



Strengthening Pig Producer Groups in Kabonera- Kyanamukaaka, Masaka district of Uganda

Case Stories of Group mentoring

Prepared for

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AKWATA EMPOLA GROUP

This group has 20 members and the meeting took place at Mr.Kavuma's place in Kabonera mu Kitto the wife being a member of this group.

None of the members had carried a copy of the constitution for my perusal .However, the executive members showed a candid understanding of the clauses in their constitution.A notable clause in this constitution is the fact that at the end of the year they divide the savings/money available amongst the members.

Their savings now make a total of 1,800,000 UGX (one million eight hundred thousandshillings) all kept in the micro finance institution. Records to confirm this are with the treasurer.

They have lent some money to members at an interest of 5% per month and they have up to 4,000,00 UGX (four million shillings) in loans to members .

Even though the group has 20 members their monthly savings average a total of 610,000 this is because the monthly contributions in savings are not equal with many saving less than 30,000 Ugx and a few at 50,000 Ugx per month.

Challenges.

Many members belong to different savings groups affecting any suggestion that comes to increase the monthly saving contribution by each member.

Members stay far from the financial institutions making them stay with the cash till meetings to hand it over to the treasurer making these savings are channeled to handle emergencies.

They struggle during distributions at the end of the year to ascertain each member's contribution to the lending arm of the group.

Issues discussed:

On the money saved: the mentor stressed it to the group that saving and later sharing the money at the end of the year where members use the money to pay fees, buy household items etc is equivalent to saving for future consumption and as such no financial developments will be realized among members.

Recommendation : To invest in a venture as a group that will bring in returns where part of the profit is what is shared for consumption but the venture stays making and accumulating capital.

On the amount saved: The mentor stressed that the amount saved by the members is still on the low given the age of the group.

Recommendation: The best way to increase on the monthly contribution is to individually create alternative sources of income to increase each members financial muscle to pave way for increased contributions to the amounts saved per member per month.

On the distribution of monies challenge: the mentor informed the group that the best way to handle this is to improve the record keeping of the entire group with a redundancy level of two. This means the treasurer has on file the contribution of each member but also this information is captured by the secretary during the meetings. As such, the executive can always compile in percentages each members contribution and reward members according to the percentage contribution. Redundancy ensures data is always available and increases on the transparency.

On loans: usually the treasurer receives money and before taking it to the bank ,money can be lent to members who want to borrow and the balance taken to the bank. The mentor highlighted to the group that this practice limited growth of the group. Since would be future partners like banks need to see their deposits before considering their loan requests.

Recommendation: All deposits should first hit the bank and later withdrawn for loan purposes.



KYANAMUKAKA - KABONERA CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY EXECUTIVE

The mentor was able to meet a few committee members of the executive who were the chairman ,the secretary and the head of information ; the late change of venue affected the number of people who did attend .

The executive members highlighted the fact that even though ILRI came through the co-operative to know the groups, the members of the co-operative have not gained from the trainings as much as the individual group members.

Challenges cited:

Co-operative society executive members have positions in the different pig farmer's groups this has resulted in many co-operative meetings lacking quorum.

The co-operative society requires a financial contribution yet the groups also require a financial contribution this limits many people from subscribing as members to the co-operative society

There is general lack of a clear understanding amongst the members on how a co-operative society runs and the role it should currently play in the ILRI intervention.

There is a huge information gap between the co-operative and farmer groups. The group members have no idea on the benefits of joining the co-operative.

Issues discussed:

The co-operative society executive requested that for all ILRI/Enterprise Uganda interventions, the co-operative executive be given a chance to be at the fore-front in the mobilisations to accord the co-operative the visibility that can help it push its agenda and programs.

In the event that the above request is not possible or achievable, It was the executive members' request that for every training ILRI /Enterprise Uganda undertakes in the region ,the co-operative society executive is put in the know to prepare to send a representative to the trainees to inform them about the benefits of joining the co-operative and the programs of the co-operative.

The executive members requested a training with modules on leadership, mobilization and time management to build their capacity on how to run a co-operative society.

Recommendation:

The mentor mentioned it to the executive that they had to make joining the co-operative attractive by highlighting benefits to motivate people to join. This would entail among many other ways having co-operative members who have gained from it to be the ones to spread the message.

They needed to set a goal of increasing the number of co-operative society members by aggressively meeting these group leaders and asking for a platform to preach their agenda.

The co-operative society executive was advised to find harmonious relations within the executive members to have them aim at achieving the same goal.



HOPE IN CHRIST GROUP

This group has 22 members and it has existed since 2013.

There were only a few members in attendance like 10 as a group member had lost a relative and the rest of the members had gone to attend the burial.

The group chairperson, treasurer and secretary were in attendance and all the documentation regarding the group was available. The constitution and the weekly savings record book were all availed to the mentor.

The members are very conversant with the clauses in the constitution answering with a lot of courage any question put forward to them.

The savings book indicates that the highest saving member saves 250,000UGX per month and the lowest saving member saves 40,000 UGX per month.

After the first intervention in form of training by Enterprise Uganda the group intimated that they were advised by trainer Daniel Joloba not to depend on a single source of income. On this advice they withdrew up to a tune of 2,590,000 UGX and they gave it to members to start side income generating ventures.

They affirm that this has helped them a lot since the swine fever wiped out many of the group owner's pigs in December 2015. They initially had a total collection of over 120 pigs amongst members but the fever left them with only 30 pigs.

Their current group saving stands at 3,000,000 UGX.

They usually give loans to members at 3 percent per month.

Challenges:

No access to Veterinary services making them struggle a lot during disease outbreaks .

They can't charge more than 3 percent interest per month to members who borrow.

Group savings are still mixed with church money.

Issues discussed:

Since the veterinary services were scarce it was important for all members to get acquainted with signs and symptoms of many diseases that affect pigs to enable them look for interventions early enough to control on the number of losses.

The mentor pointed out to the members that the group has its goals and so does the church .Conflicts of interest will always arise when the church needs money for the project and when the money is not enough it attempts to use the group savings.

Recommendation : It was agreed that the group will open its own account to keep its savings by the first week of April 2016.

The mentor informed the group that much as loans are disbursed at 3% per month is a good and fair percentage to members the progress rate of the group is too slow at that rate.

Recommendation: The mentor advised the group to look for a joint/group income generating venture on top of the pig farming .Several ventures were suggested that included events management where the group could buy chairs and hire them to give them a chance to grow their money and be able to use this increased income to look after their pigs better.

Also even though the swine fever almost wiped out many of their pigs the Mentor stressed it to the group members that real-entrepreneurs never give-up and it was agreed by members to resume the piggery projects by April 2016