



# Amplifying Organic Agriculture in Uganda

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# Introduction

Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) is not only driven by rising local and global demand for organic products, but also utilized by small scale farmers to significantly raise yields in affordable and resilient manner, often in conjunction with the regeneration of degraded lands and ecosystems, largely through the utilization of locally available biodiversity. This system is cutting the cost of production, increasing productivity and diversifying income streams, which are helping small scale farming communities, achieve food security, resilience to climate change, achieving climate justice and regenerating the productive capacity of degraded lands. Such ecosystem, landscape based and community-centered approach is highly suited to the majority of small scale farmers throughout Africa and is the bedrock of inclusive low carbon sustainable development as it contributes to the **"Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme"** (CAADP) pillars 1, 3 & 4.

Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) has been identified to significantly contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (goal 1, goal 2, goal 5, goal 8, goal 10, goal 12, goal 13, and goal 15) through increasing crop yields and reducing hunger and malnutrition in farming communities.

## Principles of Ecological Organic Agriculture

*The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM) identified four basic principles of organic farming;*

### 1). The Principle of Fairness

Organic agriculture is built upon relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities. Fairness is characterized by equity, respect, justice, and stewardship of shared world, both among people and in their relations to other living beings.

### 2). The Principle of Ecology

Organic agriculture is based on living ecological systems and cycles that works with them, emulates them and helps to sustain them. This principle roots organic agriculture within living ecological systems. It states that production is to be based on ecological processes and recycling. It should protect and benefit the environment.

### 3). The Principle of Health

Health is the wholeness and integrity of living systems. It is not simply the absence of illness, but the maintenance of physical, mental, social and ecological wellbeing. Immunity, resilience and regeneration are key characteristics of health. Organic agriculture sustains and enhances the health of soil, plants, animals and human and planet as one and indivisible. Organic farming is intended to protect and enhance the health of all organisms including soil microorganisms and human beings.

### 4). The Principle of Care

Organic agriculture is managed with precaution and responsibility to protect the health and wellbeing of current and future generations and the environment. Organic agriculture is a living and dynamic system that responds to internal and external demands and conditions. Practitioners of organic agriculture can enhance efficiency and increase productivity, but this should not be at the risk of jeopardizing health and well-being.

# Basic Facts about Organic Agriculture in Uganda

- 1** | Ecological Organic agriculture in Uganda is guided by the National Agriculture Organic Policy, 2018
- 2** | Uganda has the largest organically certified acreage in Africa (262,282 hectares, 2018). The certified organic farmers grew from 15000 in FY2002/03 to over 33000 farmers in FY2017/18. In FY2017/18 Organic Agriculture contributed US\$75million up from US\$44million in FY2015/16.
- 3** | Ecological Organic Agriculture provides Small scale farmers with cheap, low cost and locally available technologies and inputs which increases productivity and food security.
- 4** | Ecological Organic Agriculture recognizes the value of traditional and indigenous knowledge shared through farmer to farmer learning which increases social capacity.
- 5** | Ecological Organic Agriculture protects natural resources and enhances environmental resilience against climate change.
- 6** | Ecological Organic Agriculture increases the incomes of the farming communities through reduction of inputs and costs of inputs, fetches a higher price on the market.
- 7** | Ecological Organic Agriculture helps preserve the culture of sharing and exchanging food and seed in communities.
- 8** | Ecological Organic Agriculture improves the quality of the soil, reduces greenhouse emissions and enables small scale farmers to grow crops that are climate resilient.
- 9** | Organic farming empowers women to become more sovereign over their food and can improve their livelihoods through increased incomes.
- 10** | Currently there is very limited research, education and training in organic agricultural production system.



# Ecological Organic Agriculture Practices

## Rain Water harvesting

EOA aims at optimizing the use of on-farm resources and at a sustainable use of natural resources. Active water retention, water harvesting and storing of water are important practices, especially for organic farmers.



## Nutrient Management

Soil is a living system and soil fertility is the key to agricultural productivity. Therefore organic farming maintains the inherent soil fertility by replacing the nutrients removed by the crops or livestock grazing by using green manures, animal manures (raw or composted) and other natural fertilizers (e.g. rock phosphate).

## Mulching

Mulching does not only keep moisture and water in the soil but it also prevents easy growth of weeds in the garden.



## Integrated Pest and Disease Management (IPM)

Ecological Organic Agriculture emphasizes a range of preventive and control practices of IPM using biological, mechanical control and natural pesticides i.e. (Mechanical -push pull strategy, Hedges, Flower strips, Companion plants - Fruit bagging (natural- using Neem, Pyrethrum, Chill pepper, Garlic: urine, and indigenous herbs like 'mukuna', 'muluku', 'sekoteka', and 'kawunyila').



## Plant Propagation

EOA emphasizes high quality organic seed and plant propagation, allowing for improved yield and product quality, for crop resilience, considerate use of non-renewable resources and for increased genetic and species diversity where traditional varieties and their conservation is prioritized.

## Animal Husbandry

Integrating animal husbandry into crop producing farms is one of the principles of ecological organic farming. This plays an important role in the recycling of nutrients, high costs of production and waste generation.

## Biogas Production

Production of biogas is an energy saving technique which protects the environment from pollution. Biogas residues can also be used as manure in the garden.

## Steps to transition to Organic Agriculture

- 1 | The small scale farmer should familiarize with the National policies on Organic Agriculture.**
- 2 | Apply to a certification body**  
A farmer should apply to an accredited certifying body in the country such as CERES and UGOCERT. Get to know the requirements for certification.
- 3 | Get training on adequate knowledge and skills on Organic Agriculture**  
These skills can be obtained from fellow organic farmers or extension workers at the sub county level. Learn the dos and don'ts of Organic agriculture and learn the basic requirements.
- 4 | Identify potential Organic Buyers and markets**  
Understand what your buyers will need. Get to know if they will need final organic products packaged.
- 5 | Start conversion of the farm from a conventional to an organic farm**  
Understand the history of the land you are planning to practice Organic agriculture on and understand what your neighbors are up to in order to determine the possibility and need for a buffer zone.
- 6 | Keep records of the farm**  
Design a system that will be appropriate and comfortable for you. Records can be kept in a records book, paper, computer or a simple note book.

## Recommendations for up scaling Ecological Organic Agriculture

- 1 | The government in consultation with other actors like small scale farmers should review the existing policy and legal frameworks to be responsive to needs of small holder farmers to secure resources for production such as seed through promoting farmer managed seed systems and land. More efforts are needed to recognize and further promote the role of women in agriculture and design gender responsive interventions for addressing gender inequalities.**
- 2 | The private sector, government and civil society should work towards building strong circular organic markets that closely link the farmers to the consumers and contributes to rural economic development.**
- 3 | The media should create more awareness on the dangers of using harmful agricultural inputs such as highly hazardous pesticides with serious negative effects to human health and the environment.**
- 4 | Research institutes and civil society organizations should work towards development of a robust research agenda for Organic Agriculture and strongly incorporate it in their institutional research agendas to better inform decisions, policies and practices for scaling up Organic agriculture in Uganda.**
- 5 | All stakeholders should promote participatory landscape or community wide approaches that address wider than the farm challenges related to land use management for enhanced resilience of the farming system.**

## Conclusion

Organic farming has proved to improve the livelihoods of small scale farmers. It protects their health because of the absence of chemicals and other artificial inputs. However, many small scale organic farmers say they lack markets where they can sell their products more competitively with conventional agricultural products. They therefore call upon government and policy makers to establish specific markets for organic products with higher prices as well as put in place the recommendations.

## Other learning materials

Please access training videos on EOA practices on the following links:

1. Mulching on: [https://youtu.be/gPREbm\\_0OGk](https://youtu.be/gPREbm_0OGk)
2. Kitchen gardening on: <https://youtu.be/5-Z2PQerOOI>
3. Integration of animals on the farm on: <https://youtu.be/HZJm15p6CYM>
4. Cover cropping on: [https://youtu.be/KXdjk0H6\\_98](https://youtu.be/KXdjk0H6_98)
5. Organic pest management on: <https://youtu.be/cJDTTUd7OSU>
6. Production of liquid manure on: <https://youtu.be/yxG-HpyUCSI>
7. Rain water harvesting on: <https://youtu.be/wUki7dcmDFs>
8. Biogas production on: <https://youtu.be/gL5M80q82XY>
9. Production of organic fertilizers on: <https://youtu.be/uYGyAMSpOKU>

## Brief about the project

ESAFF Uganda in partnership with PELUM Uganda, Uganda Martyrs University, and Kulika Uganda are implementing the EOA-SDC project titled "*Mainstreaming Ecological Organic Agriculture into national policies, strategies and programs in Africa.*" The EOA Initiative is a continental undertaking implemented under the guidance and oversight of the African Union chaired Continental Steering committee. It is designed to establish an African Organic platform, based on available best practices and to develop sustainable organic farming systems.

The main goal of the project is to mainstream EOA into national agricultural production systems by 2025 in order to improve agricultural productivity, food security, access to markets and sustainable development in Africa.



***Mainstreaming Ecological Organic Agriculture into national policies, strategies and programs in Africa.***

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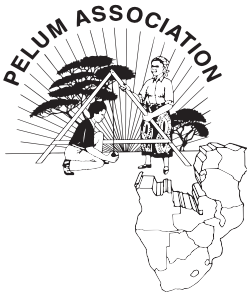
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## About ESAFF Uganda

Eastern and Southern Africa Small- Scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF) Uganda is a small scale farmer initiated and farmer- led movement formed to facilitate processes through which small scale farmers' development concerns can be solicited, articulated and ultimately addressed through local, national, regional and international policies and programs.



Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers' Forum

# ESAFF - UGANDA

*"Small Scale Farmers Speaking For Themselves"*

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