# Changing the Future of Young People SKY



SKY Project Stories of Change 2020 AVSI Foundation















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We thank the characters who told their stories and permitted us to publish them to inspire other young people.







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#### Foreword

From the Chief of Party Samuele Otim Rizzo

This photo book aims to showcase some of the stories of the youth who have walked the SKY journey from skilling to employment. They are stories of mindset change and empowerment, whose protagonists have found a purpose by engaging in agri-business which has significantly boosted their income, and are now inspiring others to follow the same path. This is exactly the aim of our efforts in the SKY project, designed to create job opportunities for young people through skilling and private sector partnerships. We have achieved these successes through applying a dynamic approach driven by the Ugandan market to build on the potential of the Ugandan economy, and through synergies between educational institutions and agri-businesses. These stories are therefore examples of how this approach has impacted the youth in diverse ways as experienced through their own eyes and voices.

#### Introduction

AVSI Foundation is implementing the Skilling Youth for Employment in Agribusiness (SKY), a five-year project funded by Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The project targets to skill 8,000 young people for employment or self-employment in agribusiness and to achieve this, SKY works with 65 strategic agribusinesses and 14 institutions (agricultural colleges, BTVETs (Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training) and secondary schools).

SKY began operations in December 2015 in the Lake Kyoga, Elgon, Lake Victoria Crescent, and in the Western regions of Uganda with a main focus of investing in practical training of the target groups through public private partnerships. Subsequently the geographical coverage was expanded to include the Lango sub-region (Northern Uganda).

#### SKY objectives:

- 1. To strengthen the capacity of agri-skills providers to deliver marketable and employable skilling.
- 2. To provide pre and post-employment support to the skilled youths.
- 3. Build the capacity of agribusinesses through skilling and brokerages.
- 4. Facilitate Skilling Uganda Authority to be supportive to agri-skilling in the targeted areas.

#### SKY competency-based areas:

- · Tailor-made technical agricultural training.
- · Entrepreneurial skills training.
- Life Skills (including aspects of Sexual Reproductive Health Rights).
- Mentorship and coaching in business planning, proper record management, accounting systems and linkages to agricultural financing.

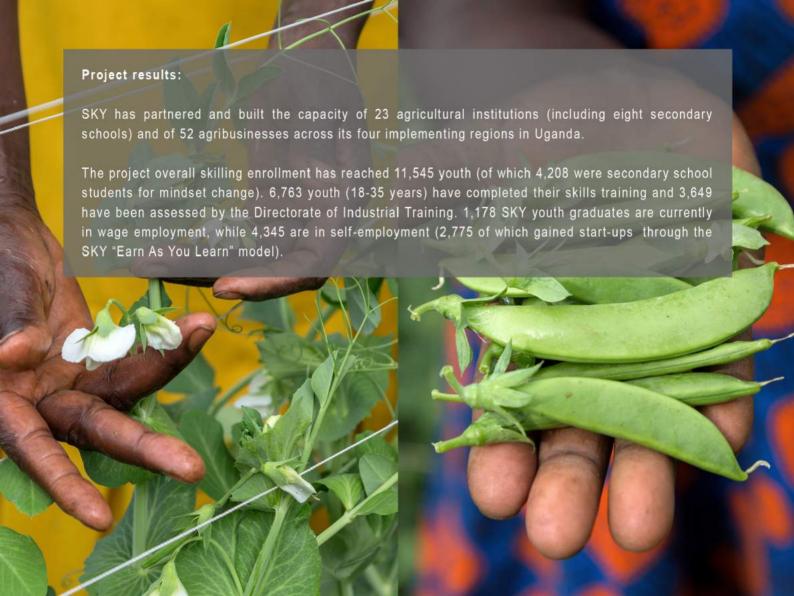
**SKY's intervention model** supports young people to realize their own capital by promoting the "Earn As You Learn" training model where the youth are provided with skills and payable opportunities, from which they earn an income to start their own enterprises, expected to generate an overall annual income of Euro 3.6 million.

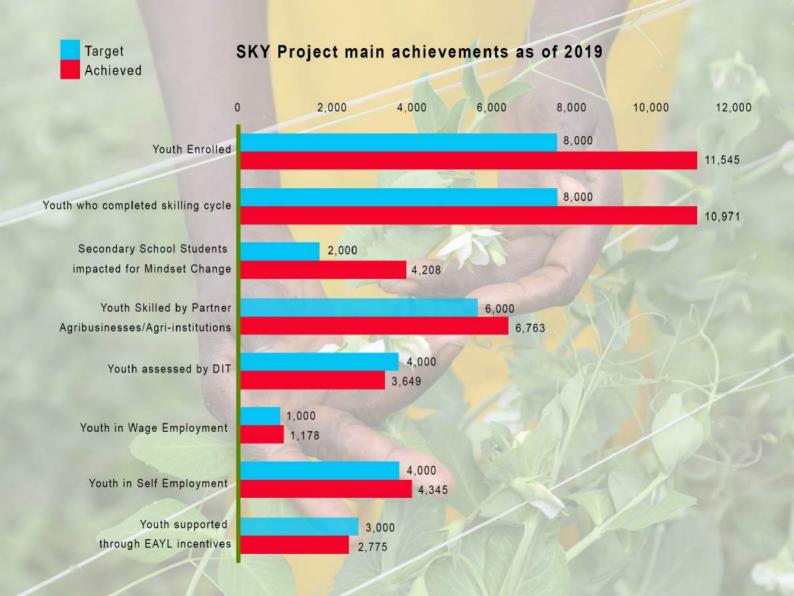
#### SKY in Strategic Agribusinesses:

• SKY identifies gaps in agribusiness entities and builds their capacity to deliver marketable skills to the youth through expert coaching.

The project invests in infrastructure development to improve crop and livestock productivity while linking the agribusinesses to information sharing platforms such as Netherland Uganda Trade and Investment Platform (NUTIP), Africa Agribusiness Academy (AAA), to promote trade and investment, both nationally and internationally with a focus to Netherlands.

 By scaling up investment prospects, the project facilitates agribusinesses for match-making opportunities with impact investors.





# stories



#### Agri-Investment Kibbutz

Founded by young university graduates

"I graduated from university in 2017 and I see a significant difference in income between members of Agri-Investment Kibbutz and other youth our age. Young people have abundant untapped potential but lack of access to resources and information deters them from achieving success" — Sam Mbulamukungi, member, 26.

Agri-Investment Kibbutz investment club was started by ten students from university who contributed a total of UGX 15 million.

Mukono District, Central Uganda
Current profits: UGX 120,000,000
(group seasonal profits – 6 months)
Previous profits: UGX 60,000,000
(group seasonal profits – 6 months)
Training: Horticulture and Coffee production

Under a partnership between Agromax and AVSI Foundation, Agri-Investment Kibbutz coffee project expanded to produce 500,000 cloned coffee seedlings over six months. In their first season, the youth raised 200,000 seedlings of the best ranked coffee which they sold to Uganda Coffee Development Agency for UGX 60 million.

Referring to themselves as "game changers", the SKY-trained youth employ 20 casual laborers from neighboring communities, 19 of whom are women. They are continuing the coffee campaign by mentoring a hundred other youth.





# David Manano, 28

"I travelled 400 kilometers from Nebbi to Kampala to look for a job with a security company. I was deployed near the COWA VTC training center. For six months, I worked in the night shift while I attended the trainings (in agribusiness) during the day."

After the training, David's employer allotted him an acre of land where he practiced his skills. He fenced off the land, prepared it and fixed a water source for his crops. David's Go green Farm quickly became an attraction and demonstration to the neighboring communities and earned him respect from his peers.

Having realized his potential in the agriculture sector, David decided to move back to Nebbi, his home village in Northern Uganda, where he could access to 20 acres of his family land. He has planted several horticultural products, cassava, and cotton and is now running a successful business, while training youth from the neighboring areas and earning UGX 30,000 a day.

Kampala District, Central Uganda Current income: UGX 900,000/month Previous income: UGX 100,000/month Training: Horticulture



# Rachael Nakayiza Kalule, 20

Meet Rachael, machine operator.

Rachael got skills in repair and maintenance at NUCAFE coffee processing plant. After her six month's course at the factory, Rachael began practicing coffee quality analysis and assurance, grading, de-stoning, pre-cleaning, and color sorting. The factory's Technician and Assistant Quality Controller plans to start her own coffee farm and establish a consultancy firm for coffee processing and machine installation.

"From the time I was employed, I have been able to feed myself, take care of my transport costs, pay my bills and go out with friends. I see myself as an enterprising farmer in the future. NUCAFE and SKY have changed my life. I grew up with the love to challenge the boys out there, who thought we could not do the work they do. But here we are now. My message to the girls out there is to take the courage and the confidence. Come and let's challenge the boys who think we can't. There is going to be a very big change in the coffee sector when the girls are running it!" — says Rachael.

Kampala District, Central Uganda Current income: UGX 700,000/month Previous income: UGX 0/month Training: Coffee value-chain and machine maintenance





## Nana Faith Tyaba, 16

"We used to learn about manure, crops and livestock within the walls of our classroom or at least we saw the pictures on television. Now we are living the experience of farm practice. It is an exciting project for everyone at school: students, teachers, parents."

At home, Nana planted a small garden of vegetables which withered "agriculture is not my thing", she said. But when her school started the agribusiness club, Nana didn't think the same.

Agriculture is now her first subject and she is a vibrant member and president of her school's agribusiness club. Nana revived her home garden with collards and cabbages for her pocket money.

She learnt to talk to customers, market her crop and to manage her agribusiness "it's fun seeing students market their produce at the school assemblies; the club also helps students to interact and make friends in other schools."

Wakiso District, Central Uganda Student, President of the agribusiness club at Luigi Giussani High School Training: Horticulture





## Cissy Nabukalu, 23

"In 2015 while in Italy I tasted a cappuccino: I loved the aroma and there I picked interest in making coffee."

When Cissy, a former beneficiary of AVSI Distance Support Program (which supports vulnerable students with school fees and bursaries), returned to Uganda she enrolled at NUCAFE under AVSI SKY project to train in baristering. She now makes different cups of coffee, including cappuccino, and has gained valuable skills in managing business and customer relations.

Cissy is employed at NUCAFE's Omukago coffee shop. With the skills and her savings, she plans to start her own coffee and fast food restaurant in the near future.

Kampala District, Central Uganda Current income: UGX 300,000/month Previous income: UGX 0 Training: Coffee baristering



## Mirembe Mary, 24

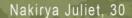
Mirembe Mary had completed her Ordinary level but there were no funds for her to continue with her Advanced level, so she was anxious to join Jeka Poultry farm after learning over the radio that the farm also provides skills in piggery. Mary is now an expert in piggery farming, artificial insemination and castration in pigs after completing her two-month training at Jeka Poultry Farm in Kamuli District.

"My brother offered me space at the back of the house after completion of skilling at Jeka to set up my pig farm. I started with two piglets but I am a proud owner of 20 pigs now - 10 piglets, one boar, five castrates and four gilts. My future plan is to set up a model farm in Butagaya sub-county for my fellow youth to learn and also sell packed pork within Jinja and the surrounding districts."

Jinja District, Eastern Uganda Current income: UGX 400,000/month Previous income: UGX 80,000/month Training: piggery farming, artificial insemination, treatment of pigs, castration of boars







One sunny day, Juliet's village representative spoke about a chance for young people to gain skills in the country side. Juliet was ready to join the training, as having to drop out of school and early marriage had not deterred her from progressing. From engaging in petty jobs, Juliet is now an expert in poultry keeping and management after completing her two-month training at Jeka Poultry Farm in Kamuli District.

"My husband offered me space at the back of the house to set up a poultry keeping structure and with support from AVSI's SKY project I received 300 layer chicks, a solar panel, feeders and feeds among others to start my farm. My life has totally changed and I am now mentoring 10 more youth in my village, six males and four females."

She also encouraged her husband to start his street food stand at the trading center from which they are earning more money. Juliet has brought hope to her family: she supports her children and siblings in school. She also purchased a phone which helps her keep in touch with her egg buyers.

Kamuli District, Eastern Uganda
Current income: UGX 800,000/month
Previous income: UGX 50,000/month
Training: Poultry keeping and management,
life skills, record keeping,
marketing and communication skills



# Daniel Musimami, 33

"I rear pigs and a cow from which I get milk daily for sale and for my own consumption. And when my chickens start laying eggs, I will earn UGX 80,000 each day."

Upon hearing about a skilling opportunity from a leader at a youth community meeting in his village, Daniel decided to enroll for a two-month training at Jeka Poultry Farm, under the SKY project. After completing the training, he received 300 layer chicks, vaccines, iron sheets, wire mesh and a 40 watt solar panel.

500 chicks and purchase a motorcycle to ease transportation of his eggs and milk to the nearby town.

Kamuli District, Eastern Uganda Current income: UGX 600,000/month Previous income: UGX 150,000/month Training: Entrepreneurship skills, poultry keeping, piggery and marketing.



#### Pius Wekesa, 33

"I had taken shelter from heavy rain when the person next to me (Isaac Malinga) shared his story of success in farming. I received this as a tale since I had just lost half an acre of beans to extreme weather."

Pius' adverse experience made him lose interest in farming. Nonetheless, he reluctantly followed Isaac's invitation to Maikut Farm where he heard about the SKY project and how several youth in the community were succeeding with farming as a business.

The stories motivated Pius and he quickly joined the training. A few months into coaching, Pius was astonished when his first trial garden of onions brought him UGX 800,000. He invested his earnings in an Irish potato garden which brought him UGX 1.9 million in 16 weeks. Because of Pius' great zeal for agribusiness and exposures, he was also appointed Farm manager of Maikut Farm with a monthly pay of UGX 300,000.

Pius' next step is to supply cabbages as far as Kenya. "I have never looked back", he says.

Kapchorwa District, Eastern Uganda Current income: UGX 800,000/month Previous income: UGX 50,000/month Training: Horticulture farming, marketing, nursery bed management and farm machine operation



## Mwanga Muzamiru, 27

Mwanga graduated with a Degree in Information Technology from Makerere University, but says he was struggling to survive in Kampala. The small IT jobs that he was engaging in were not paying him enough money, to the point that he would fail to pay his rent. He thought that the only way to break through in life is to find a stable office job but after joining the SKY project, his mind has changed.

Kapchorwa District, Eastern Uganda Current income: UGX 1,500,000/month Previous income: UGX 300,000/month Training: Horticulture farming, marketing, nursery bed management, pest identification and management, business skills "There are full time paying jobs most youth do not see in their gardens. After being skilled at Atari River Irrigation Initiative under the SKY project, I planted onions, cabbages, tomatoes, and potatoes on one acre of land and my earnings have drastically changed: from barely making UGX 300,000 I am now earning UGX 1.5 million each month."

"A number of youth have also contacted me after seeing the photos of my gardens and asked me to train them. I am now skilling four of them on nursery bed preparation and management, while my future plan is to train as many youth as possible and change their mindset towards agriculture. Without agriculture I would not be where I am now."





#### Harriet Oroma, 23

Raising kroiler chicken for breeding stock for the local market and para-vet service provision is Harriet's trade.

Harriet struggled with her poultry business until she joined the SKY project trainings. Her score was when she identified a common problem faced by farmers in the business. The community role model ventured into a para-vet service provision, on the farm vaccination and advisory services which she extends to her colleagues in the trade at a fee. She also supplies other farmers with kroiler chicken at UGX 30,000.

Harriet wants to expand her poultry production and management services to poultry farmers in her district and generate employment opportunities for other youths.

Lira District, Northern Uganda
Current income: UGX 600,000/month
Previous income: UGX 100,000/month
Training: Poultry production and Management,
and Life Skill



#### Eunice Acen, 29

From struggling with pig rearing to another battle with her 300 poultry birds, Eunice was losing hope in farming. She wanted to make money quickly but things were not working her way – she lacked the technical skill to raise a good breed and the high cost of treating her chicken and improper housing put her at risk of losing her stock.

But after the training, SKY project supported Eunice to remodel her business. In a few months, Eunice had become an entrepreneur who kept her records updated and studied the market demand for her product. The 1,000 capacity poultry unit constructed by SKY supported Eunice to reestablish her business. Her productions costs reduced and her earnings more than tripled.

She used her income to construct another 6,000 capacity poultry unit and supplies 6,000 broiler chicken to YoKuku Company every five weeks. Eunice envisions herself a successful poultry farmer who will supply all poultry products on her farm for Lango sub-region and beyond.

Lira District, Northern Uganda
Current income: UGX 2,000,000/month
Previous income: UGX 200,000/month
Training: Poultry Production
and Management, and Life Skill



#### Denish Obua, 27

Meet Denish, the Managing Director and founder of Farmers' View Agro. Denish holds a National Certificate in Agriculture, which he attained from Bobi Community Polytecnic. His leadership skills proved successful in the management of the youth cluster in Minakulu, a town near his home, after the SKY project engaged him for further skilling in modern agronomic practices, business and financial literacy, and safe use and application of chemicals.

Denish's enthusiasm to attend business linkage events at the Agri-finance Fair, Source of the Nile Agribusiness Trade Show and other learning visits was backed by SKY to equip him with

Oyam District, Northern Uganda
Current income: UGX 2,000,000/month
Previous income: UGX 200,000/month
Training: Mindset change, business skills training,
financial literacy, safe chemical use and application

relevant skills to acquire market linkages for his agro-inputs and chemicals enterprise. Denish is now prospering in his shop in Minakulu. His suppliers: East African Seeds, Balton, Yara fertilizers, Faith Agro have him the drive in his business which attracts farmers from the surrounding districts. His determination is yielding good results; Denish signed a memorandum of understanding with AVSI Foundation to skill 40 youth in modern agronomy practices in his village.

"The seeds and simple equipment I received from SKY made a good start for me. I grew cabbages and watermelon and despite the low harvest in that period, I made UGX 2,500,000. I am now my own manager" says Denish.



# Geoffrey Odaga, 24

Geoffrey started Odaga Horticultural Darm in Agulurude village in 2015. The young Executive Director decided to focus on the production and marketing of fresh vegetables. His farm's vision is "To build a self-sustaining business through consistent supply of high quality fresh vegetables produce to satisfy consumer demand."

Because of his great work and determination for success, Geoffrey was selected and supported by AVSI-SKY project to skill 150 youth in modern horticulture through the Earn as You Learn Model. By conducting a number of village meetings, he recruited youth who had been

Oyam District, Northern Uganda
Current income: UGX 3,000,000/month
(cumulative yearly profit: UGX 38,000,000)
Previous income: UGX 650,000/month
Training: horticulture production

engaged in farming but lacked skills in the production of high value crops. Each youth was assigned a portion of an acre of land to replicate the acquired skills, while receiving constant mentorship from Geoffrey.

"Meeting AVSI – SKY has made it possible for me to earn more money. Thanks to the SKY-funded irrigation facility, I am now able to do off-season and the entire Lango sub-region now knows me. I did not go far with formal education but I feel I am now a contributor of positive life transformation to many youth in Lango and beyond. AVSI's SKY project has given me the capacity to transform other youth through practical skilling."

Geoffrey has so far skilled and mentored 62 youth and aims at becoming a living example of positive change.



### Samuel Amal, 28

Sam is engaged in planting clonal eucalyptus, musizi tree seedlings, onions and tomatoes. He is proprietor of Greenland Agro which plants trees for sale in Lira District.

"I met opportunities to supply tree seedlings, spray and offer consultative services to farmer groups during my visit to a career exhibition in Eastern Uganda, and things are now better." The mentorship and exposures Sam gained from the project helped him build confidence and commitment to his agribusiness plan, rapidly expanding his forestry enterprise using the contract tree planting and spray services concept.

Sam is also happy about his connection with input suppliers in the nearby towns of Mbale and Kamdini, an assurance of his constant satisfaction to supply agricultural services and professional development opportunities in the sector.

Alebtong District, Northern Uganda Current income: UGX 500,000/month Previous income: UGX 80,000/month Training: Agro forestry, safe chemical use and application, mindset change, business skills and life skills trainings, and financial literacy



## Naboth Asimwe, 33

Naboth realized that he could hardly sustain his family on a salary when he decided to join a one-month practical training at AGDI Diary Farm in Kiruhura District. Eager to improve his income, he started a banana plantation, goat, pig and poultry rearing on a small scale with his savings from Rwemikoma Laboratory where he worked for six years.

The skills he received from the diary farm helped him look at things in a different way. He gathered resources and built a simple shelter for his animals. He sold pasture from his four-acre land and bought three cows. A few months later, his cows delivered and the business began to grow.

A father of three, Naboth now earns a daily income of UGX 20,000 from the 20 liters he gets from his cows, giving him UGX 600,000 each month. He has planted maize on the four acres, constructed a silage bank and added two more cows on his farm.

Naboth says the skills he received have been instrumental in changing his life and his standard of living has improved.

Kiruhura District, Western Uganda Current income: UGX 600,000/month Previous income: UGX 400,000/month Training: Dairy management, animal health and nutrition, artificial insemination and production of pastures





# Aggrey Ashaba, 26

Aggrey began to grow green bananas on his grandfather's two and a half acres of land but didn't harvest a good crop. This drove him to divide the land into smaller parts for his relatives to farm. When he joined the SKY project, his dream was to make money from agriculture. He wanted to be an expert in banana and citrus production and acquire skills in crop management.

After his training at IBO Mixed Farm, Aggrey returned home and rejuvenated his banana plantation, putting into practice the expertise he had gained. He now works with a planned budget and recognizes that land is a valuable asset.

The 40 bunches of bananas he sells monthly generate for him an income of UGX 400,000 and are also a source of food for his family throughout the year.

"Many of my peers are searching for white-collar jobs because they look down on agriculture, but I say that farming is a great opportunity for anyone to make money. I am hopeful that I will earn a lot more money in the next three years."

Sheema District, Western Uganda Current income: UGX 400,000/month Previous income: UGX 0 Training: Crop Farm Management



# Babara Kyasiimire, 33

Barbara depended on a small income from making potato crisps for the time she spent at home without employment. Seven years can be a long time to sit at home jobless. But Barbara endured as she earned an income hardly enough to afford her personal needs. To Barbara, completing her university degree in 2009 was an assurance for a good job; little did she imagine that she would stay home for such a lengthy period.

Her relief was when she met the SKY project at Mushroom Training and Resource Centre. In March 2017 she enrolled at the Centre for a two-month program to learn how to plant, manage and harvest from a mushroom garden. She began to market and keep good records of the whole process from production to sale.

Her skill in value-addition has given Barbara the advantage to sell her mushrooms at a higher price.

Kabale District, Western Uganda Current profits: UGX 1,000,000/3 months Previous profits: UGX 100,000/1 month Training: Mushroom production and value addition She set 30 mushroom gardens at her home. The technical support she continued to receive from the Centre and from the SKY project were a worthy contribution that has given her exposure to a bigger market where she now attends agricultural events and trains people, a prospect she says has helped her generate more experience to manage her business. She is now a certified grower of quality mushrooms by the Directorate of Industrial Training.

Barbara has gradually expanded to 300 mushroom gardens in her 500-capacity grow room from which she earns UGX 1 million every three months. It's still a long road for Barbara – with the target to reach a thousand gardens, she wants to harvest 10Kg of fresh and 20Kg of dry mushrooms each week.

Never abandoning her passion for making potato crisps, Barbara has invested in the snack business and is training women and youth in her neighborhood, some of whom now supply her with the crops to meet her growing demand.



### Evah Katushabe, 23

The Crop Manager's training at IBO Mixed Farm was Evah's rescuer. Evah is an agriculturalist but she had never been employed. Although she loves farming, her school experience did not expose her to practical learning until she joined the training at IBO Mixed Farm, where she experienced hands-on practice of what she learnt.

Upon completing her course at IBO, Evah got the chance to practice her skills at another SKY partner's farm in Kiryandongo District, where she was in charge of the establishment of a 600-acre banana plantation, the largest such farm in Uganda. She was paid UGX 15,000 each day for five months.

"The farm experience was amazing! It was my first practical encounter. I got paid for the work done even while I was still undergoing training."

Excited about her new experience, Evah saved her earnings for another course in agro-input shop management: she wanted to learn the proper use of agrochemicals. She is now the manager of a 40-acre farm with a banana plantation, passion fruit and bamboo where she earns UGX 500,000 every month. She also negotiated with her employer who provided her free land for her banana macro propagation project where she propagates 500 plantlets which give her an additional income each month.

Isingiro District, Western Uganda Current income: UGX 500,000/month Previous income: UGX 0 Training: crop farm management



### Allan Ahimbisibwe, 24

"I am happy to provide modern skills to farmers and to increase accesses to agricultural information. We have grown into a center of solutions to the needs of farmers."

Allan had started his own poultry enterprise in his mother's motor garage but the money he was getting from it was far from his expectation. He had worked for a bank and in pursuit for his dream in agriculture.

Having studied at Makerere University, in the densely populated Kampala, where most homes have limited space to practice farming, Allan decided that he would give the city residents a chance to grow their own vegetables in the urban context. And the idea to start a consultancy firm which would set up smart vegetable gardens commenced.

Mbarara District, Western Uganda
Current Income: UGX 1,500,000/month
Previous Income: UGX 400,000/month
Training: Plant doctor, soil testing
and agro-chemicals safe use

He left for IBO Mixed Farm, 400km away from Kampala, a rare determination among young people living in the urban areas. He wanted to become a plant doctor so that he would possess expert knowledge while serving his customers.

"It was one of the greatest moments of my life. I spent one month of intensive training at IBO and it has been far-reaching. I got the opportunity to create an online plant clinic to support farmers with diagnosis and pest control. When I started providing this service, I earned UGX 4 million in just a few months because one farmer referred me to another and my contacts widened".

Allan has strategically positioned his services in Kampala and in Arua, another densely populated town. He acknowledges the enormous business opportunities he is enjoying from the linkages he received through the SKY project during the learning and exchange visits he has had with over 200 farmers who are now part of his market. His Spark Agro-Initiatives Ltd. extends services to 1,500 farmers and 300 youth and women around Uganda.

"My dream is to make farming a smart, reliable and exciting business for young people. I hope to see a society where every child wants to be a smart farmer."







