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Fiscal Year 2010 Annual Results Report Guidance

ACDI/VOCA / Uganda

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

A2N	Africa Network 2000
ARV	Antiretroviral
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CD4	Cluster of differentiation 4 (T helper cell lymphocyte receptor protein)
CHAFORD	Charity for Rural Development
CSB	Corn Soy Blend
FaaB	Farming as a Business
FADEP-EU	Farming for Food and Development in Eastern Uganda
FEW	Field Extension Worker
FFP	Food for Peace
FY	Fiscal Year
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
LOA	Life of Award
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MT	Metric Ton
MYAP	Multi-Year Assistance Program
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSARWU	National Strategy for the Advancement of Rural Women in Uganda
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
PHH	Post-Harvest Handling
RAA	Recipient Agency Agreement
TA	Technical Assistance
TASO	The Aids Support Organisation
TOT	Training of Trainers
TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation-Uganda
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UYAP	United Youth Action for Progress
VEDCO	Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns
WACFO	Women and Children First Organization
WFP	The World Food Programme

I. INTRODUCTION: ANNUAL FOOD AID PROGRAM RESULTS

ACDI/VOCA, along with subrecipients Africare, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and The AIDS Support Organization (TASO) as well as local non-governmental and community based organizations (NGOs and CBOs),¹ is implementing a five year (FY 2007-FY 2011) food security program in northern Uganda. The program aims to 1) reduce food insecurity among 69,500 households (or 139,000 individual farmers) in northern Uganda and increase their nutritional status through better production and use of food,² and 2) provide food supplements to 42,000 People Living with HIV (PLHIV) and their families to help improve their nutritional status and ability to tolerate anti-retroviral treatments (ARVs).

Northern Uganda remained politically stable during the past fiscal year. This gave confidence to beneficiaries who are returnees from internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in making various household investments and applying knowledge imparted to them. The plentiful rains received in the second season of 2009 resulted in lower prices due to higher production. This resulted in improved household food availability while income from sold crops decreased. An additional challenge related to input price hikes due to a scarcity of much needed quality agricultural inputs.

ACDI/VOCA employed several strategies to mitigate the impact of these and other challenges:

- **Crop diversification:** Low prices for farm produce, particularly maize, facilitated program promotion of diversification of the crop mix to include a range of legumes, groundnuts and beans, and expand on both rice production and root crops such as cassava.
- **Post-Harvest Handling (PHH):** Improved rodent-resistant grain storage facilities constructed with locally-available materials have been promoted. These measures reduce crop loss and permit farmers to hold crops for higher prices during the off season.
- **Minimum tillage technologies:** A collection of practices coined “Less Labor, High Yield” were successfully piloted, resulting in improved nutrition and higher producer income.

The spread of cassava diseases throughout Uganda continued to limit supplies of quality planting material which caused input price increases for the program’s target areas during both agricultural seasons of FY 2010.³ ACDI/VOCA and partners continued to work with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and other organizations to replicate and make available disease-resistant cassava cuttings, coordinate efforts and share information about cassava disease outbreaks as well as diseases that affect other crops.

ACDI/VOCA continued to provide technical assistance and training to the program grantees in financial management and compliance with USAID rules and regulations. However, in several cases, program implementation was delayed by the inability of some ACDI/VOCA grantees to implement activities in accordance with program policies and regulations. This caused delays in fund disbursements to several grantees. Three grantees were suspended as a result of financial

¹ The Ugandan NGOs and CBOs are commonly referred to as “grantees” throughout this report.

² ACDI/VOCA’s approved restructuring plan reduced the Life of Award (LOA) targets from 85,300 households to 69,500 and from 170,600 farmers to 139,000.

³ The agricultural (rainy) seasons in most program areas are February through May and July through November. However, the first season further north, especially Kitgum District, is usually quite dry.

irregularities.⁴ Practical methods such as early planning and systematic and immediate recording of project activities are stressed to help grantees comply with rules and regulations. In addition, as part of the USAID-approved restructuring plan, ACIDI/VOCA engaged twelve Technical Support Officers (TSOs) to provide technical support to program partners and grantees.

During FY 2010, ACIDI/VOCA rolled out redesigned and streamlined training materials and reduced the number of training topics in the MYAP curriculum from 42 to 14. The training topics fall under five technical areas – Group Formation, Savings and Credit Management; Nutrition and Hygiene; Agronomy; Farming as a Business (FaaB); and Post-Harvest Handling (PHH) – that ACIDI/VOCA found promote increased food security and nutrition. Refer to the table below. The new materials feature more visual aids to resonate with our beneficiaries. With these improvements, partner and grantee field extension workers (FEWs) were able to devote more time to follow-up visits and providing increased levels of support to farmer groups.

Table 1: ACIDI/VOCA Technical Areas and Training Topics

Technical Areas	Training Topics
Savings and Credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group formation • Constitution development • Savings and loan schemes
Nutrition and Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hygiene and kitchen gardens • Nutrition for pregnant and lactating women and infants • Diet plan development for PLHIV
Agronomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Less Labor, High Yield practices • Planting preparation and crop management • Herbicide application
Farming as a Business (FaaB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to business skills development • FaaB for individuals and farmer groups • Developing a profitable enterprise
Post-Harvest Handling (PHH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of post-harvest techniques • Post-harvest practical

ACIDI/VOCA collaborated with several USAID-funded programs operating in northern Uganda. The collaboration included monthly meetings, coordination of agricultural training materials, activities and geographic interventions and maximizing development efforts and programmatic linkages by the implementing partners. These included Mercy Corps, the ARD-implemented Livelihoods and Enterprises for Agricultural Development (LEAD) project and the World Food Programme’s (WFP) Purchase for Progress (P4P) program. This coordination has resulted in more collaborative monitoring and reporting across different programs operating in Uganda.

ACIDI/VOCA also hosted visiting representatives of the U.S. government. During their February 2010 review of USAID P.L. 480 Title II activities in Uganda, Regional Inspector General auditors met with ACIDI/VOCA staff and observed four days of food distribution activities. Along with USAID and other implementing agencies, ACIDI/VOCA hosted a delegation of U.S.

⁴ The suspended Recipient Agency Agreements (RAAs) were with FADEP, AUPWAE, and Gwokke Ber. These RAAs were terminated in December 2010 following receipt of comprehensive final audit reports completed by external private firms on FADEP and AUPWAE and completion of the internal investigation of Gwokke Ber.

Senate and House Agricultural Committee staff members during their August 2010 visit, which included a tour of the Kampala warehouse and field visits in Gulu, Kitgum, Lira and Soroti.

ACDI/VOCA has adjusted its approach and activities to overcome the challenges mentioned above and achieve positive results across all program activities. ACDI/VOCA will continue to adapt the program as necessary to address these and future challenges to ensure that beneficiaries improve their food security, health, and livelihoods.

A. Strategic Objective 1: Reduced food insecurity and increased nutrition status through better production and use of food

a. IR 1.1: Improved nutrition and hygiene practices at the household and community level

Nutrition and hygiene interventions are centered on educating rural households to improve dietary and hygiene practices through increasing awareness and building training capacity of grantee staff through training of trainers (ToT). During FY 2010, ACDI/VOCA conducted several types of training in nutrition and hygiene for 116 grantee and partner staff. Ten ACDI/VOCA TSOs received training in the area of nutrition and hygiene, equipping them with knowledge and skills to support grantees.⁵ In addition, the ACDI/VOCA team responsible for distributing food rations (21 staff) received training that enabled them to train food aid recipients and prepare them for the phase out of food distribution.

MYAP subrecipients and grantees trained an estimated 37,268 farmers to make informed decisions on which nutritious foods to consume and cultivate within their means. Topics included hygiene, kitchen gardening and nutrition for infants, pregnant women and lactating mothers and PLHIV. Key messages emphasized the importance of consuming fruits and vegetables from home gardens, utilizing local poultry and eggs, ensuring nutritious diets for vulnerable household members and constructing household hygiene and sanitation facilities.

Table 2: Numbers of Farmers Trained in Nutrition and Hygiene

Partner/Grantee	Households Trained	Farmers Trained*		
		Males	Females	Total
A2N	2,189	1,296	1,449	2,745
AFRICARE	6,874	4,069	4,551	8,620
AUPWAE	1,279	757	847	1,604
CHAFORD	392	232	260	492
CPF	105	62	70	132
FADEP	1,822	1,078	1,206	2,284
GWOKKE BER	187	110	124	234
KICA BER	384	228	254	482
LWF	10,283	6,086	6,808	12,894
NSARWU	1,603	949	1,061	2,010
SURFACE	17	10	11	21
TPO	1,454	861	963	1,824
URADI	207	123	137	260
UYAP	128	76	85	161
VEDCO	2,116	1,252	1,401	2,653

⁵ Two of the twelve new TSOs were hired late in FY 2010.

Partner/Grantee	Households Trained	Farmers Trained*		
		Males	Females	Total
WACFO	680	402	450	852
TOTAL	29,720	17,591	19,677	37,268

*Data on individual farmers trained are estimates based on beneficiary households attending training sessions.

During FY10, partners and grantees helped farmers construct and/or improve 94,480 household sanitation and nutrition facilities, as outlined below.

Table 3: Hygiene Facilities and Kitchen Gardens Established by Project Beneficiaries during FY 2010

Partner/Grantee	Kitchen Gardens	Pit Latrines	Tippy Taps	Bath Shelters	Plate Racks	Rubbish Pits
A2N	370	806	527	764	712	860
AFRICARE	2,696	492	1,830	964	1,051	1,055
AUPWAE	207	409	229	424	384	368
CHAFORD	374	224	74	292	192	145
CPF	2	-	3	3	4	2
FADEP	5,142	5,679	4,835	5,497	5,551	4,962
GWOKKE BER	1	32	10	34	39	19
KICA BER	403	421	224	334	300	334
LWF	4,437	5,739	3,617	5,073	6,298	6,554
NSARWU	540	1,132	866	1,070	1,027	1,048
TPO	227	364	246	447	430	235
URADI	21	23	1	29	25	24
UYAP	119	228	55	209	158	214
VEDCO	751	576	610	690	761	722
WACFO	105	158	65	160	50	96
TOTAL	15,395	16,283	13,192	15,990	16,982	16,638

b. IR 1.2: Enhanced Agricultural Productivity, Farm Management and Marketing

ACDI/VOCA conducted ToT and refresher workshops in agronomy, post-harvest handling and marketing, FaaB and group formation and credit and savings during FY10 as outlined in Table 3 below. As with nutrition and hygiene, the main objective of the trainings is to equip FEWs with the necessary knowledge and skills to train farmers in the technical areas. FEWs subsequently train farmer groups in the various technical areas.

Table 4: Number of Partner/Grantee Staff and Beneficiary Farmers Trained

Technical Areas	Staff Trained			Households Trained	Farmers Trained*		
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
Savings and Credit	140	44	184	30,872	18,272	20,441	38,713
Nutrition and Hygiene	83	33	116	29,720	17,590	19,678	37,268
Agronomy	200	88	288	47,268	27,977	31,297	59,274
Farming as a Business	152	45	197	24,652	14,590	16,323	30,913
Post-Harvest Handling	81	31	112	27,913	16,520	18,482	35,002

*Data on individual farmers trained are estimates based on beneficiary households attending training sessions.

Agronomy

In FY10, the program taught “less labor, high yield” farming practices, based on principles of conservation agriculture: minimum tillage, residue retention, and rotation of legumes and non-legumes. Land is prepared by slashing weeds and spraying weed re-growth with glyphosate, a benign, environmentally safe herbicide approved by USAID. Tillage is limited to planting holes. Glyphosate kills weeds thoroughly and consequent weeding is reduced by 50 to 75 percent. The technique generally produces higher yields than conventional tillage practices due to earlier planting and less weed competition, mitigates against drought, conserves water and reduces soil erosion, and allows for earlier planting, enabling growing crops to benefit more from early rains.

All partner and grantee field staff (288 people) received ToT in “less labor, high yield” before the rains commenced. A total of 47,268 households comprising an estimated 59,274 individual farmers were trained. Virtually all farmer groups were exposed to conservation agriculture principles. Demonstration gardens played a key role in encouraging adoption. A total of 3,034 gardens were established for rice, maize, beans, cassava, groundnuts, soybeans and green grams. Many farmers have adopted the practices and have purchased and used glyphosate.



Upland rice and bean demonstration garden established by the Pit Tek Farmer Group in Amuru District.

Implementation slowed somewhat during the first growing season (beginning in February) of 2010 as field staff needed time to gain experience with the new practices. Some fields had to be re-sprayed to kill persistent weeds

such as spear grass. As a result of improved procurement and experience gained by field staff, second season demonstrations were more successful.

Groundnut, rice, bean and cassava yields were generally higher under the improved practices. However, maize yields were sometimes lower. This was attributed to soil nitrogen immobilization by dying weeds and, in some cases, to a hard pan, which inhibited maize root development. It is now being recommended to farmers that maize be planted after legumes (rather than when land is opened) or with fertilizer.

Table 5: Annual Reported Grantee Demonstrations

Partner/ Grantee	Cassava	Maize	Beans	Ground Nuts*	Rice	Green Gram*	Soybean	Total
A2N		55	87	73				215
AFRICARE	23	121	67	120				331
AUPWAE		30	30	30				90
CHAFORD	20	8	4	11				43
CPF	67		105	81	101			354
FADEP		111	124					235

Partner/ Grantee	Cassava	Maize	Beans	Ground Nuts*	Rice	Green Gram*	Soybean	Total
GWOKKE BER	18				52			70
KICA BER	13	10	6	15	5			49
LWF	225	108	95	210	23	59	59	779
NSARWU	57	152						209
TPO	44	17		33				94
URADI	25	17	10	18	17			87
UYAP	13							13
VEDCO	94	169	74	70				407
WACFO	12		18	15	13			58
TOTAL	611	798	620	676	211	59	59	3,034

*Ground nuts are the local name for peanuts. Green grams are the local name for mung beans.

Farming as a Business

The number of farmers trained increased during FY 2010 as a result of a simplified curriculum that emphasizes practical aspects of business. The program focused on practical projects that interest farmers such as how to use FaaB to utilize savings for investments in various enterprises, how to grow off-season vegetables, and how to obtain and use herbicides or sprayers. A total of 197 partner and grantee staff received FaaB training and they, in turn, trained an estimated 30,913 farmers. This is an increase of 90 percent from the 16,230 farmers reached in FY 2009.

The effective application of FaaB faced a number of challenges that included low prices for farm produce as previously described. In some cases, household storage needs could not keep up with the higher yields. In addition, poor road infrastructure in some project areas restricted access to markets. In a few cases, training of FEWs didn't keep up with the need for training of farmer groups in FaaB principles.



An improved traditional maize crib with rat guards in Dokolo District.

Post-Harvest Handling and Marketing

An estimated 35,002 farmers were trained in PHH and marketing during FY 2010, which nearly doubles the number of farmers reached in FY 2009 (17,575). PHH training benefited from sequential training where agronomy trainings had been largely completed. As a result, timely harvesting, drying and storage practices improved among the beneficiary farmer groups. The total number of PHH technologies established by seventeen ACDI/VOCA partners and grantees included maize cribs (577), drying racks (514), tarpaulins (1,075), improved granaries (1,490) and drying mats (2,630).

c.IR 1.3: Increased road access to local and regional markets and services

Road Rehabilitation

The original MYAP design called for the districts to provide equipment and laborers/operators to carry out road rehabilitation. However, following the division of many Ugandan districts⁶, many do not have

⁶ The number of districts has increased from approximately 31 in 1986 to 57 by 1991 and to 111 at the end of 2010.

the necessary equipment to carry out rehabilitation as planned. To address this constraint, ACDI/VOCA increased the number of kilometers in Africare's scope of work, and will contract private construction firms to complete the roads in Lira.

During FY 2010, Africare rehabilitated 13.3 km of feeder roads in Soroti District, bringing the total-to-date to 45 km in the district. USAID/Uganda approved our environmental assessment for road rehabilitation in Budaka (eastern Uganda). Africare has completed two sections totaling 18 km in the district, representing 16 percent of targeted roads in the three eastern districts of Budaka, Bukedea and Kumi. ACDI/VOCA hired MBW Engineering Ltd to provide an engineering design for 80.7 km of road work in Lira district.⁷

In FY 2011, ACDI/VOCA anticipates increasing the pace of road rehabilitation activities to meet LOA program targets. Africare will rehabilitate an additional 93 km of community access roads in Budaka, Bukedea and Kumi Districts and private contractors will be hired to rehabilitate 80.7 km in Lira District.

ACDI/VOCA engages district officials and community members throughout the rehabilitation process. District local governments help identify the target roads and ACDI/VOCA conduct environmental impact assessments for USAID approval. ACDI/VOCA holds community sensitization meetings before implementation occurs. Road preparation involves bush clearing, grading, gravelling, applying gravels, placing constrict culvers and bridges and compacting the roads. Local communities have largely supported the activity, which contributes to its success. In many cases, communities have provided marum (gravel/clay mix for surfacing roads) and have helped ensure there are no land title issues or objections from adjacent land owners.

d. IR 1.4: Enhanced community and household capacity to withstand shocks

Farmer Savings Groups

During the fiscal year, ACDI/VOCA trained 184 grantee extension staff on group formation, group savings and credit. An estimated 38,713 farmers received training in savings mobilization and group management, representing a 32 percent increase from FY 2009, when 29,239 were trained. Partners and grantees attributed the increased attendance to the new training materials which comprise mainly of visual aids such as posters. Farmers found the new training approach not only interesting but in line with realities in their localities. ACDI/VOCA is optimistic the new training approach will strengthen group savings.

B. Strategic Objective 2: Reduced food insecurity and improved nutrition for 42,000 particularly vulnerable people through distribution of supplementary food per year

During FY 2010 a total of 7,614 PLHIV (prime beneficiaries) received monthly rations of corn soy blend (CSB) and vegetable oil. To qualify for entry in the food distribution program, individuals must be HIV-positive TASO clients who are identified as food insecure. As household members also benefitted from this support (up to a maximum of six members per household), a total of 41,111 beneficiaries received supplementary rations during FY 2010. This number was lower than the original target of 42,000 beneficiaries and resulted from a slightly lower than average household size (5.4). ACDI/VOCA served distribution sites in the districts of

⁷ At the time of this writing, ACDI/VOCA is awaiting USAID environmental assessment approval for roads in Lira District.

Gulu, Amoria, Lira, Dokolo, Amolatar, Soroti, Kumi, Apac and Katakwi with an average monthly attendance of 38,915 people.

e. IR 2.1: Increased access to nutritious foods through direct distribution of supplemental rations to 42,000 PLWHA, including their families

Food recipient enrollment continued throughout FY 2010 culminating in 41,111 total beneficiaries even as some beneficiaries graduated from the program. A cumulative total of 490,572 monthly food aid rations were delivered to beneficiaries, totaling 3,514.981 metric tons (MT) of CSB and 222.295 MT of vegetable oil. Enrollment fell slightly short of expected targets due to lower than anticipated household size which prevented ACIDI/VOCA from rolling out the program to the full anticipated number of 42,000 beneficiaries.

A lesson learned from previous years was the need to assess many more potential beneficiary households than the actual target number. Fewer households were found to be vulnerable as per the assessment criteria, which is based on the USAID household food vulnerability assessment tool.

f. IR 2.2: Improved health and nutrition practices through behavior change education

A total of 123 food and cooking demonstrations were conducted in FY 2010 to help clients maximize the benefits of distribution commodities by using various recipes utilizing CSB, vegetable oil and local ingredients including fish, greens, meat, bread, pan cakes, porridge and groundnut paste. The recipes improve the palatability of CSB by increasing options for consumption. Food clients reported improved health due to proper utilization of rations.

When interviewed, 95.71% of clients demonstrated an increased knowledge in the preparation of distributed commodities. This significantly exceeded the project target of 40% of clients demonstrating increased knowledge. When asked, clients were able to list traditional recipes into which CSB could be incorporated. A high percentage of clients (91.50%) were able to give examples of food combinations that they had prepared incorporating distribution commodities. Beneficiaries reported through household surveys that rations were acceptable and palatable.

Furthermore, surveys indicated a significant increase in number of meals per day prepared and consumed in each household.

g. IR 2.3: Increased access to complementary services for food beneficiaries

Food aid recipients received complementary services from project partner TASO such as counseling and medical care, anti-retroviral treatment (ART), child support, and income generating activity training and support. Clients accessed counseling and medical care services at

Beneficiaries of the food distribution program have acknowledged the improvements to their quality of life (the following comments are paraphrased):

Thanks to the rations I now receive I have enough energy to live a more productive life and be a healthier and happier person.

The money I needed for food in the past has now been made available for other purposes thanks to my rations.

I can only take my ARVs when I have eaten food and in the past, lack of food often made me not take my medication. However, now thanks to my rations, I take my medication on a regular basis.

Thanks to the cooking demonstrations I attended I can now make recipes my whole family enjoys.

outreach clinics and health centers; a total of 1,444 food clients were counseled and 4,570 received medical care in FY 2010.

In collaboration with ACIDI/VOCA, TASO hired four new staff as Integration Assistants to work with food aid recipients as they enrolled into the agricultural package training program. They were deployed in Soroti, Gulu, Lira and Kaberamaido Districts. Their role is to help food recipients integrate into farmer groups and farming activities and monitor the beneficiaries' progress. ACIDI/VOCA enrolled 1,072 "graduated" food recipients into the agricultural training program. The process of integrating graduated food aid beneficiaries into the project's agricultural activities is on-going. However, a continual challenge is the lack of geographical overlap between ACIDI/VOCA grantee activities and TASO client/food aid beneficiary households.

Income Generating Activities

ACIDI/VOCA, in collaboration with TASO, awarded income generating activity (IGA) grants to six PLHIV women's groups in the Acholi and Teso regions. These grants funded activities ranging from goat keeping to flour milling to tailoring. A total of 132 PLHIV and their families will benefit from these awards. In an effort to support the funded activities and provide the beneficiaries with the best opportunities to carry out successful and sustainable businesses, ACIDI/VOCA also trained the 132 beneficiaries in business management. Course content included business skill development, group management and leadership, planning and sources of finance. The IGA grants awarded are summarized below.

Table 6: Income Generating Activity Grants Awarded through the end of FY 2010

IGA Group	Inputs	Members	Total Value (US\$)
Art Loko Kwo Group (Gulu District)	1 grinding mill Funds for constructing mill house	12	4,395
Auro Grinding Mill Group (Kaberamaido District)	1 grinding mill Funds for constructing mill house	26	3,360
Community Based Initiative to Fight HIV/AIDS (Amolatar District)	33 Kenya Top Bar hives 30 traditional hives Funds for beekeeping training, protective clothing, and processing equipment	33	3,816
Nyeri Kan Women's Group (Gulu District)	1 paste mill 1 generator Funds for constructing mill house	20	3,742
Omed Gen Bot Wa PHA Group (Gulu District)	5 sewing machines 1 design machine 1 weaving machine Funds for workroom rental	20	3,905
Wera AIDS Development Association (Soroti District)	39 goats Funds for constructing goat house	21	4,437
Total		132	\$23,655

II. SUCCESS STORIES

Success Story 1 — Can Kwiya Goro Farmer Group is located in Keyo village, Palema parish, Lamogi sub-county, Amuru District in northern Uganda. The group has 30 members, 11 male and 19 female. Out of the 30 members, 29 are HIV-positive. The group was formed independently in 2006 with the main objectives of pooling resources to develop productive enterprises suitable to their condition. In July 2008, group members enrolled in the USAID ACDI/VOCA food distribution program and received supplementary rations of CSB and vegetable oil for one year. As clients of TASO, they also received antiretroviral (ARV) treatment. The combination of ARVs and food rations allowed group members to increase their strength and become productive farmers.



Bonny Oola (right) of, ACIDI/VOCA, with Can Kwiya Goro Farmer Group members Christine Oyelo and Ronald Otto at the group's groundnuts demonstration garden in Amuru District.

Charity for Peace Foundation (CPF), an ACIDI/VOCA grantee, began supporting the group in May 2010. The group received improved bean, rice, and groundnut seeds, as well as trainings in improved agronomic practices. The group has managed a one-acre minimum tillage demonstration garden, where they planted rice, groundnuts, beans, and cassava, and used herbicide to reduce labor needed for land clearing.

Christine Oyela, a group member and mother of 8 children, learned from the demonstration garden that using glyphosate, an environmentally benign USAID-approved herbicide, reduced the amount of time and labor required for land clearing and

subsequent weeding. With a good groundnut harvest from her own garden this season, she intends to purchase 2 liters of glyphosate, sufficient to open 1-1/2 acres of land. *“Using this technology is more appropriate for those of us living with HIV/AIDs. The work is light and manageable as the effort to clear land and weed is reduced, and we can work our own land without hiring labor.”* The group has decided to use its pooled resources to purchase a sprayer to share amongst them and utilize the technology.

Christine relates how her life has been changed after receiving USAID support: *“Before we received food aid distributed through ACIDI/VOCA, life was not easy. I could only manage ½ acre of land, as I was frequently ill and weak. My small garden was insufficient to support my children. With the food aid and the medicine I receive from TASO, I fall sick less frequently. I have gained weight, and my CD4 count has increased. This season, I am managing four gardens of one acre each.”*

Success Story 2 — Mr. Tom Egaru lives in Agule village, Ocheru sub-county, Kaberamaido District. His remote village is located approximately 442 km northeast of Kampala and lacks basic infrastructure and access to services. As an active participant in the 30-member *Pur Ber* Farmer group supported by Africare under the USAID – ACIDI/VOCA P.L. 480 Title II MYAP, Mr. Egaru has been trained in improved agricultural, production, post-harvest handling, savings and credit, and nutrition and hygiene techniques.

Specifically in agriculture, together with his fellow group members, Tom was trained in agronomic practices to boost production using improved crop varieties, proper plant spacing, and strategies for adequate weed control and pest management. In August 2008, Tom received 10 kg of improved maize seed (*Longe 1*) from the Title II program, which he planted on one acre of land. Using the techniques he learned, he harvested 1,500 kg (1.5 MT) of corn, a significant improvement over the 800-1,000 kg yields he had previously experienced.



Mr. Tom Egaru of Pur Ber farmer group

With increased production, Mr. Egaru was able to sell 1,000 kg (1MT) at 325 Uganda Shillings (UgSh)/kg, obtaining UgSh 315,000 (US \$157.50) in profit. In addition, Tom was able to reserve 500 kg for use both as food for his family and also as seed for the next planting season.

In 2009, Tom increased his production even further by applying techniques he had learned in Farming as a Business training. He decreased input costs by using seeds properly saved from the previous season. Then, he expanded planting by a third to 15 kg of corn over 1.5 acres of land. Despite a severe prolonged drought, Tom was still able to harvest 1,800 kg (1.5 MT), of which he sold 1,300 kg at 350 UgSh/kg for a profit of UgSh 455,000 (US \$227.50).

Over the next two planting seasons, Tom managed to save 720,000 UgSh (\$360), which he supplemented with profits from other income generating opportunities to purchase a maize grinding mill for UgSh 1,600,000 (US \$800). The grinding mill allows Tom to add value to his products before selling in the market and also provide milling services to village members for additional income. Tom grows vegetables to diversify his household's food basket. According to Tom, the training, support and assistance he received as part of the Title II Program has greatly improved his household's livelihood security. The grinding mill has significantly increased his income generation, training has improved his household's health and hygiene, and increased farm revenues have paid children's school fees and family medical bills and improved the nutritional quality of his family's diet. In the near future, Tom intends to use his savings to buy heifers to graze on his farm. He encourages other community members to embrace the interventions supported by Africare and adds, *"I am very grateful to Africare for the support it gave us with my fellow group members. The benefits have brought a great change in my family."*

Success Story 3— *"FaaB trainings have made me rich."* Mr. Omony Tito, 36 years old, lives in Latanya village, Kitgum District. In October 2009, he joined the farmer group *Okany can*, a group supported by Lutheran World Federation under the USAID – ACDI/VOCA P.L. 480 Title II Food Security Program. As a member of this group, he participated in trainings in Farming as a Business (FaaB) and other topics, such as agronomy and nutrition and hygiene. After the FaaB trainings, he decided to start producing onions as a means to generate income. Using his own money, he bought seeds at 90,000 UgSh and charged his labour at 60,000 UgSh for half an acre. At harvest time he collected 12 bags of onions, selling each for 160,000 UgSh each in Kitgum town. Tito made about 1,920,000 UgSh from his onion sales (approximately \$870), of which he saved 920,000 (\$418) for the next season. He acquired a plot of land to build a shop and bought a bicycle to facilitate his movement. The profit Tito made from selling onions helped him meet household basic needs and pay fees for his children to attend boarding school in Kitgum Town.

III. LESSONS LEARNED

ACDI/VOCA's restructuring plan applied the following lessons learned in prior years:

- To increase training attendance and adoption of messages, trainings were reduced by two-thirds, and materials re-designed to focus on fewer, practicably applicable messages that could substantially improve farmer well-being.
- Farmer groups with a stated goal tend to save more compared to other groups. FEWs should help groups agree on goals to increase the likelihood that savings will accumulate.
- The process for bringing on new grantees was arduous and time-consuming. Rather than bring on new grantees, proven grantees were renewed and expanded, rapidly accelerating the number of beneficiaries. A simplified grants process is recommended.
- Supervision of partners and grantees: Regular technical support and monitoring is necessary to strengthen partners' and grantees' ability to successfully implement the MYAP. Roles and expectations, especially regarding targets, must be clearly outlined.

A number of new lessons learned in FY 2010 have resulted in changes to implementation:

- New projects attract community attention and participation: Since Africare began working with WFP on its Purchase for Progress (P4P) project, approximately 350 farmers supported by the MYAP sold to WFP. Farmers sold 300 MT of maize in December 2010.
- The weed wiper developed by the project to control weeds after crop emergence proved impractical and was abandoned. Farmers found little need for weed wipers, because herbicides applied before planting substantially reduced post-emergent weed pressure, making hand or hoe weeding more economical options.
- Males rarely participate in the production of lower value subsistence crops (e.g., cowpeas, amaranth and okra). Some men only supported women in vegetable production if there was a potential for a marketable surplus. This has resulted in fewer indigenous vegetables in kitchen gardens. Future projects might promote vegetable consumption on a wider scale to stimulate market demand, making the crop more "acceptable" to men.
- Cost and durability are key to the adoption of post-harvest handling facilities. Traditionally, farmers have used granaries made with stones for stands; these facilities have proven durable, are not attacked by termites, and are not susceptible to rotting. As a result, the project has experienced challenges in promoting granaries with wooden poles, despite a higher clearance, because the wood is not seen as a sustainable, lasting material.
- Farmer adoption of training messages increases when immediately applied. For example, construction of hygiene structures greatly accelerated when groups of farmers were immediately formed after trainings to build specific structures. Scheduling agronomy trainings just prior to the rainy season accelerated adoption of improved farming practices. Savings and loan associations are more active and sustainable when farmers are encouraged to immediately develop and save for a specific opportunity. Savings also promote group cohesion, as farmers are motivated to attend trainings and group meetings for updates on their finance or to borrow money.
- Across farmer groups, some groups had larger demonstration gardens than others. Farmers who worked on larger demonstration gardens benefitted from more cuttings and higher production, and as a result showed more commitment to their groups.