

# INTERNET BASED COOPERATIVE MARKETING INFORMATION VILLAGES



Project site: Bukedea district, Uganda

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Orientation of key stakeholders of kolir sub-county on marketing information centres

PHOTO: KACE

## Background

Kachumbala Area Cooperative Enterprise (KACE) was founded in 2004 by 4 rural producer organizations (RPOs) to gain the advantage of numbers (bulking, group marketing, coordinating production, market information, identifying buyers and selling for members, setting up rural markets etc). We have about 1540 members (56% are women).

Almost 75% of the families in the Bukedea area earn less than a dollar a day. The predominant sector is farming. Rural Farmers are traditionally reached through magazines, books, cassette tapes, stories and songs as the information landscape is radically bad with few telephones, and limited internet facilities. However, the district's electrical and telecommunications infrastructure has been improved in the last three months with an electricity grid extension throughout our communities. We believe Information and communication technologies (ICTs) can make a positive contribution to poor rural families who would be empowered with an increased awareness of their rights and entitlements and could improve their bargaining power in the marketplace.

## Project Summary

The project's aim is to establish a rural information network with 5 village knowledge centres. Kachumbala, a market centre and administrative node, has been chosen as the project's headquarters and the information network's hub. Here the staff will be producing, translating, and updating the information fed into the network. Each village will have a small, community-owned village knowledge centre, staffed by trained volunteers and equipped with a computer, printer, telephone, and with Internet access.

We will be providing supervised free access to over 3000 rural farmers wishing to find agricultural and marketing information, learn about computers, search the Internet, communicate by phone or email, or use other services such as word processing, printing, and fax. The 5 knowledge centres will broadcast detailed agro-based/marketing information and weather forecasts over a speaker system outside the centres in the main language Ateso, giving low literacy community members equal access to essential information.

Staff at the network hub will initiate a daily news item sent to the knowledge centres called “Agri-business Diary.” The bulletin will provide information on technologies and techniques relevant to agriculture, marketing and sustainable development, with an emphasis on sustainable approaches such as collective bulking, marketing, purchasing, etc.

### **Contributions to the Decent Work Country Programme’s priority (DWCP):**

- Reduce poverty through increased opportunities for youth employment and productivity.

### **Partners**

KACE partners are:

- COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup>: project co-funding;
- Uganda Cooperative Alliance: technical, statutory and advisory support;
- Bukedea district local government: community mobilization support;
- Bukedea district commercial office: technical, statutory, advisory and supervisory support;
- Bukedea district production department: provision of agricultural advisory services.

### **Beneficiaries**

The project’s beneficiaries include

- Rural farmers and producers organizations;
- Agricultural & cooperative extension workers, students and teachers;
- Organizations involved in collective agricultural marketing;
- Sub-County local governments.

### **Expected achievements**

- Establishment of a network in Kachumbala and 5 operational information centres;
- Over 3000 farmers (men and women) accessing the cooperative marketing information centres. (50% of which are youths);
- Increase in bulking volume by 200% and various local produces obtaining competitive price offers;
- Several Linkages to other commodity markets.

This project clearly aims to improve the governance, performance and efficiency of farmer groups, leading to an increase in new job opportunities, household income, and cooperative voice, leading to a reduction of poverty in the farming communities.

### **Project duration and budget**

Project duration: 12 months, from May 2009 till April 2010

Total budget: USD 39,625.00

Contribution from COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup>: USD 19,750

Contribution from KACE: USD 19,875

ILO Office Dar es Salaam  
COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup>  
Kazi House, Maktaba Street  
P.O. Box 9212  
Dar es Salaam  
United Republic of Tanzania  
Tel: +255.22.2196700  
Fax: +255.22.2122597  
Email: [coopafrica@ilo.org](mailto:coopafrica@ilo.org)  
[www.ilo.org/coopafrica](http://www.ilo.org/coopafrica)

### **Contacts**

Kachumbala Area Cooperative Enterprise  
Suite #1&3, Okeyi House, Plot 19B,  
Kachumbala Trading Centre,  
18 km Mbale, Kumi Road;  
P.O. Box 2394  
Mbale, Uganda

#### **Main contact person:**

Charles Okubal, Chairman &  
Project Leader  
Tel: +256.772.485799  
Email: [natacott@yahoo.com](mailto:natacott@yahoo.com)

#### **Second contact person:**

Steven Ogwang, Program Manager  
Tel: +256.776.428485



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