



GROWING FUTURES

2016 - 2021 | WESTERN KENYA

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're supporting 2,400 young farmers in Trans-Nzoia County and 2,000 young farmers in Elgeyo Marakwet County capitalise upon the growing demand for produce such as green beans, mangetouts, kale, tomatoes and cabbages. Young farmers are learning to grow export-quality crops, set up sustainable relationships with buyers 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.

Young farmers often lack the business skills and finance necessary to grow their businesses. This project equips farmers with access to the financial products and knowledge they need to turn their farms into profitable commercial enterprises.

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. We help farmers set up contracts with buyers that guarantee a market for their produce and provide them with a more stable income stream. Improving farmers' links to market helps them sell more produce and at higher prices.



● Trans-Nzoia County

● Elgeyo Marakwet County

PROJECT TIMELINE:

The Growing Futures project builds on the foundations of Farm Africa's Youth Empowerment in Sustainable Agriculture (YESA) project, which was founded in 2011 and co-funded by the Medicor Foundation.



The pilot originally worked with 400 young farmers from 20 newly recruited groups to develop their agri-business and entrepreneurial skills.



By 2015, YESA had helped 2,300 young farmers set up and run their own farming businesses.



YESA became Growing Futures in 2016. With funding from Aldi UK (2016) and the Medicor Foundation (2017), Growing Futures started supporting 2,400 young farmers in Trans-Nzoia County to commercialise their operations.



In 2018, Farm Africa received UK aid funding, from the UK government, to expand the project to a further 2,000 young farmers in Elgeyo Marakwet County.



PHOTO: FARM AFRICA / LISA MURRAY / COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

HOW ARE WE DOING IT?



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.



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.



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.

This project is funded by:



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