (before 4.00p.m.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> Late afternoon (4.00p.m. - 6.00p.m.) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Others (specify) |

3.7 What are the main challenges PWDs face in accessing agri-skills training or extension advisory services in this area? *(Tick all that apply)*

- Low literacy level
 Inadequate training staff
 Distance to training facilities
 Limited information about training opportunities
 No time to participate/too busy
 Not invited
 Do not have money to pay for training
 Do not have land
 Others (specify)

3.8 What are the main challenges women farmers face in accessing agri-skills training or extension advisory services in this area? *(Tick all that apply)*

- Low literacy level
 Inadequate training staff
 Distance to training facilities
 Limited information about training opportunities
 No time to participate/too busy
 Childcare responsibilities

- Husbands do not allow them
- Do not have money to pay for training
- Do not have land
- Others (specify)

3.9 What are the main challenges youth farmers face in accessing agri-skills training or extension advisory services in this area? *(Tick all that apply)*

- Low literacy level
- Inadequate training staff
- Distance to training facilities
- Limited information about training opportunities
- No time to participate/too busy
- Not interested
- Do not have money to pay for training
- Do not have land
- Others (specify)

3.8 What are the main areas farmers in this area need to be trained in? *(Tick all that apply)*

- Crop diversification
- Crop varieties
- Pest and disease control in crops
- Soil fertility management
- Post-harvest handling/processing/value addition
- Agribusiness and marketing
- Group dynamics/forming and managing small groups
- Use of agricultural technologies
- Financial and record-keeping
- Others (specify)

4.0 Availability and accessibility of agri-technologies

4.1 What kind of agricultural technologies are available to smallholder farmers in this area? *(Tick all that apply)* Tractor Irrigation Improved seeds Pesticides Organic fertilisers Inorganic fertilisers Others (specify)

4.2 Who provides the above-mentioned technologies? *(Tick all that apply)*

- District Production Office
- Sub-county office
- NGOs (specify)
- Private-for-profit service provider (specify)
- Farmer organisations/SACCO
- Others (specify)

4.3 What specific agricultural technologies have farmers you have trained accessed? *(Tick all that apply)*

- Tractor Irrigation Improved seeds Pesticides
- Organic fertilisers Inorganic fertilisers Others (specify)

4.4 Did they receive training in the use and management of the agricultural technologies you accessed? Yes No Received training in some technologies

5.0 Opportunities and challenges in farmers' groups/associations

5.1 Do you know of any farmers' groups existing in this area?

- Yes No *(skip to 6.1)*

5.2 If yes, how many youth-focused (those below 30 years are in your group) groups are in this area? [-----]

5.3 How many women-focused groups are in this area? [-----]

5.4 How many PWDs-focused groups are in this area? [-----]

5.5 What do members gain from their groups? *(Tick all that apply)*

- Accessibility to better market opportunities
- Accessibility to financial services
- Training in agro-business management

- Training in crop management
- Accessibility to improved storage facilities
- Others (specify)

5.6 What challenges do farmers' groups face in this area? *(Tick all that apply)*

- Inadequate commitment from members
- Limited support from public authorities
- Limited resource capacity to handle farming challenges
- Inadequate leadership
- Others (specify)

5.7 How can farmers' groups be supported to attain their objectives? *(Tick three choices only)*

- Support them to link with markets/buyers
- Support them to access financial facilities
- Training in group management
- Training in processing and value addition
- Support them to access processing facilities
- Others (specify)

6.0 Private-public partnership initiatives

6.1 What challenges does your organisation face in working with smallholder farmers in this area?.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

6.2 Please share recommendations on how the district and sub-county authorities can improve their engagements with the non-public service providers to help smallholder farmers in this area

.....

.....

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.....

.....

Thank you so much for your needed cooperation

Appendix H: Questionnaire for farmers

Introduction to the study

The following is to be read by the researcher/research assistant to the study participants.

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. I would like to briefly introduce ourselves, explain the purpose of this study and provide some information on how to complete it.

My name is and I will be helping to facilitate this study along with my other colleagues (mention them). We are part of a team of people recruited by Advance Afrika to assess the inclusivity, accessibility and capacity of agri-skills extension service training of farmers in Abim, Lira and Soroti districts of Uganda. The overall purpose of the study is to inform the Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA) Programme meetings with expert groups, local skills platforms and ongoing dialogue processes to improve access to and the quality of agri-skills for the empowerment of smallholder farmers, and particularly women, youth and PWDs. The study will facilitate different stakeholders to better understand the agri-skills training needs and extension services of the targeted communities to address the knowledge gaps and challenges faced by women, youth and PWD farmers so that they can improve their livelihoods.

You have been chosen randomly to participate in this survey because you are a farmer. The answers that you provide will be kept confidential. As you can see, we do not ask you to put your name on the survey paper so that the information cannot be traced back to you as an individual. Your participation in the survey is voluntary and you are free to stop the survey at any time or skip any questions you do not want to answer. However, it may be impossible to withdraw your responses after data has been analysed and report findings reported.

This survey is divided into six sections. The first section asks about your basic information, including age, education and years of farming experience. The second section asks about the crops that you are engaged in and the main problems that you face in producing the crops. The third section looks at your experiences with agricultural extension and the methods of extension that you prefer plus the areas in which you would like to receive training. The fifth section focuses on the agri-technologies. And the final section provides a space for you to include any additional information that you would like to share with us about your training needs. We will go through the survey with you step by step to help you complete it. If you have any doubts or questions during the survey, please ask the researcher/research assistant. In cases where you feel the researchers have not acted ethically, please contact the Advance Afrika Director of Programmes (satukunda@advanceafrika.org; 0755144876 or 0785144876) or your district authorities. The survey will take about one and a half hours to complete. We really appreciate your time, and we thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to our study.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Respondent: I have understood the objectives of the study and I am willing to participate as a respondent.....

(thumbprint/signature of respondent)

Preliminary information

Date:

District:.....

Sub-county

1.0 BASIC INFORMATION

Please tick one box only in each of the following questions.

1.1 What is your gender? Male Female

1.2 What age group do you belong to?

15-25 26-34 35-39 40-49 50-59 60 and above

1.3 Do you have any kind of disability? Yes (specify) No

1.4 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- No formal education
- Not finished primary school
- Completed primary school
- Completed O' level
- Completed A' level
- Vocational education
- Tertiary education

1.5 How many people currently live in your household? 1 2 3

4 5 More than 5

1.6 What is your main source of income? (Tick only one)

- Crop farming Livestock farming Poultry keeping
- Others (specify)

1.7 How many years of farming experience do you have?

- Less than 3 years
- 3 to 5 years
- More than 5 years

1.8 What is the size of all your agricultural land (in hectares)?

- No land
- Less than half a hectare
- 0.5 to 1 hectare
- 1 to 2 hectares
- 2 to 3 hectares
- 3 to 4 hectares
- More than 4 hectares

1.9 How many agricultural plots do you have (including any you rent)? 1

- 2 3 4 5 or more

1.10 Do you own or lease your agricultural land? Personally own all

- Lease all Part own and part lease Use family-owned land
- Others (specify)

2.0 Crop farming activities

2.1 What agricultural crops do you mainly grow? (Circle 3 main crops grown by respondent)

- Maize Cassava Millet Vegetables Fruit growing
- Others (specify)

2.2 What is the main purpose of your crop production? (Tick only one)

- For home consumption For selling For both home consumption and selling

2.3 What are the main problems you face in your crop farming? (Tick 4 main problems)

- Lack of capital and credit
- Lack of planting materials and inputs (seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides, etc.)
- Lack of markets/information about markets (I do not know where to sell)
- Low prices
- Low prices (middlemen traders with low prices)
- High cost of inputs
- Poor or insufficient training
- Lack of improved tools and equipment (tractor services)
- Lack of knowledge about how to use fertilisers
- Lack of access to extension services
- Changes in weather
- Poor soils
- Poor transport systems
- Poor storage facilities
- Drought
- Others (specify)

3.0 Access to and outreach of agri-skills training services/agricultural extension services

3.1 Do you have access to agricultural information/advisory services?

- Yes No (if no, skip to 3.4)

3.2 If YES in 3.1 above, what are your main sources for agricultural information/advisory services? (Tick all that apply)

- Fellow farmers
- NAADS service providers
- Other local government extension workers (specify)
- Researchers
- Other public agencies (specify)
- NGO/CBO

- Farmer organisations/SACCO
- Private sector service providers
- Traders/input suppliers
- Newspapers and magazines
- Radio
- SMS messages on phone
- Call centre

3.3 How often do you get agricultural extension advice?

- At least once a month Once in 3 months Once every 6 months
- Once a year Less than once a year

3.4 Have you or any member of this household received/is currently receiving any training in agriculture-related activities?

- Yes No (*if no, skip to 3.13*)

3.5 If YES, specify the gender of the member of the household who has attended this training.

- Male
- Female
- Both

3.6 How many times have you or the other member of the household attended this training [...]?

3.7 From which organisation did you receive/are receiving the training? (Tick all that apply)

- Government extension worker (specify)
- NGOs (specify)
- Private-for-profit service provider (specify)
- From fellow farmers
- Farmer organisations/SACCO
- Others (specify)

3.8 What was the training you attended about? *(Tick all that apply)*

- Crop husbandry
- Animal husbandry management
- Crop varieties
- Animal breeds
- Pest and disease control in crops
- Pest and disease control in livestock
- Soil fertility management
- Post-harvest handling/processing/value addition
- Agribusiness and marketing
- Group dynamics
- Use of agricultural technologies
- Others (specify)

3.9 Did the training you received meet your learning needs?

- Yes No

3.10 Did you receive any follow-up after the training?

- Yes No

3.11 What methods of training were used by the agri-skills trainer?

- On-farm demonstrations Farmer field school Workshops
- Individual farm visits Radio programmes Community meetings

3.12 What method of agri-skills training do you prefer?

- On-farm demonstrations Farmer field school Workshops
- Individual farm visits Radio programmes Community meetings
- Photos and videos Written materials Others (specify)

3.13 If no in 3.3, what is the main reason you have not received any agri-skills training/extension advisory services? *(Tick only one reason)*

- I have not received any information about agri-skills training
- I do not have the money to pay for the training
- The training is not relevant to me

- I am not a member of any farmers' group
- I am not literate so cannot gain from the training
- I have no time to spend on the training
- Others (specify)

3.14 What is the best time for you to receive agri-skills/extension training?

Time of year (tick one)

Time of day (tick one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dry season | <input type="checkbox"/> Early morning (before 10.00 a.m.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wet season | <input type="checkbox"/> Late morning (10.00 a.m.-1 p.m.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Harvest time | <input type="checkbox"/> Early afternoon (before 4.00p.m.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> Late afternoon (4.00p.m. - 6.00p.m.) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Others (specify) |

3.15 What are the main challenges you face in accessing agri-skills training or extension advisory services? (Tick all that apply)

- Low literacy level
- Inadequate training staff
- Distance to training facilities
- Limited information about training opportunities
- No time to participate/too busy
- Childcare responsibilities
- Not invited
- My husband does not allow me
- Do not have money to pay for training
- Do not have land
- Others (specify)

3.16 What are the main areas in farming that you need training in? (Tick all that apply)

- Crop diversification
- Crop varieties
- Pest and disease control in crops
- Soil fertility management

- Post-harvest handling/processing/value addition
- Agribusiness and marketing
- Group dynamics/forming and managing small groups
- Use of agricultural technologies
- Financial and record-keeping
- Others (specify)

3.17 Please circle the training you need in the listed crops in the box below (*tick all that apply in each crop*)

Maize	Cassava	Millet
Selecting and buying inputs	Selecting and buying inputs	Selecting and buying inputs
Preparing land for planting	Preparing land for planting	Preparing land for planting
Method of planting	Method of planting	Method of planting
Fertiliser use	Fertiliser use	Fertiliser use
Control of pests and diseases	Control of pests and diseases	Control of pests and diseases
Harvesting	Harvesting	Harvesting
Post-harvest handling	Post-harvest handling	Post-harvest handling
Water management/irrigation	Water management/irrigation	Water management/irrigation
Using new technologies	Using new technologies	Using new technologies
Marketing	Marketing	Marketing
Access to credit	Access to credit	Access to credit
Others (specify)	Others (specify)	Others (specify)

3.18 Do you know any person with disability who has accessed agri-skills training in this community?

- Yes No (if no, skip to 4.1)

3.19 If yes, from which organisation has the person received the training? (Tick all that apply)

- Government extension worker (specify)
- NGOs (specify)
- Private-for-profit service provider (specify).....
- From fellow farmers
- Farmer organisations/SACCO
- Others (specify)

4.0 Availability and accessibility of agri-technologies

4.1 Are you aware of any agricultural technologies in this area? Yes No (if no, skip to 5.1)

4.2 If yes in 4.1 above, what kind of agricultural technologies are in this area? (Tick all that apply) Tractor Irrigation Improved seeds Pesticides

Organic fertilisers Inorganic fertilisers Others (specify)

4.3 Have you or any other member of the household accessed or acquired agricultural technologies? Yes No (skip to 5.1)

4.4 If yes, from what source? (Tick all that apply)

- Local government extension service (specify).....
- NGOs (specify)
- Private-for-profit service provider (specify).....
- From fellow farmers
- Farmer organisations/SACCO
- Others (specify)

4.5 What specific agricultural technologies has your household accessed? (Tick all that apply)

- Tractor Irrigation Improved seeds Pesticides
- Organic fertilisers Inorganic fertilisers Others (specify)

4.6 Did you receive training in the use and management of the agricultural technologies you accessed? Yes No Received training in some technologies

5.0 Opportunities and challenges in farmers' groups/associations

5.1 Are you a member of a farmers' self-help group in this area? Yes (if no, skip to)

No

5.2 If no in 5.1, please state why? (Tick all that apply)

There are no farmers' groups in this area

The farmers' groups are not helpful in any way

I have not been invited to be part of a farmers' group

Membership fees are costly for me

Farmers' groups favour commercial farmers only

I prefer working as an individual

Others (specify)

5.3 How many members are in your group by gender?

Male [-----]

Female [-----]

5.4 How many youths (those below 30 years) are in your group? [-----]

5.5 How has your farmers' group facilitated you as a farmer? (Tick all that apply)

Accessibility to better market opportunities

Accessibility to financial services

Training in agro-business management

Training in crop management

Accessibility to improved storage facilities

Others (specify)

5.6 What challenges does your group face?

Inadequate commitment from members

Limited support from public authorities

Limited resource capacity to handle farming challenges

Others (specify)

5.7 How can your farmers' group be supported to attain its objectives?

- Support to link with markets/buyers
- Support to access financial facilities
- Training in group management
- Training in processing and value addition
- Processing facilities
- Others (specify)

6.0 Is there any further information concerning your accessibility to agri-skills training needs/challenges that you would like to share with us?

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.....

.....

Thank you so much for your needed cooperation



Contact us:

Plot 29, Acholi Road, Pece Housing Estate,
Room A112, KKT Centre, Plot 16 - 22 Duka Road,
Room L5 - 06, 5th Floor, South Point Mall,
Ggaba Road, Kabalagala, **Kampala**
P.O. BOX 36888 Kampala - Uganda
Tel: +256 414 661 113 / +256 706 302 979
Email: admin@advanceafrika.org

