

AFIRD HISTORY STORIES

003

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My experience as a partner of AFIRD

My name is Lutalo Stella, I am the country co-ordinator of PELUM Uganda. PELUM is a network of organisations promoting ecological agriculture in East and Southern Africa. I think it is a great practice AFIRD has taken on. Documenting the history of the organisation will help the current staff, beneficiaries and partners appreciate the original dreams and aspirations that motivated the founders to start AFIRD, and therefore reflect, build on and push it forward.

AFIRD first encountered with PELUM in the 2000s, so by the time I joined PELUM in 2006, AFIRD was already a member.

By then PELUM was doing trainings in sustainable agriculture, Monitoring and Evaluation, organisational capacity strengthening and exposure visits for member organisations including AFIRD. These took place between 2006 and 2008.

AFIRD also served on the PELUM board from 2008 to 2014, for the last three years of that service, Mr. Sajjabi Eustace who is the ED of AFIRD was the board vice chairperson and when the chairperson resigned towards the end, he served as the acting chairperson for the final six months.

During this period, both PELUM and AFIRD experienced a lot of growth, both organisations mutually benefited each other. The growth was in terms of funding, more donors came on board, our membership doubled, our staff team grew and we also relocated to a new and bigger office. AFIRD has also been active on almost all the thematic committees of PELUM at some point.

AFIRD was trained in governance, the board was trained and they were able to develop some policies and establish board sub committees. This exposure gave AFIRD experience in organising board meeting, preparing documents for different audiences and decision making. AFIRD was trained in the different PELUM models including the CREAM model, CMSS model, the PESA model and the GALS methodology. Being a member of PELUM, AFIRD continues to be part of many trainings and projects, as well as exposure visits.

I must say that AFIRD is a learning organisation, always ready to expand on the small technologies that PELUM starts up with them, for example the seed bank and the vermicompost, these were taken to a whole new level by AFIRD, greatly improving on what was introduced, and engaging the farmers too. AFIRD is always adapting to new technologies and continually seeking to address upcoming issues. For this reason, they have on many occasions won the award for most active PELUM members organisation, including the one at the celebration of PELUM at 20 years.

My most memorable event at AFIRD was the 20 years celebration, I was required to give remarks and during my preparation I took time to reflect on AFIRD's journey with PELUM and I came to a realisation of how much AFIRD has grown, from renting to having her own home with such a magnificent small space, organic farming and permaculture demonstration centre, to developing strong roots and connections among stake holders in Wakiso.

I see AFIRD expanding its work to other districts, becoming a model organisation in confined space and organic farming technologies.