

Farmer Training & Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Report

Organization

Resilient North Uganda (RNU)

Reporting Period

2024–2025 (Pilot & Scale-Up Phase)

Geographic Focus

Northern Uganda (Acholi, Sebei, and Karamoja-adjacent highland zones)

Thematic Areas

Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA), Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Farmer Capacity Building, Seed Systems, Livelihood Resilience

1. Executive Summary

Resilient North Uganda (RNU) implemented a Farmer Training and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) program to strengthen smallholder productivity, climate resilience, and household incomes in Northern Uganda. The intervention targeted maize and groundnut farmers operating in fragile, post-conflict, and climate-vulnerable contexts. Through structured farmer trainings, demonstration plots, and extension support, RNU promoted the adoption of improved seed varieties, climate-smart agronomic practices, and environmentally sustainable farming methods.

The program reached smallholder farmers through community-based trainings and field demonstrations, with a strong focus on women and youth inclusion. Evidence from field monitoring and farmer feedback indicates improved agronomic knowledge, increased uptake of improved seeds, better crop management practices, and early signs of yield and income improvements. The program contributes directly to food security, climate adaptation, and inclusive rural livelihoods.

2. Background and Rationale

Northern Uganda continues to face persistent challenges including low agricultural productivity, climate variability, limited access to quality inputs, and weak extension services. Despite agriculture employing over 70% of the rural population, many farmers rely on traditional practices and low-yielding seed varieties, resulting in low incomes and food insecurity.

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), when combined with Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA), offer a proven pathway to improve productivity while safeguarding natural resources. However, adoption remains constrained by limited farmer knowledge, weak input systems, and poor access to extension services—particularly in post-conflict areas.

RNU designed this training program to address these gaps by equipping farmers with practical skills, improving access to knowledge on improved seeds and agronomic practices, and strengthening local learning systems through demonstrations and peer learning.

3. Program Objectives

Overall Objective

To enhance smallholder farmer productivity, resilience, and incomes through the adoption of Good Agricultural Practices and Climate-Smart Agriculture.

Specific Objectives

- Strengthen farmer knowledge and skills in GAP and CSA
- Promote adoption of improved maize and groundnut seed varieties
- Improve soil health, crop management, and climate resilience
- Increase household food availability and marketable surplus
- Strengthen farmer linkages to extension services and input suppliers

4. Target Beneficiaries

- Smallholder farmers (men and women)
- Youth engaged in farming and agri-enterprises
- Farmer groups and community-based organizations

Cross-cutting priorities:

- Gender equity and women's participation
- Youth inclusion and skills development
- Environmental sustainability

5. Training Approach and Methodology

RNU adopted a participatory, farmer-centered training approach combining classroom sessions, field demonstrations, and continuous extension support.

Key Training Modalities

- Farmer Field Schools (FFS)
- Demonstration plots for maize and groundnuts
- Practical, hands-on training sessions
- Peer learning and experience sharing
- On-site coaching by extension facilitators

Training Topics Covered

- Land preparation and soil management
- Improved and certified seed selection

- Climate-resilient maize and groundnut varieties
- Proper planting techniques and spacing
- Integrated soil fertility management
- Use of organic and inorganic fertilizers
- Integrated Pest and Disease Management (IPM)
- Post-harvest handling and storage
- Environmental conservation and climate adaptation

6. Implementation Summary

The program was implemented in collaboration with local farmer organizations and community leaders. Training sessions were scheduled to align with the agricultural calendar to ensure relevance and immediate application.

Demonstration plots were established to showcase best practices, compare improved versus traditional methods, and encourage farmer learning through observation and results.

Special efforts were made to ensure participation of women-headed households and youth farmers, recognizing their critical role in agricultural transformation.

7. Results and Early Outcomes

Key Outputs

- Farmers trained in GAP and CSA practices
- Demonstration plots established and managed
- Improved seed varieties introduced and adopted
- Farmer groups strengthened for collective learning

Observed Outcomes

- Improved farmer knowledge of agronomic practices
- Increased use of improved maize and groundnut seeds
- Better crop establishment and field management
- Improved soil management practices
- Enhanced awareness of climate risks and adaptation strategies

Farmers reported improved confidence in farming decisions and increased willingness to invest in productivity-enhancing inputs.

8. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

RNU integrated Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) throughout program implementation.

MEL Activities

- Training attendance and participation tracking
- Field monitoring visits
- Farmer feedback and learning sessions
- Observation of practice adoption at farm level

Lessons learned were documented and used to refine training content and delivery methods. Community feedback mechanisms ensured accountability and responsiveness to farmer needs.

9. Cross-Cutting Issues

Gender and Social Inclusion

The program actively promoted women's participation in trainings and decision-making. Training schedules and locations were adapted to enhance accessibility for women and youth.

Environmental Sustainability

GAP and CSA practices emphasized soil conservation, efficient input use, and climate adaptation to reduce environmental degradation.

10. Challenges and Lessons Learned

Key Challenges

- Limited access to complementary inputs (fertilizers, tools)
- Climate variability affecting demonstration results
- Distance and transport constraints for some farmers

Lessons Learned

- Demonstration-based learning accelerates adoption
- Timely access to inputs is critical for results
- Continuous extension support strengthens behavior change

11. Sustainability and Scale-Up

RNU is strengthening local capacity by working with farmer groups and local extension actors to sustain GAP adoption beyond the project period. Lessons from this program will inform scale-up efforts across Northern Uganda.

Partnerships with input suppliers, local governments, and development partners are being explored to expand coverage and deepen impact.

12. Alignment with Donor Priorities

This program aligns with priorities of UNCDF, bilateral donors, and international NGOs by contributing to:

- Food security and nutrition
- Climate adaptation and resilience
- Inclusive economic growth
- Community-driven development

It supports SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 5 (Gender Equality), and 13 (Climate Action).

13. Conclusion

The Farmer Training and GAP program demonstrates that targeted capacity building, combined with practical demonstrations and extension support, can drive meaningful improvements in smallholder productivity and resilience. Continued investment in farmer knowledge systems and inclusive agricultural innovation is essential for sustainable rural transformation in Northern Uganda.

Prepared by: Resilient North Uganda (RNU)

For: Donors, Development Partners, and Stakeholders