Tomato (Lycopersicon Esculentum Mill.) is a high value crop which can be produced by all gender specific interest groups (males, females and youths). Tomato is consumed by about 3 million households in every meal in almost every district of Uganda and it is economically important as a source of income. Because of its importance at household level, Solidaridad, with funding from FORD FOUNDATION, and in partnership with House of Seeds, Selected District Production Departments and Namulonge Crop Resources Research Institute staff and SULMA FOODS, focused in improving the tomatoes value chain in Mpigi, Luwero and Wakiso Districts in Central Uganda.

To achieve its objective, the project worked with over 929 beneficiaries, organised into producer marketing groups, with 65% being women, while 21% being youth, in MPIGI district. One such group was Tukole Bukozi Youth Group, with 28 members, in Bubezi location. The group benefited from a Young Plant Raising Nursery (YPR), training on agronomy and business development.

Mr and Mrs John Ssenyonjo have been members of the group for the last 3 years. The couple has been married for the last 7 years, and have been blessed with three (3) children (1 girl and 2 boys). Their main source of income is from crop production, which include Matooke, Cassava, Tomatoes, Cabbage and sweet potatoes.

Tomato production was the main source of income in 2015, contributing 85 percent of their household income. While the man was initially not interested in Tomatoes production, mainly concentrating on Matooke and cassava, the wife diversified into tomatoes production, both for commercial and household consumption. Due to lack of expertise and in ability of the woman to perform some duties such as spraying, and intensive weeding, the yields were discouraging. From the January,
2015 planting, she was able to harvest 2,000 Kgs of tomatoes, from ½ acre, with a potential of 8,000 Kgs. This earned the family USD 571.43 with a net of USD 200. According to her, she did the bulk of the work, apart from some activities which she couldn’t do such as pesticide and fertiliser application.

The couple were the first members of the group to attend the trainings on nursery management, field production, post-harvest management, organised by Solidaridad and its partners. Through the two demonstrations, the couples were able to learn of new tomato varieties such as RANDAH F1, from House of Seed Limited. With the yields of 900 Kgs in a 1/8 acre, equivalent to 7,900 Kgs/acre, the husband was convinced that there is money in tomatoes.

Mr. Gabriel (Left) from NACCRI in Namulonge research station and Charles (Right) explains to a farmer about pests in chilies

The man became interested in production and fully participated in tomatoes production. The couple bought the RANDAH F1 seeds, enough for ½ acre, in October, 2015. They were able to apply the knowledge acquired through the training. The result was instant. Access to hybrid variety RANDAH F1, from House of Seed Company in Uganda, tripled the yields from 2MT in March, 2015 to 6MT per ½ acre in January, in 2016. Though the prices at that time reduced from USD 28 to USD 20, due to high supply, they were able to make USD 657 above the first season planting.

Asked why the yield tripled, the couple associated it to participation of both of them in the production and training they have received from the project. Initially, they were not using fertiliser on tomatoes production, as they thought fertiliser damages their soils. From the soil analysis done for the demonstration, the group were trained on the importance of fertiliser application based on analysis results.

Through the project, the couple have received trainings on business management, record keeping and gross margin analysis.

‘Advice given on soil nutrition from the extension staff led us to invest in fertiliser at planting and top-dressing,

Mr. Ssenjonjo, who has now dedicated his time in tomato production.

Sustainable Vegetable Production and Marketing Project (SVMP),

**Funded by FORD FOUNDATION,**

**Implemented by Solidaridad (2015-2016) impacting 2,330 farmers (18% Youths)**

**In Central Region of Uganda**