

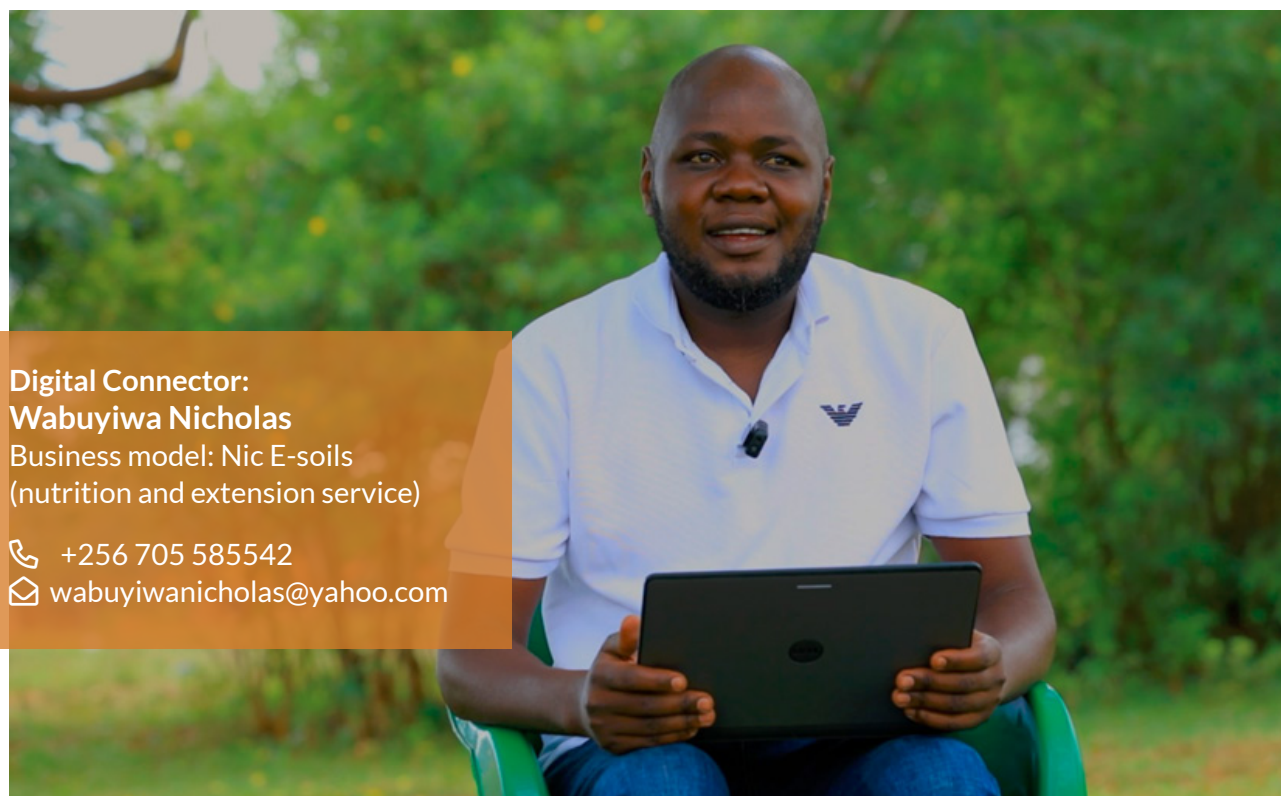


NICHOLAS REVOLUTIONALIZES SOIL HEALTH SERVICES WITH A BLEND OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Compiled by the Uganda Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (UFAAS)

February, 2025

NICHOLAS REVOLUTIONALIZES SOIL HEALTH SERVICES WITH A BLEND OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



Digital Connector:

Wabuyiwa Nicholas

Business model: Nic E-soils
(nutrition and extension service)

☎ +256 705 585542

✉ wabuyiwanicholas@yahoo.com

Wabuyiwa Nicholas, a 38-year old graduate of agriculture is a Digital Connector and the Director of Nic e-soils nutrition and extension services. Based in Bugiri District, he came to know about the digital connectors project through his friend who sent him the call for proposal. Through BAIDA Innovation Platform, he wrote a proposal to become a Digital Connector, and was selected for training. UFAAS provided him with different trainings on how to develop his business model.

Before becoming a Digital Connector, Nicholas was an extension worker, and everything was done traditionally and manually and hence hectic. Through his new business model, he now provides e-soil testing and e-soil nutrient delivery services to farmers.

Nicholas says he has benefitted from being a Digital Connector in several ways:

- Through UFAAS, he was connected to ISDA organisation with the Virtual Agronomist, where he was introduced to use of Artificial Intelligence in agricultural extension. He was trained on how to use GPS, how to measure land and capture coordinates and how to assess soil health. He tests the farmers' soil /plots of land, virtually and digitally. This reduced the cost of testing soil by farmers from Uganda Shillings (UGX) 60,000 (~US\$18/ 15 Euros) per acre to UGX 6,000 (~US\$1.8/ 1.5 Euros).
- He has connected 1,506 farmers on the virtual Agronomist platform
- Through ISDA, he gets a commission for the service, which is a reliable source of income. He has directly reached out to 100 farmers, and he gets a commission of UGX 3,000 (~US\$ 0.83/ 0.75 Euros) per farmer for that service. For any emergency he attends to he gets an extra UGX 1,000 (~US\$ 0.27/ 0.25 Euros).
- The project has also made him famous within and outside Bugiri District, and he is known as the Soil doctor.

To facilitate the adoption and integration of digital technologies among farmers, Nicholas sensitizes the farmers about the benefits of using several digital tools such as in soil testing. He also trains farmers who are interested in agricultural digitization to disseminate knowledge about its benefits to others.

To ensure that farmers not only understand but also actively utilize digital technologies, Nicholas has employed these programs. He is working on hands-on services where farmers can see different results of the products and services he is offering.

He shared an example where one farmer Jasper [not real name] in Nabukalu Sub-county, did not believe in soil testing and fertiliser use, saying it was a waste of time and money. To demonstrate that the technologies work, Nicholas experimented with Jasper's neighbor Sulaiman. He tested his garden soils, provided appropriate inputs, and he got very high yields. Jasper was impressed by Sulaiman's yields and he called Nicholas to provide the same service: "...he had to call me, and he even paid more than what Sulaiman had paid. This was proof that my extension model works and it increases yields of the farmers' crops," narrated the industrious Nicholas.

To expand and improve his services in the future, he and other digital connectors in the District are developing a dashboard from where farmers can easily access their services as a one-stop center. He is continuously sensitizing farmers on each platform he has developed so as to expand his services to other districts. With agricultural digitization, Nicholas sees a reduced cost of production by farmers. For support to help him achieve his goals, Nicholas seeks support to develop a dashboard.



“Before I think about planting, I reach out to Nicholas with a phone call or message. I first consult Nicholas who advises me to test the soil and advises on the fertilizers to use, and the crops suitable”
Adong Josephine, Farmer, Kazimbakungira village, Bugeso Parish, Iwemba Sub county, Bugiri District.

Adong Josephine, one of Nicholas' clients

Challenges encountered during the implementation of his business model include; Lack of an application that brings them together as digital connectors, yet their services work along each other. “We are few within the district, yet we have to reach a large number of farmers” said Nicholas

Appreciation: Nicholas appreciates UFAAS for the opportunity of being a Digital Connector, saying that the project has increased his income, earned him fame, and the yields of the farmers have increased.



DIGITAL CONNECTORS FOR FARMING COMMUNITIES

FUNDED BY



COORDINATED BY



IMPLEMENTED BY



UGANDA FORUM
FOR AGRICULTURAL
ADVISORY SERVICES



Ag  Connectors