

**Operation Wealth Creation And Youth Farmers Development: A Case Study Of Kirima Sub-County,
Kanungu District**

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ABSTRACT

The research study was primarily aim at assessing the effect of operation wealth creation to youth farmers' development. a case study of Kirima sub county, Kanungu district. The research study was base on various objectives that includes establishing the contribution or role of operation wealth creation towards improving livelihoods, establishing the different challenges met by Operation wealth creation program in extending services to farmers and finding out the extent to which operation wealth creation program was improving the productivity of agriculture in, Kirima Sub-County, Kanungu district. The study further sought to establish relationship between Operation wealth creation program and the level of food and nutrition security in rural areas. According to the study findings on the challenges met by OWC program in extending services to households, shortage of agricultural inputs, uncooperative members, unfavourable climate and low value addition to agricultural production were the major challenges. This was because 17% strongly agreed and 83% of the total respondents agreed with both challenges that they were affecting them badly. The researcher recommended that farmers need to take on the advice from different technical teams if the operation wealth creation program is to perform to their expectations. Policy makers especially parliament representatives should try to follow up the OWC programme in conjunction with the evaluation teams to know how the programme is being implemented. They should also try to deal with the problem of corruption whereby it is claimed that much of the OWC program funds were embezzled when they reached at the sub-county level which is the level of implementation.

Key words: Operation wealth creation, Food Security, Welfare.

Background of the Study

The agricultural sector is prioritized in Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan (NDP I A II) as a growth opportunity that will accelerate Uganda's socio-economic transformation to middle income status by 2040 (Collins et al., 2023). This is to be achieved through the Ugandan government's strategic investment in the sector to facilitate gender-responsive mechanization, commercialization and provision of infrastructure for production (Allan et al., 2023), value addition

and marketing. The Government of Uganda's objective for the agricultural sector is to: Transform two million (50%) subsistence farming households into market-oriented production through sustainable commodity value chains by 2020 (Moses et al., 2023). The sector's medium-term objectives for the financial year 2010/11 to the financial year 2014/2015 were: a) To increase rural incomes and livelihoods. b) Improve food security and nutrition in households. The inventions focused

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on increasing agricultural production and productivity through a commodity approach that prioritized 11 commodities for public investment, namely maize beans, rice, bananas, cassava, cattle, meat, fish, coffee, tea, market fruits and vegetables (Oromo et al., 2023). The sector consists of seven votes, namely: vote 010: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAAIF); Vote 121: Dairy Development Authority (DDA); voice 125: National Animal Genetic Resources Centre and Databank (NAGRC&DB); vote 142: National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO); vote 152: National Agricultural Advisory Services Secretariat (NAADS); vote 155: Uganda Cotton Development Organization (UCDO); vote 160: Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA); Vote 500: local governments receive a Production and Marketing Grant (PMG) (Allan et al., 2023).

Beginning in the 2013/2014 fiscal year, the government-initiated reforms to harmonize and coordinate the country's parallel extended service delivery systems, based on the President's initiative. (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Industry and Fisheries .2016). This came amid regrettable failures and criticisms of 6 NAADS, particularly the ineffectiveness of service delivery as mentioned earlier and that it was riddled with corruption, a reputation that ran counter to the objectives of the establishment of the body. NAADS project staffs at

Problem Statement

The Government of Uganda is committed to improving service delivery through effective funding, implementation and monitoring of programs (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). The ultimate goal is to improve the well-being of citizens through better access to basic services including health, education, water and sanitation, agricultural extension services, energy, roads, ICT and microfinance (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022). 15 Government disbursed Uganda Shillings 497.52 billion to the agricultural sector to provide planting,

Local Government (LG) levels were dismissed in FY 2013/2014 and the recruitment of civil servants, especially the military, into the Public Agricultural Extension Service started in FY 2014/2015 with zones that have supported political liberation struggles since 70. until the mid-1980s. It was codenamed Operation Wealth Creation (OWC). The main objective of Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) is to create a system to facilitate effective national socio-economic transformation with a focus on increasing household income for poverty eradication and sustainable wealth (Christopher & Micheal, 2022). As a result, the household income of the vast majority of Ugandans continued to be low, even though 80.3% of the population escaped poverty (Vincent & Peter, 2023). However, Uganda's per capita grew at an average rate of 3.5% over the period 1990 to 2014, rising from US\$320 to US\$550 (Atlas method) and is still among the lowest in the world, making Uganda a lowly 164th out of 187 countries in human development index (HDI) (Faridah et al., 2023).

Despite the attention and resources devoted to the OWC program to support households in accessing extension services to improve their productivity and thus well-being, public information on the impact of the program is limited (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022).

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breeding and storage material; value added; setting up irrigation facilities; research and extension; supporting labour-saving technologies and strengthening farm mechanization under the OWC program (MAAIF 2017).

Despite the attention and resources devoted to the OWC program to support households in accessing extension services to improve their productivity and thus well-being, there is limited public information on the impact of operational wealth creation on the development of young farmers or the role of the program (Isaac et al., 2023). , given that the studies were partially funded and implemented by the OWC Secretariat. The lack of further independent evidence on the contribution or role of the OWC program has raised public concerns about the effectiveness of the program in raising productivity and household incomes. This is particularly significant given the fact that several audit and media reports have indicated some level of misuse of program resources by both OWC administrators and beneficiaries. This leads the researcher to assess the contribution of operational wealth creation to the empowerment of young farmers in the performance of OWC in rural areas using Kirima Sub- County, Kanungu District as a case study.

General objective

To assess the effects of operation wealth creation (OWC) on youth farmer's development in Kirima sub county, Kanungu district.

Specifics Objectives.

1. To establish the different challenges met by OWC in extending services to households in Kirima sub county, Kanungu district.
2. To establish how the OWC programs have improved the productivity of agriculture in Kirima sub county, Kanungu district.

Section two

Methodology

This study used both qualitative and quantitative responses. The researcher used a descriptive survey design which involves gathering data that describes events and then organizes them, tabulates, depicts and describes the data collected using visual aids such as graphs, charts and tables to help the reader in understanding data distribution (Sekaran and Bougie, 2003). This helped to establish and clearly understand the contribution of operation wealth creation to youth farmers empowerment in improving the socioeconomic welfare of Ugandan

households in Kirima sub county, Kanungu district. The study was conducted in Kirima sub county, Kanungu district the sub county is located in kitgum district in northern part of Uganda. The area has rich agricultural land with fertile soils and good climatic conditions. The area was selected for study because there are a great number of beneficiaries of the OWC programme. The researcher used a two-stage stratified random sampling. all the household in the six villages of labongo layamo sub county formed the sampling frame., however only a total

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of 30 households were interviewed. purposive random techniques were used to obtain reliable and accurate data from the respondents. The proportions p of the selected respondents to the estimated total involves choosing the number of observation or replicates to include astatistically sample of labongo layamo sub county .it is about making inferences about a population from a sample .it is determined based on the cost, time, or convenience of collecting data the need of for it to offer sufficient. A questionnaire is a formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives. The questionnaire is use on the basis that the variables under study cannot be observe for instance the views, opinions, perceptions and feelings of the respondents. The questionnaire is equally use because the

information has to be collected from a large sample of 60 respondents in a short period of time yet the respondents can read and write (Sekaran and Bougie, 2003). The questionnaire is use in collection of data from respondents. The questionnaires consist of both open and close ended questions administer to respondents of Kirima sub county, Kanungu district. Kombo & Tromp, (2006) argue that data collected has to be processed, analysed and presented in accordance with the outlines laid down for the purpose of the research. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) as use to analyse the data to generate frequencies, summary statistics, tables, percentages, t-values, confidence intervals for comparing and testing the significance of different data variables (Nelson et al., 2022).

SECTION THREE

RESULTS

Table 1 the Roles of OWC towards improving welfare of households in KIRIMA SUB-COUNTY, KANUNGU NDISTRICT

Roles of OWC	Responses											
	S. Agree		Agree		S.Disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Total	
	Freq	%ge	Freq	%ge	Freq	%ge	Freq	%ge	Freq	%ge	Freq	%ge
Increases market oriented agriculture production	10	17	41	68	-	-	09	15	-	-	60	100
Enhances households' access to appropriate services	10	17	45	75	-	-	-	-	05	08	60	100
Helps farmers to move progressively to higher levels of adoption and implementation through demonstration	20	33	40	67	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	100
Increases access to information and technology and training	-	-	42	70	-	-	0-8	13	10	17	60	100
Helps households achieve economies of scale as they increase negotiating power and skills and other services that could be costly	03	05	38	63	-	-	18	30	01	02	60	100
Facilitate quality of advisory services and promote adoption to new crop livestock enterprise and use of modern agriculture production technologies	10	17	41	68	-	-			09	15	60	100

Source: Primary data 2019

According to the study findings on the roles of OWC towards improving welfare of households' Kirima sub county, Kanungu district in Table 1, it was found out that OWC helps households to move progressively to higher levels of adoption and implementation through demonstration. This was strongly agreed by 33% of the total respondents and agreed by 67% of the total respondents (Ronet et al., 2023). This implies that OWC empowers farmers in different households to access and use investment capital through the integrated support to farmer groups which makes them to manage their products very well (Derrick et al., 2023). This was followed by the view that the OWC programme enhances access to appropriate services which was strongly agreed by 17% and agreed by 75% while 08% were not sure. It was also revealed that the OWC programme facilitates quality of advisory services and promotes adoption to new crop livestock enterprise and use of modern agriculture production technologies which was strongly agreed by 17%, agreed by 68% while 15% were not sure (Kazaara, Prudence, et al., 2023). Also, according to the findings, it was found out that the OWC program helps households to increase market-oriented agriculture production strongly supported by 17% and agreed by 68% while 15% disagreed. Also, according to the study findings OWC increases households' access to information and technology and training where by 70% of the respondents agreed. However, 13% disagreed while 17% of the total respondents were not sure (Suzan & Kazaara, 2023). And finally, it was found out by the study findings that OWC helps households to achieve economies of scale as they increase negotiating power and skills and other services that could be costly which was strongly agreed by 05% and disagreed by 63% of total respondents. However, 30% disagreed while 02% were not sure. This implies that the OWC programme has played a big towards improving socioeconomic welfare of household in Kirima sub county, Kanungu district

Table 2: The challenges met by OWC program in extending services to households

The challenges met by OWC	Responses											
	S. Agree		Agree		S. Disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Total	
	Freq	%ge	Freq	%ge	Freq	%ge	Freq	%ge	Freq	%ge	Freq	%ge
Decline in soil fertility	20	33	40	67	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	100
Low value addition to agricultural production	10	17	50	83	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	100
Weak implementation of agricultural laws and policies	07	12	41	68	-	-	08	13	04	07	60	100
Peasant based agriculture	08	13	46	77	-	-	-	-	06	10	60	100
Shortage of agricultural inputs and uncooperative members, unfavorable climate	10	17	50	83	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	100
Corruption among OWC official	10	17	48	80	-	-	02	03			60	100

Source: Field Data 2022

According to the study findings on the challenges met by OWC in extending services to farmers in table 2 above, shortage of agricultural inputs, uncooperative members, unfavourable climate and low value addition to

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agricultural production were the major challenges. This was because 17% strongly agreed and 83% of the total respondents agreed with both challenges that they were affecting them badly (Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). These were followed by corruption among OWC official whereby 17% strongly agreed and 80% agreed while 03% disagreed. Those who disagreed were OWC officials who were the implementers of the programme and were trying to run away from the fact. According to the findings, there was a challenge of peasant-based agriculture where by 13% strongly agreed and 77% agreed while 10% were not sure (Niyonzima, 2023). Also, the OWC program in kitgum faced a challenge of weak implementation of agricultural laws and policies while extending services to households. This was strongly supported by 12% and only agreed by 68% of the total respondents. However, 13% disagreed while 07% of the respondents were not sure. It was also found out that decline in soil fertility was also a challenge which was strongly agreed by 33% and agreed by 67% the total respondents.

How the OWC program can be established so as to directly improve the welfare of household

Table 3: How OWC program can be streamlined to directly improve the welfare of households

Source: Field Data 2022

Whether OWC program is influential	Increasing profitability		Total
	Agree	Disagree	
Yes	31	11	42
No	13	5	18
Total	44	16	60
$\chi^2 = 4.3257$ $df = 1$ $p = 0.032$			

Source: Researcher's Analysis

of OWC programs to target market opportunities for households												
Identify domestic and export market opportunities to households	14	23	46	76	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	100
Training and advisory services to households	06	10	42	70	-	-	08	13	04	07	60	100

According to the study findings on how OWC program can be streamlined to directly improve the welfare of households in table 3 above, the study findings indicated that increased funding to agriculture sector by government can streamlined OWC program to directly improve the livelihood of farmers where by 25% strongly agreed 75% agree (Racheal et al., 2023). This was followed by identification of potential domestic and export market opportunities to farmers which was strongly agreed by 23% and agreed by 76% followed by offering training and advisory services to farmers in the different households. This was strongly agreed by 10%, and agreed by 70% of the total respondents. However, 13% disagreed while 07% were not sure. Finally, respondents suggested empowerment of OWC programs to target market opportunities for households which was agreed by 58% of the respondents. 30% disagreed with this view while 12% were not sure. **Table 4 Cross tabulation between OWC program and its influence on productivity of agriculture**

Since the computed is greater than the tabulated =3.841, we reject the null

Whether OWC program is influential	Influence on food nutrition and security			Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	
Yes	16	15	10	41
No	6	8	5	19
Total	22	23	15	60
$\chi^2 = 6.5324$	df=2	p=0.023	$\alpha=0.05$	

hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between OWC program and the general productivity of agriculture in selected Parishes, Kirima sub county, Kanungu district. **Table 5: Cross tabulation between OWC program and its influence on food and nutrition security**

Source: Researcher's Analysis

Since the computed is greater than the tabulated =3.841, we reject the null Hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between NAADS program and the level of food and nutrition security in labongo akwang sub county, kitgum district

Discussion

Role of OWC towards improving welfare of households in labongo layamo Subcounty, kitgum District

According to the study findings on the roles of OWC towards improving socioeconomic welfare, it was found that OWC helps households to move progressively to higher levels of adoption and implementation through demonstration. This was strongly agreed by 3% of the total respondents and agreed by 67% of the total respondents. This implies that OWC empowers farmer to access and use investment capital through the integrated support to farmer groups which makes them to manage their products very well. In relation to this, Nyanga (2004) argues that through demonstration, lead, model and Nucleus farmer/farms empowering farmers to access and use investment capital through the integrated support to farmer groups (ISFG), OWC is also providing a revolving fund to the farmers to increase farmers' access to improved seed, better breeds and inputs. Accordingly, OWC supports households in Kirima sub county, Kanungu district to capitalize which also enables households to have shares in SACCOs and better manage their investment. According to the study findings, OWC programme enhances households' access to appropriate services which was strongly agreed by 17% and agreed by 75% while 08% were not sure. According to Nyanga (2004), different farmer categories have different farmer needs and the categorization enhance their access to appropriate service. In addition to this, OWC helps Farmers to attain critical linkages to commercialization through the nucleus farms. In this system, farmers in the different households follow a system progression based on their performance.

The study findings also revealed that OWC program facilitates the quality of advisory services and promote adoption to new crop livestock enterprise and of modern agriculture production technologies which was strongly agreed by 17%, agreed by 68% while 15% were not sure. In relation to this it is the role of OWC in Uganda to provide innovative public- private extension services delivery approach, with the goal of increasing market oriented agricultural production by empowering farmers to demand and control agricultural advisory services.

Also, according to the findings, it was found out that OWC helps farmers to increase market-oriented agriculture production strongly supported by 17% and agreed by 68% while 15% disagreed. Other studies have not conquered with this because accordingly studies have shown that farmer groups and collective action in general could help households to achieve economies of scale as they could pool power and skills, facilitate advocacy and provide other services that could be costly if undertaken by individual farmers as per the argument of Coulter et al. (1999).

Also, according to the study findings OWC increases households' access to information and technology and training where by 70% of the respondents agreed. However, 13% disagreed while 17% of the total respondents were not sure. According to UBOS (2004), a number of technology development sites have also been set up at farmer group level to increase farmer access to information and technologies. The sites are used for development and multiplication of foundation technologies in addition to training farmers. Therefore, farm households are directly benefiting from these sites as contact farmers and farmers in participating in Kirima sub county, Kanungu district are benefiting directly from the trainings.

And finally, it was found out by the study findings that OWC helps farmers to achieve economies of scales as they increase negotiating power and skills and other services that could be costly which was strongly agreed by 05% and agreed by 63% of the total respondents. However, 30% disagreed while 02% were not sure. This implies that OWC programme has played a big role towards increasing livelihood in KIRIMA SUB-COUNTY, KANUNGU NDISTRICT. These lower transaction costs by pooling resources of poor farmers, increase their negotiation power and skill facilitate advocacy and provide other services that could be costly if undertaken by individual households (Hussein, 2001).

The challenges met by OWC program in extending services to households.

According to the study findings on the challenges met by OWC program in extending services to households, shortage of agricultural inputs, uncooperative members, unfavourable climate and low value addition to agricultural production were the major challenges. This was because 17% strongly agreed and 83% of the total respondents agreed with both challenges that they were affecting them badly. This was in relation to the president's report of July 2007 which indicates that, four main challenges face the agricultural sector in Uganda: low productivity, low value addition to agricultural produce and limited market access, weak implementation of agricultural laws and policies, and weak public agricultural institutions as according to (MFPED 2000).

These were followed by corruption among OWC officials whereby 17% strongly agreed and 80% agreed while 03% disagreed. Those who disagreed were OWC officials who were the implementers of the programme and were trying to run away from the fact in addition, according to the findings, there was also a challenge of present based agriculture where by 13% strongly agreed and 77% agreed while 10% were not sure. In relation to this Barungi (2004), corruption chokes OWC policies and more than 80% of Ugandan population lives on agriculture which is still peasant-based and whose contribution households and national economy is minimal. The OWC policies are among the programs that the government has been implementing to address and alleviate poverty.

Also, there was a challenge of weak implementation laws and policies while extending services to farmers. this was strongly supported by 12% and only agreed by 68% of the total respondents. However, 13% disagreed while 07% of respondents were not sure. On the same issue, Livingstone and Charlton (2001) argues that although Uganda began decentralizing government services in 1992, provision of agricultural extension and other agricultural support services became the responsibility of local governments in 1997, as per the local government (LG) Act. However, several challenges still remain; for example, the proportion of the district budgets allocated to agricultural production and marketing in kitgum even smaller.

Shortage of capital and credit facilities is often cited by farmers as a critical constraint facing them, in addition to scarcity of agricultural inputs, lack of adequate farmland, unfavourable weather patterns and problems of pests and diseases. Ssewanyana (2004) emphasizes that the quality of advisory services is not the only important factor influencing technology adoption and productivity, and the need for complimentary progress on other areas, especially development of the rural financial system.

How the OWC program can be established so as to directly improve the welfare of households

According to the study findings on how the OWC program can be streamlined to directly improve the welfare of households, the study findings indicated that increased funding to agriculture sector by government can help streamline the OWC program towards improving the welfare of households whereby 25% strongly agreed and 75% agreed. However, increased funding to agriculture must be in tandem with improved resource utilization, as well as organizational efficiency and institutional strengthening in the sector while the primary responsibility for implementing this plan at the government of Uganda level lies with the ministry of agriculture, animal industry and fisheries. The national academies pres on food and nutrition (2007) argues that some of the necessary investments that support agriculture lie outside MAAIF-rural roads, agricultural finance and electricity.

The study also suggested identification of potential domestic and export market opportunities to farmers which was strongly agreed by 23% and agreed by 76%, followed by offering training and advisory services to farmers. The OWC program officials should play a pivotal role in the identification and development of farm enterprise to exploit existing and potential domestic and export market opportunities. In this respect, the program should

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facilities and support farmers, to organize in groups, to access productivity-enhancing agricultural technologies, knowledge and advice for increased productivity and profitability and profitability: and to link them to produce and input markets in relation to (UBOS, 2004).

Finally, respondents suggested empowerment of OWC program activities to target market opportunities for beneficiaries which was agreed by 58% of the respondents, 30% disagreed with this view while 12% were not sure. In relation to this, (UBOS, 2004) contends that households should undergo training and have access to information and advisory services through private service provider.

To this over 58 NGOs have been involved in strengthening the farmer groups at sub-county level and to date, a total of 1148 advisory service contracts have been signed for the provision of advisory services to farmers in the country where Kirima sub county, Kanungu district is also a beneficiary.

Conclusions

The OWC program was initially designed to build the capacity of farmers to form and operate farmer associations, demand advisory services and adopt improved agricultural technologies and practices – through demonstration of the technologies by model farmers in the community (MAAIF, 2010). The OWC program formally known as NAADS was set by the act of parliament as provided in the act, OWC was established to replace the old extension and to spear head the promotion of market-oriented agriculture and to provide for other related and incidental farming.

However, some households in labnongo layamo Sub county, kitgum District have gone on to argue that OWC program has remained a liability than an asset as regards achieving the present objectives for instance, it's failure to solve problems of crops and animals pests and diseases, improve farmer's income, and improve the general welfare of households, among others that therefore there is need to operationalize the plan for Modernization of Agriculture component to compliment the implementation of the OWC program.

Recommendations

To the OWC program beneficiaries

Households involved in framing should seriously take the advice of the technical teams to support the programme for their own benefit in improving their livelihood or welfare. The OWC program was designed for the farmers in order to improve their welfare. Therefore, households should own it and try to deal with all the challenges that affect them in partnership with the local leaders and policy makers.

To local leaders

Local leaders in Kirima Sub-County, Kanungu District should always try to involve everybody in the programme because many complaints have been raised that some were left outside the OWC programme.

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To policy makers

Policy makers especially parliament representatives should try to follow up the OWC programme in conjunction with the evaluation teams to know how the programme is being implemented. They should also try to deal with the problem of corruption whereby it is claimed that much of the OWC program funds were embezzled when they reached at the sub-county level which is the level of implementation.

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