



## Enhancing Farmer Entrepreneurship through Market Linkages



The National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU) shared its experiences with regard to market linkages.

NOGAMU is an apex membership organization formed in 2001 to coordinate and drive all stakeholders towards organic agricultural development. The organization is a member of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM). It currently has membership of over one million farmers of which over two hundred are organic and/or Fair-trade certified also involved in the export market chains.

The market linkage strategy promotes collective marketing, understanding markets and their dynamics, as well as linking farmers' associations to buyers.

NOGAMU has identified a number of optimal market strategies. These include;

- An export market linkage strategy which is purely demand driven and focuses on selected enterprises.
- A local market linkage strategy that involves linking organic farmers to local market outlets e.g. super markets and shops. The NOGAMU shop for example operates a basket scheme which has grown over time, with 80% of its current clientele being local Ugandans. (The Basket Scheme involves having fresh produce including fruits and vegetables, placed in a basket at the organic shop and ready for delivery to a client).
- The collective marketing strategy focuses on value chain development and aims at producing sufficient volumes for a specified market.
- The Information sharing and raising of awareness strategy aims at disseminating relevant information to the public via various platforms such as radios, televisions and organic days.
- Product development and promotion strategy aims at promoting organic entrepreneurs by supporting them to attend organic trade fairs, both locally and internationally as well as easing the accessibility of inputs required for organic farming.
- The networking strategy involves creating a network of organic products clientele in order to facilitate the sale of organic products.

However, the market linkage approach still requires improvement. There is still a need to empower farmers to acquire basic business skills, to learn or appreciate cost effective ways of advertising, to raise consumer awareness and be able to identify new market opportunities. There is also a need to strengthen collective marketing campaigns as an incentive to attracting bulk buyers and creating sustainable markets for organized groups. More effort needs to be exerted in sharing of information, knowledge and experiences so as to improve the quality of products. Standardization, certification and advertisement costs should be made affordable for the small holder farmer in order for organic products to compete favorably in the market.

**PELUM and APF Sharing Event. "Making entrepreneurship a reality for small holder farmers"**

There was consensus among the participants that the market linkage approach is a commercially viable venture as well as a sustainable practice due to its direct link to the market. The approach acts as a gateway to communication, enhances production and gives assurance of continuity of market.

The following means were suggested for up scaling this practice;

- Support certification of farmers.
- Government should offer subsidies to farmers.
- Collective marketing to reduce marketing costs and collective procurement of inputs
- Mechanization of farming for improved quality and efficiency.
- Procure business development services to enable farmers run successful farming business.
- Promote environment awareness and value addition to produce.
- Information sharing between producers, buyer and other stake holders.
- Profiling best practices, producers and potential markets.