



lets create

# Audacious

NEWSBITE - ISSUE 002

## FOOD SHEROS COMMUNITY

Launch of the Food Sheros Community in Kisaana/ Mityana District Central Uganda. **We are building a Movement!**



**Meet the Second Audacious community of small scale food growers in Kisaana**

Uganda is a beautiful Country. Part of Uganda's Beauty is her food. Rich in color, micro nutrient, varieties and types. From the Southern to the Northern and across the Country, different cultures grow specific staple foods in addition to many others. The communities through different practices of seeds growing and sharing have vast knowledge in preserving the best of different varieties. Leveraging their collective memory, women and communities have built food systems that feed their nutrient and social needs.

However the capitalist "food for profit" systems is threatening the existence of this local knowledges through systemic

erasure of our rich varieties of foods and seeds. Through the alienation of community and local knowledge of stewarding and self-determination of food systems.

Audacious Creators is committed to empowering women and local communities to draw from their wealth of knowledge on food cultivation and preservation. Their knowledge and practice BEARS wisdom to the current complex food and climate crises.

On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September the AUDACIOUS Africa Team met at Kisaana Primary School with 76 women and local community leaders. This is the Second Audacious Food Sheros community.



**76**

community  
women

with resolve to defend  
food systems

**Teopista is 56 years old woman living in Kisaana and this is her story.** "I have spent the bigger part of my years in this community. I remember that in my childhood, we used to grow a lot of food, how I loved the beans and bananas. In my community sharing and exchanging seeds was part of belonging and togetherness. If my neighbor liked my beans, I shared with her in exchange from her harvest of maize seeds. When visiting a friend, it was normal to extend the visit to the garden. After the garden conversation, you were gifted with a sucker of a good banana variety, it could also be vines of yam or sweet potatoes. Those were good times. Things have changed so much these days. I don't know where we are heading to. Now, we get most of our seeds from the shops not as much from within the neighborhood, I don't like it. We are in the village, but it feels like everybody is on their own. We need to do something. We thank God for the Audacious People, they are helping us to bring back our good old days"



# We are building a Movement!

Through this activity, *we established the 2<sup>nd</sup> Audacious Africa Food Sheros Community - 76 community women with resolve to defend food systems that recognise the richness and diversity of Uganda's foods and seeds.* This community engagement was received as an opportunity to promote local and cultural ways of knowing and food growing that are a bedrock for good food. Good food is that which is healthy, compounded with micro nutrients to enable, mental, brain development, physical and reproductive health all of which determine the well-being of a people and community.



*Launch of the Food Sheros Community session in progress*

## The Approach

Audacious Africa recognises that women and local communities have deep, historical and social knowledge for food sovereignty and security.

We build on this collective memory to enable recognition of what is and what can be improved or strengthened.

## Group discussions

The participants were divided into 3 groups

01

*Group 1 discussed the*  
**TRADITIONAL PLATE**

This assignment required members to reflect on how communities defined and related with food, the different foods served 50 years ago, how it was cooked and the ways in which food was grown.

02

*Group 2 was tasked to*  
**TRACE VARIETIES** of  
*bananas, cassava & beans.*

The importance of this assignment was to probe knowledge of the foods diversities and to ascertain if these varieties still exist within the communities. This will build our food knowledge for this community (one of foundational pillars of local food systems)

03

*Group 3 discussed the*  
**MODERN PLATE**

For participants to highlight the changes in our food behavior, to share about the practices that are leading to these changes and to discuss if the change is for good or otherwise.

From the discussions, it was acknowledged that a) so much has changed and not for better. b) Participants pointed out diminishing food diversity, c) they decried the high costs of food production today, saying that it almost impossible to grow anything without applying pesticides, herbicides and other inputs. The pain and cost of producing food is increasing so much so that all things from the seed to herbicide and pesticides have to be bought. "Our soils are now dead. They can no longer support food growing on their own. We are always spraying, spraying and spraying".

"We are witnessing a steady decrease in indigenous varieties- we used to eat many

nice varieties of cassava, sweet potatoes, yam, beans and fruits. Today a few of these is promoted through selective seed, we hardly see many varieties that we ate as children. This is affecting the amount of food we are able to grow and sustain. For example the new banana varieties have weak stems, they are unable to stand strong rains and winds. It is easy to lose a whole plantation during the strong rains like it is this season. Because of this, things have changed, we now rely on our children to bring us food from Kampala. In our childhood days, it was a shame for a village person to eat posho and beans on a daily, today we almost have no option, and it's a shame"

"The modern plate is posing many challenges to how food is grown. We rely a lot on pesticides and herbicides. As a result our soil has grown old and exhausted. Nothing grows without spraying. We need to re-think this. The drought will not spare us and the elnino rains".

"I am very thankful for this Audacious Team- we used to hear about food scarcity in Somalia, it sounded like we can never be in that situation- but by the look of things we are close to the Somalia situation. When I see how we eat and the foods produced from our gardens, the situation is very worrying".



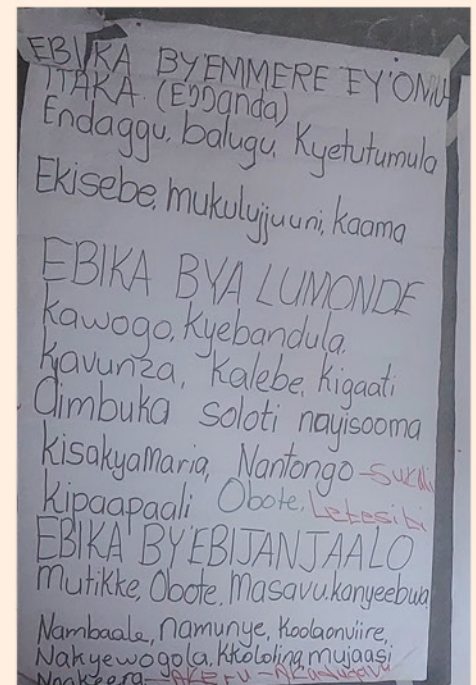
# Session on Nurturing and sustaining a banana Plantation. Olusukku

Mrs Dorothy Kiwanuka a small scale food grower facilitated the session. She shared on how bananas are planted, how they are maintained and the importance of a compost pit to maintaining a plantation. The compost pit is where all residue from the kitchen is kept for at least one year. It can also be used for cow dung to decompose, after which that decomposed material is spread to the garden. With this compost pit, it is possible to maintain a healthy banana plantation for over ten years without artificial pesticides.



Other ways of maintaining a good plantation is using organic farming techniques like; mixed cropping. Here you plant seasonal crops like beans, ground nuts rich in nitrogen, some leafy vegetables. Banana plantations also work well with coffee trees.

Mulching also helps to maintain the soil humidity and to keep pests away. Through such ways a farmer is able to harvest different foods, keep the garden healthy and herbicide/pesticide free and have extra food or coffee for the market.



## Lessons learned

The need to document our Food stories and practices of the past and share them with young people in schools.

We need to establish Food and seed banks in the communities and to strengthen community ownership of sustainable food systems.

The need to establish, farming care groups and re-mobilise communities to influence food systems for food security.