

Masheruka Women's Club

Members of this women's club, and other communities across Uganda now have access to disease resistant bean seeds thanks to FARM-Africa.



Communities all across east Africa are benefiting from new approaches to small scale farming through FARM-Africa's Maendeleo Agricultural Technology Fund (MATF). MATF takes its name from the Swahili word for 'development' and identifies and tests new approaches to small scale farming in the region. The findings are then shared amongst many different communities, bringing benefits to thousands of families.

The Masheruka Central Women's Development Club is just one such group of families that have benefited. Based in Uganda, the group was set up to help members access credit and run their farms better. However, they faced a large and ongoing problem – almost all members had little or no money to spare due to low bean yields.

Beans are one of the most important crops in Uganda both in terms of food and income generation. However diseases such as root rot have been damaging crops to such an extent that some farmers have even stopped trying to grow them.

MATF has helped develop new disease resistant bean varieties which have proved highly successful and very popular. However, just developing the new beans would not benefit whole communities. The sharing of the new bean seeds and crop growing skills is essential.

The members of the Masheruka Club were lucky enough to attend training and practical demonstrations about how to plant and care for their crops to minimise the occurrence and spread of any disease. This coupled with the new, hardier, disease resistant seeds has seen a huge increase in bean yields for the members.

These once impoverished families are now well on their way to a brighter future. They are now able to ensure that their children have enough nutritious food in their tummies before leaving for school, and can buy other household necessities such as soap and cooking oil. Some families are even able to buy livestock and save for their futures.