

DE-RISKING SMALLHOLDERS' ENTERPRISES

2016 - 2021 | TRANS NZOIA AND ELGEYO MARAKWET

In 2016, nearly 80% of Kenyans were less than 35 years old; and nearly one in five young people of working age was jobless. In a country where agriculture is key to the economy, contributing 26% of GDP, providing 65% of the export earnings, and employing more than 70% of rural people, farming should be offering a solution to youth unemployment.

With limited access to land, equipment and transport, the odds are stacked against young Kenyan farmers' chance of success. This project helps young farmers in western Kenya set up profitable enterprises growing and selling vegetables that are in high demand.

We've supported 2,400 young farmers in Trans-Nzoia County and 2,000 young farmers in Elgeyo Marakwet County to capitalise upon the growing demand for produce such as green beans, mangetouts, kale, tomatoes and cabbages. Currently, we are working with 400 farmers in Trans-Nzoia County.

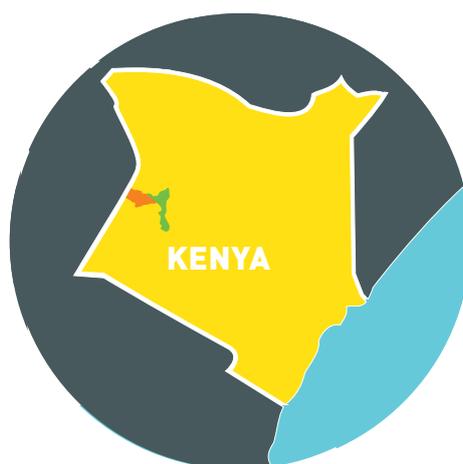
Young farmers are learning to grow export-quality crops, set up sustainable relationships with buyers, access financial products and run profitable farming businesses.

Horticulture and agronomy training sessions allow farmers to meet the quantity and quality of produce demanded by high-value buyers and certification schemes.

Farm Africa helps farmers gain GLOBAL GAP certification so that they can sell to more profitable markets including export markets.

Growing Futures helps farmers set up production, processing and trading systems that enable them to meet buyers' needs. We teach farmers how to aggregate and market their produce, allowing them to sell in bulk to major buyers.

To make it easier for smallholder farmers to market their fresh horticultural produce and reduce post-harvest losses, the market initiative recently completed the construction of a solar-powered pack house in Cherangany.



● Trans-Nzoia County

● Elgeyo Marakwet County

RESULTS IN TRANS NZOIA:

The following outcomes were achieved for 2,000 farmers in the Medicor Foundation funded phase of the Growing Futures project, which ran from 2018 to June 2020 in Trans Nzoia:

▼
67% increase in **average annual income** from KSh 34,522 per annum in 2018 to KSh 57,746 in 2020.

▼
Yields increased from 781MT to 12,748MT (and overachieved three-fold its target of 3600 MT).

▼
Total revenue from sale of horticultural produce **increased** from 10M to 196M in 2018 and to Kshs 102M in 2020. This led to a cumulative revenue of Kshs 299M generated between 2018-2020.

▼
Produce sold **increased** by 4,713MT from baseline (621MT) to end term (5,334MT).

▼
Between June 2019 to May 2020, loans amounting to Ksh 2,927,050 had been accessed.

▼
85% of the farmers had been trained on GLOBAL GAP and all the trained farmers had been certified.

▼
The project linked **80%** of the farmers with export buyers.

RESULTS IN ELGEYO MARAKWET

The following outcomes were achieved for 2,000 farmers in the UK aid funded phase of the Growing Futures project, which ran from 2018 to June 2021 in Elgeyo Marakwet:

- Yields sold over the project period for export crops **increased** from **381 MT** at baseline in 2018 to **3730.6 MT** at end line in June 2021.
- The project **exceeded** its target of selling horticulture produce worth **Ksh 39,000,000 by 60%**, having sold produce worth **Ksh 62,273,574**.
- There was a **154% increase** in household income from **Ksh 121,000** in 2018 to **Ksh 308,547** in 2021.
- The number of farmers who established contracts with buyers **rose from 7% at baseline to 54% at end term**. The project linked farmers to major export companies i.e. Vegpro and East African Growers for the export produce and **17** local traders to farmers.
- **3 grading sheds** were constructed for use by farmers as collection centres, and currently as their marketing and meeting points between the buyer and the farmer.
- **45 groups** are now certified under the GLOBAL GAP and have their codes in the international market.
- **276 champion farmers** were trained so as to offer extension services to other farmers.



LESSONS LEARNED

- **Champion farmers influence adoption:** Training champion farmers helped in ensuring the groups produce on schedule and in line with the business plans.
- **Market assurance accelerates adoption:** The uptake of the project's crops by farmers was influenced by the assurance of a market prior to planting. This increased confidence in production and led to higher production levels of the specific crops. Crops with a shorter growing period were preferred because they removed the long term burden of production costs and increased the frequency of earning and thus overall income.
- **Exchange visits:** Where farmers from Elgeyo Marakwet County went to Trans-Nzoia for benchmarking and gained knowledge that they were able to implement and even share with other farmers. This was found to be a good learning approach.



PHOTO: FARM AFRICA / LISA MURRAY / COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

METHODOLOGY



ADVANCING AGRICULTURE

Field trainers train farmers face-to-face on demonstration plots. From land preparation to harvesting, group lessons equip farmers with the knowledge and skills they need to grow high-value crops.

The most successful and committed group members receive additional technical support. In return, these farmers share their newfound agricultural knowledge with other young farmers not directly supported by this project.

Growing Futures provides farmers with access to and training in how to use agricultural technologies, such as drip-irrigation systems, fertilisers, seed and pesticides.



WIDENING ACCESS TO FINANCE

With fewer assets to offer as collateral for loans, young farmers often find it difficult to take out loans and source investment. Growing Futures helps young farmers gain access to working and investment capital.

Village Saving and Loan Associations provide a platform for young adults to unite to save and make funds available to invest in each other's businesses.

Growing Futures also promotes private sector investment in youth-run businesses. Buyers are asked to provide farmers with loans to cover the costs of farming inputs, certification or aggregation as part of contract agreements.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Farmers are provided with practical training in how to run a successful horticultural enterprise. Training sessions meet each group's specific educational needs and also cover basic business concepts such as planning, marketing, financial literacy, budgeting, forecasting, bookkeeping and cash flow management.

These lessons lay the foundations for farmers to develop and action business plans. These plans outline strategies for growth, marketing and how to access finance, and assess the relative risks involved.



BOOSTING TRADE

Growing Futures helps farmers produce for the market. Alongside helping farmers meet buyers' quality standards, the project trains community-based organisations to effectively market members' produce and negotiate contracts on behalf of farmers.

Farm Africa identifies, researches and approaches appropriate Kenyan and international buyers. Farm Africa mediates meetings between farmers' groups and buyers, and supports the development of contracts to ensure that the terms benefit the farmers.

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medicor foundation



FARM AFRICA

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