

Case Study 1:

I am Akena Patrick 35 years old married to Atoo Vicky 28years old and we have 4 children. We belong to Pacu clan who migrated from South Sudan hundreds of years ago. I currently live together with my family in Dog gudi B village, Paloga Parish, Paloga Sub County, Lamwo District in Uganda. I am a smallholder farmer who earns a living mainly from farming and petty businesses.

Before I joined SARD-Net programme, life was very challenging for my family. We could only afford to eat one (1) meal in a day. I had no proper shelter except my 2 grass thatched huts with mud wattle, 1 cow, and 3 goats. Paying school fees for my children was challenging, buying basic family needs like source pans, clothes, paying medical bills among others was not easy. My wife could sometimes do petty jobs for food from the neighbours and even paying part of the school fees for the children. Farming on a large scale was hard because of lack of good quality planting Materials and labour costs since we could not afford. I used to engage in charcoal and brick laying activities in wetlands to earn a living i.e. pay school fees, medical bills and other domestic bills. My worst moment in life was when I was given a letter for payment of dowry for my wife. I did not have anything like an animal and money to pay dowry of my wife, life became miserable when I failed to raise to their expectation but through the good relationship with friends and relatives, I finally managed pay.

Through my Local council (LC 1) Mr.Ocitti Kenneth, I got to hear about SARD-Net and I became more interested when I was told that SARD-Net implements agriculture and livelihood project activities in Paloga Sub County, Lamwo District. Since I have abundant piece of land, besides that our motto for the clan being '*lapur pe camo labutu*' meaning you cannot achieve anything while sleeping i.e. you have to wake up and work hard in order to eat and improve your livelihood. Through my active participation during group formation, I was elected to be the Village Development Facilitator (VDF) of Dog gudi B village where I live. I have attended several trainings conducted by SARD-Net staff and exposure visits within and outside Lamwo District on Good Agronomic Practices (GAPs), Gender Action Learning Systems (GALs), Village Saving Loan Association, and Climate Resilient Agro Ecosystem Model (CRAEM). Through the trainings, I got inspired to engage in sustainable farming as a business to improve my livelihood.

SARD-Net has empowered me to acquired skills of solving gender violence related issues, Good Agronomic Practices (GAPs), nursery bed establishment and management, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), animal health related management among others. Through SARD-Net trainings, I have managed to increase my acreage of farming from the previous 2 acres to 10 acres per annum. The proceeds from farming and VSLA savings have enabled me to: construct a 3

roomed permanent house for my family, acquire 8 heads of cattle, 1 ox-plough, 15 goats, a shop for selling general merchandise and other domestic assets. Furthermore, am also able to pay school fees for my 3 children and cater for other family basic needs. However, with the knowledge and skills that I have acquired through trainings provided by SARD-Net, I am empowered to sustain my life and family very well. I would therefore like to thank SARD-Net and the donors who fund their activities for job well done in Lamwo District.



Akena Patrick working in his tomato garden in Dog gudi B village, Paloga Sub County, Lamwo District