

Capacity strengthening of small holder pig producers; a progress review



John Rachkara (right) a progressive farmer from Kitgum shares his experiences with his peers in Masaka (Photo credit: ILRI/Brian Kawuma)

Although pig production in Masaka district is on the rise, several capacity and knowledge gaps constrain smallholder pig farmers from fully exploiting the potential of this enterprise. In July 2015, the IrishAid-funded MorePORK project engaged [Enterprise Uganda](#), a capacity building firm to [undertake the training](#) of 150 pig producers in Masaka District (Kabonera and Kyanamukaaka subcounties) on entrepreneurship and business management. The key components of the training were; Entrepreneurship training and attitudinal reorientation, Farming as a business, Savings and investment, Business planning, Mentoring and counselling for group leaders and individuals members and Business leadership and governance.

We talked to some of the training participants and below are their testimonies;

May Nakanwagi, 40

She has attended three of the trainings; *Farming as a business*, *Entrepreneurship training and attitudinal reorientation* and *Business Planning*. Before she participated in the training, she tethered her pigs because she didn't realise the importance of confining them in a sty. The training has changed her mindset to viewing her piggery project as a business and she has since constructed sties for her pigs. May has also expanded her herd size from 5 to 13 pigs. She has also used the newly acquired knowledge to improve her retail business that deals in basic household items like food and domestic wares. She has

now developed a business plan and can now borrow more money to recapitalize her business and open a second outlet.

A member of Akwata Empola Farmers group, Nakanwagi is grateful because the training is transforming her group as well. Initially the group leaders were not tolerant to varying opinions of members but they seem to have 'softened'. For instance after the training on Savings and Investment, the members suggested a hike in the individual savings from Ushs.20,000 to 50,000 per member per month which has in effect increased the maximum amount each of them can borrow from the group from Ushs.300,000 to Ushs.700,000.

Grace Kitiibwakye, 41

Has attended training on; *Farming as a business, Savings and investment, Marketing and Business planning*. Her most important lesson has been nurturing her ambition and not fearing to grow. Interacting with her peers and listening to their experiences at the numerous training sessions has encouraged her to buy 5 more pigs to add to the one she had kept for over a year. The members in her farmers group, Hope In Christ Farmers Association were each saving between Ushs.2, 000 and Ushs.10,000 per week but the lessons from the Saving and Investment training have challenged them to aspire for greater; each member can only save a minimum of Ushs.5,000 per week which has enabled the group raise Ushs.600,000 in a month. Through peer learning, Grace has learned to enrich her pigs' diets by increasing the nutrients in their feeds to be able to boost growth and productivity. She has also constructed proper housing structures for her pigs, a shift from the tethering system she initially had.

Bruno Settuba, 71

To Bruno, the business training has been most informative. Knowing what business is irrespective of whether it is crop, livestock or retail trade has helped him adjust most of the operations on his pig farm.

"I have learned not to waste time on unproductive things and to avoid making excuses like I can't make it because it rained or the kids are sick", Bruno says.

He further states that the training has encouraged him to increase his herd size from 4 to 8 pigs to be able to earn more from his pig enterprise. In the last two trainings Bruno brought along his eleven year old son to learn a few things about piggery as a business so he can take over from him in the future.

Norah Namugenyi, 49

Norah is the secretary of Kyamuyimbwa Farmers Association and has attended all the trainings by Enterprise Uganda and ILRI. The most significant change to her has been change of mindset; she no longer takes her pigs for granted. Before she was not mindful of the feeding time for per pigs and often fed them once a day. She has since learned to take her piggery project as a business. She has drawn up a feeding time table, has constructed proper housing structures for her pigs and also grown the herd size from 1 pig to 13.

As a group, they had never seriously considered saving jointly but the training has enabled each of the 39 group members to save a minimum of Ushs.5, 000 a week. They hope to use part of the group savings to stock feeds for their pigs.

Florence Kakeeto, 39

Florence is married to a businessman, whose trade requires him to always be on the move consequently she decided to take up various income generating activities to be able to meet urgent household and personal financial needs in his absence. Her biggest enterprise is piggery and in her words, the training has been a godsend because it has taught her not to be afraid of dreaming and aspiring for better.

The lessons on savings and business plan have given her a new perspective about piggery as a business. As the chairperson of Akwata Empola Farmers Association, she has taken it upon herself to pass on the information she gets at these trainings to her peers who were not able to participate.

“Some of our fellow members cannot participate because their husbands won’t let them,” she says. “So during our group meetings I try to give them a summary of what we learnt in the trainings”

Her group has intensified their saving efforts and has gradually grown from saving Ushs.5, 000, to 50,000 per member per week. Because of this, each member can now borrow a maximum of Ushs.700, 000 up from just 300,000. The members of her group have also been encouraged to borrow in order to recapitalize their piggery businesses.