

Voices from the Field

The Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) was founded in 1986 by Norman Borlaug, Jimmy Carter, and Ryoichi Sasakawa, to support smallholder farmers in Africa.

Voices from the Field offers an insight into the positive impact and benefits of SAA programs and activities, in the words of the smallholder farmers with whom we work. Through their experiences we continue to learn and improve, working together for a better future for Africa's smallholder farmers.

“I am proud of being engaged in agriculture”

The youth agribusiness in Uganda turning agricultural employment into a winning choice

The Zirowe Agaliawamu Agri-business Training Association (ZAABTA) is a dynamic and award-winning youth agri-business association situated in the Luwero district of central Uganda. The success of the group rests on its ability to inspire African youth to view agriculture as an employment choice with a bright future, rather than as a last resort.

The Nokia Youth Farming Agricultural Innovation Platform (NOFAIP) is a member of the ZAABTA association, and comprises over 300 young people, 123 of whom are women. Established in 2004, NOFAIP provides a range of services, including planting, threshing, shelling, as well as market support and water crop management.

Kiyingi John, a 24-year old member of NOFAIP, said: *“We have done a lot of activities. I am proud of being engaged in agriculture. We are providing agricultural production support services to the farmers, and the services are timely and commercial based. We are a mobile team; where there is demand, we are there.”* Speaking about the benefits that membership has brought, Kiyingi added: *“I personally have been able to buy more land, as well as my own field motorbike. We are so grateful to SAA because it has really given so much support to the Nokia youth through various training, which has enabled me to keep records and manage my funds, and that's why I am able to move from one step to another and also improve my livelihood.”*

Kiyingi, who holds a degree in development studies, added: *“Most of the youth look at agriculture as a last resort, but we say it can be a choice. As long as you have the social capital in your village, you can provide market to the farmers, and you get commission through linking the farmers to the market.”*

For more information, contact:

Zecharias Getahun, Communications Officer, SAA
Gurd Sholla Daminarof Building, 4th Floor Bole Sub-City, Kebele 13 PO Box 24135 Code 1000
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251-11-647-7670/71 | Fax: +251-11-647-7666 | info@saa-safe.org



Kamoan Daniel (L) and Kiyingi John working in the greenhouse

Kamoan Daniel, a graduate of Makerere University, and an extension officer at ZAABTA Extension said: *“In Nokia and the whole association [ZAABTA], I work as an agronomist and extension worker. I have poultry and livestock [cattle] projects, and I am aiming to buy more to improve my standard of living.”*

The energetic duo added: *“We promote agriculture as a choice of employment to the youth. When recruiting, we look for those who have the spirit of teamwork, commitment, and innovation. We want to train individuals who can earn from any kind of activities based on the resources, and the demand, around them.”*



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