

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE 4TH INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE LEARNING VISIT TO ZANZIBAR



Each year, within the ESFROMA partnership, KOFLEC organizes an international exchange learning visit which is hosted in either Tanzania, Zanzibar or Uganda by an implementing organization or jointly by a group of implementing organizations. Previous international learning visits were hosted in Uganda jointly by Caritas Kampala, URDT, and GLOFA in 2021 and 2023; and in Dodoma Tanzania by TOAM in 2022. It was the first time for UWAMWIMA to host the international exchange learning visit in Zanzibar. The 2024 visit was comprised of 4 teams of master facilitators and staff of the Implementing Organizations of the ESFROMA program – GLOFA, URDT, CK, TOAM, and UWAMWIMA. At least 23 master facilitators and staff from these organizations participated in the exchange learning whose main purpose was to enable the FFLG masterfacilitators to explore the unique experiences on organic production of horticultural products, the vital collaborations for enhancing organic agriculture, the Zanzibar Organic Initiative (ZOI), advocacy, and collective marketing particularly tapping into the less explored opportunity presented by the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS).

The international exchange learning visit consisted of field visits, reflection meetings, and fun visits to the beach and exploration of the historic and other interesting features of Zanzibar City. The field visits took place on the 15th and 16th October 2024. Four FFLGs were visited. These included the Vanilla Spices Farmers FFLG in Donge Mbiji Village, North B District; Nia Safi FFLG in Dunga Kiembeni village, central

district; Twendeni Pamoja FFLG in Bungi Village, central district; and Tufahamiane FFLG in Kazimkazi village in the South District. In addition the teams also visited some individual farms belonging to members of these FFLGs. Such included Mr. Sharji's organic farm in Bungi village , Mr. Mrisho's organic farm in Bungi village in central district. Lastly the teams visited Mr.Shija's farm in Ukongoroni village in the central district. A member of Twendeni Pamoja FFLG.

Look out for our next blog for the details of what we saw and learnt from each of the FFLGs and individual farmers whom we visited. Suffice it to note that we picked a lot of lessons from the international exchange learning visit. These lessons also provoked us to make some important recommendations. The lessons learnt and some of the recommendations made include the following:

a) The FFLG approach's international exchange learning activity provides a fertile ground for experiential learning and mindset change. For instance we learnt that organic farmers in Zanzibar have embraced farming as a business, have closely tailored their farm enterprises to the booming tourism and hotel business on the island, and have embraced mainly high value horticultural crops and spices. This provides impetus to peri-urban farmers in FFLGs in Wakiso, Mpigi, Kampala; Kasese, Kitagwenda; and Kagadi, where tourism is already booming, to pick a leaf from their Zanzibari counterparts; they can do the following:

- Form linkages with hotels and tourists, in particular, identify unique horticulture crops and crops demanded by such clientele and start producing them locally;
- Undertake basic training in production of horticultural crops and spices for specialty markets (urbane markets, hotels, and tourists)
- Identify from within amongst themselves host farmers who can take lead in hosting demonstration & production of organic vegetable & spice farms for the specialty market
- Embrace PGS as a marketing tool



Mr. Sharj explaining to the visiting teams the organic practices on his horticultural and spices farm

- b) Mainstreaming agro-tourism in the FFLG approach: The Zanzibari FFLGs have embraced agro-tourism which takes the form of farm visits by the tourists, sale of processed spices to the tourists, and production that is focused on meeting the tourists' needs. Ugandan FFLGs have the same opportunity which they have not yet fully utilized.



Mr. Khamis stressing a point to the members of the Vanilla & Spices FFLG on how to improve organic vanilla production

- c) Climate change resilience: FFLGs in Zanzibar have adapted to the local environment, have embraced use of drip irrigation using on farm water sources including deep wells, and are able to produce off-season and throughout the year. That way they are able to maintain constant supply to their clients. FFLGs in Uganda could be encouraged to embrace rainwater harvesting and micro irrigation technologies so as to have all-year round production to meet the clients' demands. Most of the FFLGs in Zanzibar promote coconut growing, a traditional enterprise, as a means of protecting their islands from carbon emissions. In Uganda the FFLGs can identify a particular indigenous tree to promote not only as a source of income but also for atmospheric carbon dioxide sequestration



Photo: Mr. Shija explaining to the visitors the use of drip irrigation in his vegetable and herbs farm.

- d) Adoption of the PGS system: Most of the FFLGs and individual farmers visited have embraced PGS and produce directly for the market on demand. This is a lesson the FFLGs in Uganda should embrace.
- e) FFLGs in Zanzibar have adopted improved organic agricultural production technologies including soil sterilization, improved nursery bed management, greenhouse production of horticultural crops and spices, drip irrigation, mixed cropping, and highly planned crop rotations. Ugandan FFLGs could pick a leaf.



Members of Tufahamiane FFLG in Kazimkazi village in the South District showing their innovations in production of organic horticultural crops



Members of Tufahamiane FFLG in Kazimkazi village making welcome remarks to the visiting teams

- f) Funding & other resources: The Zanzibar FFLGs have organized and positioned themselves to benefit from additional resources from government programs and financial institutions. Ugandan FFLGs could pick a leaf and benefit from the various financing initiatives including the Parish Development Model and GROW program among others.

- g) UWAMWIMA should embrace further the three layer facilitator model (master, external and internal facilitator) as it did not come out very clearly if this exists and if so, if the roles for the different categories are clearly implemented
- h) The large scale farmers in the FFLGs need a customized approach otherwise they are detached from other FFLG members.