

The challenge

There is a bulging urban population in Africa, of which nearly 200 million are aged between 15 and 24, and the business sector is unable to meet employment demands. Recent statistics show that Africa's youth are three-times more likely than adults to be unemployed, so the continent must address the issue of finding sustainable opportunities for a rapidly-increasing workforce.

Objectives

To build the capacity of youth to develop innovative business models that increase their participation in the fisheries and poultry sub-sectors in Kenya.

The solution

- The project tested whether the Metro AgriFood Living Lab model, which involves training, business innovation services and action research, is an effective model for enhancing business opportunities for youth in the fish and poultry sectors in Kenya. The training component provides skills to young people to increase agricultural productivity. Business counseling has improved youth access to resources, and/or markets and income, while action research has been critical in gathering data that will inform policy.
- The project provided a platform for young men and women to adopt and develop new products and get them to the market, helping to support the growth of successful enterprises and provide networking opportunities to young entrepreneurs.
- Action research was used to gather evidence on what works in building successful youth-led businesses. The researchers compared youth who have gone through the program with others who have not, as well as youth who have received different types of support, in order to make an assessment of what kind of support works. The evidence will be used to influence policies and programs aimed at supporting young entrepreneurs.

Key results

Increasing production and incomes

- The project's training component has contributed to increased agricultural productivity by enhancing the business skills of young people. One male entrepreneur from Siaya, who kept two chickens as a hobby before the project, increased production to 200. A female entrepreneur from Makueni County, who had 840 birds before commencement of the project, has since trained 75 other poultry farmers on effective ways to produce poultry; one of her trainees now has 700 birds.
- The project's field-based business counseling was beneficial for young people as it improved their access to resources, and/or markets and income. One entrepreneur received US\$19,000 from a savings and



FRANCIS NGUMBA

Most youth businesses in Kenya are family owned

credit cooperative organization to implement his aquaculture business plan, while another who received orders for chicken deliveries from a fellow entrepreneur and hotel owner, also won a government tender to deliver 50 birds per week for functions within the county office.

Gender equity and empowerment of women

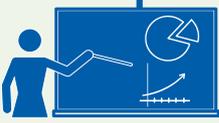
- The project took several measures to specifically target the selection of participants to the program and ensure that young women were provided with the facilities to enable them to participate. For example, during business counseling, women received support at their homes in order to increase their retention rate in the program and to address the key issue of mobility that has often reduced women's ability to attend training programs.
- Compared to their male counterparts, female applicants demonstrated a greater capacity to complete the entire training program through to business launch. In the group who initially attended training, 68.4% were men compared to 31.6% who were women, however in the final group, 66.7% of participants were women.
- During the course of the program, it became evident that the female participants had more of the entrepreneurial characteristics associated with launching a successful business plan. Such factors included better knowledge and experience of the poultry/fish farming industry, and thus a greater ability to bring skills relevant to the program. The ability to take on board the training to overcome weaknesses identified in venture concepts. Therefore, although there were more men than women in the initial 301

applicants (65% to 35%), there were more women than men in the final group (60% to 40%).

- Of the final 20 business plans, those led by women demonstrated and implemented a social enterprise angle for community empowerment more so than those led by men.
- The top three performers of the final group were women, and these entrepreneurs were selected to receive further support from project partners including Agriprofocus, which intends to showcase their products during a business-to-business networking forum, and Umati Capital which provided further training on market linkages.

Capacity and policy influence

- 39 selected young people attended an intensive business training course with the United States International University Africa (USIU-Africa) that covered topics such as entrepreneurial mind-set, business plan development, product marketing, financial management, resource mobilization, information and communication technologies, record-keeping, and production and operation management. After pitching their business plans to a team of industry experts, 20 were selected to receive business counseling and mentoring support towards the launch of their businesses.
- By combining multiple strategies including training and business counseling, the project achieved a 90% business launch success rate of youth ventures in the fish and poultry sectors, and 60% were women.
- The research team has engaged with the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Council for Science Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI) to encourage them to allocate more funds for research in business and innovative models, as well as provide better structures to create an enabling environment for youth ventures to thrive. After receiving an Institutional Review Board certificate from NACOSTI, USIU has been able to increase its internal research funds.
- Project results were presented to the African Development Bank Group who are incorporating the lessons learned into their ENABLE Youth project aimed at

	The project achieved a 90% business launch success rate of youth ventures in fish and poultry sectors
	In the final group of 20 applicants, there were more women than men (60% to 40%)
	39 young agripreneurs (22 men and 17 women) were selected to attend intensive business training
	20 were selected to receive business counselling and mentoring to support the launch of their business
	Business plans led by women were more likely to include a social enterprise angle than those led by men

contributing to job creation, food security, rural income generation and improved livelihoods for young people in both urban and rural areas.

Conclusions and recommendations

- While many programs supporting youth entrepreneurs focus on single strategies such as the provision of capital or training, the results from this program show that multiple strategies including capacity building, business counseling and linking entrepreneurs to other networks, are required to enable young agripreneurs to successfully launch their businesses. This is especially important for young women, who are often less likely to apply for these programs and should be adopted when distributing funds that target youth and women.

Contact

Karen Musikoyo: karenmunoko@gmail.com

Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAF) supports research to achieve long-term food security in Eastern and Southern Africa.



International Development Research Centre
 PO Box 8500, Ottawa, ON Canada K1G 3H9
 Phone: +1 613 236 6163 | Fax: +1 613 238 7230 | www.idrc.ca