



AGRICULTURE REORM HUB UGANDA (AGROREF)

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2025

Theme: Sow, Grow, Reform

1

AGROREF, Annual Activity Report, 2025

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ACRONYM AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACTV..... African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims

CSO..... Civil Society Organization

MDA..... Ministry, Department and Agency

NGO..... Non-Governmental Organization

UN..... United Nations

HRBA..... Human Rights Based Approach

ICT..... Information, Communication and Technology (ICT)

UHRC..... Uganda Human Rights Commission

CAT..... Coalition Against Torture

MoU..... Memorandum of Understandings

EASC..... East African Standards Committee

TC..... Technical Committee

UNBS..... Uganda National Bureau of Standards

DEAS..... Draft East African Standards

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON BOARD OF DIRECTORS

On behalf of the Board of Directors of AGROREF Uganda, I am pleased to present the Annual Activities Report for the year 2025. This report highlights the progress made, challenges encountered, and lessons learned as we continued to pursue our mandate of promoting sustainable agriculture, food security, and resilient livelihoods among farming communities in Uganda.

The year 2025 was one of growth, reflection, and renewed commitment. Despite operating in an environment characterized by climate variability, rising operational costs, and evolving community needs, AGROREF Uganda remained steadfast in delivering impactful programs. Through strong partnerships, dedicated staff, and the trust of our beneficiaries, the organization successfully implemented key activities aligned with our strategic objectives.

Notable achievements during the year included the strengthening of farmer capacity through training, promotion of climate-smart agricultural practices, and increased engagement with local stakeholders. These efforts contributed to improved productivity, enhanced household incomes, and greater awareness of sustainable natural resource management among our target communities.

The Board acknowledges that challenges remain, particularly in resource mobilization, climate-related risks, and scaling successful interventions. However, these challenges have also provided valuable learning opportunities that will inform our strategies moving forward. The Board is confident that the management team is well positioned to build on the gains made and to address existing gaps with innovation and accountability.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to our development partners, donors, government agencies, community leaders, and all stakeholders for their continued support and collaboration. Special recognition goes to the AGROREF Uganda management and staff for their dedication, professionalism, and commitment throughout the year.

As we look ahead, the Board reaffirms its commitment to good governance, transparency, and strategic oversight. We remain focused on strengthening AGROREF Uganda's institutional capacity and expanding our impact to reach more communities in need.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank you for your continued confidence in AGROREF Uganda and invite you to review this report as a testament to our collective efforts in 2025.

Mr. Eric Namungalu,
Chairperson, Board of Directors.

REMARKS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As AGROREF Uganda concludes the year 2025, I am pleased to reflect on the significant progress the organisation has made over the past two years since its establishment. This period has been foundational, marked by deliberate efforts to build strong partnerships that advance our mission.

Partnership development has remained a strategic priority for AGROREF Uganda. Over the last two years, we have successfully established and nurtured collaborative relationships with local communities, civil society organisations, government institutions, development partners, private sector actors, and research and learning institutions. These partnerships have enhanced our capacity to design and implement impactful programmes, strengthened knowledge sharing, and enabled us to reach underserved farming communities more effectively. Through collaboration, we have been able to leverage complementary expertise, resources, and networks, ensuring that our interventions are inclusive, context-responsive, and sustainable.

In 2025, these partnerships translated into improved programme delivery, increased stakeholder engagement, and growing recognition of AGROREF Uganda as a reliable and innovative actor in the agricultural and rural development space. We are particularly encouraged by partnerships that promote farmer-led solutions, climate-smart agriculture, youth and women inclusion, and evidence-based approaches to agricultural transformation. As we look ahead, AGROREF Uganda remains committed to deepening existing partnerships while forging new strategic alliances that align with our vision and values. We are confident that continued collaboration will be central to scaling our impact, strengthening institutional growth, and contributing meaningfully to Uganda's agricultural development agenda.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all our partners for their trust, commitment, and shared vision. Some of the partners include, Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC), PELUM Uganda, Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV), The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Restless Development Uganda, Bulambuli District Farmers Advocacy Platform, Nkoma Area Cooperatives Enterprises, TUMAINI Cooperative, Sensitise Uganda, Human Rights Centre Uganda, African Youth Development Link, Young Farmers Champions Network, to mention but a few. Together, we have laid a strong foundation, and together, we will continue to grow.

Asingizibwe Ambrose;
Executive Director

ABOUT AGRICULTURE REFORM HUB UGANDA (AGROREF)

AgroRef Uganda is a Not-for -Profit Organization focusing on advancing agricultural policy reforms, budget advocacy and supporting building of systems, fostering values of equity, accountability, transparency and sustainability of organisations especially small holder farmer organizations including but not limited to agricultural cooperatives using a Human Rights Based Approach.

Vision

We aim to create a world where farming communities flourish, and food security is a reality for all.

Mission

To drive agricultural policy reforms especially for agricultural cooperatives prioritizing inclusivity and sustainability, driving a Human Rights Approach coupled with strengthening management and governance of farmer led and focused organizations.

Core values

- Probity and integrity
- Respect for systems
- Accountability and Transparency
- Equity and Fairness
- People centered

Program areas

- Advocacy and Networking
- Capacity Building
- Research And Development Plus Learning
- Operations and Administration

1. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE UNDER EACH PROGRAM

1.1. ADVOCACY, POLICY REFORM & NETWORKING

The agricultural sector especially small-holder farmers in Uganda still faces several challenges at various levels of the value chain. As efforts are being made to support farmers to improve on their production and market related challenges, there is need to also ensure that there is a conducive enabling policy and regulatory environment as an enabler of other functions of the agriculture sector and their collective formations. This therefore calls for consolidated and well-planned external engagement system. During the year, these engagements targeted government as it is responsible for the enactment, review and implementation of policies, laws, ordinances, bylaws etc. Nevertheless, AGROREF was also cognizant of the fact that within the agricultural sector, there are other stakeholders including private sector players, civil society and development partners operating at various levels (sub-county, district & national) that have vested interests in the sector that were also engaged.

Below, are the activities that were conducted under this program:

1.1.1. Livelihood and Resilience Sector Working Group (LRSWG) Meetings

AgroRef Uganda as a member of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Livelihood and Resilience Sector Working Group (LRSWG) attended all the meetings as listed in the table below;



S/N	Topic	Date
1.	Rapid Assessment on the impact of the funding freeze (UNCHR)	Wednesday 26th Feb 2025

2.	LRSWG Monthly meeting (The discussion focused on the current situation analysis related to the refugee operation for 2026-2019,	19th March, 2025
3.	LRSWG Monthly meeting (The discussion focused on critical updates within the livelihoods and resilience sector, particularly concerning funding and its implications for refugees)	Wednesday 16 th April, 2025
4.	LRSWG Monthly meeting focused on the outcomes of UNHCR's land mission in Refugee Settlements, and access to land among refugees and host Communities in Uganda,	21 May 2025
5.	The June LRSWG Monthly meeting focused on entrepreneurship and employment in Uganda, emphasizing collaboration and advocacy strategies to address barriers faced by refugees and host communities.	18th June 2025
6.	Refugee Livelihoods and Resilience Sector Working Group meeting	15th Oct, 2025

1.1.2. Food and Nutrition Policy validation

AgroRef Uganda participated in the Food and Nutrition Policy validation workshop. The national stakeholders' consultation meeting was held on the 14th of April 2025 at Fairway Hotel in Kampala. In recognition of the critical importance of addressing food and nutrition security in Uganda, the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) in partnership with PELUM Uganda, Food Rights Alliance and other like-minded partners conducted a national stakeholders' consultation meeting on the Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy 2003 under review. The workshop updated the stakeholders on the UFNP review process, to obtain input from the national stakeholders on the draft Food and Nutrition policy and incorporate into the policy the zero-waste management practices for promotion of circular economy for SMEs.



Stakeholders at the consultative meeting; AgroRef's Executive Director second from the left

1.1.3. National Private Sector Engagement Forum (NaPSEF)

AGROREF attended the 1st National Private Sector Engagement Forum (NaPSEF). The NaPSEF is a Ugandan initiative that brings together government, finance, and businesses to drive private sector leadership in climate finance mobilization, fostering green innovation and sustainable economic growth for Uganda's climate resilience. The forum focused on unlocking private investment for climate action, supporting MSMEs, and bridging significant climate financing gaps.

1.1.4. Digitally Enabled Resilience and Nutrition Policy Innovations (DERPIN) continental policy dialogue: harnessing data & evidence for decision-making

AGROREF Uganda attended an online webinar, the continental policy dialogue: harnessing data & evidence for decision-making on 23 July, 2025. Africa's agrifood systems face increasing challenges related to climate change, market volatility, and

other shocks, which are exacerbated by persistent vulnerability and malnutrition, as well as limited access to reliable, disaggregated data for informed decision-making. The DERPIIn project was initiated to strengthen the resilience of African agrifood systems by leveraging digital tools and data analytics to support evidence-based, inclusive, and gender-sensitive policy- and decision-making. The project aims to empower policymakers, farmers, researchers, and private sector actors with timely, actionable data and tools that can strengthen food system resilience and improve nutrition outcomes.

1.1.5. Other knowledge sharing online engagements

AgroRef Uganda participated in a number of online webinars organised by our key partners on difference topics and thematic areas. The table below shows a number of webinars AgroRef participated in;

S/N	Partner/ organiser	Topic and summary of discussion	Date
1	COLEAD	Recent & Upcoming Changes to EU Agri-Food Regulations. The webinar provided an overview of new regulatory requirements relating to pesticide residue MRLs, nickel maximum levels, flavourings and food additives and an introduction to EU initiatives that may affect Ugandan agri-food exports in coming years such as rules on mineral oil contamination, packaging, and corporate sustainability due diligence.	26th March, 2025
2.	YPARD	Resource Mobilization and Mastering the Art of Proposal Writing which focused on Unlocking Opportunities: Resource Mobilization for Youth Leaders in Agricultural Development	14th April, 2025

3.	African Union, AUDA-NEPAD, the Pan-African Farmers' Organization (PAFO), AKADEMIYA2063, Andreas Hermes Akademie, and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)	Continental Webinar on the Kampala CAADP Declaration. The event convened key actors across the African agriculture and development landscape to examine how the Kampala CAADP Declaration can be effectively translated into action that prioritizes and responds to the realities faced by African farmers.	May 15, 2025
4.	AKADEMIYA2063	Kampala CAADP series, Webnar (session) II. The session provided a policy deployment package to support the domestication and implementation of the Kampala CAADP Agenda.	26th June 2025
5.	PAFO and hosted by PROPAC,	Session 23/PROPAC: Pan-African FO Exchange Platform: "Agroecology in today's world. Agroecology in today's world: implications of biological and chemical inputs" to be moderated by PROPAC.	26th June 2025
	Pan African Farmers' Organization (PAFO) and the Andrea Hermes Academy (AHA),	Session 24/ROPFA: Pan-African FO Exchange Platform: on "Youth Engagement in Agrifood Systems Youth Engagement in Agrifood Systems: Situation, Gap Strategies and Inspiring Pathways in reference to Kampala Declaration." to be moderated by ROPFA.	18th August, 2025
	EAFF, PAFO	Session 25/EAFF: Pan-African FO Exchange Platform: on "Land Access and Use	13 Nov 2025

	<p>Malabo Montpellier Forum</p>	<p>17th Malabo Montpellier Forum: The virtual event officially launched the Panel's report, Recipes for Success 2: Policy Innovations to Achieve the Kampala Declaration Goals.</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to contribute to the evidence needed to guide the implementation of the Kampala CAADP Agenda by pulling together a rich set of lessons from 70 country case studies conducted by the Malabo Montpellier Panel over the last decade.</p>	<p>18th December, 2025</p>
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1.1.6. The International Day in Support of Torture Survivors

AGROREF Uganda as a member of the Coalition Against Torture (CAT) fully participated in the preparation for the UN Day against Torture organized by ACTV. The United Nations International Day in Support of Torture Survivors was held on Thursday, 26 June 2025 at the Golf Course Hotel. AgroRef was represented by Mr. Okongo Desiderio.



The picture shows stakeholders at the dialogue held in support of Torture survivors

1.1.7. Press Conference on peaceful elections

AgroRef attended a press conference organized by ACTV calling upon Ugandans and election stakeholders to observe respect for human rights during and after the general elections that were being organized to take place in 2026. During the conference AgroRef Uganda highlighted the critical need of a violence free elections and its associated benefits to farmers including food security, & keeping stable the livelihoods of 62% Households engaged in the sector.



Second to the left, AgroRef's Executive Director during the press conference.

1.1.8. Reflection meeting on the UN day in support of victims of torture

The objective of the meeting was to have a feedback session about the recently concluded UN Day commemoration and also reflect on our achievements so far made under the CAT Advocacy strategy 2024-2027 and what activities to prioritize in the remaining months of the year 2025. The meeting was held on 19th August 2025 at the ACTV offices



CAT members and partners during the reflection meeting

1.1.9. National Youth Manifesto

AgroRef Uganda participated in the National Youth Manifesto (2026-2031) development led by African Youth Development Link (AYDL) and the Youth Coalition on Electoral Democracy (YCED). The National Youth Manifesto is a youth-led advocacy framework that captures the issues and aspirations of young people across Uganda as priorities for policy action over the next years of the political tenure. Currently in its fourth (4th) edition, the manifesto is developed through broad consultation with youth from all regions and seeks to shape youth engagement in governance and development as Uganda headed into the 2025/2026 General Elections and beyond. Agroref focus and influence hinged on youth participation in the agriculture sector.



1.1.10. UNBS Technical Committee meetings

In **2025**, *AgroRef Uganda* engaged actively in standards development and harmonisation processes convened by the **Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS)**. As part of its commitment to improving agricultural value chains and market access for agro-products, *AgroRef* contributed to national and regional standardisation dialogues and technical committee activities that shape quality, safety, and trade policies for agricultural goods.

During the year, *AgroRef Uganda* participated in key **standards harmonisation and technical committee meetings** facilitated by UNBS and its partners. This included involvement in technical working groups on harmonising edible oils and related products under the East African Community's standardisation strategy, where stakeholders from partner states collaborated to align commodity standards that support cross-border trade and consumer safety.

AgroRef's engagement with UNBS provided opportunities to represent farmer-centric perspectives in standards discussions, ensuring that smallholder and cooperative voices were included in deliberations on quality requirements, product certification, and regional trade facilitation frameworks. Through this participation, the organisation reinforced its mission to advance equitable and sustainable agricultural systems while helping stakeholders understand how standards can unlock broader market opportunities for agro-enterprises.

As UNBS continues to coordinate numerous technical committees and harmonisation efforts at national, regional, and international levels, AgroRef's role in these processes underscores its commitment to enhancing policy coherence and inclusive stakeholder engagement in standards development across Uganda's agricultural sector.

The table below shows the activities AgroRef Uganda participated in under the leadership of UNBS

S/N	Topic	Date
1.	Committee 202 on Oilseeds, Fats, and Oils <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mayonnaise – Specification 2. Sesame Flour – Specification 3. Sunflower Seeds for Oil Extraction – Specification 4. Pumpkin Seed Flour – Specification 5. Edible Groundnut – Specification 6. Edible Corn Oil – Specification 	24th Oct, 2025
2.	1st meeting of UNBS/TC 217 on Organic Agriculture Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) is convened the 1st Technical Committee meeting on Organic Agriculture (UNBS/TC 217) via Zoom. The meeting discussed the TC business plan, explored new areas of standardization at national, regional and international level, and receive feedback on the implementation of standards related to organic agriculture. Additionally, the session also agreed	30th Sept, 2025

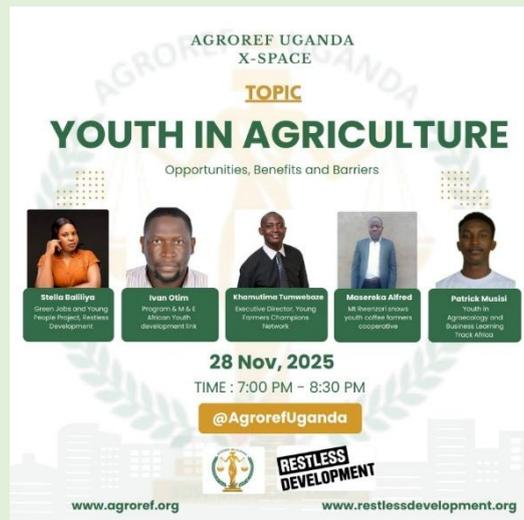
	and recommend the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the TC prior to appointment by the Executive Director, UNBS.	
3.	9th meeting of UNBS/TC 202 on Oilseeds, oils, fats and related products and processes	03rd Oct, 2025
4.	Partner States of the East African Community are undertaking harmonization of standards under the EASC/TC 007, Alcoholic beverages. The UNBS/TC 219, Alcoholic beverages respectively that is a National Mirror Committees for the regional and international work under this sector, therefore calls stakeholders to prepare and participate in the upcoming physical harmonization meeting on the following seven (7) Draft East African Standards;	

1.1.11. Youth in agriculture on twitter space

AGROREF UGANDA in partnership Restless Development organised a twitter space with the goal of enhancing and attracting youth participation in all agriculture value chains and cooperatives for employment creation and business development. The event took place on the 28th November 2025 and representatives from youth led and focused organisations and youth engaged in agribusiness were given an opportunity to share their experiences.

Brief context

Apparently, the agriculture sector is not looked at as a viable sector of employment and remains highly unattractive to the youth due to the risks, intensive nature and low profitability. Most of the youth engaged in agriculture are vulnerably employed as own account workers and contributing family workers with little or no income accruing to them. While the exodus of the youth from the agriculture sector (of 9.0 percent) might seem to be higher than that of the prime age group (of 3.4 percent), the majority of the youth continue to derive their livelihood from agriculture. Some would argue that this movement away from agriculture is a sign of structural transformation of the economy; but the pattern has not brought with it the required job growth needed to absorb the increasing young labour force and as such high levels of underemployment are being experienced in the services and industrial sectors (UB oS 2009)



1.1.12. Youth CSO consultative meeting on the NGO bureau’s regulatory impact assessment report and revision of the NGO policy

AgroRef Uganda attended a meeting organised by African Youth Development Link (AYDL) on 13th of November 2025, at Hotel Africana, Kampala. AYDL convene a Youth CSOs Consultative Meeting with the NGO Bureau to generate feedback and recommendations that will inform the finalization of the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) report and contribute to the revision of the NGO Policy and potentially the NGO Act. This was intended to ensure that the voices of youth CSOs are reflected in the policy and legal reform process.



Youth stakeholders during the consultative meeting at Hotel Africana; AgroRef was represented by Mr. Okongo Desiderio

1.1.13. The UN International Human Rights Day

AgroRef Uganda was a key stakeholder and partner in organizing the International Human Rights Day 2025 spearheaded by the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC). The organization attended the planning meetings held at UHRC headquarters and the National Stakeholder dialogue held on 10th December 2025 at Golf Course Hotel under the theme, “Strengthening democratic space, upholding freedom of expression, speech, association, media and security of persons during the 2026 elections for all persons.”



1.1.14. Strategic CAT meeting at Golf Course Hotel in Kampala district

AGROREF Uganda attended a strategic CAT meeting On Friday, 14th November 2025, at Golf Course Hotel in Kampala district. The Coalition Against Torture (CAT) in Uganda, chaired by ACTV, is a vital network of 30-member civil society organizations (CSOs), legal aid providers, and human rights defenders committed to preventing torture, advocating for and securing justice for survivors. The primary outcome of the meeting was the development of a comprehensive CAT advocacy report on elections. The quarterly Strategy Meeting was a critical, timely intervention that proactively coordinated the CAT network's efforts to mitigate electoral violence and ensured a unified, evidence-based human rights response.



CAT members and partners at the strategic meetings

1.1.15. Roundtable discussion with access to justice sub programme actors on the human rights situation in Uganda

AGROREF Uganda represented by the legal officer Okongo Desiderio attended a two days residential roundtable meeting organized by the Human Rights Centre Uganda on 26th and 27th November 2027 at hotel 7 Seasons in Entebbe. The meeting was conducted to disseminate the baseline information/findings and human rights issues to the decision makers to enhance access to justice. The duty bearers and human rights defenders discussed the push-factors that trigger justice actors like Police and Prisons officers that cause them to violate the rights of citizens and find solutions to address them and ultimately reduce cases of human rights violations in Northern Uganda. The round table meeting was informed by issues that arose from the capacity building workshops, community dialogues and district public dialogues that were held in selected districts in Northern Uganda.

1.1.16. Dialogue on creating consumer awareness on agroecological products and services

PELUM Uganda organized a dialogue that brought youth and other stakeholders on intended to creating consumer awareness and agroecological products and services and Agroref Uganda was represented by the Executive Director. The meeting was held at the American centre on 20th March 2025. Key to the discussion was how the youth can be engaged and supported in the agroecological space.



Mr. Asingizibwe Ambrose with a microphone at the American Centre during the dialogue

1.1.17. Workshop for advocacy initiatives for torture-free elections and OPCAT ratification in Uganda

On 24th and 25th March, 2025 at Esella Hotel, AgroRef Uganda attended a two days residential workshop organized by the ACTV and CAT. The advocacy workshop to discussed elections and the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture. The workshop also discussed and developed a comprehensive process plan for advocating for torture and violence free elections in Uganda and formulated a strategic process plan for advocating for the ratification of OPCAT in Ugandan.



Stakeholders and CAT members at the workshop

1.1.18. The second annual stakeholders' convention on policing 2025

On Wednesday 6th August 2025, at Fairway Hotel-Kampala, AgroRef Uganda was attended and participated in the second annual stakeholders' convention on policing 2025 that sought to critically examine the tensions and synergies between the ideal frameworks of democratic policing and the everyday experiences of citizens and officers across Uganda. Through a deconstruction of systemic challenges, a showcase of emerging best practices, and a search for contextually grounded pathways, the convention charted a sustainable course of democratic policing that is accountable, professional, rights-respecting. Efforts to build a professional, accountable and human rights centered Uganda Police Force remains central to the country's democratic development and the rule of law.

1.1.19. Radio talk show

On 10th December 2025, our executive Director, Asingizibwe Ambrose was hosted on the K-FM, the Hot-Seat program. The topic of the show was, "Restoring citizen sovereignty." The E.D used the platform to talk about issues of cooperatives and agriculture including food security and sovereignty in relation to the topic.



Mr. Asingizibwe Ambrose attending a Radio talkshow on K-FM

1.2. CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRANSFORMATIVE SYSTEMS

Through its training, capacity development and community engagement, AgroRef Uganda strives to empower farmers, farmer organisations, cooperatives with skills and knowledge on different aspects including; accountability and transparent systems strengthening, personal and digital security training, Human Rights Based Approach and civic awareness, fundraising and resources mobilization, international, regional and national agriculture and cooperatives promotion mechanisms, research, monitoring and documentation among others through capacity building training workshops and community sensitization forums.

During the period under review, the following engagements were conducted under this programme

1.2.1. Youth in Agroecology Business Learning Track Africa Program

Our Executive Director was selected to participate as a mentor in a youth mentorship program by PELUM Uganda. He is currently mentoring Five (5) young people engaged in agribusiness for a period of 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. The Youth in Agroecology & Business Learning Track Africa (YALTA) program supports

young entrepreneurs in agroecology across Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda, focusing on sustainable food systems, business skills, and networking, building on its prior work and integrating with new initiatives like the Building Women & Youth-led Network Alliances for Agroecology and Organic Agriculture (WYNA) program in 2025, which expands opportunities for youth-led solutions and market linkages through training and grants.



Asingizibwe Ambrose with Mr. Patrick Musisi Ndungutse the mentee and founder of Maripat Food Solutions is a youth-led initiative based in Mayembe Upper, Mpigi District, Uganda

1.2.2. O-Farms Academy for circular agribusiness

Our executive Director enrolled for an 8 months agribusiness academy that was intended to build his capacity in agribusiness and circular economy models. The training was based on four modules which include; Business model canvas, Circular strategies and value chain mapping, Stakeholders, value creation and impact metrics. O-Farms is an African SME accelerator completely focused on circular agribusiness with the goal of making circularity a mainstream approach for improved rural livelihoods and sustainability. It is an initiative funded by the IKEA Foundation to help scale circular agribusiness innovations in East Africa.

1.1.1. Engagement with members of Bulambuli District Farmers Advocacy Platform

AGROREF Uganda continued supporting and offering technical guidance to Bulambuli District farmers advocacy Platform with over 50 organisations as members. The goal of the Districts Platforms is to engage in policy dialogue that creates an enabling environment for Producer Organisations and other private sector actors to engage profitably in agricultural markets. To achieve this, the market players such as the traders, aggregators, input suppliers, processors, producer organizations, were brought together (formally or informally) to tap into the opportunities amongst themselves and inclusively demand a more appropriate enabling environment in a more focused, structured, and effective non-confrontational way.

With this, District Advocacy Platform has created an environment where farmers through their Producer Organizations (POs) actively participate in agricultural policy development and implementation to improve their incomes, livelihoods, and resilience. The platform has been in highlighting the policy issues currently affecting smallholders, identifying opportunities within the policy terrain, and also sharpening their policy advocacy skills. This intervention has not only established a community of practice aimed at improving smallholder agricultural policies but also contribute towards increased capacities within the different constituencies dealing with smallholder agricultural policy issues.

1.1.2. Mentorship session on Agroecology Entrepreneurship and Business Development

AgroRef participated in a mentorship session organised by PELUM Uganda through the YALTA Agroecology Entrepreneurship and Business Development that took place on 9th August 2025 at the KCCA Farm in Kyanja during the YPARD Farm Day Out. The meeting brought key sector players in the agroecology space with discussions on issues surrounding agroecology and land use.



1.3. RESEARCH AND INNOVATIONS

Research is a key component of AgroRef Uganda. The thematic objective is to enhance capacity building, advocacy and networking intended for a just and fair legal and policy environment that promote agriculture, cooperatives development, rural transformation, equality and non-discrimination. The goal is to achieve systemic changes towards the realization of the rights of small holder farmers, members of cooperatives informed by evidence-based advocacy and development. AgroRef strives to be a key leader in the generation of cutting-edge research on various dimensions of agriculture, small-holder farmers, cooperatives and public policy in Uganda and beyond. Our work focuses on legal analysis of laws, policies and bills, baselines on new areas of interest, human rights violations, land related issues among others.

Through the thematic area, AgroRef works to contribute towards enhancing an enabling legal and policy environment for small-holder farmers for agricultural transformation.

It involves monitoring, analyzing and documenting the situation/environment in which farmers operate in Uganda. Since its inception AgroRef has been undertaking studies

on the situation of small-holder farmers, cooperatives and agriculture in Uganda; analyzing their working environment, challenges, threats, opportunities and strategies.

Research is carried out all year round since issues keep emerging that affect the environment in which farmers and cooperators operate. Through research, AgroRef has produced reports, publications that have increased the body of knowledge and promoted effective advocacy for improved operating environment of farmers in Uganda.

1.1.3. You have a right to know; weekly agriculture –cooperatives news

In order to keep our key stakeholders informed about new developments, AGROREF Uganda continued publishing news updates of news compiled from different newspapers and online platforms. The Lest You Forget series were and instead of the monthly publication, they were now published quarterly and shared on the organisation's blog page, twitter, the website and widely shared again on email to numerous individuals. In total, 4 editions were published and shared in 2025.

2. CHALLENGES FACED DURING 2025

Lack office space

AGROREF Uganda lacks its own independent office premises which adversely affects the organisation's operations. Currently, the organization is hosted by our partner, Sensitise Uganda which has done a great service and has kept AGROREF safe for the past one year. However, this poses challenges of privacy to both Sensitise Uganda and AGROREF but also the space is too small which doesn't promote a safe and conducive working environment.

Lack Financial resources

For the past one year, AGROREF's activities have been financed informally by funds raised and mobilized from friends that believe in the vision and mission of the organization. Other funds came from the private funds of the founding directors which not a sustainable model and from Barista Skills Academy.

Low staff capacity.

Based on the current organization organogram, the organization is ideally understaffed but realistically operating optimally because of the current few implementable activities. All current staff volunteer their services entirely to the organization. However, some key priority positions are still vacant because of the financial constraints the organization is currently facing.

Lack of Equipment

AGROREF Uganda lacks key equipment to effectively, efficiently and optimally operate. These include computers, laptops, printers, projector, office furniture, vehicles among others. These limit the operations of the organization which negatively affects our work.

3. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION

In order to overcome the mentioned challenges and increase the impact of AGROREF Uganda, the following strategies will be employed in advancing its mandate and objectives considering the challenges encountered.

AgroRef Uganda business: Barista Skills Academy

As part of AgroRef Uganda's commitment to strengthening Uganda's coffee value chain, the Barista Skills Academy continues to operate as a strategic business arm focused on professional capacity building in specialty coffee. Located in Wandegaya, Kampala, the Academy serves aspiring baristas, café owners, hospitality professionals, and coffee entrepreneurs seeking internationally benchmarked skills and certification.

The academy has trained and graduated over 500 baristas in Uganda since its establishment. Barista skills academy is a legal business that begun operations at the intersection of two modern challenges: high youth unemployment and a soaring country demand for skilled coffee professionals. As the specialty coffee industry exploded, cafes and roasteries found themselves desperately seeking trained baristas who understood not just how to push a button, but the science and art behind a perfect extraction. Simultaneously, hundreds of young people particularly those that were facing economic or social barriers and struggling to find pathways to meaningful employment, have been skilled through our academy in various coffee value chain, especially on what we termed as "BEAN TO CUP" hands on training.

Overview of Training Programs

The Academy delivers hands-on, industry-driven training designed to meet both local and global market standards. Core training areas include:

- Espresso extraction and brew theory
- Milk texturing and beverage composition
- Coffee machine operation and preventive maintenance
- Café workflow and customer service excellence

Performance Highlights: 2025

- Graduated a new cohort of professional baristas serving cafés, hotels, and coffee enterprises.
- Strengthened industry linkages with cafés and hospitality establishments for

job placement and internships.

- Maintained high practical training standards through small cohort-based instruction.

Business Needs and Strategic Solutions

To ensure sustainable growth and increased impact, the Academy requires targeted investments and strategic improvements. Below are key business needs and proposed solutions:

a) Increased Market Visibility and Enrollment

Need: Limited brand awareness beyond Kampala and among hospitality institutions restricts enrollment growth.

Proposed Solutions:

- Develop a structured digital marketing strategy (social media campaigns, alumni testimonials, short skill demonstration videos).
- Partner with hospitality schools, universities, and hotels for pipeline enrollment.

b) Equipment Upgrades and Practical Learning Capacity

Need: High-quality espresso machines and grinders are critical for hands-on training, but equipment depreciation and limited units constrain larger cohorts.

Proposed Solutions:

- Establish supplier partnerships for equipment sponsorships or leasing arrangements.
- Allocate an annual equipment replacement and maintenance budget.
- Expand machine maintenance training as a revenue-generating short course.
- Procure more advanced and smart equipment for efficiency and effectiveness

c) Alumni Engagement and Job Placement

Need: Limited structured follow-up with graduates reduces networking potential and industry placement tracking.

Proposed Solutions:

- Establish a Barista Skills Academy Alumni Network.
- Create a digital job board connecting graduates with cafés and hospitality businesses.
- Host annual alumni competitions and networking events.

d) Infrastructure and Learning Environment

Need: Growing demand may outpace the current training space capacity in Wandegeya.

Proposed Solutions:

- Optimize classroom layout for improved workflow simulation.
- Introduce blended learning modules (theory online, practical in-person).
- Explore satellite training sessions in other regions of Uganda through short-term mobile training setups.

Strategic Outlook for the academy

In 2025 and beyond, the Barista Skills Academy remains a critical pillar in AgroRef Uganda's mission to enhance value addition within Uganda's coffee sector. By strengthening marketing, diversifying revenue streams, investing in equipment, and formalizing alumni engagement, the Academy is positioned to grow sustainably while maintaining high professional standards.



Enhance the Human Resource

AGROREF will continue recruiting staff to fill the positions that are vacant but also continue developing the technical capacities of its staff through regular trainings so as to meet the dynamic working environment in Uganda. AGROREF will strive on retaining highly skilled and competitive personnel through good remunerations and other welfare benefits that add value to the organisation.

Promote Research and Documentation (R&D)

AGROREF is progressively investing in research, documentation and knowledge management on issues of cooperatives, agriculture locally and globally to ensure that its programs and focus are well informed based on realities and development needs. AGROREF will also invest in improving its Monitoring and Evaluation systems and shall keep learning and improving throughout its programs and initiatives.

Promote collaboration and partnerships

AGROREF will continue building new alliances and collaborations throughout the country and beyond. AGROREF is aware that in order to deliver on its mandate, stronger and robust partnerships, alliances and collaborations are very important. We shall strive to improve on our networks through joint implementation, joining coalitions and signing Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) with government agencies, local governments and community-based organizations in order to promote and harness the power of a united advocacy engagement.

Improve resource mobilization mechanisms

AGROREF will develop a fundraising strategy to help in mobilization of resources both internally and externally. A number of initiatives will be devised to mobilize enough resources but most importantly, strategies that reduce donor dependency will be given priority.

Encourage Risk Management systems.

The AGROREF will also develop and implement a Risk Management Strategy. The strategy will be developed for the purpose of identification, evaluation and prioritization of risks followed by coordinated and economical application of resources to minimize, monitor, and control the negative impact of unfortunate or unforeseen events in order to maximize the realization of opportunities.

Increase engagement with the media for increased awareness and visibility

AGROREF will work continuously with both mainstream and social media platforms across the country. AGROREF will reach out and partner with both national and sub

national media houses across the country to ensure that its work is known and felt by all the citizens.

Increase engagement with state agencies and departments to enhance penetration and acceptance of the proposals put forward for the benefit of farmers and cooperatives.

4. AGROREF MANAGEMENT AND STAFF



**Mr. Asingizibwe Ambrose; Executive
Director**



Ms. Tahiyah Nasseje, Head of Programmes



**Mr. Iddi Kibuuka, Livelihood and Resilience
Officer**



**Mr. Twahah Kaweesi; Information and
Technology Officer**



Ms. Laura Aladiru; Senior Agronomist



**Mr. Okongo Desiderio; Human Rights and
Legal Officer**

<p>Mr. Kenneth Nyakashaiaja; Finance and Accounts Officer</p>	<p>Ms. Hope Cabrine</p>
<p>Ms. Teddy Namale (Program Officer)</p>	<p>Mr. Brian Bamutaze(M&E) Officer</p>
<p>Katumba Benson (Media Engagement Officer)</p>	<p>Mr. Kenneth Kitambula (Advocacy and Research officer)</p>

OUR PARTNERS

