

Developing Village-based Advisors to improve food Security - Promotion of food security and agriculture - Adult men and women

Programme: Developing Village-based Advisors to improve food Security

Programme Data

Programme Description

The Village-based Advisors Food Security project is improving productivity by promoting good farming practices among smallholder farmers, with the larger goal of increasing their food security and resilience to environmental shocks. The project identifies keen, hard-working farmers at the village level and develops them into 'agro-entrepreneurs', called Village-based Advisors who provide inputs (such as improved seed), services (such as livestock vaccination) and advice on good farming practices to their community. These micro-businesses offer the double benefit of creating rural employment opportunities and building a sustainable system for delivering agricultural technologies.

The project is part of the U.S. Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative, also known as 'Feed the Future', which seeks to address the root causes of hunger and poverty and create conditions where food assistance is no longer necessary. ?

Program type

National

Cost

USD 2,000,000.00

References

<http://kenya.usaid.gov/programs/economic-growth/1272>

Implementing organisations

- Government
 - Other
 - Details:
more
Farm Input Promotions Africa (FIPS-Africa)
- Bilateral and donor agencies and lenders
 - US Agency for International Development (USAID)
 - Details:
more
U.S. Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative,
also known as 'Feed the Future'

Funding sources

- Bilateral and donor agencies and lenders
 - US Agency for International Development (USAID)
 - Details:
more
U.S. Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative,
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Action data

Start date	January 2012
End date	January 2017
Country(ies):	Kenya
Status:	On-going
Area:	Rural
Place:	The project works in Siaya, Busia, Embu, Kitui, Machakos, and Makueni counties
Topic:	Promotion of food security and agriculture

Target group:	Adult men and women
Age group:	18-49
Delivery:	Commercial Community-based
Implementation details :	<p>The project is working to mitigate the negative effects of climate change on Kenya's smallholder farmers by increasing their use of improved varieties of crops and inputs like fertilizer; building their understanding of and ability to implement good soil and water management techniques, and providing better access to poultry vaccination.</p> <p>The model relies on the use of Village-based Advisors (VBAs) who earn an income through the provision of improved inputs, advice and services to their fellow farmers. Unlike traditional group-based approaches, VBAs have a target to work with every farmer in their community, meaning thousands of farmers can be reached quickly and cost-effectively. The project builds on the entrepreneurialism and community spirit common among smallholder farmers.</p> <p>FIPS-Africa is a pioneer of the 'small pack' approach where inputs such as seed are distributed to farmers in small quantities. This allows farmers to experiment on their own farm at a low cost and with minimal risk. Farmers are more likely to adopt if they have seen something work first.</p>
Target population size :	By June 2012, the project had trained over 100 VBAs who distributed over 34,000 small packs of seed of improved varieties of key staple crops to farmers and established nearly 4,000 multiplication sites for drought tolerant root tuber crops.
Coverage type:	Period
Coverage level (%):	By March 2013, the following additional achievements are expected: 1,800 demonstration plots for improved soil and water management or seed priming established 9,000 households growing improved varieties of root tuber crops; 56,000 more small p
Outcome indicator(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local food production and consumption levels • Food import and export rates • Rates of undernutrition • Rates of people living < \$1/day
M&E system:	xx
Baseline:	Local food production and consumption levels Food import and export rates Rates of undernutrition Rates of people living < \$1/day
Post-intervention:	Local food production and consumption levels Food import and export rates Rates of undernutrition Rates of people living < \$1/day
Outcome reported by social determinants:	Socio-economic status
Personal story:	<p>Dorcas Nyangasi of Emuhaya is 22-years-old and successfully self-employed. Like many young people in rural areas, Dorcas had trouble finding work when she finished school: 'My mother thought I was depressed because they could not afford my college, or lonely because most of my friends were leaving the village. But the real reason was that I needed something to do.'</p> <p>Dorcas's life was transformed when Farm Input Promotions-Africa (FIPS-Africa) trained her to be a Village-based Advisor (VBA), providing agricultural inputs, services and advice on good farming practices to smallholder farmers in her village. 'As well as distributing seed, Dorcas sells vegetable and tree seedlings from her nurseries and vaccinates poultry against Newcastle disease, which used to devastate local flocks. 'After two-and-a-half years of being her own boss, Dorcas has more than 2,000 farmers buying her inputs and services. She explains, 'within the first four months I noticed that I could make more money when I approached more farmers, so I expanded my operations to three more villages.'</p> <p>Dorcas' hard work is not only improving her own livelihood ' it helps the other farmers in her community too. 'I am happy because I have helped my village rise above the problem of hunger, there is poultry in abundance, and we have surplus sweet potatoes and cassava to sell,' she says.</p>
Other lessons learnt :	The long drought of 2009 hit both people and ecosystems hard, putting millions of Kenyans on food relief and killing large numbers of animals. However, this environmental stress also dramatically highlighted the payoffs of improved natural-resource management. Over 750,000 hectares of semi-arid woodland and rangeland - brought under improved management thanks to USAID and partners - showed no decline in ecological condition despite the drought. The condition of some areas even improved

Typical problems

Solutions

Staff skills/training

Finding the right people to be VBAs can be challenging. Ideal VBAs are farmers who are entrepreneurial, hard-working, and influential change agents who are keen to help their community. In some areas, the project works with the local administration to choose appropriate people who are respected by their communities.

Typical problems**Solutions**

Infrastructure

Accessing sufficient quantities of seed of improved varieties and livestock can be a problem as demand often exceeds supply? particularly for crops with little or no private sector involvement. The project mitigates this through a loan system, where farmers repay the VBA in-kind at the end of the season, in a ratio of 2:1 or 3:1. The VBA then returns seeds, cuttings or animals to the project ? meaning that more farmers can be reached.