

# NAAC QUARTERLY Newsletter

January-March 2024



*From your CEO*

## **Hooray! Welcome to The Farm Coop Newsletter**

It's been a long journey, but we're finally here! A big thank you to the NAAC team, members, and partners for making this possible.

We believe a quarterly newsletter is essential for sharing updates and progress with our members and partners. The Farm Coop will bring the latest news about agricultural co-ops, inspiring creativity and peer learning among smallholder producer co-ops both locally and globally.

We'll share the latest developments in agriculture and cooperatives, as well as fundraising opportunities.

One exciting update is the launch of the Cooperative Registry MIS (CRMIS), simplifying business with the Cooperative Registrar. Since 2021, we've collaborated with partners like USAID-funded Feed the Future Uganda Institutional and Systems Strengthening (ISS) Activity and AMEA to digitalize the cooperative registry and support data-based decisions.

Now, the task is to help all co-ops onboard to the CRMIS, and we hope everyone in the cooperative sector embraces it.

NAAC is committed to tackling essential challenges to support farmer cooperatives, and we're open to new collaborations and partnerships. The Farm Coop newsletter is just the beginning. Let's explore more opportunities together.

Enjoy our first issue!

*Harrison R. Kaziro*



## **In this newsletter you can expect:**

Building resilient food systems for small holder farmers

Innovation to simplify project management

Board member represents NAAC at agricultural cooperatives training in Japan

A Fruitful Harvest Season for NAAC Members

LWF Burundi Team visits NAAC

Cooperatives registration now digitalised



**NATIONAL FARMERS ORGANIZATION DELEGATES AT THE TRAINING IN KENYA**

## Building resilient food systems for small-holder farmers

We all recognize the significant challenges smallholder farmers face in producing the food we consume and export. With erratic climatic conditions, unpredictable market dynamics, and factors like the ongoing Ukraine war, Uganda and the region face substantial burdens in the foreseeable future. However, we can mitigate these challenges by focusing on strengthening the resilience of those responsible for over 90% of our food production. The Eastern Africa Farmers' Federation (EAFF) organized a training to equip agribusiness advisors with necessary skills to support farmers

and food systems to become more agile and resilient to the challenges ahead. NAAC's Head of Operations, Mr. Emmanuel Ngolobe, participated in a week-long training session in Kenya at the beginning of March 2024. He was joined by delegates from National Farmer Organizations (NFOs) across Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda. Mr. Ngolobe is now actively sharing the acquired skills to educate cooperatives and their members, aiming to enhance the sustainability of Uganda's food systems through cooperative efforts.



**NAAC CEO (R) AND HOO (L) FLANKING SHARECARD MS. SANDRA AWILLI**

### Innovation seeks to simplify Project Management

How can project managers ensure their efforts impact target farmers and provide value for funders? Simplifying Monitoring & Evaluation with digital technologies is key. NAAC discussed with ShareCARD Uganda Ltd to pilot this innovation in current and future projects for cooperative farmers supported by NAAC.

NAAC Team Leader Mr. Harrison R. Kaziro and Head of Operations Mr. Emmanuel Ngolobe are leading the pilot with ShareCARD's Ms. Sandra Awilli. The lessons learned will simplify project MEL for many agricultural practitioners.



**A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST AT BULUNGULI COOPERATIVE**

### A fruitful harvest season for NAAC members

Cooperatives don't need decades of history to deliver results for their members and the Ugandan economy. This has been demonstrated by one of NAAC's members, Bulunguli Farmers' Multipurpose Cooperative Society in Bugweri District, founded in December 2019, just like NAAC. Specializing in key Busoga value chains—maize, soybeans, and rice—Bulunguli has tackled long-standing marketing challenges. With forward contracts signed with Red Corn Farm Supplies Ltd. for export, prosperity is now on the horizon. Congratulations to Bulunguli Cooperative farmers for their success and for representing NAAC so well.



MR OKELLO CHARLES DURING THE IDACA TRAINING

## Board member represents NAAC at agricultural cooperatives training in Japan

One of NAAC's primary objectives is to represent Ugandan farmer cooperatives on the global stage. To achieve this, NAAC has joined various networks, including the World Farmers' Organization (WFO) in Brussels, Belgium. These memberships facilitate knowledge transfer for Ugandan cooperative leaders and members.

Between January 21 and February 3 this year, NAAC board member Mr. Charles Okello from Cwero Farmers' Cooperative Society in Lira participated in a training program in Japan. He joined delegates from Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana under the theme "Capacity Building of Farmers to Respond to Challenges through Development of Agricultural Cooperatives." Mr. Okello gained valuable skills to help agricultural cooperatives thrive in market systems, benefiting their members and communities.

The course was organized by the Institute for the Development of Agricultural Cooperation in Asia (IDACA) and the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), in collaboration with the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and the WFO. Participants also learned about Japanese models of organized agriculture, strengthening cooperative businesses, and practicing sustainable, environment-friendly agriculture.



LWF TEAM VISITING BULUNGULI HARVEST STORE

## LWF Burundi team visits NAAC for exchange

As NAAC's reputation grows regionally and globally, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Burundi had one National Farmer Organization on their must-visit list for 2024: NAAC. On March 6, 2024, the LWF team was welcomed by CEO Mr. Harrison Richard Kaziro at the NAAC Secretariat before embarking on a field visit to Bulunguli Multi-purpose Cooperative Society Ltd. This visit was led by Mr. Colline Were, NAAC's Manager for Cooperative Institutional Development.

The LWF team aimed to learn about the collective action NAAC promotes through farmer cooperatives nationwide. Their feedback highlighted excellent value for money, leading the LWF team to invite NAAC to support the training of cooperative leaders in various provinces in Burundi.



PERMANENT SECRETARY GERALDINE SSALI LAUNCHING DIGITAL COOPERATIVE REGISTRATION

## Uganda's cooperatives registration now digitalized

NAAC believes that cooperatives cannot grow and develop without strengthening and modernizing the necessary support systems. Key changes for cooperative development include adopting data-based decision-making and digitizing business processes at the Cooperative Registrar's office. Since 2021, NAAC has supported these efforts to help the ministry establish a national agricultural cooperative database and digital Management Information Systems (MIS) to enhance cooperative service delivery.

It is for this reason that NAAC, with support from USAID-funded Feed the Future Uganda Institutional and Systems Strengthening (ISS) Activity is collaborating with the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives (MTIC) to develop and roll-out the Cooperative Registry Management Information System (CRMIS).

Launched by Hon. Francis Mwebesa, Minister of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives, on March 15, 2024, in Mbarara City, the CRMIS enables cooperatives to conduct business with the registrar's office digitally, saving valuable time and money.

The CRMIS allows online submissions of registration documents, certificate issuance, verifications, searches, and application tracking, with e-payment options. Cooperatives can register on the [Ministry's website](https://coopmis.mtic.go.ug) (<https://coopmis.mtic.go.ug>). This system reduces errors associated with manual processes.

NAAC was represented at the launch by Mr. Emmanuel Ngolobe (Head of Operations) and Mr. Douson Mwijuka (NAAC Board Member).

*Until next time. Thank you for reading!*

**National Alliance of Agricultural Cooperatives in Uganda (NAAC)**



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