



# DIGITAL CONNECTORS FOR FARMING COMMUNITIES



## DIGITAL CONNECTION EASES IRRIGATION BUSINESS FOR ANTHONY, CONNECTS HIM TO PROFESSIONALS

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A man in a white polo shirt is looking at a tablet computer. He is also holding a white electronic device with several cables plugged into it. The background is a clear blue sky.

Digital Connector: Anthony Kisakye

Business model: E-DIMES (electronic delivery of irrigation and water management and extension services)

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Kisakye Anthony (25yrs) holds a diploma in Water Engineering, from Ndejje University. A Digital Connector under Zirobwe Agaliawamu Agri-Business Training Association (ZAABTA) Innovation Platform (IP) in Luweero District.

His business model: **E-DIMES**, is an electronic delivery of irrigation and water management and extension services, where he reaches out to farmers both digitally and physically. Anthony was linked to UFAAS by his ZAABTA Manager, Mr. Mayambala, since he was already one of the extension workers for the association.

Taking on this role was an opportunity for him because,

- i) he has been able to get into contact with other people within his profession (water engineering) like suppliers and manufacturers such as Davis and Shirliff, AKVO international, and SprinklerTech among others;
- ii) it has earned him trust among people like farmers, manufacturers, and suppliers. In addition, he has accessed great deals for his farmers. For instance, he recently received three water pumps from Sprinkler Tech. to give to farmers at only 15% payment. He gets a commission of about Ugx.50,000 (~US\$13.5/ 12.5 Euros) per delivery
- iii) professionally, it has helped him gain confidence in speaking among people, and,
- iv) he has also gained marketing skills through the social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok.

To facilitate the adoption and integration of digital technologies among farmers, Anthony has trained two more digital connectors to reach out to farmers even in his absence. He has developed these programs to ensure that farmers not only understand but also actively utilize digital

technologies in their agricultural practices. He has continuously sensitized and talked to farmers about the benefits of digital farming through visits to farmer groups, on his social media platforms, and through his innovation platform training and meetings with farmers. Anthony revealed that due to the services offered under E-DIMES, dry season returns usually surpass wet season gains because not many farmers produce during the dry season.

He shared an instance where his intervention significantly helped a farmer; “I had a farmer in Wakatayi, Bungo who had a water reservoir but didn’t know he would survive even in dry seasons. I advised him to buy a pump, which he did. I also advised him to dig water channels in his swamp side of the farm so that water flows very well and he now has a clean green garden”. Anthony narrated.

Anthony has a very big plan to have a store to stock irrigation equipment and getting a tricycle with a trolley (Tuktuk) for transporting the equipment to farmers.

The business model is still promising though capital intensive. He plans to stock irrigation equipment but he has managed to partner with manufacturers and suppliers to offer installment payment deals to farmers.

**Appreciation:** *Anthony is thankful to his Innovation Platform Manager, Mr. Mayambala for connecting him to UFAAS and to the AIRTEA project and the digital connectors program that has earned him income, trust and better positioned him in the society*

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We met at ZAABTA and their manager Mr Mayambala introduced me to Kisakye, the digital connector who taught me about the benefits of agricultural digitalisation, especially the digital irrigation system. They came and gave a preliminary visit to our farm and helped us purchase the irrigation equipment at a subsidised cost”.

Tumukunde Derrick, vegetable farmer, Bundo village, Kakakala Parish, Zirobwe sub-County, Luweero District

<sup>1</sup>UGX 1 is approximately US\$ 3,600 or 4,000 Euros.



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