

AGRIBUSINESS DIGEST

SPECIAL NEWSLETTER ON SOMA

OCTOBER 2020



**Agribusiness
Development
Centre**

SOMA

An **eLearning** solution for farmers

EXPLORING THE REALITIES OF E-LEARNING
FOR AGRICULTURE IN UGANDA

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MAXIMIZATION OF ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES
WITH SOMA DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

The easiest, step-by-step
interactive agribusiness eLearning

www.soma.adc.ug



FOR SUPPORT / 0757714768 / info@adc.ug



BY PRISCILLA BASEMERA



EXPLORING

the realities of eLearning for Agriculture in Uganda

At 10 am, on the bright Wednesday morning of 29th July, Agribusiness Development Centre (ADC) at their offices on Plot 1 Mackinnon Road, launched SOMA, the first e-learning platform of its kind in Uganda with a press conference.

There are a few e-learning options available for agriculture professionals predominantly in the United States and in some parts of Asia but not in Uganda.

Internet searches for e-learning platforms provide search results to student learning portals but not farmer knowledge.

SOMA, a self-paced online portal has been developed and tailored to the needs of individual farmers and farmer-based organizations. The General Manager of ADC, Emmanuel Obuko, during the launch remarked that with the low literacy levels in Uganda,

adapting technology in agriculture has been difficult.

DRIVING FARMER LITERACY

Agricultural development in a changing world is not only dependent on constantly improving existing practices but also on the adoption of innovations like SOMA.

SOMA takes into consideration the different possibilities e-learning has to offer. It incorporates allowing learners an opportunity to access the available courses within their respective geographical locations at a time convenient for them at no cost. With agriculture being Uganda's most important export sector, several factors including limited availability of finance, lack of access to timely and quality market information as well as poor agricultural practices to mention but a few are an obstacle. ADC, with a desire of training farmers in becoming self-sufficient developed SOMA to provide knowledge in areas such as Good Governance, Financial Literacy and Marketing.

WHY FARMERS?

ADC was established in 2017 by Rabo Foundation, a Netherlands based organization and Dfcu Bank in Uganda. With agriculture being the backbone of Uganda and employing 70% of Ugandans, the ADC through training aims to support farmer-based organizations in becoming self-sufficient and bankable. In a means to create professional development opportunities for agriculture practitioners, ADC creates

innovative ideas that are effective and efficient for farmers in Uganda to earn a living enough to sustain their families as well.

The first steps of e-learning in agriculture have been taken in countries like Asia by the Asia - Pacific Regional Technology Centre (APRTC) in Thailand. Fully exploiting electronic media and maximizing its usefulness while creating a well-designed electronic training system for learners.

The online programs available on SOMA are designed to engage the learners and avail learning resources in the form of case studies for their benefit. Lessons are available in English, Luganda, Luo, and Runyakitara. The choice is simply yours.



LESSONS ARE AVAILABLE IN LUGANDA, ENGLISH, LUO & RUNYAKITARA.



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Plot 1, Mackinnon Road
P.O Box 70 Kampala,
Uganda (East Africa)

Phone: +(256)757714768
Email: info@adc.ug
Website: www.adc.ug



ACTING GENERAL MANAGER

Emmanuel Obuko

EDITOR

Katia Mugenzi

WRITERS

Katia Mugenzi
Priscilla Basemera

PHOTOGRAPHY

ADC Marketing &
Communication
Department

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Squaremile Africa

POWERED BY



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E-LEARNING IN AGRICULTURE

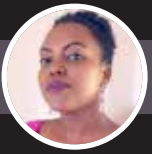
With the readjustment in the agricultural sector due to COVID 19 pandemic, access to educative agriculture information and training is a key element for agricultural development. The adoption of cost-effective means to facilitate knowledge development has created room for evolving applications such as e-learning platforms.

These are online learning forums with interactive tools and resources that provide individuals with information to support and enhance education delivery and management. Thanks to the rapid advancements in technology, online learning is a common offering these days with remarkable changes in how content is accessed, consumed and shared.

With the ongoing global pandemic COVID-19, necessary directives have been imposed to combat the spread of the virus. It is during such times that farmers need the opportunity for education at their own convenience with no restriction on time and location. E-learning platforms offer trainings without the necessity of a physical classroom, cater for learner preferences with inclusion of features like audio, video or text and allows learners choose their learning path and navigate at their own pace.

With E-learning platforms like the one developed by Agribusiness Development Centre (ADC) called SOMA, farmer knowledge in areas like Governance & Leadership, Financial Literacy and Marketing is heightened. It's through this knowledge in the above areas that farmers adopt practices that pave way for their self-sustainability.

ADC opened its platform to the public during the lockdown. Visit www.soma.adc.ug to start your free online lessons today.



BY KATIA MUGENZI



SOMA, AN ELEANING SOLUTION FOR FARMERS

The Agribusiness Business Development (ADC) powered by Dfcu bank and Rabo Foundation offers Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) trainings in good governance, financial literacy, marketing, and price risk management. ADC has trained 114 Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) with over 8042 farmers in the East, West, Central and Northern region. Our goal is to train 375 Farmers Based organizations by

2022; with SOMA we shall be able to reach our goal. SOMA is an eLearning platform which was developed based on an identified learning gap; mismatch between demand of learning services and the capacity of the ADC to match this demand in the physical and high cost of carrying out one on one classroom trainings for each individual farmer. Developing the eLearning is an opportunity to bridge the gap between

demand and supply of the ADC technical services at a cost-effective way. It is designed to be a self-based learning where members can access the system, register for accounts, and choose any courses they may wish to learn and gain skills on. With SOMA we shall be able to render a unique learning experience to users through a variety of content mainly in the categories of video, graphics, audio, and text. We plan to reach over 10,000 + farmers remotely by 2022.

SOMA will give the farmers the opportunity for education without the restrictions of time or location. This is going to solve the challenge of gender imbalance since most women miss the lessons due to other home obligations. Furthermore, some learners prefer working at their own pace and prefer not to restrict their learning to a specific location, this will help the farmers save on transport to go to learning centers.

ADC's long plan is to establish learning centers or hubs in different Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) where farmers can be able to come take lessons in their own time of convenience. When a farmer registers for a lesson and starts learning, the system offers the learner resume capabilities that is; they can always stop and later continue from where they last stopped.

The other uniqueness of SOMA is that it offers a certificate for each course completed. The fact that

most of the farmers we are training are semi illiterate; this is also a motivation for them to complete these lessons. A farmer who has completed these lessons is at an advantage of being able to do business with financial Institutions, buyers, and processors.

It goes without mention that the COVID 19 has compelled most business to include technology in their activities, farmers are the back bone of this country therefore there is need for them to adopt real quick and ADC is here to support them. To access the platform, go to www.soma.adc.ug or email us for assistance info@adc.ug Twitter @agribdca Facebook- Agribusiness Development Centre (ADC)

Katia Mugenzi is also ADC's Head of Marketing & Communication.

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A **VARIETY** OF CONTENT IN THE CATEGORIES OF VIDEO, AUDIO, AND TEXT.

WE PLAN TO REACH OVER **10,000+** FARMERS REMOTELY BY 2022.





BY PRISCILLA BASEMERA

MAXIMIZATION

of online opportunities with SOMA Digital Campaign

With the existence of the global pandemic COVID-19 and its impact on business activities, Agribusiness Development Centre (ADC) utilized the internet as a link to farmers, farmer-based organizations (FBOs) and the general public who have been spending most of their time at home and on their smartphones. Online channels have been an ideal way of raising awareness of activities that businesses are indulging in during the ongoing

pandemic. ADC through a digital campaign labeled "Register to Win" launched SOMA, an e-learning platform specific to agribusiness on its social media channels Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. SOMA can be accessed on www.soma.adc.ug. The main aim of this campaign was to encourage people to sign-up for lessons on the SOMA platform. The 1st 10 people to register each week were hosted at the ADC offices in Kampala on

The advertisement features a man with a surprised expression pointing towards the text. The background is split into teal and orange horizontal bands. At the top, a white search bar contains the URL www.soma.adc.ug and a magnifying glass icon. Below this, the text "DID YOU KNOW!" is written in large white letters on an orange background. Underneath, on a teal background, it says "You stand a chance to WIN YOURSELF A GIFT when you Register on SOMA." The man's white t-shirt has the SOMA logo and the text "soma.adc" visible.

Plot 1 Mackinnon Road for an interaction with the ADC Team and in appreciation of their efforts parted with a gift hamper. This campaign ran for 4 weeks bringing in a total of 40 winners.

From the 40 winners, only 14 were within Kampala during the campaign and shared their experience with SOMA upon their visit to the ADC offices. These 14 winners comprised of students, farmers, teachers and businessmen to mention but a few.

At this gathering, the ADC Team was represented by the Ag. General Manager, Emmanuel Obuko; Head of Communication and Marketing, Katia Mugenzi and Software Engineer, William Ssenyondo who developed the SOMA platform.

To catch a glimpse of what some of the winners had to say about SOMA, visit https://youtu.be/xLfY7k_1zH8



THIS CAMPAIGN RAN FOR FOUR WEEKS BRINGING IN A TOTAL OF 40 WINNERS





CONGRATS TO OUR WINNERS.



WE THANK YOU FOR REGISTERING AND PARTICIPATING IN OUR DIGITAL CAMPAIGN.

1. Richard Musamali, Kampala
2. Rwabyerwa Jimmy, Fortportal
3. Angus Nassasira, Kiwatule
4. Stephen Ifulaimu Hiire, Kabale
5. Weere Asuman, Mbale
6. Musinguzi Norman, Muyenga
7. Martijn Harlaar, Kampala
8. Dick Midamba, Gulu
9. Kwagala Phoebe, Kampala
10. Dennis Chesang, Kpachorwa
11. Francis Mugisha, Mbarara
12. Bryan Timothy, Lyantonde
13. Apio Angella Josephine, Makerere
14. Ronald Babikanyisa, Kansanga
15. Dan Busobozi, Mukono
16. Patrick Kato, Kisasi
17. Ampaire Dick, Kabale
18. Julius Izza Tabi, Arua
19. Katungi Cyprian Junior, Kampala
20. Samuel Okello, Gulu
21. Katana Daniel, Kiryandongo
22. Adong Patricia, Lira
23. Derrick Rubaramira, Bugolobi
24. Henry Samuel Mwesigwa, Mukono
25. Alexander Ruhweza, Kampala
26. Nkesiga Esau, Nsambya
27. Aloysius Ssendegeya, Wandegeya
28. Kristina Victoria Nnanyange, Kyengera
29. Mutai Evans, Bukwo
30. Kisa Lawrence, Lira
31. Marion Musingunzi, Nalya
32. Jonathan Kyanda, Fortportal
33. Daisy Anne Namono, Mukono
34. Kubiriba Asaph Nahabwe, Ntungamo
35. Nathan Ssebunya, Kawanda
36. Sserunkuma Moses, Kawempe
37. Asuman Jahazi, Gayaza Road
38. Wanume Paul, Kamuli
39. Stephen Magambo, Kawempe
40. Rwomithio Brian, Naguru

FOR SUPPORT

0757714768 / info@adc.ug



soma.adc.ug

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SOMA.



SOMA supports a variety of content mainly in these categories: - video, graphics, audio, and text to render a unique learning experience to users.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The ADC e-learning is a web based (internet based/ powered) self-learning platform that allows for users (unique compared with other eLearning platforms in simplicity), mainly individual farmers, farmer-based organization management and farmer members who belong to FBO to access learning resources (governance and leadership, financial literacy and management and marketing) virtually. The e-learning is designed on a self-based learning methodology where members can access the system, register for accounts, and choose any courses they may wish to learn and gain skills on.

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Improve on the efficiency and effectiveness of how training services are delivered to the ADC set target (FBOs; producer cooperatives, marketing cooperatives, SACCOs engaged in SMEs)
- ▶ Foster self-paced learning at own convenience for both FBOs and individual farmers in ADC hard to reach areas at a minimal cost.
- ▶ Increase the ADC training capacity: currently trained 7,563, we want to reach over 100,000+ farmers remotely.
- ▶ Collect relevant data (feedback and FAQs) from the learners to be able to improve learner materials on the platform.

OVERALL GOAL

The main goal of the platform is to give a learning opportunity to FBOs and members the ADC cannot reach in the physical to self-learn by accessing the different resources available on the platform remotely.



APPLICATION PROCESS



1

FRONT END PROCESS

SOMA is a web based application that be accessed from either computers, laptops and smart mobile devices over the internet and access is by typing the application address into your browser www.soma.adc.ug.

To access the application lessons, a user must be registered with an account. Upon registration, a user can access and enroll for any selected course of choice and start learning. The learning process involves steps that a user undertakes and at the end a user receives a certificate.

2

BACKEND PROCESS

The application runs on a 3-tier architecture where we have clients (browsers, server (files storage and page rendering) and a data store. This infrastructure is cloud based.



APPLICATION FEATURES

The application has the following features:

1. Registration/Sign up

A user accesses SOMA and registers for an account by clicking "START COURSE" button then click on Register tab to show the "Register for an account". Upon successful registration, user receives both an email & SMS text with his/her account details.

2. Module/Course Enrollment

Once logged in, a user can enroll for any module/course of choice by clicking "START COURSE" as the selected course is added to his/her account.

3. Course Overview

User has access to course sessions and details and can view a summary of each session under the course.

4. Course Lesson

Users can access lesson content i.e. video, text, graphic as they learn and get to make them complete if they are done understanding the lesson.

5. Forums

Interactive messaging for users within a course to enable discussions. There is also a chat box where you can ask a question to the ADC business advisors.