

AgroMarketDay

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Abstract

Every district in Uganda has markets which open on different days selling a variety of produce. Farmers bring their produce to these markets with the hope of getting buyers but it is not always obvious that they get buyers so they have to wait the same day the following week when that particular market opens. This results in small holder farmers earning little from their produce because most of the time they end up being cheated by middlemen who come from urban areas and buy produce from them at low prices which they later sell at higher prices thereby gaining more which leaves the smallholder farmers with little or no income for their hard work. We therefore came up with AgroMarketDay a mobile application that enables farmers to sell agricultural produce, get information about agricultural markets, market days, modern farming methods and tools in different districts in Uganda which will in the end alleviate poverty in the farming community and the country at large since a large percentage of the population depends on agriculture as their main source of income.

Key words: Farmers, market, Uganda

Résumé

Chaque district en Ouganda a des marchés qui s'ouvrent à des jours différents et qui vendent une variété de produits. Les agriculteurs apportent leurs produits à ces marchés avec l'espoir d'obtenir les acheteurs, mais il n'est pas toujours évident qu'ils obtiennent des acheteurs, alors ils doivent attendre, le même jour de la semaine suivante, quand ce marché particulier va s'ouvrir. Il en résulte que les petits exploitants agricoles gagnent peu de leurs produits parce que la plupart du temps, ils finissent par être trompé par les intermédiaires qui viennent de zones urbaines et acheter leurs produits à bas prix qu'ils vendent plus tard à des prix plus élevés en gagnant ainsi plus qui laisse les petits exploitants les agriculteurs ayant peu ou pas de revenu pour leur travail acharné. Nous avons donc inventé le « Jour de Marché Agricole » (AgroMarketDay), une application mobile qui permet aux agriculteurs de vendre leurs produits agricoles, obtenir des informations sur les marchés agricoles, les jours de marché, les méthodes agricoles modernes et des outils dans différents districts de l'Ouganda qui en fin de compte réduit la pauvreté dans le monde agricole et le pays en général, car, un grand pourcentage de la population dépend de l'agriculture comme principale source de revenu.

Mots clés: agriculteurs, marché, l'Ouganda

Introduction

The increasing ubiquity of mobiles in Uganda presents both opportunities and challenges, especially for critical sectors such as agriculture. In their various designs and capabilities, mobile phones can be found in the pockets of the wealthy and poor alike. Even in rural areas, mobiles are growing in number and sophistication. With the increase in the use of mobile phones, market for agricultural produce should be easy but it is not the case in some districts where farmers have their products but do not have exposure to potential customers thereby earning little from their produce.

Problem statement

In Uganda, there is a direct link between poverty and being engaged in smallholder farming as the main source of income. The small scale farmers are the majority constituting about 85% of the farming communities, 12% are medium scale farmers while 3% are large scale farmers. In Uganda some districts have plenty of food while others have little or no food leading to food not being evenly distributed in the whole country. Unlike the large scale farmers who have direct market for their produce, the small holder farmers are hindered by a number of reasons. One of them is how to get their produce to the buyers. This situation is normally brought about by lack of exposure of the local markets that are available in different districts in Uganda. This demoralizes the small holder farmers from producing large volumes of agricultural produce and leads them to doing business locally thus attaining low income.

The small holder farmers are also exploited by middlemen who are aware of the market prices of agricultural produce in both rural and urban markets.

Description of the tool

AgroMarketDay is a mobile application that exposes markets, market days, farmers and produce sold in different markets in different districts in Uganda. The application has six modules which include; Markets, Start selling, Farm inputs & tools, Farmers Trading, Agric News and Search

Markets. The Markets module when selected prompts you to select a district and market of your choice, when you click continue you are presented with the four screens below which show the Farmers Trading, Produce sold in that particular market, Location of that market and Market Info containing details of what day the market opens, the staple food sold there, the language spoken and more information concerning the market.

Start selling. When you select Start selling, you are presented with a Login form in case you already have an account else you have to first create one in order for you to proceed. If the Login is successful you can then post your produce by clicking on the Post Product button which takes you to a form where you fill in details about the produce and yourself and later upload it to our server as shown in Figure1.

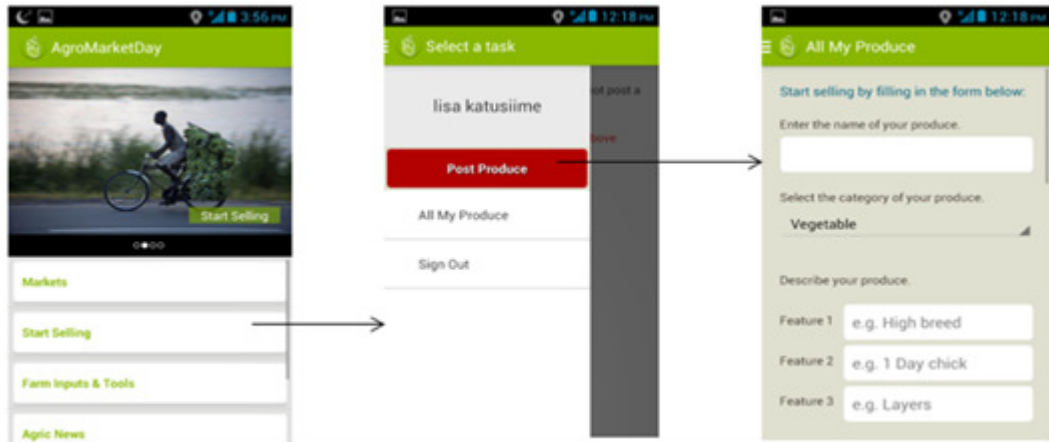


Figure 1. Screenshots of the Start Selling module.

Farm inputs and tools. When farm inputs and tools is selected, it prompts you to select a category of your choice and you are able to view the details of any farm inputs (seeds, medicines and fertilizers) and agricultural tool of your choice as shown in Figure 2.

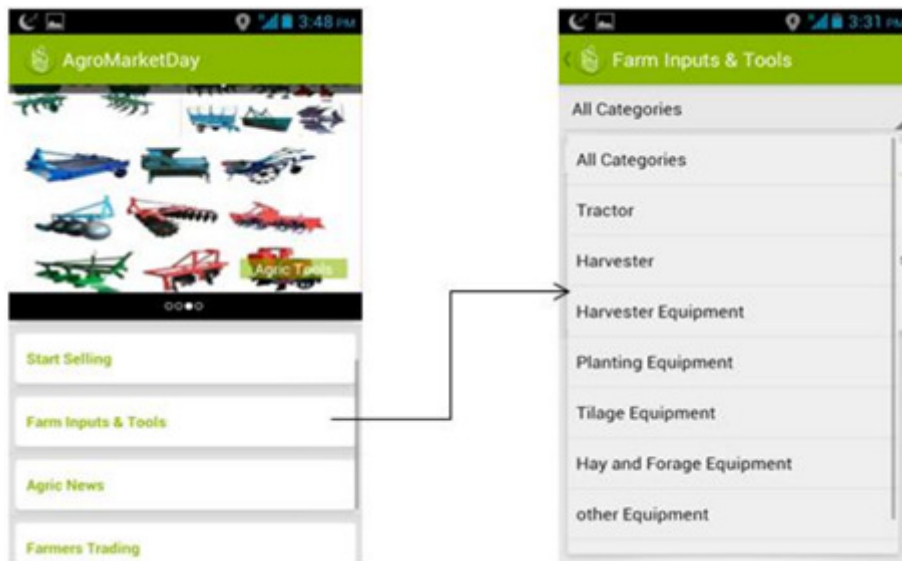


Figure 2. Screenshots of farm inputs and tools.

Farmers trading. This module enables you to view all the farmers who are selling their produce on the application.

Agric news. This module provides update News from the agricultural sector. You can select an article of your choice to see more detail about it.

Search. This module enables you to search for a particular category of item on the application.

Partnerships involved

Currently Orange is the only partner with AgroMarketDay. For our application having emerged as the overall winner at the Orange Community Innovation Awards in August 2013, Orange Uganda Limited will have the application installed on all the smartphones sold at all its outlets in Uganda. It will also provide us with an Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) platform where we shall host the USSD version of the application. This will help the application to reach out to more people.

Progress to date and lessons

AgroMarketDay is in the production stage and formation of partnership with other agricultural entities. The application is available for download on Google play store. Click this link <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.agromarketday> to get it installed on your phone. Visit our website at www.agromarketday.com for more information.

AgroMarketDay has had various opportunities to exhibit and be introduced in different communities where we were able to get feedback from people and this greatly helped us improve the application.

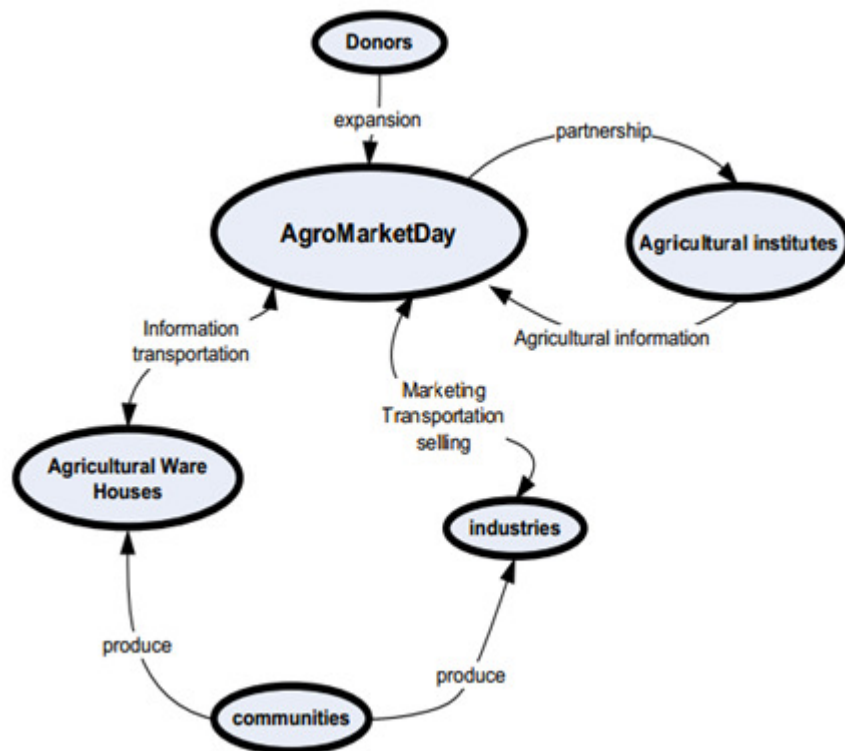


Figure 3. Future business model for AgroMarketDay.

Future outlook

AgroMarketDay project will expand to cover all the districts in country, East African countries, Africa and the world at large. Figure 3 represents the future goals and vision for the project.

During the Expansion phase; we shall build agricultural ware houses in the different local markets in various districts in Uganda. These ware houses will help salvage the produce that go to waste during seasons of plenty. We shall also build industries in various districts in Uganda that will process the different staple food crops grown in these districts into finished products. These produce will be sold by AgroMarketDay to the other districts in the country and will also be exported to the rest of the world. The finances that will be provided by donors will be used for construction and buying of equipment that will be used for running the agricultural ware houses and industries.

Conclusions

AgroMarketDay project seeks to use mobile technologies to ease the lives of smallholder farmers. With this tool, we hope to increase the income levels of smallholder farmers which will in the end help alleviate poverty in the country.

Acknowledgement

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