

# FARMING FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

<b>LOCATION</b>	Ikwoto County, Ikwoto Payam, Ifune & Ifuda Boma's
<b>IMPLEMENTER</b>	Global Aim
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"We now carry out farming activities together, which we never did before. The warehouse helps to create peace. It enables us to store our food produce and market it together. It has enhanced our livelihoods", says Joseph Ohide, the chairperson of K-longole farmers committee.

## Disputes over resources disrupts collaboration

The communities of Ifuda and Ifune Bomas in Ikwoto Payam are agro-pastoralists. They were in regular conflict over land for farming and grazing, water resources and robberies and cattle raiding occurred frequently. The conflicts caused the loss of lives and food insecurity. The area had become largely inaccessible to the government and humanitarian and developmental agencies.

The relationship between the two communities was very poor. They hardly interacted and it was difficult for youth to come together in any function in the payam. The communities did not work together, even though they have fertile land and could produce enough food to support their communities and supply the market with their joint farm produce.

## Joint farming and warehouse management

Global Aim initiated and facilitated community meetings, bringing together elders and local leaders from the two villages to develop a joint action plan for restoring peaceful coexistence amongst the communities. They realized that their problems are interconnected and it motivated them to lobby for the support from developmental partners to address the needs for water and food production. The 'peace dividend' plan recommended, amongst others, to establish a farmers group comprising of members from the two villages and building a joint warehouse. The K-longole farmers group was formed with 30 members, half coming from Ifuda village and half from Ifuna village. A total of 30 acres of fertile land was allocated for joint farming activities to be carried out by the farmers group. The group was trained on good agricultural practices, group dynamics and leadership. They were later provided with agricultural inputs such as seeds and farm tools, and supported in hiring a tractor to plough the 30 acres of land. Global Aim also built a warehouse, aiming to facilitate farmers from both conflicting communities to store and handle their food produce, and also to carry out joint marketing. A warehouse committee was formed and trained on warehouse management and maintenance. Attention was also paid to conflict resolution skills, to enhance peaceful collaboration of the farmers involved.



Farmers in Nyibira Boma on an exchange field visit.

Photo: Global Aim

### **Reduced conflict and increased income**

Over the last six months, the warehouse has had several positive effects on community life. First of all, the farmers - through the warehouse committee - now jointly market their produce among traders from Ikwoto and Uganda. The farmer group also encouraged other farmers to increase their production. To reduce post-harvest loss, the surplus of produce is stored in the warehouse. It will be sold during the lean season when the community members demand for agricultural produce and prices given are higher. The joint activities have led to higher production and hence higher income of the farmers, enabling them to school their children and access medical and other services. It also contributed to a significant reduction in cases of inter-village conflicts, stimulating interaction and free movement between the communities.

### **Inclusive participation helps peaceful co-existence**

The warehouse project shows it is important to adopt community participatory approaches to facilitate participation of farmers and pastoralists in decision-making. Especially the representation of members from the different communities in joint activities has facilitated peaceful coexistence among the farmers. It is also important to involve county authorities, local leaders, partners and communities in planning and implementation to ensure sustainability of interventions.

### **Way forward**

There is a need to construct more storage facilities for farming produce as peace dividend for conflicting communities that share limited resources. Expanding joint farming and storage can also strengthen the resilience of farming communities to the continuous increase in market prices for goods and services, for example through joint purchase of agricultural inputs such as seeds. In addition, complementary interventions that bring members from warring communities together will help to change the attitude of violence a culture embracing peace. There is finally a need to construct schools and health facilities in the area to reduce cases of illiteracy and encourage community settlement, which in turn boosts production.