

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

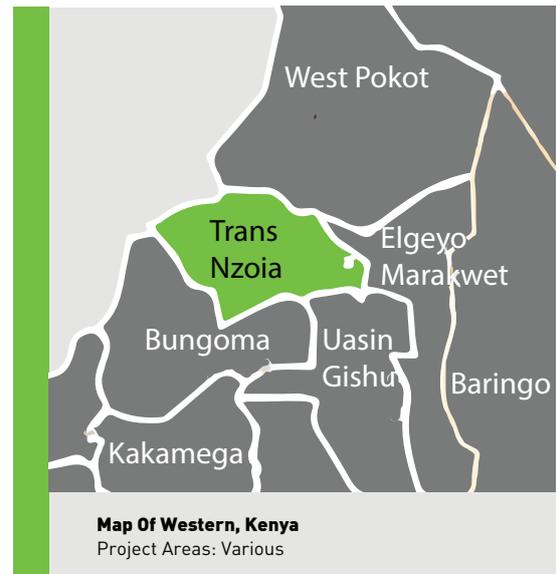
LOCATION: Trans Nzoia County; Kenya
DURATION: 2011 - 2015



Snow Peas Farmer, Trans Nzoia County, Kenya | Photo: Farm Africa

YOUNG FARMERS AND THE BUSINESS OF AGRICULTURE

According to a recent survey by the Institute of Economic Affairs, the youth under the age of 34 years make up 78.3 percent of Kenyan population. Out of this 35.3 percent constitute those between the ages of 15 and 34 years. Since 2011, to support the youth and close the gap in youth unemployment, Farm Africa through the Youth Empowerment in Sustainable Agriculture (YESA) project has been working to build youth skills in developing agricultural enterprises. The goal of the project is to reduce poverty among out-of-school youths by growing commercially viable agri-enterprise livelihoods. In so doing, the project is encouraging the youth to become job creators rather than job-seekers, in agri-business, and thus turning them into drivers of economic growth for Kenya.



Map Of Western, Kenya
Project Areas: Various

FARM AFRICA'S APPROACH

The project has been working with over 2,300 young men and women in setting up and running demonstration farms. We have trained the youth groups on aspects of agri-business, crop husbandry practices, production and marketing skills.

YESA creates, strengthens and supports youth groups to establish and manage agricultural businesses. The project provides training and technical assistance in agronomy, helps groups to market their products and encourages members to become active in local politics and governance.

These groups have established agri-businesses in production and marketing of French beans, snow peas, cabbage and chili for local and export markets. About 780 lead farmers, have also started their own individual enterprises on their own farms and with Farm Africa's initial technical support are engaged in full scale production.

The project is also working with banks and microfinance institutions to help promote the design of financial products that work for young farmers. Working with these financial institutions we are also providing training to the youth on financial literacy, credit management and the importance of creating income patterns and establishing a credit history in order to access and service commercial loans. As a result, a total of 13 groups have applied for and received the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) loans from the government.



YOUTH AGRI-BUSINESS



BUILDING SUSTAINABLE YOUTH AGRI-BUSINESSES

Farm Africa has specifically designed the YESA project to meet the needs of young people, encouraging them to get involved in farming. The project supports young farmers in a number of ways, including:

- Providing seed funding to start small agri-businesses for example growing snow peas, cabbages, chillies and French beans.
- Demonstrating agronomic practices and technologies in group plots used as training sites.
- Training participating groups on financial literacy, credit management and business planning.
- Supporting youth groups to access commercial finance to sustain and expand their agri-businesses.
- Linking the groups to markets and supporting them in the negotiation of contract farming agreements with buyers.

RESULTS TO DATE

- YESA is partnering with 87 youth groups in Trans Nzoia County, with a total of 2,300 farmers (47% of whom are women). 40 groups are working under contract farming agreements local exporters (Safe Produce Solutions for cabbages, Keitt Exporters and Kenya Fresh for French beans and snow peas and Mace Foods for chillies export) that engage the groups as outgrowers for their supply chains.
- Approximately, KES 1.3 million (£9,300) in credit has been obtained by the youth groups from the Youth Enterprise Development Fund. The loans are being used to invest in technology, such as greenhouses, and to support agricultural enterprises, including poultry, sheep, and vegetable farming and other small businesses.
- YESA introduced commercial production of chilli in Trans Nzoia in the year 2011. The success of market led production was evident when farmers sold their chilli produce to Mace Foods limited. This value chain attracted the county government's attention and prompted them to adopt the value chain as one of their major crops to promote in the County.
- Seed capital from Farm Africa enabled the groups to buy equipment that they can lease such as a multipurpose two-wheel tractors that can harrow, mix manure, blend fertilizers, irrigate, plough, weed and transport produce from the farms to markets.