



# NEWSLETTER

JULY - NOVEMBER

2023

Dear Readers,

We are back with another edition of our newsletter packed with exciting updates on the progress of the different projects currently implemented by Action for Child Social and Economic Transformation (ACSET) Uganda and the dedicated partners. Join us in celebrating the progress, the stories, and the transformative impact we've collectively made possible.

## Short overview of ongoing projects

### 1. Transitioning Youth to Sustainable Livelihoods (TYSL)

#### **Vocational Training Component:**

As the first batch celebrated their achievement of six-month course completion and a month internship conducted with private workshops in Oyam town council in July, we identified and recruited 40 young trainees for the second batch, ensuring they all get market-based hands-on knowledge and skills that they will use as an empowerment tool to economically change their lives. Like for the first batch, their journey commenced at Skills for All Vocational Training Institute (S4A VTI) and they will be trained for six months, plus a one-month apprenticeship with private workshops. We are happy that within the past five months of their training in Hairdressing, Tailoring, Carpentry and Joinery, and Bricklaying and Concrete Practice, all the trainees are able to make and design different materials, dresses, hairstyles, among others.



Mentorship isn't just a buzzword here; it is at the core of our program as well. We conducted regular sessions on life skills, career guidance, and spiritual growth, nurturing well-rounded individuals ready to take on the world in their different fields in the community



Since education doesn't have to be all books and classrooms, we integrated a Sport and Play-based approach into the curriculum at S4A VTI. This has made learning an adventure, benefiting not only the 60 trainees but also the dedicated staff at the Training Institute.

We conducted a successful student exhibition event that took place on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October, 2023 at S4A VTI, in Oyam Town Council. This event acted as a ground for the trainees to showcase their skills and knowledge acquired so far and the products made as part of their training program.



### **Agriculture Component:**

In our commitment to empowering the out-of-school young people with knowledge and skills in Soybean production and value chain activities, we identified and registered 20 farmer groups, each comprising 30 members (5 groups in Amolatar and 15 in Oyam). The farmer groups are receiving hands-on training on the Local Seed Business methodology, covering important topics such as Seed entrepreneurship, Seed production planning, and Quality control, equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to foster sustainable and successful Local seed producer groups in their communities.

During this period, we identified and established suitable demonstration plots for the 20 farmer groups. These plots are serving as the canvas for practical learning, showcasing the right way to cultivate and manage seed crops. The demo plots also serve as a visual guide on best practices for the broader community.

Through hands-on training, we guided farmers on the delicate art of land tillage for seed planting, ensuring proper seed placement, and setting the stage for a successful harvest. Following land preparation, farmer groups received training on Good Agronomic Practices (GAPs), from soil health to pest management, providing farmers with a holistic understanding of sustainable agricultural practices.



Our next steps in the TYSL project include; the completion of the six-month training for the second batch of trainees at S4A VTI, engaging Private workshops for the attachment for these trainees for their internship, graduation of trainees, providing them with start-up tools/equipment, and recruitment of third batch of trainees from Oyam and Amolatar district. In the Agriculture component, we will continue the training on GAPs for farmers, conducting training on harvest and post-harvest handling and management, and training on Soybean value addition, Marketing, and Seed quality tests.

## **2. Systems Strengthening to Enhance Solar Energy Use and Services (SESEUS) in Uganda**



The SESEUS project successfully identified and selected 40 young persons aged 18-30 (10 women and 30 men) coming from nine districts of the Lango subregion. These young and energetic youth are currently being trained on a 3-month short course on solar technology and will graduate as Solar Extension Agents (SEAs) in December. The SEAs are the torchbearers of solar energy, bringing with them the promise of change and progress, championing a cleaner and brighter future for their communities by solving challenges related to solar energy use and services in their local communities.



The three-month solar course training in the two selected Vocational Training Institutions (Human Technical Development Training Centre and Minakulu Technical Institute) commenced in September. The two VTIs were furnished with equipment and training materials for conducting theoretical and practical training, thanks to the funding from the BMZ – Germany. The training focuses on bridging between knowledge and action, turning eager minds into capable hands.



In our quest to have renewable energy planned and budgeted for in all the districts of Lango sub region, we held a workshop on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023 to train District Energy Focal Point Persons (DEFPPs) to facilitate the repair and maintenance of malfunctioning solar systems installed in government buildings. The focus was on enhancing their skills in planning and budgeting for renewable energy initiatives. The workshop not only provided valuable insights but also fostered collaboration among key stakeholders in advancing our commitment to sustainable energy solutions.



An engagement meeting was successfully held with managers and technicians of six solar companies conducted on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2023 at Alpha Resort Hotel in Lira City to establish Memorandums

of Understanding (MoUs) to offer apprenticeships to Solar Extension Agents. This meeting brought forward the achievements and challenges from previous partnership with the Promotion of Renewable Energy (ProReu Project).



Looking ahead, our next steps include completion of the three-month Solar Course; Integrate the 40 rural women and youth into the existing SEA-Network, and Facilitate and support District Local Government Energy committees in the process of mainstreaming renewable energy and solar energy into District Development

### 3. Women Livelihood Improvement Project (WE LIVE II)

Under the Women Livelihood Improvement Project (WE LIVE II), we witnessed remarkable achievements in women empowerment and the improvement of households in communities of Amolatar district in the past months.

The established 10 farmer groups in Etam town council and Etam sub-county received training on the establishment of nursery beds, cultivating the skills and expertise required to raise healthy vegetable crops such as cowpeas, eggplants, cabbages, carrots, and tomatoes, among others in home kitchen gardens. The kitchen gardens not only provide vegetables for daily consumption but also have fulfilled the promise of self-sufficiency among households.



In the first round of planting in the kitchen gardens, farmers harvested cowpeas and appreciated the benefit of kitchen gardens – thanks to the sustainable practices they had embraced. The cowpeas matured in only 16 days compared to its known maturity of 21 days in an open field. The early maturity of vegetables in kitchen gardens was a tangible demonstration of quicker harvest and a symbol of the potential for increased vegetable production in a short time, increasing household access to nutritious foods and later translating to household food security through repetitive planting in the same kitchen garden.

The farmers have successfully adopted the kitchen garden approach in their homes. This is witnessed by the increase in the number of kitchen gardens constructed, almost achieving our target of 300 farmers. Some of the farmers have already planted and harvested vegetables more than twice from their kitchen gardens in the past 3 months and have testified of the benefits derived from the kitchen gardens.



Looking ahead, our next steps include Conducting more training on Good Agronomic Practices, training on the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) principles and methodology, and engaging these groups in income-generating activities.

## Testimonies from participants of the three projects above

*“My name is Akello Medina, a 23-year-old resident of Okade village in Etam town council. I joined Nen Ayim Farmer’s group under the We Live II project being implemented by ACSET Uganda. Through the different trainings that I have acquired in kitchen garden establishment and vegetable production, I was able to establish my own kitchen garden for home use. I have so far planted cowpeas thrice, for my first harvest, I used some for home-consumption and the rest I sold them and got 8,500Ugx. I used this money to acquire basic needs like soap, salt, cooking oil, among others. This garden has improved on our vegetable intake in our house as we now eat it thrice a week, and now that dry season is approaching, I am sure that I will have sufficient supply of vegetables for home consumption through my garden. I thank ACSET Uganda for bringing this project in our community.”*



*“I am Odongo Allan from Oyam district and I have completed my six months of vocational training program under TYSL project. Before joining this training, I didn’t have hope to start a business and it was difficult for me to buy my own clothes. Now that I have acquired skills in Building and Concrete Practice, I have hope to practice and earn money. I hope that I will achieve what I wanted in life. We were taught other life skills namely, customer care, entrepreneurial skills among others. On return home I hope to get employed and raise money to buy cattle and support my siblings to pay their school fees so they can have a better life, open a business and also buy things that I didn’t have access to before.”*



*“My name is Aceng Harriet from Dokolo district currently undertaking the Solar course at Human Technical Development Training Centre. Before joining the course, I was green about solar systems and its components, now I am acquiring knowledge and skills in solar PV systems and its installation, maintenance and repair. After completion of this training, I see a lot of opportunities for me in my community in line with solar system usage. I will sensitize my community on the benefits of solar, the services that I can offer to them in line with solar installation, maintenance and repair. I will also use the skills and knowledge that I am getting from here to earn a living as a qualified solar technician to positively change my life, family and my community. This project is going to enable me to solve solar related problems in my community. I thank ACSET Uganda for implementing the SESESUS project in Lango sub-region, and for selecting me as one of the project’s beneficiaries.”*



## Want to know more about ACSET?

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