



Gender inclusive youth entrepreneurship in Kenya

A first phase of this project tested the effectiveness of training and business counselling interventions in supporting youth-led agribusinesses. The project team worked with a total of 210 youth, with 39 completing the full 18-month training program and benefiting from the project's training, mentoring and funding components. Researchers developed and tested training materials and business counselling guidelines for these young entrepreneurs, linked them with business students, and integrated lessons from the project into a new agribusiness curriculum.

This second phase seeks to expand the scope of the project, while integrating a rigorous research design to test the three components of the Metro AgriFood Living Lab youth entrepreneurship model.

The challenge

The Food and Agricultural Organization had estimated that by 2015, agricultural production would need to increase by 70% in order to feed the global population. Given that by 2030 urban population will surpass rural population, an innovative and inclusive approach for agri-entrepreneurs will be needed to provide sufficient food resources. Unfortunately, the potential of women and youth is untapped, and youth's unemployment surpasses that of adults by 25%, which risks turning the youth dividend into youth indigents.

The research

The project seeks to answer two fundamental research questions: (i) what works in successfully building youth-led businesses in the agriculture sector? and (ii) what is the additive value of training, mentoring and provision of funding in building successful youth-led businesses? Other key research areas will include addressing gender barriers, opportunities for youth entrepreneurship and the role of the external environment, including policy. The project expands the scope of the first phase by increasing the number of youth trainees from 210 to 1,200, and by expanding the range of agribusinesses beyond poultry and fisheries.

The project will integrate gender throughout the project cycle – from selection of participants to evaluation of outcomes. Youths participating in the program are expected to grow their sales, expand their businesses and improve their livelihoods. This business growth is expected to benefit an additional 15,000 youth as employees, suppliers and through peer mentoring. It is also expected that the financing module will catalyze private investment (debt or equity) into early-stage enterprises by providing cumulative financing of up to KSH 25 million (CA\$ 331,950/AU\$ 349,850).



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Expected outcomes

- Increased skills and capacity of youths to run and manage their businesses;
- Increased business growth/sales, incomes, and business networks for the 1,200 participants of the project;
- Increased employment opportunities for an additional 15,000 youth;
- Important evidence generated on the value of the training, mentoring and funding components of the Metro AgriFood Living Lab model in strengthening youth entrepreneurship;
- Evidence generated on gender barriers to youth entrepreneurship and ways in which to address them.

Implementing partners:

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Countries: Kenya

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Learn more at www.idrc.ca/cultiaf

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