

NEWSLETTER



**Ebyendiisa Expo 2026:
Good Food, Good Vibes,
and Real Change**



Building a Food System That Works for Every Ugandan

When we think of malnutrition, empty plates come to mind. In Uganda the reality is more complex: our markets brim with food, farmers grow diverse crops, and entrepreneurs innovate, yet many families still lack safe, nutritious, affordable diets. That paradox was at the heart of the inaugural #Ebyendiisa Expo 2026.



Over two days the Expo united farmers, processors, researchers, businesses, policymakers, development partners and consumers around one belief: transforming Uganda's food system requires everyone. What unfolded was more than a product exhibition; it was a conversation about the future of food.

Farmers showcased high-quality produce and improved seed varieties that raise productivity and strengthen household nutrition. Food processors displayed healthier products responding to shifting consumer needs. Young entrepreneurs demonstrated how innovation is driving transformation. One clear message emerged. Access to nutritious food is about more than production. It requires safe supply chains, reduced post-harvest losses, markets that reward quality, affordable availability where people live, and informed consumers. Above all, it needs an enabling environment where businesses, farmers and institutions thrive together.

At GAIN Uganda, we remain committed to supporting initiatives that empower communities, strengthen value chains, and promote better nutrition outcomes, especially for the most vulnerable populations.

The Expo underscored that food systems are as strong as the partnerships that sustain them. Government shapes policy; the private sector drives investment and innovation; universities and research institutions generate actionable evidence; development partners provide catalytic support; and farmers and consumers determine success.

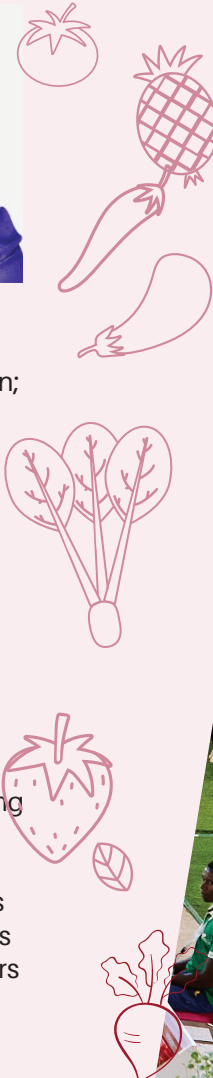
The launch of the Scaling Up Nutrition Academic Research and Innovation Network (SUN-ARINU) illustrated this collaboration, bringing research closer to industry and policy. Equally inspiring were students in the CASCADE programme turning internships into careers, showing that investing in youth strengthens the workforce and the food system.

At GAIN Uganda we connect actors, strengthen markets, support businesses, generate evidence and champion policies to make nutritious foods more available, affordable and desirable for every Ugandan.

Damali Ssali

Country Director

<https://www.gainhealth.org/uganda>



Ebyendiisa Expo 2026: Growing Demand for Healthy Foods

Social media and word-of-mouth proved to be the most effective channels for attracting visitors, highlighting the growing influence of digital platforms in promoting public health campaigns.

Uganda produces an abundance of food, yet malnutrition and poor diets remain widespread. The #Ebyendiisa Expo 2026 set out to change that by showing people how healthy eating can be practical, affordable and enjoyable.

Held on April 30 and May 1 at the Uganda Manufacturers Association Grounds, the Expo, organised by GAIN Uganda under the Vegetables for All initiative, combined nutrition education with cooking demonstrations, food tastings, quizzes, dance competitions and interactive learning to inspire healthier food choices.

The response was overwhelming. More than 1,400 people attended over the two days, with attendance remaining virtually unchanged from Day One (710) to Day Two (709). Women accounted for just over half of participants,

while nearly two-thirds were aged between 18 and 34 years, an important audience for shaping long-term family nutrition habits.

Social media and word-of-mouth proved to be the most effective channels for attracting visitors, highlighting the growing influence of digital platforms in promoting public health campaigns.

Beyond the excitement, the Expo delivered measurable impact. Before attending, only 13 percent of participants considered themselves knowledgeable about nutrition. By the end of the event, that figure had risen to 83 percent. Nearly every participant (97 percent) said the Expo had positively changed their perception of vegetables and healthy eating, with many leaving equipped with practical knowledge on balanced diets, food safety and healthier cooking methods.





Participants also shared what they hope to see in future editions. Fresh organic produce topped the list, followed by affordable nutritious foods, children's nutrition products and food preservation solutions, reflecting increasing consumer demand for healthy foods that are both accessible and practical.

The Expo also created significant business opportunities. Ninety-seven percent of exhibitors established new business connections, many gained new customers, and almost half developed new partnerships. More than two-thirds rated the Expo's business value as high or very high, while 95 percent said they would participate again.

More than a food exhibition, #Ebyendiisa Expo 2026 demonstrated that nutrition education, innovation and business can work hand in hand. It showed that when people are given the knowledge, products and opportunities to make healthier choices, they are ready to embrace change, creating benefits not only for individual families but for Uganda's entire food system.



https://www.linkedin.com/posts/global-alliance-for-improved-nutrition-uganda_ebyendiisaexpo2026-activity-7455570576896614400-7mZK?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAbcfe4Bl-oCFK4pjJufCdtTYJOHhphsmOM



In Pictures

BOTTOM: Fresh, nutrit Tatiastimet pratquo blam etumquo offic to et hilliqui accatures et ma cusaper orehendus pratem dolupid quam, ut vel mi, nonsequo doluptu repedigendam fugitasped maximped mo quatem estur andesci pictat fugit derum hit, occat qui dem earit rem cum nosapienim ut od ese re



RIGHT: Behind every great event is a great emcee. And Abbey Mukibi proved why he was the right man for the job, stepping off the stage, leaning in, and truly interacting with the people who made the #EbyendiisaExpo shine; the exhibitors.



LEFT: Fresh, nutritious, and unmistakably healthy, Maama Nduga, PSFU Vice Chairperson Sarah Kagingo, and GAIN Country Director Damali Ssali showcase the very best of the #EbyendiisaExpo. Good food, great leaders, one



The displays themselves were unlike anything seen before at a local trade event. Gone were the cluttered tables and haphazard banner stands. In their place were curated, minimalist booths that told a story rather than just selling a product. But it was the aesthetics that truly stunned visitors. The expo designers had chosen a crisp white, blue that complemented the greens, reds and yellows beautifully.



The expo offered an unequalled digital experience, with widescreens strategically located across the entire venue, capturing and displaying great moments in real time for all attendees to enjoy.

In Pictures



Representative from the Dutch Seed centre displays some of the high quality seeds available.



Some moments money cannot buy. For Maama Nduga, the veteran vegetable vendor known for her vibrant spirit, sharing a stage with Spice Diana was one such moment. Two local legends. One unforgettable stage.



Behind every successful event is a team that shows up, works hard, and never stops caring. Barbara and Scovia of the GAIN team are that team. Here they are taking a bow at the end of the #EbyendiisaExpo, and they deserve every bit of the applause.



The #EbyendiisaExpo made sure every bite was prepared under the most hygienic conditions, because good food starts with safe food.

SAN-ARINO STRATEGY LAUNCH



CASCADE's Internship Success Inspires National Nutrition Agenda

When nutrition students once left university for internship, there was little question about where they would go. Their destination was almost always a hospital or public health facility, where practical training had remained largely unchanged for decades.

Today, a growing number are taking a different path.

Through the Catalysing Strengthened Policy Action for Healthy Diets and Resilience through Agri-food Systems Transformation (CASCADE) Internship Placement Programme, students are walking into food companies, agribusinesses and private sector organisations, applying what they learnt in lecture rooms to real workplace challenges. Some have already secured jobs before graduation, while others are developing the entrepreneurial skills needed to create employment for themselves.

Those success stories took centre stage at the launch of the Scaling Up Nutrition Academic Research and Innovation Network (SUN-ARINU) Strategy 2026–2030, where education leaders, government officials and development partners argued that transforming nutrition outcomes in Uganda begins with transforming how future professionals are trained.

For the CASCADE consortium, the internship programme has become proof that universities and

industry can work together to produce graduates who are better prepared for the labour market while contributing practical solutions to Uganda's nutrition challenges.

Representing the consortium, Immaculate Yossa described the initiative as an experiment that has exceeded expectations.

"This project gave us a laboratory to test a prototype," she said. "When we started, we did not know what the outcome would be. Today, it is evident that this prototype is scalable and fundable."

Yossa said the consortium, which includes GAIN, CARE, Food Rights Alliance, Africa Innovations Institute, Farm Africa and Kyambogo University, set out to challenge the traditional model of student internships by creating opportunities within the private sector. She challenged universities to ensure the model survives beyond donor funding by embedding industry placements into their academic programmes. Yossa also pledged the consortium's continued support in helping universities build partnerships with industry and develop new programmes that respond to emerging workforce needs.

The call was reinforced by Dr Jacent Kamuntu Asiimwe of Kyambogo University's Department of Nutritional Science and Dietetics, who said the CASCADE Internship Placement Programme

demonstrates exactly what Uganda's Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) reforms are designed to achieve. "For many years, academia has been criticised for producing graduates who are not immediately employable," she said. "Our collective responsibility is to change that."

She argued that closer collaboration between universities and industry allows students to graduate with practical experience, relevant skills and the confidence to either secure employment or establish their own enterprises. Dr Asimwe said partnerships also accelerate innovation by combining academic research with industry's understanding of markets and consumer needs.



"When technical and research expertise meets practical market knowledge, we develop products and services that solve real problems rather than remaining theoretical," she said.

The internship programme's success was showcased alongside the launch of Scaling Up Nutrition Academic Research and

Innovation Network (SUN-ARINU)'s first five-year strategic plan, which seeks to strengthen the role of universities and research institutions in addressing Uganda's nutrition challenges. SUN-ARINU Chairperson Dr Peterson Kikomeko said the network has aligned its 2026-2030 strategy with the Uganda Nutrition Action Plan and other national development frameworks to ensure academic research directly informs government policy and programming.

He noted that Uganda continues to face a dual burden of malnutrition, with stunting remaining at 26 percent, underweight affecting 20 percent of children, and both wasting and overweight standing at about three percent.

"These figures remind us that research must move beyond journals and become evidence that guides policy, programmes and decision-making," he said.

Officially launched during the National Nutrition Forum in May 2024, SUN-ARINU brings together universities and research institutions to promote nutrition training, innovation and research while strengthening collaboration with government, civil society and the private sector. The network aims to contribute to ending all forms of malnutrition in Uganda by 2030.

UNICEF reaffirmed its commitment to supporting that ambition through technical expertise and financial resources. Speaking on behalf of the organisation, Nutrition Officer Mary Nabisere said Uganda is witnessing a historic shift in childhood malnutrition, with overweight and obesity now overtaking undernutrition among school-age children and adolescents.



She said only research makes such trends visible, underscoring the importance of networks like SUN-ARINU. While acknowledging shrinking global development funding, Nabisere called on partners to pool resources and coordinate investments rather than working in isolation. She committed UNICEF's continued technical and financial support to strengthen the link between research and policy implementation. Improving Uganda's nutrition will require more than scientific research or government policy alone. It will demand graduates who can move confidently from the classroom into the workplace, researchers whose findings shape national decisions, and partnerships that outlive individual projects. If

the CASCADE internship model becomes the norm rather than the exception, many participants believe Uganda will not only produce more employable graduates, but also build the skilled workforce needed to tackle malnutrition for generations to come.



Dutch Seed Centre: Better Seed for Uganda's Vegetable Farmers

For many Ugandan vegetable farmers, the difference between profit and loss often begins with a single seed. Poor germination, counterfeit seed, crop diseases and low yields have long undermined productivity, leaving farmers working hard for disappointing harvests.

Since its establishment in 2018, Dutch Seed Centre has been changing that story by connecting farmers with high-quality vegetable seed tested specifically for Uganda's growing conditions.

Working with leading international breeders, particularly Bejo Seeds, the company has conducted extensive field trials to identify varieties that thrive across Uganda's diverse agroecological zones. Its portfolio now includes onions, carrots, kale, broccoli and cauliflower, giving farmers access to crops that are both profitable and nutritious.

Rather than offering one-size-fits-all solutions, Dutch Seed Centre focuses on the challenges farmers face every day. Highland onion growers, for example, benefit from varieties such as Red Nice and Red Wave, while Red Duke and Red Silk perform better in lowland areas. The company has also introduced Alcala, an innovative self-covering cauliflower that naturally protects its head from sunlight, reducing labour while maintaining the bright white colour preferred by consumers.

The impact has been significant. Farmers report doubling and even tripling their yields while benefiting from disease-resistant varieties that reduce pesticide use, lower production costs and minimise post-harvest losses through improved shelf life. Better-quality produce has also enabled many growers to access more lucrative markets and increase household incomes.

Beyond commercial farming, Dutch Seed Centre is promoting kitchen and urban gardens through demonstration plots and agricultural exhibitions such as the Ebyendiisa Expo, encouraging households, schools and institutions to grow their own nutritious vegetables.

Looking ahead, the company is expanding beyond seed by promoting sustainable farming practices with partners such as JESSE and introducing biological crop protection solutions that offer environmentally friendly alternatives for managing pests and diseases.

With new varieties continually being introduced, Dutch Seed Centre remains committed to one goal: ensuring every Ugandan farmer has access to quality seed, the single most important investment in a successful harvest. By improving access to better genetics, promoting sustainable agriculture and supporting farmers with practical solutions, the company is helping build a more productive, resilient and nutrition-sensitive vegetable sector across Uganda.

Blackjack (biden pilosa) is the perfect example. Most farmers pull it out and throw it away. Children are taught it has no value. But traditional knowledge tells a different story.

