

Youth Employment in the Agri-Food Sector in Western Kenya

Sustainably promoting employment opportunities

The challenge

The agri-food sector is a significant part of Kenya's economy, employing 60% of the labour force and contributing over half of the GDP

70% of the population lives in rural areas. 80% of rural residents work in the agriculture industry and rely heavily on the sector for self-sufficiency, food production and employment opportunities. However, young Kenyans, who comprise more than one-third of the labour force, are underrepresented, with only 10% participating in the agri-food sector.

Despite its potential to generate income and absorb the high number of unemployed youths, the perception of agriculture as high-risk and unattractive tends to deter young people from pursuing careers in the sector.

The government is prioritising employment and skills development in agriculture, but the lack of access to education and training, amongst others, prevents higher employment levels in the agri-food industry.

Our objectives

The project aims to enhance the training and job prospects of rural youth in selected value chains of the agriculture and food industry. The project aims to improve the employment prospects of 7,000 rural residents in Western Kenya, with an aim to help 1,000 young adults aged 18 to 35 secure new or additional employment. The project also aims to enhance the economic and political involvement of 3,000 young people in the agriculture and food sector by supporting youth organisations in the counties.

Our approach

To strengthen the labour supply, the project enhances the skills and employment prospects of small-scale farmers and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the agriculture and food sector, specifically targeting young men and women aged 18–35.

We seek to empower government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector to meet better the needs of rural youth facing unemployment or underemployment.

By creating sustainable youth organisations and networks, aiming to help rural youth overcome obstacles such as lack of access to information, land, or finance. With a focus on women and young adults (18–23), the project addresses the specific needs of different target groups.

Additionally, the project aims to improve governance in county institutions and youth organisations to enhance their service delivery. It also promotes climate-smart agricultural technologies, innovations, and green jobs to enhance youth resilience to climate change's impacts and align with the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) goals.

Project name	Youth Employment in the Agri-Food Sector in Western Kenya (YEA)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Counties of Bungoma, Kakamega, Kisumu, Siaya and Vihiga
Lead Partner	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
Duration	01/2020 to 12/2023

Youth Employment in the Agri-Food Sector in Western Kenya (YEA) is part of the larger Agri-Jobs 4 Youth initiative.



Together with the global project "Rural Employment with a Focus on Youth (RYE)", financed by the Special Initiative „Transformation of Agri-Food Systems” of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) the two projects implement project activities within the labour market. This combined effort aims to improve employment opportunities for young people in rural areas of Western Kenya through a comprehensive approach that boosts the demand for labour and improves the functioning of the labour market and job-matching processes.



Our achievements

Employment creation

A total of **868 new and additional jobs** were so far (full time equivalents)



WE PROMOTE A PERFORMANCE-DRIVEN LEARNING SYSTEM THAT EQUIPS YOUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD THEIR LIVELIHOODS AND SHAPE THEIR FUTURE CAREERS

ATVET



The project focuses on providing quality education and practical skills for individuals entering the job market. To achieve this, it works with 12 agricultural training centres, providing support for capacity building and management.

100 staff have received training in operating learning management systems, curriculum development, and offering competency-based training.

The project also introduces student-centred modular learning concepts and improved teaching methods (e.g. blended learning), focusing on four value chains (passion fruit, poultry, apiculture and groundnut) and agripreneurship.

2000 young people trained

43 % Women

Organised Youth

WE EMPOWER YOUTH IN AGRIBUSINESS TO BUILD INDEPENDENT AND SELF-SUSTAINING ORGANISATIONS THAT CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND FOSTER THEIR ASPIRATIONS



We support youth-led organisations to overcome challenges that prevent young people's involvement in the agriculture industry. Five independent youth organisations in Bungoma, Kakamega, Siaya, Kisumu, and Vihiga have registered **2500 young members** (one-third being women).

The organisations receive support for organisational and business development and service delivery to members. The project also strengthens the advocacy work of mandated youth leaders, providing visibility and a voice for young people's aspirations and challenges.

Policy, Advocacy & Governance

WE WORK WITH COUNTY GOVERNMENTS TO CREATE FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS THAT FOSTER ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC POLICY PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH

The framework conditions play a significant role in the performance of the agricultural sector, and the project aims to give young people a stronger voice in political dialogue at the county level.

The project promotes youth participation through direct representation in district working groups and advocacy in public forums, this includes tools for effective civic participation and social responsibility. The project supports the county governments in creating favourable policies and regulations for youth and businesses and helps introduce new formats for dialogue between youth, private, and public sectors.

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