



**Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda (SGU): Eco-Agriculture-Sesame
Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young
Rural People in Lira District Project**

Final Evaluation Report

Prepared by: Partnership for Development Consult Limited

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Acknowledgement

This Final Evaluation, conducted in a participatory manner, received invaluable contributions from many people. We are therefore grateful to the staff of Plan International Uganda and its implementing partners (IPs) for their effective coordination of fieldwork and timely review of draft documents. Equally, we would also like to thank the research assistants for the work well done. To all the respondents thank you too for sharing with us your invaluable information.

Final Evaluation Team

Consulting Team

Drs Odongo J. Hannington	Team Leader
Dr. Alfred Lakwo	Development Management Expert
Opar R. Lakwit	Financial Analyst

Data Collection and Management Team

Sarah Atim	Research Assistant
Ronald Omara	Research Assistant
Ebu Joshua	Research Assistant
Rogers Baguma	Research Assistant
Bryan Eryong	Research Assistant
Raymond Owachgiu	Data Entrant
Lauben Niwagaba	Data Entrant

Plan International Uganda Support Team

Country Office

Mr. Patrick Ssebbowa	National Programme Manager – Youth Economic Empowerment
Mr. Frederick Paul Mugume	MER Coordinator (Research & Evaluation)
Mr. Patrick Engoru	Project Coordinator

Field Office

Mr. Laban Okwir	Field Officer- NOGAMU
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Executive Summary

About the Project

Plan International Spain and Plan International Uganda in partnership with the National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU) secured funding from the European Union through UNOPS to implement the **Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda (SGU): Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District** project. The goal of the project was “to increase the quality of life in Lira District by enhancing the green economy and sustainable consumption and production in the region” and its specific objective was “to increase livelihood opportunities for youth sesame-farmers through improved eco-agriculture production and green economy inclusion.” The Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project was implemented in Lira district in the Sub Counties of Barr, Agweng and Ogur and its stakeholders included: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), young smallholders, MSMEs (young smallholder farmer groups and enterprises), Financial Institutions, Plan International Uganda staff, NOGAMU staff, district officials and Sub county leaders.

The Objectives and Processes of Evaluation

The main purposes of the evaluation were: (a) To assess the achievement of the planned project goal and objectives using the standard tests of relevance, consistency, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability; and (b) to identify challenges faced and lessons learned, and propose recommendations for future replication.

To meet these purposes the evaluation team developed a project result chain and used a longitudinal study design that anchored on a mixed-mode approach to data collection and triangulation (quantitative, qualitative and PRA methods). A 3-phase approach was adopted starting with Phase I: Inception phase that defined the evaluation boundaries by developing and securing approval for study tools, sample size and work plan; Phase II: Field data collection covered data collection from 396 respondents drawn from the various units of analysis - beneficiary and non-beneficiary youth farmers, youth farmer groups, Plan International Uganda and IP staff, district and sub county local government officials, and private sector enterprises. Finally, Phase III: Reporting focused on data entry, collation, analysis, and report writing.

Data was collected using the following methods: Document review, individual youth survey, Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews, participant observations, and case studies (using a mix of personal and most significant change stories). These different data sources were analyzed using both SPSS (V24) and narrative/content analysis methods and triangulated into a unified report. Data quality control measures were put in place and child protection policy was adhered to. However, the evaluation experienced some major limitations, namely: The baseline study that was conducted in 2016 had two critical gaps: very small sample size and unclear project results chain. To bridge this gap, a result chain was clarified and a recall method was used for recreating the missing baseline status. The use of non-digitalized

management information system slowed access to timely output data. And finally, poor field mobilization led to rescheduled meetings.

Findings of the Evaluation

The following were the key findings from the various evaluation parameters:

Relevance, Quality of Design, and Internal Consistency (see 3.1)

From literature review, individual survey and discussions with the targeted rural youth, it emerged that the project addressed the needs of the youth by promoting farming as a business in the agriculture sector where subsistence farming is a norm. Meanwhile 44% of the youth also noted that the project provided the support they direly needed to improve their farming.

SGU was also found rightly aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially Goal 1 that strives to *'end poverty in all its forms everywhere,'* Goal 8 that aims to *'promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all,'* Goal 12 that *'ensures sustainable consumption and production patterns'*, and Goal 13 that focuses on *"taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts."* At the national level, the project was aligned to the National Development Plan (NDP) II strategy that aim to *'increase employment and employability'* through among others youth focused programmes.

Within Plan International Uganda 5-year Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2016-20, the project was found consistent with Programme Area One: Youth Economic Empowerment (YEE) especially **Outcome 1.1:** Young women and young men improve their work- related skills and capacities and **Outcome 1.3:** Private sector and government provide safe, inclusive, and gender sensitive youth employment opportunities. More so, the project had a strong adherence to the Child Centered Community Development (CCCD) and child protection policy of Plan International Uganda. This was evidenced from its rights based programming, capacity building for self-employment, working in partnership with local Implementing Partners (IPs). More so, it adopted an inclusive approach towards having 69% of the beneficiaries as female youth. The evaluation mission also observed that the project was inclusive by targeting of youth with physical disability, child mother/fathers, school dropouts, and youth living with HIV. Finally, the project was closely linked with many other projects of Plan International Uganda such as the EU funded Empowering Youth for sustainable Livelihoods Project, the Austrian Development Agency funded Construction Skills Development and Youth Employment Project, the Enhancing Livelihoods of Vulnerable Child headed households and enhancing women's capacity to educate girls projects that were all implemented in Lira and Alebtong districts.

Effectiveness (see 3.2)

The evaluation found that The Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project was implemented using a multi-stakeholder participation approach. More than half of

the targeted youth reported being that they were involved in every stage of the project right from design to periodic feedback. An analysis of output achievement revealed that out of the 23 planned activities only 1 activity-1.5 (4%) was under-delivered as compared to 10 activities (44%) that were executed as planned and 12 activities (52%) that were achieved with an adjusted upwards. Yet gaps remained with a very low private sector engagement as there was only one organic buyer that was linked with the youth. Equally, the manual M&E system proved ineffective in guiding operational decision-making.

Efficiency (see 3.3)

The efficiency matrix of the project showed an absorption rate of 84% (USD 205,189.65 was utilized and USD, 37,824.35 committed). Output-based financing guides fund disbursement to NOGAMU. Meanwhile, there was adequate human resources and logistics.

Outcomes/Impact (see 3.4)

The Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project changed the lives of the targeted youth. The 35 trained youth ToTs built the technical capacity of youth: Seven in ten of the trained youth took up the eco-sesame production and provided wage employment to non-targeted youth. They also exhibited increased adoption of eco-agriculture practices (namely organic pesticides (22%), crop residue management (24%), agroforestry (26%) and organic postharvest handling of produce (40%)).

These various skills acquired in eco-agriculture enabled 11.3% youth farmers to report increase in their income, which rose by 105% (a real average increase of UGX 50,893 from UGX 48,265 to UGX 99,158). This gain was possible with an average yield increase of 5 Kgs and reduction in the volume of sesame sold to middlemen (-50.3 Kgs).

The spill over effects of these project included the following: a radical shift in where the youth saved from one self (45.5%) before the project to savings in their youth savings groups (80.8%). Many youth (15%) also adopted income diversification strategies as well as asset accumulation especially through the purchases of land, cattle, poultry, mobile phones and mattresses. The targeted youth households also witnessed a 9% rise (from 16.4% to 25.4%) in the proportion of households that had 3 meals daily.

The sharing of the draft National Agriculture Organic Policy and Regulatory Impact Assessment report with organic farmer group representatives and local government staffs increased awareness of organic agriculture among farming communities in the project area. This is an impetus to increased organic sesame production and trade.

Finally, there was also improved gender relation. The district local government officials interviewed noted that before the project, child mothers were unable to fend for themselves and their children. In return, some resorted to transactional sex to make ends meet. However, through savings, access to credit for both emergencies and business capital and higher income from the sale of organic sesame, many females are economically empowered to look after themselves.

The key drivers for the success of the project were attributed to:

- a) The membership of Child mothers with assumed responsibilities and challenges of food and income enabled them to utilize the knowledge and skills promoted under the project to improve the livelihood conditions of their young families.
- b) The existence of VSLA in the groups with the support from lower local government, NOGAMU and Farmer Trainers of Trainers continue to strengthen group cohesion and linkages with other support organizations.
- c) The availability of local materials for production of organic chemicals has reduced cost for soil fertility enhancement and crop protection, thus increasing group members' crop yields.
- d) The availability of arable land suitable for practicing ecological agriculture has provided incentive for group members to take-up eco agriculture technologies.

Sustainability (see 3.5)

For sustainability, the project has developed a training manual for farmers' own use. It also trained youth peer-trainers who have continued to provide peer-extension services to their group members. In addition, its innovative technologies such as drying racks and organic pesticides making and trade will continue to be used on sesame production.

Key Project Challenges, best practices and lessons learned (see 4.0)

The following challenges were identified:

- **Key challenges** included: inadequate market development to win a competitive pricing edge; persistent weather variability that affected production; Inaccessibility to adequate land for youth to increase production; and a biased training approach that focused on technical skills training at the expense of the organizational development of the youth producer groups.
- **Best practices:** Included: an innovative and integrated youth-led ecological agriculture and green business to the youth; multi-stakeholder involvement in both the policy formulation processes and activity implementation; Peer-led training and mentorship approach; and the adoption of *Youth Savings and Loan Group model* for both cohesion building and financial inclusion. In addition, it developed a training manual for organic sesame production, established a capacity building fund, and some innovative technologies such as the drying racks.
- **Lessons learned:** Included targeted training and mentorship for better adoption; timely delivery of quality agriculture input for increased productivity; Partnerships for cross-learning; and a clear M&E is a driver for tracking achievements of outputs and outcome.

Recommendations and conclusions (5.0)

The evaluation team therefore recommends the following with a hindsight that the best practices and lessons learnt will be favorably continued:

- Investment in eco-product market development through: a direct partnership with private sector enterprises; and a differentiated eco-product development with product

certification, branding, and advertisement for increased visibility and market segmentation.

- Adoption of climate smart agriculture to improve smallholder farmer resilience to weather changes.
- Land advocacy for increased access to and ownership of ample land for eco-agriculture.
- Balanced training that builds both the technical and organizational capacity of youth farmers and their groups.

In conclusion, the final project evaluation found out that the Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project reached 450 youth farmers (69% females) and it achieved the planned outputs, outcomes, and impacts with a number of positive spill over effects. The main challenge is that most of these gains have not matured – youth farmer groups are not strong enough to stand on their own; adoption of eco-agribusiness practices is mixed; and market penetration is still at a nascent stage. This observation can be attributed to the very short life span of the project. The sizeable increase in the number of jobs created for non-targeted youth as well as their wages and profits to the eco-sesame amidst a volatile weather and market demonstrates the huge potential this approach has to youth employment and poverty reduction.

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Acronyms

CCCD	Child Centred Community Development
CDD	Community Driven Development
CDO	Community Development Officer
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAO	District Agricultural Officer
DLG	District Local Government
DPMO	District Production and Marketing Office
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IP	Implementing Partner
KII	Key Informant Interview
LLG	Lower Local Government
LoP	Life of Project
M+E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
NOA	National Organic Agriculture
NOGAMU	National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organization
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
PLWA	Persons Living with HIV and AIDS
PSE	Private Sector Enterprise
PUM	Project Unit Management
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization
SGU	Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
UAA	Uganda Agribusiness Alliance
UGX	Uganda Shillings
US\$	United States Dollars
VSLA	Village Savings and Lending Association
YAP	Youth Advisory Panel
YEEP	Youth Economic Empowerment Project
YSLGs	Youth Savings and Loans Group

1.0 Introduction

This section presents the background to the final project evaluation. It assesses the context of project implementation and presents the key activities that have been implemented in order to set the stage of the evaluation.

1.1 About Plan International

Plan International is a child-centred development organization with a mission to achieve lasting improvements in the lives of marginalized children in developing countries through a process that unites people across cultures and adds meaning and value to their lives. Plan International has worked in Uganda as Plan International Uganda since 1992 and under its current Uganda Country Strategic Plan 2016-2020. Plan International Uganda aims to intervene in the areas of: Youth Economic Empowerment; Quality and Inclusion in Early Childhood Development and Primary Education; Strengthening Child Protection Systems; Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH) and Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH); and Community Based Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. Gender equality, civil society strengthening and Disaster Risk Reduction are crosscutting priorities. As one of the leading child rights organizations in Uganda, currently Plan International Uganda works in five regions of the country, namely; West Nile, North, Eastern, East Central, and Central mainly in mutual partnership with more than 40 civil society organizations, the government and the private sector.

1.2 Project Background

Plan International Spain and Plan International Uganda in partnership with the National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU) secured funding from the European Union to implement the Eco-agriculture Sesame Livelihoods and Organic-Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in northern Uganda (hereafter referred to as The Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda (SGU): Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project that is part of the Switch Africa Green Initiative in Uganda. The Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project sought to contribute to change production and consumption management to reduce the negative environmental impact in Lira district, Northern Uganda by increasing livelihoods opportunities for youth sesame-farmers through the access to eco-agriculture production and marketing and green economy inclusion. In addition, through documentation of best practices taking stock of the best consumption and production practices that have been adopted along sesame value chain the project would support the promotion and up-scaling of eco-agriculture production and green economy inclusion.

The Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project was implemented in Lira district in the Sub Counties of Barr, Agweng and Ogur. The key implementation stakeholders

included: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), youth, MSMEs (youth smallholder farmer groups), Financial Institutions, Plan International Uganda staff, NOGAMU staff, district officials and Sub county leaders.

Table 1: Summary of project logic

Goal	To increase the quality of life in Lira District by enhancing the green economy and sustainable consumption and production in the region	
	Focus of entry	Envisaged results
Specific objectives	To increase livelihood opportunities for youth sesame-farmers through improved eco-agriculture production and green economy inclusion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 2 national stakeholder meetings take place for participatory consultative process with all production, market and environmental actors to develop policies and programmes. 2. At least 75% youth sesame-farmers increased their income by 15% by the end of the project. 3. 90% of the targeted youth have access to eco- markets. 4. At least 2 policies supported and to be adopted by national government bodies and district council. 5. 75 % of youth farmers undertake waste management farming practices by the end of the project. 6. 5 % of youth farmers have diversified their sources of income.
Results	R1: Targeted relevant organizations in sesame growing sector increase their eco-market opportunities through policy support and the promotion of green economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. At least 2 stakeholder meetings held, and at least 20 represented institutions participate in the policy dialogue meeting. 1.2. At least 2 policy recommendation papers prepared and shared with MAAIF & relevant stakeholders. 1.3. Regulatory impact assessment report on draft organic agriculture policy generated and adopted by the MAAIF.
	R2. The technical, administrative and financial capacities of local actors (youth farmers and other value chain actors) to engage in eco-agriculture production and access to strategic eco-markets have been strengthened.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 15 youth farmers groups secured established market linkages. 2.2 5 MSMEs and 75% of youth farmers with linkages to funding institutions. 2.3 At least 80% of the people trained (15 farmer groups, 10 SME staff, 10 local leaders, 10 government technical staff) in different topics within the organic production of sesame positively evaluate their acquired knowledge. 2.4 15% youth take up business/employment opportunities along the sesame value chain. 2.5 15 youth trained as TOT on eco-agriculture. 2.6 5 funding schemes established.

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1.3 The Project Context

The Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project had six major risks for success, namely: a stable political context; climatic shock; active stakeholders' participation; stable market of sesame; high interest of young people in eco-agriculture sesame production; and secure land tenure for youth. To understand the external project implementation environment, a look at the context within the last three years of project design and approval as well as the initiation and implementation was conducted. It emerged that:

- Generally, Lira district was peaceful and secure for the population to work for self-development. The youth focus group discussions (FGDs) pointed out that there was no day their work was curtailed by any political and military instability.
- Yet weather conditions remained volatile with 2016 considered as the worst agricultural year given that rainfall was erratic and uneven.
- The participation of the various project stakeholders was reported as mixed. The private sector was noted to have been slow in adopting the eco-agriculture product (at both production and consumption promotion). Formal financial institutions were also reported as inaccessible and not interested in youth. However, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Plan International Uganda staff, NOGAMU staff, district officials and Sub county leaders were noted to have been actively engaged in the project. Overall, the youth exhibited high interest in eco-agriculture sesame production.
- Equally, the market for sesame (especially price) remained volatile throughout the project period. For instance, the youth FGDs pointed out that prices for eco-sesame did not vary much with prices for other sesame varieties. In the same way, prices differed throughout the year.
- Government commitment towards eco-agriculture was noted as supportive. Although the organic agriculture policy has not been passed, district bylaws that is in effect provides adequate space for both producers and traders to benefit from eco-entrepreneurship.
- Finally, youth access to land was not compromised. Discussions with key informants, elders, and the youth echoed that access to land for utilization has no constraints. Challenges however emerge on the question of ownership especially for female youth.

1.4 Key Project Activities

To achieve the project's envisaged results, the project conducted the following activities:

- A project launch at the national, district and community levels themed around eco agriculture and organic green business opportunities;
- A project baseline and market analysis study and value chain analysis of the sesame sub sector including stakeholders mapping;
- 12 dialogue / engagement meetings with relevant stakeholders - value chain actors, policy makers, private sector actors;
- 11 advocacy /consultative workshops for the promotion of eco-agriculture and green economy at national, district and community levels
- 01 documentation of good practices in eco-agriculture and green economy;

- An update to the current draft Uganda Organic Policy also called the National Organic Agriculture Policy was done after a Regulatory Impact Assessment on the draft National Organic Agriculture Policy and an analysis of the relevant policies to eco-agriculture production, marketing and identification of any existing gaps;
- 01 policy recommendation brief;
- 13 experiential sharing events at community, region, national and international level;
- Production and dissemination of Information Education & Communication (IEC) materials such as banners, posters, t-shirts, fact sheets, power point presentations all bearing the project and donor logos employing 6 communication channels;
- Mapping of market for eco agriculture and green economy and creation of market linkages with Lira Resort and OTIS garden seeds;
- Mapping and engagement of financial institutions and potential co-funding institutions;
- Mapping of potential business opportunities and green jobs along sesame value chain of sesame production and support of 15 youth groups (with 450 members) with start-up kits to enable entry into the identified green jobs;
- Development of one comprehensive training manual;
- Capacity building with trainings targeting all the project youth farmers in the following topics: Eco agriculture practices (02); Organic products quality management (02); Techniques on own resources mobilization (01); Eco-marketing principles, standards and market requirements (02); Postharvest practices, collective marketing & quality assurance (02); Business development and production planning (02); and Entrepreneurship (02);
- Training of 32 selected youths/model farmers as ToT eco-agriculture for the upscale of the project among youth people in the project area
- Tree planting
- Training and support to value addition to 15 groups.

2.0 The Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

This section presents the methodological approach used to conduct the final project evaluation. It shows the purpose and objective of the evaluation, the study design and approach, data collection and analysis methods as well as the quality control measures used. It ends by highlighting the limitations of the study and how they were addressed.

2.1 The Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

The overall goal of the Final Project Evaluation was to assess whether the project has met its goal and objectives during the two and half years of implementation as well as assess and document both intended or unintended project impact or consequences, lessons learnt, and recommendations to support future designs and implementation of similar programmes.

1.2.1 Specific Objectives of the of the Final Project Evaluation

To achieve the above purpose, the evaluation terms of reference (ToR) aimed to:

- a) Assess the relevance of the project to the intended beneficiaries (i.e. in enhancement of capacity for participative planning in eco-agriculture policy development and coordination and strengthened technical, administrative and financial capacities of local actors).
- b) Assess the effectiveness of the project towards improvement of planning capacity in eco-agriculture policy development and coordination as well as technical, administrative and financial capacities of local actors
- c) Assess the extent to which the project was efficiently implemented.
- d) Examine the sustainability of the project beyond the designated timeframe.
- e) Examine both unintended positive and negative outcomes from the project, including the multiplier effect on skill and income generation.
- f) Highlight the enabling factors/strengths and challenges/gaps faced by project implementers.
- g) Document lessons learnt, good practices, and recommendations to inform design and implementation of similar projects in future.

In addition to the above, the evaluation reviewed:

- a) How partnerships with the different private sector actors had added value to solving the development challenges stated in the project document.
- b) The extent the private sector was involved and contributed to the project (including changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior, practices and social aspects).
- c) The extent the project and private sector had strengthened ability and capacity of youth in entrepreneurship.
- d) How the project demonstrates outcomes realized in the project over time.
- e) The consistency of the programme with the new Country Strategy (how this study will contribute to the overall Country Strategy goal and to the Global Strategy)

- f) The consistency of the programme with key standards of gender transformation (focus on girls/women position, voice, decision making, lasting impact for women.)
- g) The consistency of the programme with key aspects of Plan International’s CCCD approach.
- h) How the project/programme had been integrated with other Plan International Uganda interventions/projects?
- i) How well the internal monitoring system contributed to on-going implementation of the programme and its monitoring and evaluation
- j) How appropriate the original project/programme design was for achieving the results that were originally expected.
- k) Approximately how many boys and girls and other community members the project has reached, including the targeted and untargeted beneficiaries.

2.2 The Evaluation Focus and Approach

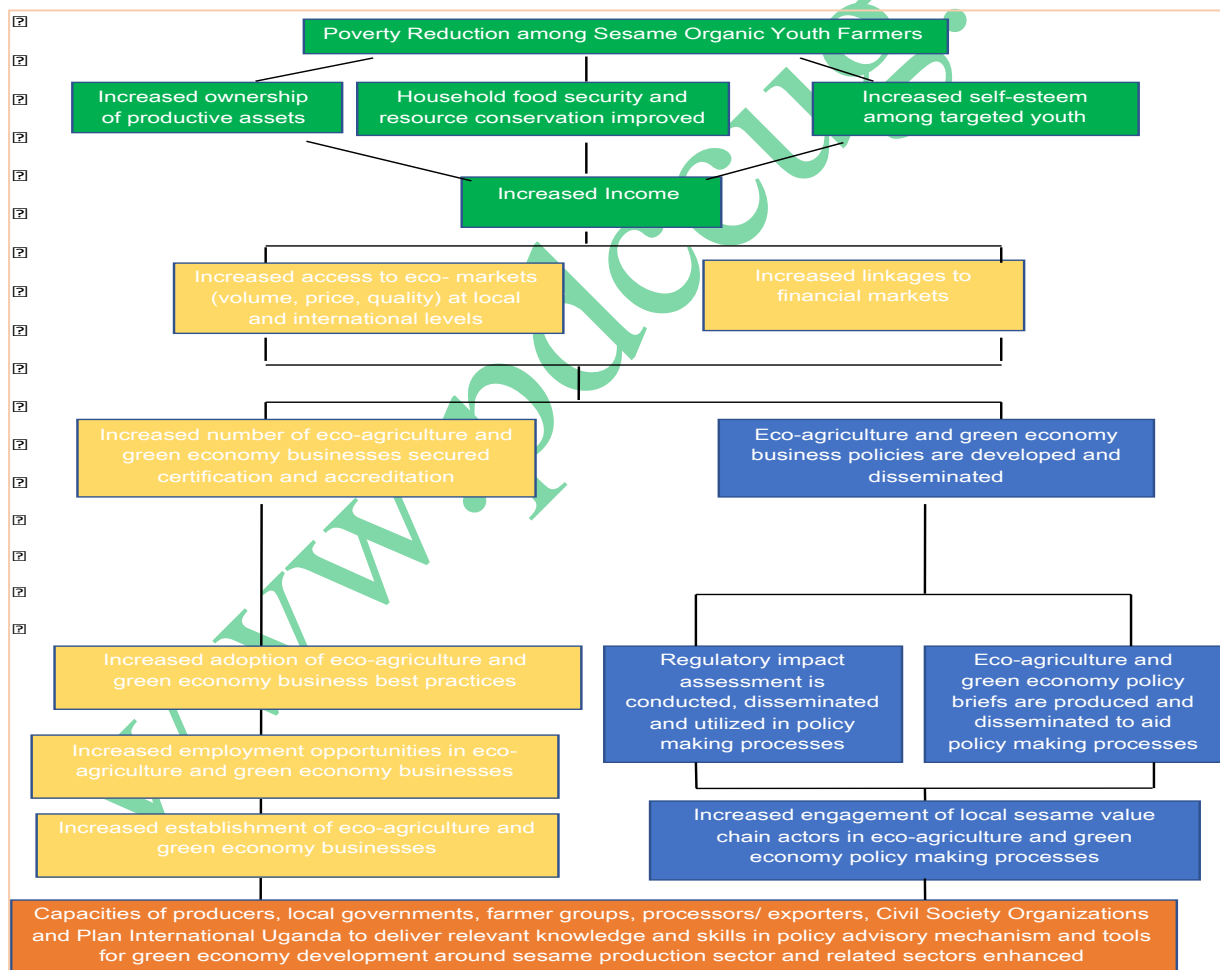


Figure 1: Adapted project results chain for The Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project

The Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project set to reach out to and

transform 450 youth smallholders in Barr, Agweng and Ogur sub counties, Lira district into organized commercial production and marketing groups and link them to local, national, regional and international organic produce buyers. The positive results therefrom would contribute towards the change in the production and consumption management to reduce the negative environmental impact of traditional sesame farming in Lira district. It was expected that access to eco-agriculture production, marketing and green economy inclusion would increase livelihoods opportunities for youth sesame-farmers.

In line with the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, the focus of study developed a synergy in the guidelines of Development Assistance Committee (DAC) for evaluating development programmes and that of Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCEd) on enterprise evaluation so as to clearly isolate and demonstrate intervention results. These results were clarified in the adapted result chain (see figure 1 above) to show result flows from outputs through outcomes to impact. In addition, a longitudinal study approach was used to ably attribute change within the various project beneficiary areas (Barr, Agweng and Ogur sub counties in Lira district).

Finally, given the various project stakeholders, a number of units of analysis were adopted, namely: (i) Young smallholders as the direct beneficiaries for process and outcome measurement; (ii) Community structures such as youth farmer associations as local organizations to ensure sustainability of the knowledge and practices in improved eco-agriculture technologies and green business opportunities enhancement; (iii) Private sector actors as stimulants in eco-agribusiness; and (iv) Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) development and dissemination of national organic agriculture policy for fast-tracking of policy development, dissemination and use assessment;

2.3 General Approach

The evaluation was conducted using a mixed method approach that ably triangulated quantitative, qualitative, and PRA methods of data collection and analysis. While the quantitative method (effectiveness, efficiency, and impact) focused on quantifiable results, qualitative and PRA methods generated explanatory data for the project relevance, progress, consistency, outcomes, sustainability, lessons, challenges and solutions that gave voices to the various young people and stakeholders involved in the project implementation.

Thus, the evaluation process involved three inter-linked phases, namely:

Phase I: Inception phase: This phase involved literature review (annex 1). Apart from other reference materials, within Plan International Uganda the following documents were accessed and reviewed: project proposal and log frame, documentation of best practices report, monitoring and evaluation plan, quarterly and annual progress reports, project baseline report, gap filling and progress tracking reports, Eco-agriculture practice and marketing training guides, Country Strategic Plan 2017-21, and CCCD, Child Protection and Gender standards. This document review enabled the designing, refining and approval of evaluation units of analysis, results chain, sample size (for beneficiary and control group), and work plan (annex 2) and tools (annex 3).

Phase II: Field data collection: This phase focused on primary and secondary data collection at the various units of analysis. It involved working closely with both Plan International Uganda team in Kampala and at the project implementation unit and partner offices in Lira in: (i) Recruiting and training of research assistants; (ii) pre-testing of study instruments; and (iii) engagement with stakeholders and beneficiaries using Key Informants interviews, Focus Group Discussions and individual youth survey. Annex 3 shows the respondents.

Phase III: Reporting: This included data entry, collation, analysis, and report generation. A draft report (this report) is therefore presented to Plan International Uganda for review and a feedback meeting with project stakeholders will be held to disseminate and validate the findings. The feedback comments will then be used to prepare this final report.

2.4 The Study Design

The evaluation covered all the Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project sub-counties of Barr, Agweng and Ogur in Lira district. The various respondents were sampled using the following methods:

- a) All institutional stakeholder respondents were purposively sampled in order to suit their interest for inclusion in the project.
- b) The targeted youth smallholders were randomly sampled using a single proportion of study population sampling method as below:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2} \quad \text{Where}$$

- n = The sample size of the project population
- Z² = The abscission of the normal curve that cuts off an area α at the tails (1-α equals the desired confidence level of 95%)
- e = The desired level of precision of 95%
- p = The national proportion of poor people is estimated at 33.5%.
- q = 1-p.

Substituting in the above formula (p = X, Z = 1.96, q = 0.442 and e = 0.05)

n = 1.96² * 33.5% * 0.442 / 0.05²

n = 228 (i.e. targeting 50% of youth sesame farmer group members' population of 450 reached).

However, to note is that non-beneficiary youth who served as the control group were randomly sampled using a 70:30 ratio (for treatment and non-treatment category) required for unidirectional hypothesis testing for single-level trials, with continuous outcome

variables¹. The total number of these youth was then allocated based on the percentage proportion of beneficiary youth per Sub County.

Table 2: The study respondents

Methods of data collection	Males	Females	# of people
Individual survey (beneficiaries)	79	177	256
Individual survey (non-beneficiaries)	29	53	82
KII with Plan International Uganda staff	1		1
KII with project implementing partners	1		1
KII with ministry officials			
KII with Lira DLG officials	2	1	3
KII with Sub county officials	3	1	4
FGD with beneficiary group members	3	48	51
TOTAL	118	280	398

2.5 Data collection methods

To elicit comprehensive information from the various respondents, the data collection methods were aligned to the key evaluation questions as are shown in table 2 below.

Table 3: Key Data Collection Questions and Methods

Evaluation Focus /questions	Key Performance Measure	Core evaluation questions	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods
Relevance, Responsiveness and Internal consistency	The fit of Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project with the needs of young people,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the project contextually appropriate and responsive to the needs of young people in the region? Was the project consistent with Plan's new Country Strategy? Was the project consistent with Plan's International CCCD approach? Was the project consistent with Plan's key standards of gender transformation? Was the project integrated with other Plan's projects? 	Country Strategy paper; CCCD guidelines; Baseline report; Project beneficiaries and support services agencies	Document Review Focus Group Discussion Key Informant interviews Youth focus group discussions

¹ For details see Djimeu, E.W., and Houndolo, D. (March 2016) Power Calculation for causal inference in social science: Sample size and minimum detectable effect determination. 3ie Impact Evaluation Manual, Working Paper 26. New Delhi: 3ie.

	local governments, and Plan International Uganda			
Effectiveness	% of planned targets (outputs and outcomes) achieved Stakeholder participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were project beneficiaries involved in the project implementation? To what extent has the project achieved its originally planned results – outputs and outcomes? To what extent has private sector contributed to the project and strengthened ability and capacity of youth in entrepreneurship? What (f)actors (dis)enabled the achievements of project results? How has internal monitoring and learning improved implementation? 	Project proposal; Baseline report; Project annual reports; and Project staff	Document Review Key Informant interviews Youth survey
Efficiency	The project value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was the project cost-efficient? 	Project reports; Financial report; M+E system; and Project staff	Document Review Key Informant interviews
Impact	The changes in the lives of beneficiaries Value added to partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many young smallholders were reached? To what extent has the project achieved its originally planned results – outputs and outcomes? What changes – positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended – have the project caused in the lives of the targeted youth smallholders? What “value added” did the project partnership provide to solving the development challenges? 	Individual youths; Project support agencies;	Survey Focus Group Discussion Key Informant interviews MSC/Case study
Sustainability	The probability that the project benefits will continue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What strategies – planned or not – are in place to ensure continuity of project benefits beyond project funding? 	Direct beneficiaries and project support agencies	Focus Group Discussion Key Informant interviews
Learning and replication	Lessons learned for future programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What challenges impeded the attainment of planned and or more outcomes/impacts? What lessons have been learned that are relevant for programming, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation? What best practices can Plan International Uganda replicate from the project? 	Project staff; Support agencies	Focus Group Discussion Key Informant interviews MSC/Case Study

Below is a highlight of the various data collection methods used in the evaluation.

Document review: The consultant reviewed a number of documents as are listed in annex 1.

Employment/economic empowerment survey: To ascertain whether or not the Project increased livelihoods opportunities for youth sesame-farmers, a survey among treatment and control sesame youth group was conducted. This survey, using a structured questionnaire, focused on key questions on adoption of eco-agriculture practices, access to green markets and access to green business employment opportunities.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Using a structured guide, FGDs was conducted with project beneficiary young people in their youth groups. A few in-depth sessions were conducted within the group discussions using participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) tools.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): Using a structured interview guide, KIIs was conducted with the project stakeholders drawn from staffs of Plan International Uganda (national office and project level), district and lower local government officials, financial institutions; sesame buyers/processors and exporters; NOGAMU; and members of Sesame Young Groups.

Participant observations: The evaluation team also observed the different target project areas in order to confirm existing sesame youth groups, financial institutions, sesame buyers/processors and exporters and eco-business and market employment opportunities/outlets. Observation enabled the team to ascertain and document successes that can be replicated.

Cases studies: In the process of conducting participatory discussions, the evaluation team documented case studies using a mix of personal and most significant change story to depict what worked well, what did not work well, how, and why (best practices, stories of change, and lessons, etc.). This method allowed the identification of what changed, the scope of change, what factors facilitated/curtailed those changes, and whether or not the changes are sustainable.

2.6 Data analysis, Quality control and Reporting

During the data collection phase the Statistician set up a Data Mask to guide data entry and analysis. He also supervised the data collection process to ensure quality adherence. Thus, quantitative data was collected, collated, cleaned and analyzed using SPSS software (V24). A missing data analysis was done to ensure validity and reliability. Meanwhile qualitative and PRA data was transcribed using MS Office and analyzed using content and narrative analysis method. Findings from each analysis was triangulated into this unified report.

Specifically, for outcome and impacts assessment, a double difference method was adopted. While the gold standard and the randomized experiment approach of impact evaluation are

both untenable, the difference-in-difference method was desired. Using this approach, participants in Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project were compared, over a 2-time period, to non- participants on a number of the project outcome and impact indicators, as suitable comparators.

The difference-in-difference (or "double difference" $\hat{\delta}_{DD} = \bar{Y}_1^T - \bar{Y}_0^T - (\bar{Y}_1^C - \bar{Y}_0^C)$) estimator is defined as the difference in average outcome in the treatment group before (\bar{Y}_0^T) and after (\bar{Y}_1^T) treatment minus the difference in average outcome in the control group before (\bar{Y}_0^C) and after (\bar{Y}_1^C) treatment. In other words, it is a "difference of differences" pre- and post-treatment.

To ensure validity of findings, the following quality control measures were used:

- *Adherence to international and sector standards:* At the study inception, the result chain was clarified using international and sector standards for agriculture and labour market outcome measurement.
- *Involvement of M&E unit at all stages:* A close consultative relationship was maintained with the Plan International Uganda M&E unit to ensure that indicators, tools and procedures meet internal standards. For instance, the evaluation team designed the data collection tools that would match the longitudinal design in order to strengthen reliability, acceptability, question flow, and the duration of the interview. These tools were reviewed and approved by Plan International Uganda M&E unit.
- *Social mobilization for data collection:* To increase the response rate, Plan International Uganda Project Team supported the mobilization of respondents for data collection.
- *Data Management Procedures:* The data management and analysis plan was discussed and agreed with Plan International Uganda in order to secure data generation, storage, and analysis.

2.7 Child Protection Statement and other Ethical considerations

The evaluation team ensured that Plan International Uganda's Child protection policy was adhered to by doing the following:

- We signed and enforced the code of conduct as part of our contract;
- Data collectors were inducted on and also signed the policy. They sought and confirmed consent from respondents and or their legal caretakers/guardians for young women and men of less than 18 years of age to participate in the survey before data collection.
- Tools contained and emphasized a statement of confidentiality for the beneficiary i.e., committing not to divulge individual respondent details except when consented to.
- Secured from Plan International Uganda a letter of introduction for the field team to facilitate acceptance by the various support agencies.

2.8 Evaluation Report Dissemination

Through the feedback workshop and working with Plan International Uganda project team, both the draft and final evaluation reports will be shared with all project stakeholders including European Union, UNDP, UNOPS, Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries, Plan International Uganda, Plan International - Spain National Office, implementing partners, beneficiaries, local governments, national stakeholders and institutions in print and electronic copies. However, the actual distribution of the printed and electronic copies of the evaluation reports will be done by Plan International Uganda.

2.9 The evaluation Limitations

The evaluation process experienced some major limitations, namely:

- The baseline study that was conducted in 2016 had three critical gaps: First, the sample size was small compared to the project target population. Second, it did not identify clearly the project results chain. To bridge this gap, a result chain was clarified and a recall method was used for recreating the missing baseline status.
- An ineffective M&E system: Data on outputs were hard to secure from the non-digitalized management information system. This delayed the reporting time given that output-based data were to be retrieved from different project performance reports and files. The Consultants had to allow ample time for the Project Coordinator to assemble the data from various sources.
- Poor field mobilization. Field work was marred with a number of failed appointments especially for FGDs and KIIs. This evaluation team had to reschedule these meetings.

Below we present the final project evaluation findings.

3.0 Findings of the Evaluation

This part of the report presents the projects' achievements of its planned outputs, outcomes and impacts and how sustainable it is. It also presents the drivers of change as well as the challenges that impeded progress and finally the best practices and lessons learned.

3.1 Relevance, Quality of Design, and Internal Consistency

The evaluation assessed whether or not the project was relevant to the needs of its stakeholders (especially government and youth sesame farmers) and consistent with Plan International Uganda's strategy and operational principles. Below are the findings.

3.1.1: Responsiveness to the needs and priorities of the youth farmers

From literature review, individual survey and discussions with the targeted youth, it emerged that the project addressed the needs of the youth. By targeting agriculture, the project improved employment opportunity for rural youth who had largely engaged in subsistence farming. Mr. Max Okullu noted that, "before I used to farm the local sesame varieties that never fetched me any higher prices. But with organic farming, there is some fair price that ultimately makes me earn higher income with which I am able to improve my former poor quality of life (through feeding, clothing, and educating my children)." Asked whether the project addressed their needs, 62.9% of the youth responded "yes." Meanwhile 44% also noted that the project provided the support they direly needed to improve their farming. The local government representative of Ogur Sub County summarized this well when he argued that,

Through the project poor young farmers who would have found it hard to join farmer groups or cooperative societies got organized into farming as a business group. This is the kind of social mobilization for economic transformation that our families, communities, and government desires.

3.1.2. Conformity with Inter (national) development priorities

The commitment of the project to the overall objective of contributing to improving the quality of life of youth in northern Uganda was found to be consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially Goal 1 that strives to '*end poverty in all its forms everywhere*,' Goal 8 that aims to '*promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*,' Goal 12 that '*ensures sustainable consumption and production patterns*', and Goal 13 that focuses on "*taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*." Likewise, nationally the project fits within the national fight of promoting inclusive economic growth. Lira district, located in northern Uganda, is within the second poorest region after Karamoja in Uganda according to the 2016 World Bank poverty assessment report. This project therefore meaningfully contributes to national plans, priorities and programmes of the National Development Plan (NDP) II strategy that aim to '*increase employment and employability*' through among others youth focused programmes.

3.1.3. Conformity with Plan International Uganda's Country Strategy

Plan International Uganda has a 5-year Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2016-20 aiming that “marginalized girls, boys and youth enjoy their rights in inclusive, resilient and secure communities.” The CSP Programme Area One: *Youth Economic Empowerment (YEE)* whose objective is that young women and young men from poor and marginalized rural communities and urban slums are engaged in decent work with improved incomes strives for partnership with CSOs, the private sector and government to increase the provision of safe, inclusive, gender sensitive youth employment opportunities, especially for girls. It also seeks to strengthen youth organizations to participate in demanding accountability by government. This project fits well within this CSP programme **Outcome 1.1:** Young women and young men improve their work-related skills and capacities and **Outcome 1.3:** Private sector and government provide safe, inclusive, and gender sensitive youth employment opportunities. Particularly the project contributes to the focus of: training youth in market-based technical and entrepreneurial skills, climate smart value chain development, including livelihoods-related resilience building; and influencing the private sector to offer young people equal, fair, safe employment opportunities.

3.1.4. Consistency with CCCD Approach and child protection policy

The CCCD is Plan's approach to rights based programming. It focuses on the empowerment of beneficiary communities to fight against their poverty and marginalization. The seven CCCD principles include: *Children at the centre; Universal human rights; Helping people help themselves; Collective action; Inclusion and gender equality; Support civil society and Government has ultimate responsibility.* The assessment therefore found the project in conformity with these principles given its focus on building the capacity of youth sesame farmers to independently secure their livelihoods through the following: (i) Capacity building for eco-agricultural production and marketing; (ii) Partnership development with private sector companies to promote eco-agriculture marketing; (iii) Mainstreaming approach to cross cutting issues such as the emphasis on rights and protection of children.

3.1.5. Consistency with gender transformation standards

Project relevance is also determined by its focus on vulnerable groups. The Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project targeted majorly under employed and unemployed rural youth who were unable to access decent job opportunities from their subsistence farming practices. During the evaluation mission, it was observed that the project reached out to youth with physical disability, child mother/fathers, school dropouts, and youth living with HIV. Specifically, female youth who constituted 69% of total beneficiaries and the youth FGDs also revealed that they occupied leadership positions in the youth groups.

3.1.6. Integration with other Plan's community development projects

Discussions with the project management team both in Kampala and Lira revealed that the project was closely linked with many other projects of Plan International Uganda. For instance, the EU funded Empowering Youth for sustainable Livelihoods Project, the Austrian Development Agency funded Construction Skills Development and Youth Employment Project, the Enhancing Livelihoods of Vulnerable Child headed households and enhancing

women’s capacity to educate girls projects that were all implemented in Lira and Alebtong districts.

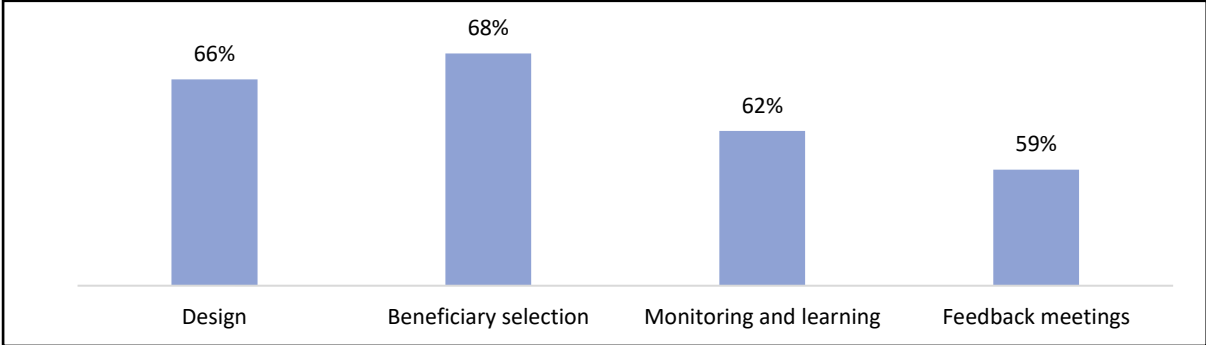
3.2 Effectiveness

The evaluation assessed whether or not the project was able in its lifetime to achieve its initially planned outputs. Reviews of project contracts, plans, annual narrative reports, and management information system and interviews were used to collect data that would answer this question. Below we present the findings.

3.2.1: Participation of beneficiaries in the project cycle

The new country strategy of Plan International Uganda espouses beneficiary empowerment through effective participation in the project cycle. To assess the involvement of the targeted beneficiaries in the project management, individual survey finding (in figure 3 below) shows that more than half of the project beneficiaries have been involved in every stage of the project right from design to periodic feedback. This was backed up the youth FGDs where beneficiary youth agreed that they are working hand-in-hand with the project staff in the project implementation. However, as the low score of feedback meeting reveals, the youth pointed out that “no monitoring findings were shared with them.” This finding calls for strengthening monitoring and learning using participatory gap and solution analysis so that beneficiaries are made aware of their constraints and the inherent solutions therein. Equally, local government officials reported their active participation. The KII with Barr Sub county officials revealed that they were involved in the identification and selection of the beneficiary groups, distribution of inputs, and follow-up of groups to assess adoption of best practices. In addition, as a sub county, they also provided facilities for training such as halls, chairs and security. Meanwhile, Mr. Ariyo Mike the District Agricultural Officer reported that they also provided training for some beneficiary youth groups.

Figure 2: Beneficiary participation in project implementation

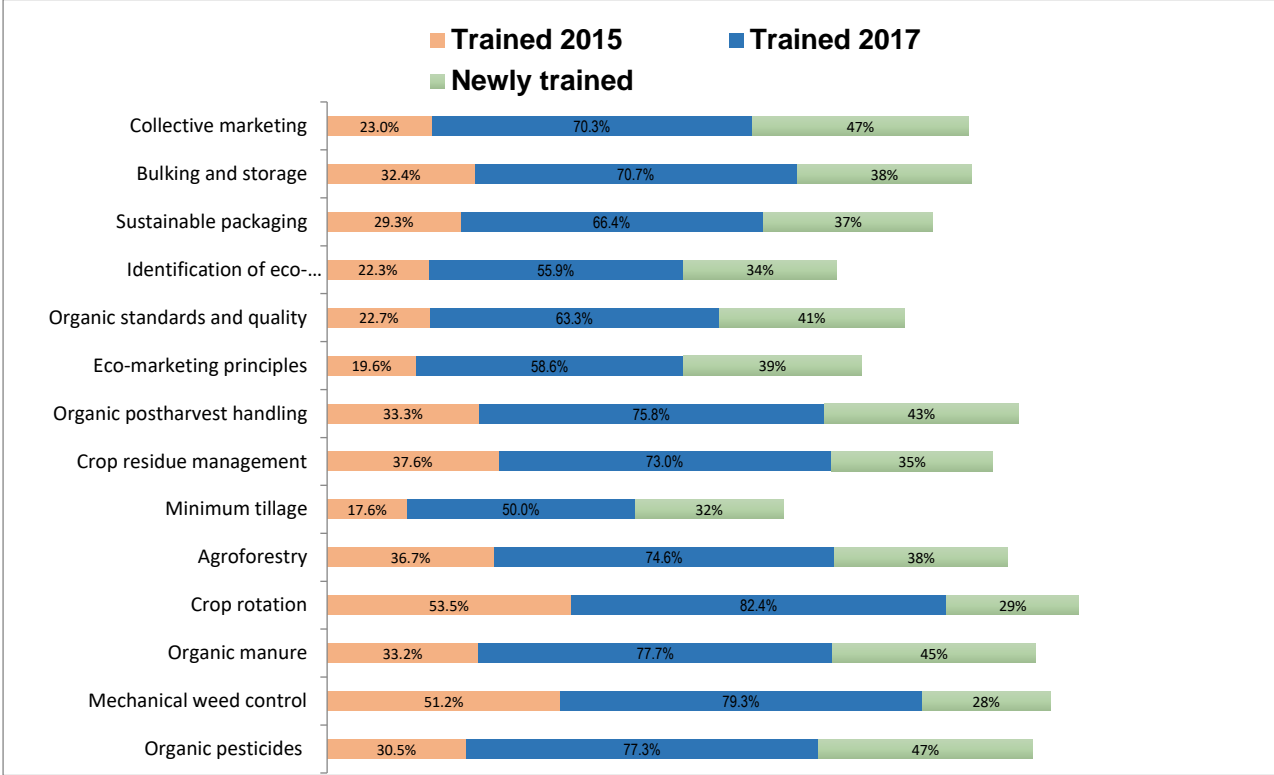


3.2.2: Participation in trainings

The second result area of Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project focused on capacity building of local actors, youth inclusive. To assess whether or not youth benefited from the various planned training, youth were asked in the individual survey about

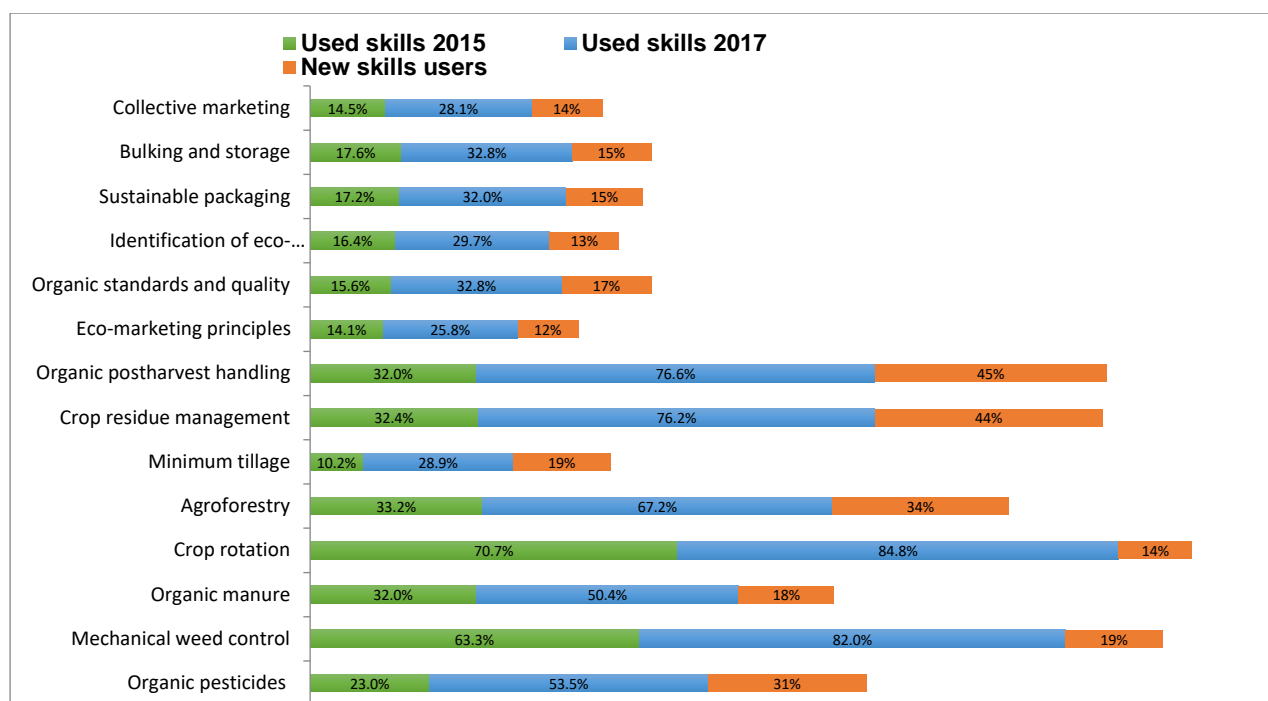
their attendance of the various project provided trainings. Figure 3 shows that generally the targeted beneficiaries were mainly new to the concept of eco-agriculture. Most of the training contents designed in the training manual were known to few of the youth who had attended such trainings before.

Figure 3: Youth sesame smallholders who attended various trainings



3.2.3: Use of various skills acquired

Figure 4: Young people who attended various trainings



In as much as some youth attended various trainings before the project intervention, much more gains from the project manifested in the increased use of the skills acquired (see figure 4 above). While only 10- 71% of the youth used the various skills pre-intervention, at the end of the intervention the individual survey found out that 28-84% were using the various skills. This translates into roughly a difference of 12-45%. In the FDGs, youth eloquently listed the various skills they were utilizing without need for supervision e.g., organic tea.

3.2.4: Achievement of planned outputs

A review of the project annual reports and activity database showed that all the planned outputs were delivered. Table 4 show that out of the 23 planned activities only 1 activity 1.5 (4%) was under-delivered and 10 activities (44%) were executed as planned. However, 12 activities (52%) were adjusted upwards. For instance, for all trainings, refresher sessions were provided to ensure increased adoption of best practices.

Table 4: Achievement of project targets

Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement	Project Target	Actual LoP	Project success rate (%)
Inception activities	0.1: Project launch – national and district levels and orientation workshop	3	3	100
	0.2: Project baseline study and value chain analysis of the sesame sub sector including stakeholders mapping	1	1	100
R1: Targeted relevant organizations in sesame growing sector increase	1.1: Dialogue / engagement meetings with relevant stakeholders - value chain actors, policy makers, private sector actors	2	12	600
	1.2: Advocacy / consultative workshops for the promotion of eco-agriculture and green economy	4	11	275

their eco-market opportunities through policy support and the promotion of green economy	1.3: Documentation of good practices in eco-agriculture and green economy	1	1	100
	1.4: Support development of the draft organic agriculture policy – conduct a regulatory impact assessment (RIA) and policy gaps analysis	3	3	100
	1.5: Development of policy recommendations briefs	2	1	50
	1.6: Support participation in experiential sharing events at community, region, national and international level	4	13	325
	1.7: Awareness creation through development and dissemination of Information Education & Communication (IEC) materials	3	6	200
R2. The technical, administrative and financial capacities of local actors (youth farmers and other value chain actors) to engage in eco-agriculture production and access to strategic eco-markets have been strengthened.	2.1: Mapping of market for eco agriculture and green economy and creation of market linkages	1	1	100
	2.2: Market study analysis of the potential use and marketing of eco-agriculture products and services	1	1	100
	2.3: Mapping and engagement of possible financial institutions and potential co-funding institutions – identify and design funding / co-funding schemes	1	1	100
	2.4: Mapping of potential business opportunities & green jobs along sesame value chain of sesame production; support the youth groups to participate and access the identified green jobs	1	1	100
	2.5: Development of training materials / manual	1	1	100
	2.6: Capacity building trainings in the following topics:			
	- Eco agriculture practices	1	2	200
	- Organic products quality management	1	2	200
	- Techniques on own resources mobilization	1	1	100
	- Eco-marketing principles, standards and market requirements	1	2	200
	- Postharvest practices, collective marketing & quality assurance	1	2	200
	- Business development and production planning	1	2	200
	- Entrepreneurship training	1	2	200
2.7: Exchange experiences at district, regional and national level - participate in Trade Fairs, expositions, networking for a	4	13	325	
2.8: Training of selected youths / model farmers as ToT for the upscale of the project promoted farming practices among youth people in the same geographical area	15	32	213	

3.2.5: Contribution of private sector to youth entrepreneurship

Discussions with staffs of NOGAMU and Plan International Uganda and the FGDs with the youth found out that there was very negligible contribution of the private sector towards eco-agriculture. The youth noted that they did not interface with any private sector actor during any of the trainings they received. According to the youth, all trainings were provided by staff from Plan, NOGAMU and local government. During an informal discussion with some major produce buyers in Lira municipality, it emerged that they hardly have preference in eco-products because their trade is largely based on conventional sesame. As such, they saw no

benefit in investing in “what would not produce them any financial gains.” This remark showed the limited awareness, interest, and involvement of private sector in eco-agriculture production, marketing, and waste management; something the project should have engaged in right at its inception.

3.2.6: Contribution of project monitoring to learning and accountability

The evaluation team found that the project was monitored using a manual M+E systems except for fund utilization that used Plan’s SAP system. Without an integrated data base, high staff turn-over, it was evident that the project M+E system added limited to no value to performance tracking. For instance, baseline study was conducted in 2016. No standard M&E system was designed for use by both Plan and its IP (NOGAMU). Each party conducted its own monitoring and this affected timely reporting.

3.3 Efficiency

The evaluation also asked whether or not project resources were used in the most cost-efficient way. Reviews of project plans, budgets, annual narrative and financial reports, and interviews were used to collect data that would answer the questions: (i) To what extent was the project cost-efficient i.e., how well were project resources (time, finance, human, and logistics, etc.) utilized in implementation of the project? Below is the finding.

3.3.1 Financial Management

The KIIs with the project team revealed that the project benefited from Plan International Uganda’s experience and its prudent financial control system. The absorption rate of 84% was due to tight control on expenditures (and the 16% outstanding budget balance was already committed). Output-based financing was adopted for both NOGAMU and consultants engaged in the project implementation. Quarterly plans and budgets were agreed upon and timely accountability were litmus test for disbursements. Procurement was based on prequalified service providers and bid evaluation committees were in place to ensure integrity, accountability and value-for-money.

3.3.2 Human and Logistic Resources

The project had experienced staff some of whom had worked with international agencies before. These staffs were productive and dedicated. Through the periodic meetings, output targeted were allocated and reviewed. However, the project experienced high staff turn-over. We found that 03 Project Coordinators worked on the project in its very short 2.5 year life span.

3.4 Outcomes/Impacts of the Project

The final evaluation also explored whether there were any evidences of change in the lives of targeted youth attributable to the project. It also assessed if the project value added to the partners involved in its implementation. Both individual survey and interview/discussions were conducted to collect data that would answer the questions: (i) To what extent has the project achieved its planned outcomes and impacts? (ii) What changes – positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended – have the project caused in the lives of the targeted youth smallholders? (iii) What “value added” did the project partnership provide to solving the development challenges? And (iv) What (f)actors (dis)enabled the achievements of project results. In order to map the outcomes and impact of the project we used the difference-in-difference method in order to isolate net effects on various project indicators among beneficiaries and control group. Below is the finding.

3.4.1: Characteristics of youth farmers

As table 5 reveals, the evaluation respondents were comparable in almost all characteristics, namely; sex (mainly females), age (late twenties), household size (4 persons), marital status (mainly married) and educational status (majorly with primary education).

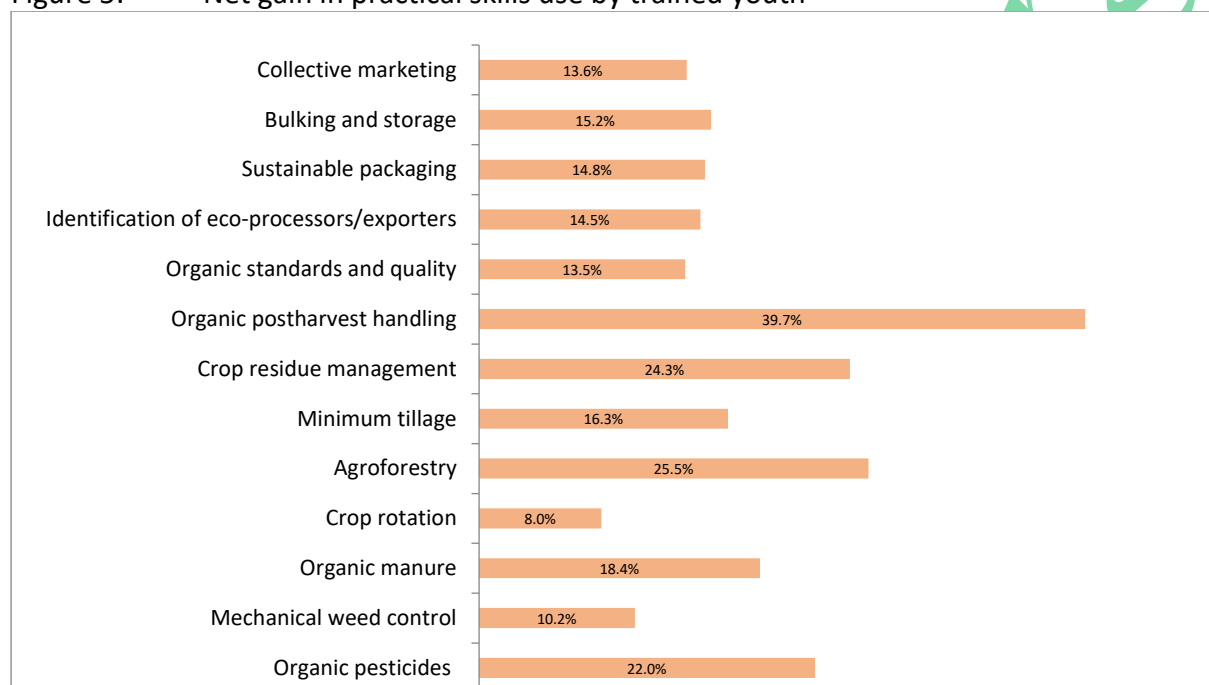
Table 5: Demographic characteristics of youth farmers

	Control	Treatment	Variance
Number of respondents	82.0	256.0	174.0
Sex			
Males	35.4	30.9	-4.5
Females	64.6	69.1	4.5
Mean age	28.5	26.1	-2.4
Mean household size	3.9	3.7	-0.2
Marital status (%)			
Single	28.0	34.8	6.8
Married	72.0	65.2	-6.8
Highest educational status (%)			
None	4.9	9.4	4.5
Primary level	69.5	64.5	-5.0
Secondary level	18.0	16.8	-1.2
Tertiary level	0.0	2.3	2.3
Vocational level	6.1	5.9	-0.2
Functional Adult Literacy	1.2	1.2	0.0

3.4.2: Use of various practical skills acquired

Aware that under effectiveness analysis youth pointed out that they accessed skills training priori to SGU project, a similar finding was also revealed by comparing the control group to the treatment group. As such, by deducting the net effects attributable to the project, figure six shows the overall outcome of the project in terms of the practical use of technical capacity building provided. Much of the gains were in organic pesticides (22%), crop residue management (24%), agroforestry (26%) and organic postharvest handling of produce (40%). In areas where conventional farming practices are a norm (e.g., crop rotation, collective marketing, etc.) no much gains were registered.

Figure 5: Net gain in practical skills use by trained youth



3.4.3: Achievement of planned outcome targets

Table 5 below presents mixed results in the achievement of planned outcomes. The project enrolled 450 youth farmers in 15 groups and trained them in various eco-agriculture technical skills. Seven in ten of these trained youth took up the eco-sesame production and provided wage employment to non-targeted youth. To improve market and funding linkages the project worked closely with OTIS to buy eco-sesame. The project also supported the youth to develop their Youth Savings and Loans Group financing.

Table 6: Achievement of planned intermediate outcomes

Indicators of achievement	Target	End Line status	Success rate	Comments
Stakeholder policy dialogue meetings held	2	11	+9	Achieved
Policy recommendation papers are prepared and shared with MAAIF & relevant stakeholders.	2	2	1	Achieved

Regulatory impact assessment report on draft organic agriculture policy generated and adopted by the MAAIF.	1	1	1	Achieved
Youth farmers groups secured established market linkages.	15	2	-13	Partially Achieved
MSMEs are linked to funding institutions.	5	0	-5	Not Achieved
Youth farmers with linked to funding institutions.	75%	0	-75	Not Achieved
People trained in different topics within the organic production of sesame positively evaluate their acquired knowledge.	80%	70%	-10%	Partially Achieved
Youth take up business/employment opportunities along the sesame value chain.	15%	75%	+60	Achieved
Youth trained as TOT on eco-agriculture.	15	35	+20	Achieved
Funding schemes established.	5	1	-4	Partially Achieved
% of youth participating in eco-agribusiness policy processes**	-	37.9%		
Number of non-targeted people employed in eco-agribusiness**	-	243		
Average seasonal wages per non-targeted employee (UGX)**	-	76,788		
Adoption of eco-agribusiness practices**	-	50%		

** denoted outcomes derived from the elaborated project result chain

3.4.4: Achievement of planned impact targets

The goal of Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project was to increase the quality of life in Lira District by enhancing the green economy and sustainable consumption and production in the region and its specific objective was to increase livelihood opportunities for youth sesame-farmers through improved eco-agriculture production and green economy inclusion. To assess whether or not these were achieved further analysis of the achievement of impact targets conducted. Table 6 shows in summary that 50% of the planned impact targets were achieved while 01 was partially achieved and 02 not achieved at all. While only 11% of targeted youth had increased income from their sales of organic sesame, the real average increase was UGX 50,893 (from UGX 48,265 to UGX 99,158).

Table 7: Achievement of planned impacts

Indicators of achievement	End line target	End line status	Comments
Youth sesame-farmers with increased income	75%	11.3%	Not achieved
Increase in youth sesame-farmers income	15%	105.0%	Achieved
Targeted youth have access to eco- markets	90%	33.9%	Partially achieved
Policies are adopted by national and district governments	2	0	Not achieved ²
Youth farmers undertake waste management farming practices	75%	76.2%	Achieved
Youth farmers have diversified their sources of income.	5%	14.5%	Achieved

² The process of adopting organic agriculture policy by national and district governments will take longer than expected falling outside the project timeframe.

3.4.5: Growth of agricultural productivity

For Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project to improve the lives of sesame youth farmers it had to trigger change in agricultural productivity. Table 7 however shows that overall there has been mixed results. Negative net increases (difference between targeted and non-targeted youth) were observed in land under eco-sesame production (-0.12 acres), price (UGX 1,187) and volume sold to middlemen (-50.3 Kgs).

The reduction in land size under organic sesame production was attributed to the heavy workload organic sesame production requires. Contrary to conventional farming practices where a farmer simply ploughs the land, plants and waits to harvest and sell, under organic farming, the youth noted, ploughing is done twice, planting is in lines, roughing has to be done to remove unwanted plants, weeding and organic pest and disease control methods all add to the workload. Such heavy work hindered youth from increasing their land sizes. On the other hand, the decline in price was attributed to the failure of the project to secure many organic buyers. There was only one organic buyer (OTIS). And for middlemen it was noted that they largely traded for established big buyers who mainly traded in conventional sesame.

However, positive net increases were observed in the yield of organic sesame that was 5Kgs more than traditional simsim as well as in the shifting sales to organic buyers and processors.

Table 8: Selected net means values of organic production and sales

Respondents	Acres	Yield (Kgs)	Price (UGX)	Volumes (Kgs) sold to:			
				Roving buyers	Middlemen	Organic buyers	Processors
Non-Beneficiary	0.05	2.38	618.27	40.83	-232.75	150.0	52.5
Beneficiary	-0.07	7.25	-568.42 ³	43.57	-283.06	185.14	100.0
Net increase	-0.12	4.87	-1,186.69	2.74	-50.31	35.14	47.5

³The price beneficiaries received for their sesame was less than for non-beneficiaries because organic sesame buyers do not differentiate conventional from organic sesame, thus offer lower prices

4.4.6: Positive changes in the lives of beneficiary youth

The various FGDs and KIIs with beneficiary youth and support agency representatives highlighted a number of positive changes in the lives of the beneficiary young people. These are presented below.

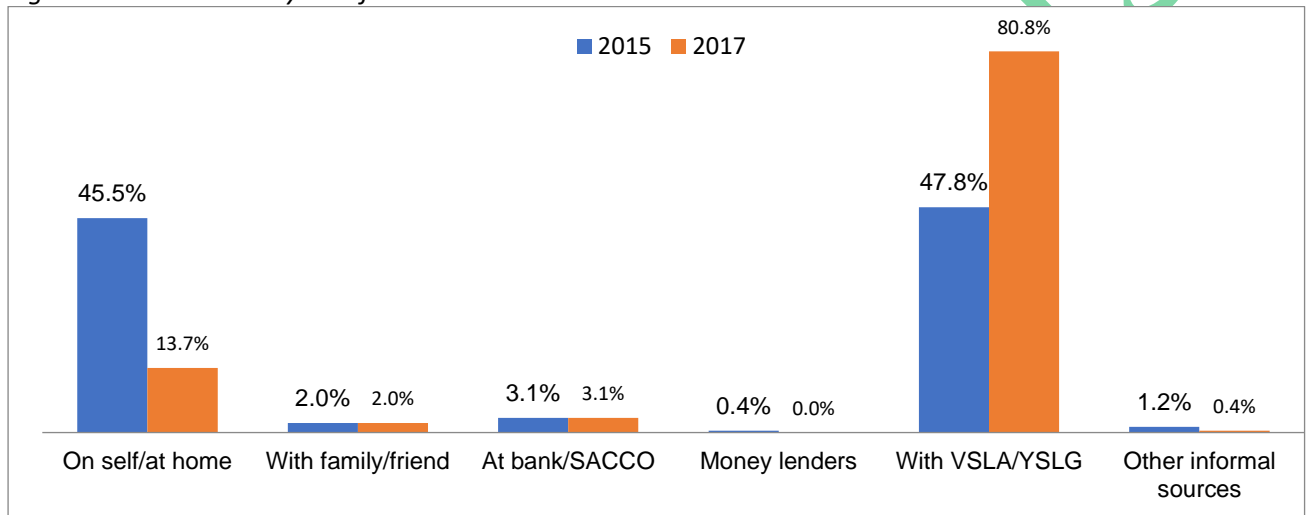
- a) **Improved savings and agribusiness culture:** The Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project organized the targeted youth into youth farmer groups and skilled them in youth savings and loans methodology. As a result of the weekly savings requirements a new culture of cash saving was instilled in the youth as the youth echoed in their FGDs that “Before we were in groups, many of us found it difficult to save. We consumed all that we had. But after the training in savings, every member finds it incumbent upon herself or himself to work and earn some income in order to meet the

weekly savings obligations. Figure 6 shows the radical 35.3% shift in where the youth saved from one self (45.5%) before the project to savings in their youth savings groups (80.8%).

Likewise, the entrepreneurship training has triggered youth farmers to see their farming not only as a source of food but as a business as Mrs. Hellen Auma noted,

Before the project, I farmed simsim mainly for family food use and only sold a very small portion for income. However, this changed with the training provided by the project. I now grow my simsim strictly for sale and is keen on ensuring that I earn adequate profit by minimizing cost through the application of organic chemicals, which I make myself instead of buying expensive chemicals from agro-input shops.

Figure 6: Where youth farmers save



b) **Increased productive assets:** As is the norm with business-oriented youth, any change in income affects their asset accumulation capacity. Youth preference for productive assets is because these assets provide insurance against livelihood and business risks. Assets also act as stores of wealth and acquisition of social status as Mr. Balam Okello remarked,

Without any cow, whose daughter will agree to marry you? A boy who does not have livestock can die unmarried that is why for me once I started to earn income from my sesame business, I had to start by buying a cow. This cow has now increased to two and in the next two years when I plan to marry they will be about five or six. With it I can without shame ask for a lady's hand in marriage.

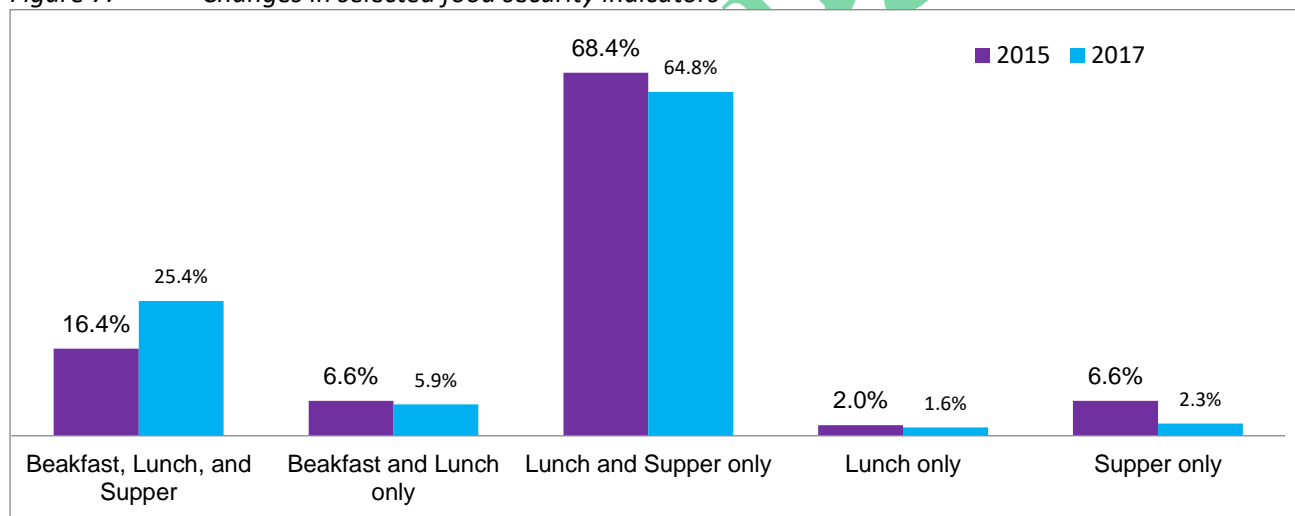
Table 9 shows that in comparison between targeted and non-targeted youth the project caused positive increase in the purchase of land, cattle, poultry, mobile phones and mattresses. While no gain was made in the purchase of motor cycle, targeted youth were not able to buy more shoats (goats, sheep, pig), radios, and bicycles; assets that non-targeted youth invested in.

Table 9: Net gains in the number of asset bought

	Land	Cattle	Shoats	Poultry	Radio	Motor cycle	Bicycle	Mobile phone	Mattress
Non-Beneficiary	-0.15	0.04	-0.28	-2.08	0.02	0.00	0.02	-0.02	0.14
Beneficiary	0.38	0.47	-0.67	2.04	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.32
Net effect	0.53	0.42	-0.39	4.12	-0.01	0.00	-0.02	0.06	0.19

- f) **Improved food security:** By increasing production and productivity Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project would also improve household food security status. Figure 7 shows that there has been a small improvement in the number of households eating three meals a day from 16.4% to 25.4%. This 9% rise has been as a result of the reduction in the proportion of households having 1-2 meals only.

Figure 7: Changes in selected food security indicators



- c) **Improved gender relations:** With females constituting more than 60% of the project beneficiaries, Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project in line with Plan's gender transformation standards impacted on changing social norms and practices that devalued female youth. The district local government officials interviewed noted that before the project, the girls in particular were very vulnerable. As child mothers, many were unable to fend for themselves and their children. In return, some resorted to transactional sex to make ends meet. However, through savings, access to credit for both emergencies and business capital and higher income from the sale of organic sesame, many females are economically empowered to look after themselves. The stories below confirm this positive impact.

Story of change 1: Business Cases from Alebere Young Mother

While Ms. Adong Judith is a 28-year old mother of 2 children who faced the challenges of teenage pregnancy. She narrated that before the project life was very hard. Raising income that is able to meet basic needs, pay school fees, medical bills and dress my family members was impossible. Often, the “devil” set in because life had to go on. Eventually the hard life forced her into marriages that hardly supported her expectations.

However, life is changing after the project intervention. Ms. Judith took to the production and marketing of organic pesticides. Weekly she is able to earn a net income of UGX 10,000 (€2.5) from the sale of 10 litres of pesticides. During the interview, she gladly pointed out that now she doesn't rely on the erratic support from her husband. She is able to feed her household on diversified diet, cloth herself and the children, and pay education and medical bills as and when required. Her abusive marriage is also no more. Meanwhile men who used to underrate her now give her respect because “money speaks!”

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Story of change 2: Ecological Agriculture Transforming the Livelihood of a Child Mother

Ms. Christine Akullo is a 32-year old former child mother of one boy in Te-adwong village, Agweng sub county of Lira district. She was abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army as a young girl but returned from the bush war in 2013 with a child without the father. This made coping with life in the community very difficult. As isolated abductees, they started their own group - Agweng Child Mothers - in March 2013 with 20 members. The aim of their group was to help each member solve her socio-economic problems and their activities included saving ("*Boli cap*"), sale of group members' labour. However, because of lack of skills and any NGO support the group was not able to transform the lives of members.

This changed from March 2015 when Sesame Green Jobs Uganda project took them on. The various trainings that their group members received in counselling, savings, organic farming, farming as a business and collective marketing changed the way they conducted their businesses. Ms. Christine borrowed UGX 300,000 (€75) from the group to grow 3 acres of soy bean in the first season. With organic farming technologies, she harvested 500 Kgs of clean soy bean seeds and earned UGX 500,000 (€125). The next season she planted 3 acres of sun flower from Mukwano and as she pointed, "I harvested 10 bags and earned UGX 1.2 million (€250)." Immediately, she constructed a 2-room permanent house, bought a solar lighting unit and paid school fees (UGX 400,000) for her sister in S.2 at Aloï Fatima Secondary School.

With increased income Ms Christine increased her weekly saving to UGX 10,000 (€2.5) and land size to 6 acres. At the end of 2016, she bought one cow and seven goats, shifted her child to a good private school and diversified into citrus fruit production. She now has a cow with a calf and citrus orchard and expects to harvest 4,000 Kgs of soy bean worth UGX 4.8 million (€1200). This money she has planned to pay her boy's school fees in Senior One in Agweng Parents Senior Secondary School and buy land in the trading centre to put a commercial building.



Story of change 3: Eco-agriculture provides agribusiness niche to a child mother

Eco-agriculture Sesame Livelihoods and Organic-Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in northern Uganda sought to increase livelihoods opportunities for youth sesame-farmers through the access to eco-agriculture production and marketing and green economy inclusion. Ms. Lucy Ongola a 30-year old young mother of 4 children is one of the beneficiaries of the project. She lives in Abolet village in Alebere parish, Barr Sub County in Lira district. She narrates her experience:



My young family has been struggling to make ends meet as our main income was from crop farming that has not been producing good harvest. We grew every season one acre of pigeon peas and only harvest two basins. Equally, one acre of sesame yielded for us 1 bag of 80-100 Kgs. With the need to feed five family members, there would be nothing left to sell for school fees, clothing and medical treatment. This always forced me to sell my labour to cater for the extra family needs. Still my children could not get adequate school requirements including uniforms and scholastic materials. In addition, I could not afford more than UGX 1,000 (€0.25) per week as stamp value making my share out value annually less than UGX 100,000 (€ 25). As a result, I used to rely on my husband for everything and life was hard. I had no voice on what to do in the family.

With the various trainings I received in eco-agriculture and especially on soil fertility enhancement and pest and disease control using organic materials, in 2015 I planted 0.5 acres of pigeon peas and shockingly harvested 1.5 bags that earned me UGX 450,000 (€112.5). However, significant changes came in December 2015 when I borrowed UGX 200,000 (€50) from the group and started a restaurant business in the trading centre as she emphasized,

Now I earn monthly UGX 1,440,000 (€360). Because of my increased daily income, I have increased my weekly savings to UGX 10,000 (€2.5). I am able to comfortably and timely pay for our two children's school fees and buy scholastic materials in private and boarding schools. My husband is very happy and accords me respect. Suddenly I have a voice in decision-making on the affairs of the family. I feel "whole and valued." Our family is no longer stressed with paying school fees, medical bills and meeting other daily needs. We are assured of food all the time and sometimes help other community members with food when they are in need.

3.4.7: Project value added

Apart from impacting the lives of the beneficiary youth farmers, the SGU project also positively impacted on the various stakeholders engaged in its implementation, namely:

- To Plan International Uganda, it has built knowledge and experience in eco-agribusiness development that will be critical in rolling out its CSP's YEE component.
- To NOGAMU, Mr. Laban noted, it widened its product organic portfolio from largely vegetables and pulse into oilseed as well as increasing its geographical outreach.

- To local governments, the project has “improved our political support among youth farmers who often felt left out in youth livelihood projects that favor other vocational skills, remarked the local government officials in Barr. It has also brought to fore the need for “pro-active policy engagement for organic practices in the entire agricultural sector given that healthy human lives needs adequate income and safe environment,” remarked the district production officer.

3.4.7: The key drivers of project effects

The following key actors and factors were enlisted to have positively triggered the achievement of the various results pointed out above.

- e) The membership of Child mothers with assumed responsibilities and challenges of food and income enabled them to utilize the knowledge and skills promoted under the project to improve the livelihood conditions of their young families.
- f) The existence of VSLA in the groups with the support from lower local government, NOGAMU and Farmer Trainers of Trainers continue to strengthen group cohesion and linkages with other support organizations.
- g) The availability of local materials for production of organic chemicals has reduced cost for soil fertility enhancement and crop protection, thus increasing group members’ crop yields.
- h) The availability of arable land suitable for practicing ecological agriculture has provided incentive for group members to take-up eco agriculture technologies.

3.5 Sustainability

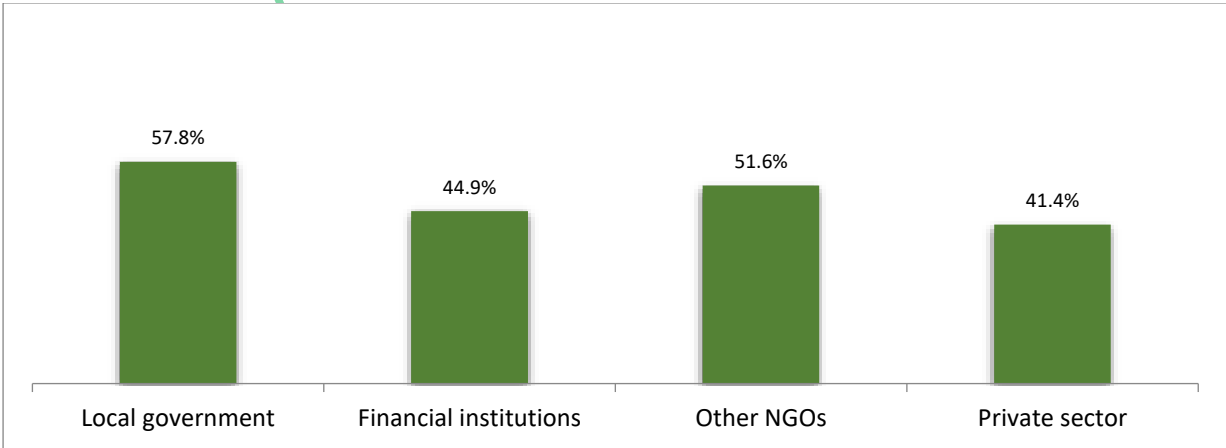
To ensure that the project achieved impacts continue to benefit the youth smallholder farmers, interviews and discussions were held with the direct beneficiaries and project implementers on the question: what strategies – planned or not – are in place to ensure continuity of project benefits beyond project funding? Below is the finding

It emerged from the different respondents that a number of implementation strategies are in place to secure the project’s sustainability. Figure 8 below shows that a number of linkages have been built with local government and NGOs for skills, policy, and input support and private sector for access to inputs and sales of produce. For instance, Ayamu Child Mothers was linked to IRR (Internal Institute of Rural Reconciliation) and Ayira Child Mothers are linked to DREAMS project. In almost all the FGDs, more doubts were raised on linkages with financial institutions because the financial products these institutions have are less customized to smallholder farmers’ needs.

The greatest opportunity exists in the youth farmer groups. With 15 TOTs providing per-extension services, manual on organic sesame production, some knowledge and skills in eco-agriculture best practices established and the increasing urge for farming as a business, they are able to transform their producer groups into collective farming that will entail the continuation of an agreed quality controlled collective management of the entire eco-sesame product right from input sourcing, timely planting, field management, postharvest management and bulk marketing. More so, with the groups already registered with local government they are able to access local government programme.

The primary dilemma however remains with attracting the private sector to take a lead in the sesame eco-agriculture. As was noted earlier, to many of the private sector used to conventional product trade, this is a rather new concept.

Figure 8: Linkages for project sustainability



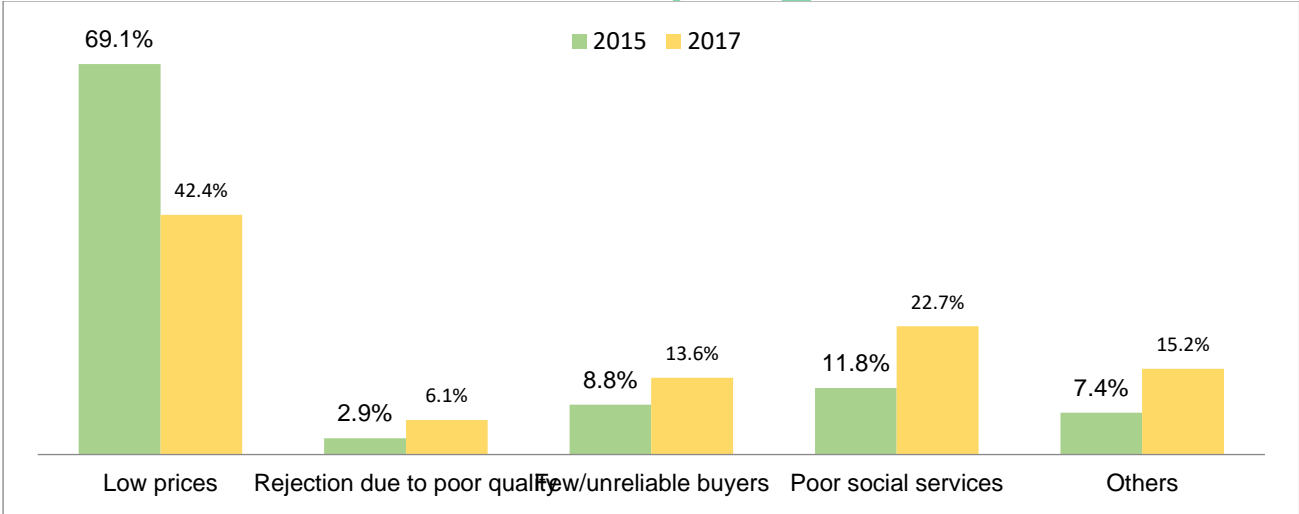
4.0 Key Challenges, Learning and Best Practices

4.1 Key challenges

The following challenges were identified:

- Inadequate market development:** It was observed that there were few established organic sesame buyers. In addition, there was undifferentiated product development for the eco-sesame given that no product certification was done (certification fell outside the project scope and possibilities). As a result, the youth farmers products did not fetch any premium price in the local market. Rather they competed with conventional sesame in the local market dominated by conventional traders. This was made worse by having a private sector that had limited knowledge of the value added of eco-agriculture and was unable to facilitate eco-sesame production, marketing, and consumption. The few produce buyers we spoke to pointed out that they paid a flat price of UGX 2,000-3,000 per kilogram of whatever was a sesame grain. This left very few youth who sold to organic buyers to earn UGX 4,000 per kilogram. Figure 9 confirms the youth cry for unattractive price for their labour intensive sesame.

Figure 9: Challenges to the sales of organic sesame



- Persistent weather variability:** From 2015, Lira district experienced variable weather changes with devastating effects on agricultural production. Rainfall and dry spells were unpredictable and erratic between the sub counties. This affected timely planting and postharvest management.
- Inaccessibility to adequate land:** In the FGDs the youth farmers pointed out that increased net income from organic sesame farming in a near normal-market requires increased acreage of land so that they can gain from yield advantage. However, many of them were unable to access more than 1 acre of land. With high rental charges, they were constrained to grow small plots and hence earned low income.

- **Skewed training:** The project focused on the provision of technical skills training for the beneficiary youth farmer groups. This ignored the urgent need for organizational development of the youth groups into viable producer groups able to own and manage “collective farming” processes. This failure in part explains why majority of the project beneficiaries used unattractive marketing channels: 56% sold in the local market; 50% sold to any sesame buyer; and 90% did not sell their produce through collective marketing.

4.2 Best practices

The evaluation identified the following best practices:

- **Agricultural extension:** Traditional agriculture extension models focuses on routine agronomic practices, farmer group development and external input distribution to mainly adults with limited ecological agriculture and green business opportunities inclusion. Many agriculture extension training manuals address specific improved crop and livestock production and marketing practices excluding the aspects of sustainable agriculture. The extension agents also in their trainings and demonstrations in many cases exclude young people. Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project has innovatively developed an integrated youth-led ecological agriculture and green business to the youth who had not thought of participating in improving yields by using organic materials. The project has increased the yield of sesame in just 2 years by 5 Kilograms.
- **Stakeholder involvement:** Government policy development process is usually done in a top-down manner involving external consultants producing draft policy documents and government ministry officials review for improvement without the participation of key stakeholders including the citizens, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Private Sector Organizations (PSOs). The consultants always engage with few government, NGOs and PSOs representatives with already biased views of the policies. Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project has updated the draft National Organic Agriculture (NOA) Policy and Strategy through a participatory and consultative process. To integrate the inputs from different stakeholders and promote independence of the policy development process, an independent consultant worked with NOGAMU, MAAIF and Plan International Uganda staffs to solicit inputs from a number of stakeholders at local and national levels. Three consultative, validation and popularization meetings were held involving Members of Parliament (MPs), local governments, National Agriculture Research Organization (NARO) and NGOs like Uganda Agribusiness Alliance (UAA).
- **Training and Mentorship:** Both government and NGO agriculture extension service provision involves only delivering the technologies to farmers without taking into consideration the process of learning and adoption. Many agricultural extension officers usually conduct trainings to two or three farmer groups in central places in a day to just complete the activity without paying attention to farmer’s ability to appreciate, learn and practice. The extension officers also do not keep touch with farmers to enable them walk

through the process. NOGAMU with lower local government staffs have provided on-farm demonstrations and mentorship to the sesame farmer groups who had not gotten the opportunity to relate with technical staffs.

- *Youth Savings and Loan Group model:* The project adopted and used Plan's Youth Savings and Loan Group (YSLG) model to enable the targeted youth gain financial inclusion through access to opportunities to save, take loans, and share-out accumulated lump sum income. As a result, many of the beneficiaries have been able to combine the YSLG loan product with eco-agriculture to increase their productivity and ultimately improve their livelihoods (see the 3 stories of change above).
- In addition, the project developed a training manual for organic sesame production that can be replicated. It also established a capacity building fund, and promoted some innovative technologies such as the drying racks to reduce postharvest losses.

4.3 Lessons learned

- *Training and mentorship:* Taking the journey together with youth sesame farmers from training through to application of the skills learned is important for increasing adoption of improved technologies and sustainability. Although NOGAMU had well qualified staff who provided the training to members of the youth sesame groups he was alone. He could not provide adequate mentorship support to all individual youth sesame group members. There is need to provide support for trainer-of-trainers.
- *Quality and quantity of agriculture input and infrastructure:* Increased access to right quality and quantity of organic sesame seed and market infrastructure guarantees the expected product quality and volumes needed to meet the increasing local and regional market demands for organic sesame. At the same time, promoting youth sesame group linkage and networking with micro finance institutions for accessing input credit at low interest rates will ensure group members continue to produce and sell for increased member income and group revenue.
- *Partnerships:* Working with partners especially district local government departments of community development, production and commercial office who have the mandate to work on agriculture and farmer groups with a strong level of expertise, knowledge and understanding of the issues and context increased youth sesame farmer group's outputs.
- *M&E and baseline:* A robust M&E system is needed to allow a realistic set of outcome indicators to be measured in a systematic way. This should include indicators that will measure overall changes in the practices of youth farmers, their quality of life, quantity and quality of organic sesame. This is viewed to be as important as the outcomes, and constitutes a key factor in delivering the outcomes and ensuring long-term capacity to bring about increased clean organic sesame production and productivity by forming sesame groups and strengthening their capacity and that of the individual members to increase yield and quality of organic sesame for increased household income and sesame group revenue.

- A small number of outcome indicators linked to the project and tied to baseline figures would have been identified and tracked systematically throughout the lifetime of the project. There were no specific indicators aimed at improving or measuring changes in organic sesame production technology improvement, value addition and processing and group marketing. Quantities and qualities of organic sesame produced and sold by groups and individual members were not tracked. If there was an expectation of wider buy-in to the project approach, youth sesame data collection and analysis of the right quantity and quality of organic sesame should not be seen as something that can only be done by a professional researcher but rather a routine stage in any project M&E cycle.

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5.0 Recommendations and Conclusions

This last part of the report presents the final independent observation on the project through specific recommendations that can help improve future programming and up-scaling. We focus on addressing the key identified challenges with a hindsight that the best practices and lessons learnt will be favorably continued.

5.1 Recommendations

For Plan International Uganda to upscale its eco-agricultural intervention with high impacts, the following are worth paying attention to:

- **Adequate market development:** Farming as a business is market-driven. Foremost, there is need to identify reliable private sector enterprises as project partners so that they are part of the implementation chain. This experience can be drawn from the partnership of Plan's A Working Future Project with KK Foods where the company is able to secure the needed seeds, provide on-field technical support, and a ready uptake market. Second, there is need for investment in a differentiated eco-product development with product certification, branding, and advertisement for increased visibility and market segmentation so that farmer's products fetch less competition but high premium price. Third, the deepening of markets for green economy requires a vibrant private sector that is knowledgeable in eco-agriculture and is able to tilt consumer mind-sets towards eco-product consumption and waste management. This too requires a targeted investment.
- **Adoption of climate smart agriculture:** The experience of variable weather changes calls for an adaptation of eco-agriculture to climate smart agricultural practices that improves smallholder farmer resilience to weather changes.
- **Land advocacy:** The cultural land norms in many parts of especially northern Uganda exhibits "access to but without control over" land especially for youth and particularly female youth. The need for ample land for eco-agriculture to generate adequate income will without doubt require supporting youth voice on land advocacy so that they are able to own adequate land sizes.
- **Balanced training:** The value added of capacity building to any intervention need no emphasis. However, there is need to balance technical and organizational skills training for the beneficiary youth farmer groups so that they are able to own and manage their agribusinesses collectively and transparently.

5.2 Conclusions

In conclusion, the final project evaluation found out that the Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda: Eco-Agriculture-Sesame Livelihoods and Organic - Green Business Opportunities for Young Rural People in Lira District project reached 450 youth farmers (69% females) and it achieved the planned outputs, outcomes, and impacts with a number of positive spill over effects. The

main challenge is that most of these gains have not matured – youth farmer groups are not strong enough to stand on their own; adoption of eco-agribusiness practices is mixed; and market penetration is still at a nascent stage. This observation can be attributed to the very short life span of the project. The sizeable increase in the number of jobs created for non-targeted youth as well as their wages and profits to the eco-sesame amidst a volatile weather and market demonstrates the huge potential this approach has to youth employment and poverty reduction.

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Annex 1: List of Documents Reviewed

1. Plan International Uganda - project proposal and log frame
2. Plan International Uganda - Documentation of Best Practices report
3. Plan International Uganda - Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and log frame
4. Plan International Uganda -Quarterly and annual reports
5. Plan International Uganda - Project baseline report
6. Plan International Uganda - Gap filling and progress tracking reports
7. Plan International Uganda - Eco-agriculture Practice and Marketing Training guides
8. Plan International Uganda - Country Strategic Plan 2017-21
9. Plan International Uganda – CCCD Standards
10. Draft Lira district local government five year development plan.
11. International Organic Agriculture Certification Standard
12. UN Millennium/Sustainable Development Goals
13. Uganda National Development Plan (2010-15; 2015-2020)
14. Uganda Vision 2040
15. National Agriculture Policy
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24. World Bank (2016) *The Uganda Poverty Assessment Report 2016: Farms, cities and good fortune: Assessing poverty reduction in Uganda from 2006 to 2013*. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Annex 2: Evaluation Work plan

Day/Date/Time	Morning		Afternoon	
	8.30 – 9.30 AM	11 AM – 12 PM	2.30 – 3.30 PM	4 – 5 PM
Mon/Nov 6, 2017	Meeting Plan Uganda staffs	Signing contract		
Thur-Mon/Nov 2-5, 2017	Developing inception report with evaluation tools	Developing inception report with evaluation tools	Developing inception report with evaluation tools	Developing inception report with evaluation tools
Tue-Mon/Nov 7-19, 2017	Review of review, improvement of inception report and evaluation tools	Review of review, improvement of inception report and evaluation tools	Review of review, improvement of inception report and evaluation tools	Review of review, improvement of inception report and evaluation tools
Sat/Nov 25, 2017			Production of evaluation tools	Production of evaluation tools
Sun/Nov 26, 2017	Travel to Lira	Travel to Lira	Travel to Lira	Training research assistants
Mon/Nov 27, 2017	Meeting Plan Uganda Lira Unit and NOGAMU staffs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel to Agweng Sub County - Field data collection 	Individual questionnaire administration	Individual questionnaire administration
Tue/Nov 28, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel to Ogur Sub County - Data entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data entry - Key Informant Interview with CDO and Agricultural Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adwoa Group FGD Individual questionnaire administration - Data entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual questionnaire administration - Data entry
Wed/Nov 29, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel to Ogur Sub County - Data entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual questionnaire administration - Data entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual questionnaire administration - Data entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual questionnaire administration - Data entry
Thur/Nov 30, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key Informant Interview with CDO and SAS Barr Sub County - Travel to Barr Sub County - Data entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual questionnaire administration - Data entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual questionnaire administration - Data entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alebere Young Mother FGD Individual questionnaire administration - Key Informant Interview with NOGAMU Staff - Data entry
Fri/Dec 1, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel to Barr Sub County - Data entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual questionnaire administration - Data entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual questionnaire administration - Data entry 	Travel to Nebbi
Sat-Tue/Dec 2-5, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data entry - Interview transcription 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data entry - Interview transcription 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data entry - Interview transcription 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data entry - Interview transcription
Wed-Fri/Dec 6-15, 2017	Data cleaning, analysis and report writing	Data cleaning, analysis and report writing	Data cleaning, analysis and report writing	Data cleaning, analysis and report writing

Annex 3: List of Respondents for KII

Name	Organization	Position in Organization	Telephone
1. Patrick Ssebbowa	Plan International Uganda	National Programme Manager – Youth Economic Empowerment	0772 487348
2. Thomas Okello	Lira District Local Government	District Production & Marketing Officer	0772345374
3. Mike Ario	Lira District Local Government	Agricultural Officer	0772344771
4. Dorcus Alum	Lira District Local Government	District Agricultural Officer	0780451494
5. Leo Okwir	NOGAMU	Field Officer	0782843144
6. Molly Alwedo	Barr Sub County	Community Development Officer	0774267825
7. Henry Ekwang	Barr Sub County	Senior Administrative Secretary	0772586648
8. Christine Akullo	Ogenrwot Child Mothers	Chairperson	
9. Ouma Charles	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	0782352745
10. Kia Sarah	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	0793264420
11. Ageno Jackline	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	
12. Ayoo Agness	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	0794737240
13. Akello Teddy	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	
14. Atula Jimmy	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	0785507722
15. Alum Winne	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	
16. Abor Walter	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	
17. Auma Susan	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	
18. Akullu Rachel	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	
19. Ocen Polycap	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	
20. Ogoro Yuventino	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	
21. Ageno Linda	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	0785796924
22. Auma Dorcus	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	
23. Akech Sarah	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	
24. Amuge Stella	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	0794225684
25. Akullu Scovia	Adwoa Youth Group	Chairperson	0785968306
26. Akite Milla	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	
27. Auma Charoline	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	
28. Akullu Santa	Adwoa Youth Group	Member	0771907806
29. Amolo Jenifer	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	0787568558
30. Apio Lidiya	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	0787752180
31. Angom Polly	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	0772279122
32. Akello Agness	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	0773507759
33. Ayena Agnes	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
34. Ogwang Ales	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
35. Awor Juliet	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	0789705853
36. Aceng Christine	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
37. Auma Christine	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
38. Akello Eve	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
39. Okello Conny	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
40. Awidi Nancy	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	0778973241
41. Alum Stella	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
42. Okello Agnes	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
43. Ongola Lucy	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	0785003857

44. Duca Lucy	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
45. Kia Babra	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
46. Olee Winny	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
47. Akech Rabeca	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
48. Akello Vicky	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
49. Ogali Babra	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
50. Adong Ketty	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
51. Odyek Molly	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
52. Ayugi Eunise	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
53. Okodo Mirryam	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
54. Okello Dorcus	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
55. Adongo Miriam	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
56. Okello Rose	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
57. Akeny Janet	Alebere Young Mothers	Member	
58. Adongo Judith	Alebere Young Mothers	Secretary	0775664113

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Annex 4: Term of Reference (ToR) for Final Evaluation of Sesame - Green Jobs Uganda Project

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