

FROM THE FIELD

SPRING 2022



FARM AFRICA

THE FUTURE IS FARMING FOR KENYA'S YOUTH

Elgeyo Marakwet, western Kenya, is a county known for high levels of youth unemployment. Limited access to land, agricultural training and financial means often rule out farming as an option for young people. But with UK Aid Match funding, Farm Africa is giving young farmers in this region a helping hand to secure prosperous futures... in agriculture.

Emily, 31, lives in Mokoyo Village with her parents and young daughter. After finishing school, Emily weighed up her options and decided to give farming a go. She asked her parents for a small portion of land from the family farm. Her parents gave her 0.25 acres where she began growing and selling maize.

Emily worked hard but after nine months she was still barely making a profit. But then she joined Farm Africa's Growing Futures training programme and with guidance from Farm Africa's experts, she started planting French beans. Within three months she had earned a healthy profit of £340!

"It was then that I realised I could make more money within a short period of time through vegetable farming."



Emily's success fuelled her ambition and with her profits she hired an acre of land and started growing mangetouts and cabbages as well. Soon she was able to save £2,400.

Farm Africa also supported Emily with business training. With an entrepreneurial mind-set, Emily used her profits to diversify into poultry farming. She now also earns a regular income selling eggs and chickens.

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit Emily's vegetable business hard and her income from selling crops dropped significantly. Fortunately, Emily was able to sustain a decent income thanks to her poultry business.

Emily is now working hard to expand her farming enterprise even further. Her goal is to earn enough to build her own house, so she can move out of her father's home.

"I have now enrolled my daughter in a good school whose fees I am able to raise comfortably. I also plan to enrol in college soon...I don't have enough words to thank the Growing Futures project for the progress I have made in life" – Emily



This project was funded by matched funding from the UK government unlocked, by our supporters, through our Growing Futures UK Aid Match appeal in 2017-8.

THREE THINGS I LEARNT AT COP26

Last November Farm Africa's CEO, Dan Collison, joined the climate discussions in Glasgow. Here are his top three takeaways from the conference.

1. Farm Africa is more relevant, and more needed, than ever

Climate change will come for all of us, but it is hitting the poorest earliest and hardest. Farm Africa's work is crucial because it deals with both tackling climate change - through reducing forest loss, improving soil quality and incentivising communities to manage natural resources sustainably - as well as adapting to change through climate-smart approaches. We help farmers diversify their livelihoods and help them access new markets. Linking the three pillars of our work - agriculture, environment and business - is the key to helping the world's poorest farmers face the impact of climate change.

2. Agriculture didn't feature as a focus of COP26 at policy level, but it should have

Agriculture accounts for up to 30% of global carbon emissions and there were hundreds of side events and discussion groups that discussed ways to protect and restore the planet whilst improving livelihoods. I was very proud that Farm Africa's work on improved sorghum varieties, regenerative agriculture and farmer-focused natural resource management were cited as success stories.

3. Most importantly: I've been reminded of the skills, experience and dedication of Farm Africa teams

For me, the biggest highlight of COP26 was meeting colleagues who were there as part of the official Ethiopia delegation. In the midst of the all the 'blah blah blah' that Greta Thunberg berated the conference for, Farm Africa showed what can be done and how to bring change at scale, for example through our forest management work in Bale Eco Region in Ethiopia.

"I think that COP26 marks a moment when new levels of anger, fear and anxiety about the future spark new commitment. Whether it keeps global warming to manageable levels – or not – depends on action and Farm Africa is on board to be part of that global effort."

Dan Collison, November 2021

ETHIOPIA'S FEMALE FOREST PATROL

Ethiopia's Bale Eco-region is home to the Biftu Beri Women's Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA). Set up with the support of Farm Africa and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Ethiopia, members help each other strengthen their small businesses. But what truly unites this group of women is their passion for protecting the 15,230 hectares of forest that surrounds their homes.

On setting up the VSLA, Farm Africa delivered training to Biftu Beri members on the importance of natural resources to their day-to-day lives, highlighting areas in their local forest where valuable organic coffee plants and indigenous trees grow.

Invested in the future of the forest, the group soon established a forest-monitoring schedule where a committee would patrol the forest and report illegal acts of deforestation. Mrs Momina Adem Gutu, chair of Biftu Beri VSLA group, explains:

"Women in our area are highly attached to the forests and I believe our contribution to the protection of such resources is way bigger than men. As the responsibility at home requires us to collect firewood, we visit the forests daily; in the mornings and evenings. This has given us a chance to closely monitor and report on the status of the forest."



"Nowadays, when we have to gather firewood, we purposely go in groups in case we catch people cutting branches off trees. When we see this happening, we bring the illegal practitioners to the law."

The commitment of the group to preserving the environment knows no bounds. Momina Adem Sida, a group member, recounted:

"I remember one day we received information that a group of eight people had been cutting branches off trees."



"My friend and I rushed immediately to the forest. When we got there, most of the perpetrators ran away. Though we asked him to stop, one man refused. He was cutting our trees in front of my eyes. I couldn't bear that feeling and took action. I took away his hatchet and my friend helped me chase him out of the forest. I am glad we saved that particular tree."

The brave actions of Biftu Beri members are going a long way in preventing deforestation. But they have other incentives up their sleeves to encourage more people to protect their environment! Members are also encouraging forest communities to reduce their use of firewood by promoting fuel-saving stoves which reduce household fuel consumption.

To ensure that the stoves are accessible to all who want them, Farm Africa is linking the communities to businesses who produce the stoves, as well as assisting with transportation. And to make them more affordable for low-income households, Farm Africa is covering 50% of the purchase price of the stoves. So far our teams have distributed 5,961 fuel efficient stoves!

"These days, in order to reduce pressure on our forests, we have started to use fuel-saving stoves. We have become careful not to burn a lot of wood for cooking," - Momina.

Momina and her friends are an inspiring example that small actions can often make a big difference. There's no arguing that when it comes to protecting their forest, Biftu Beri mean business!



£90 could help more communities like Momina's to protect their natural environment and bring about lasting, sustainable change.

2021 CLIMATE APPEAL UPDATE

A huge thank you to everyone who supported Farm Africa's climate emergency appeal last winter. Together, you raised an incredible £90,442.00 so far, helping farmers in rural Africa to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

With extreme weather, such as severe droughts, becoming worse in eastern Africa year-on-year, it is crucial that the communities we work with can protect their livelihoods.

Having the support of people like you means we are able to help farmers adopt climate-smart agriculture techniques, which increase productivity and build resilience to the impact of adverse weather.

Farm Africa's experts deliver training in how to grow a variety of vegetables, so farmers can diversify their income sources. We also teach farmers how best to process and store grains protectively, so they can be sold throughout the year and not just at harvest time.

We also help farmers gain valuable financial and business skills, so families can manage their income and plan for the future.



Your support not only helps farmers protect their own futures, it helps them protect natural resources and the future of the planet too!

Meshack Panga is a Farm Africa Field Officer in Dodoma, Tanzania. He knows first-hand how life-changing Farm Africa's climate-smart training is for the farmers we work with:

"Seeing the impact that climate-smart farming is already having on the lives of people in Dodoma, I feel confident that a better future is possible if we work together to adapt... I am really proud of how much farmers here are achieving – thanks to the support of people like you."

RED HOT SUCCESS: UGANDAN CHILLI FARMERS CELEBRATE MAJOR EXPORT

We are delighted to announce that thanks to your support and the help of Farm Africa, chilli farmers in Lira, northern Uganda, are celebrating their first major export! Five metric tonnes of dried chillies left Lira in December after being sold in bulk to buyers in Germany.

As part of a three-year project run in partnership with North East Chilli Producers Association, 3,000 smallholder farmers in Lira have capitalised on the growing international demand for African bird's eye chillies.

Farmers taking part in Farm Africa's chilli project learnt how to improve their soil and water management, how to produce chillies organically and how to meet the high standards of international markets.

Farm Africa also helped farmers access all of the inputs they needed to make their chilli farming a success: high-quality chilli seeds, organic pesticides and solar drying racks, which offer a cost-effective and sustainable way of preserving chillies.

As both the quantity and quality of the chillies noticeably increased, Farm Africa helped the farmers to gain certification for their chillies, opening doors to lucrative markets.

But the impact of the project doesn't stop there...

We are proud to report that 53 Lira residents were trained as local seed multipliers. A further 20 were trained to produce organic pesticides, and 20 people were trained as field agents, who buy dried chillies from farmers and sell seeds to them.

What's more, 30 young people received training in how to build and sell solar drying racks, giving them the opportunity to establish businesses in their own right.

Lira's chilli farms are certainly spicing up and it is amazing to see how one tiny crop is creating opportunities for entire communities!

Farm Africa's chilli project was funded by aBi Development Ltd and Ajahma Charitable Trust.



Your support could be the difference between poverty and prosperity for farming families. Thank you for all that you do.



A gift of £54 could help more farmers access valuable markets and build thriving farming businesses, like the chilli farmers of Lira!



THANK YOU!

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