

INTEGRATED YOUTH AGRIBUSINESS HUBS

Creating Employment Opportunities for Rural Youth in Africa

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Kenya

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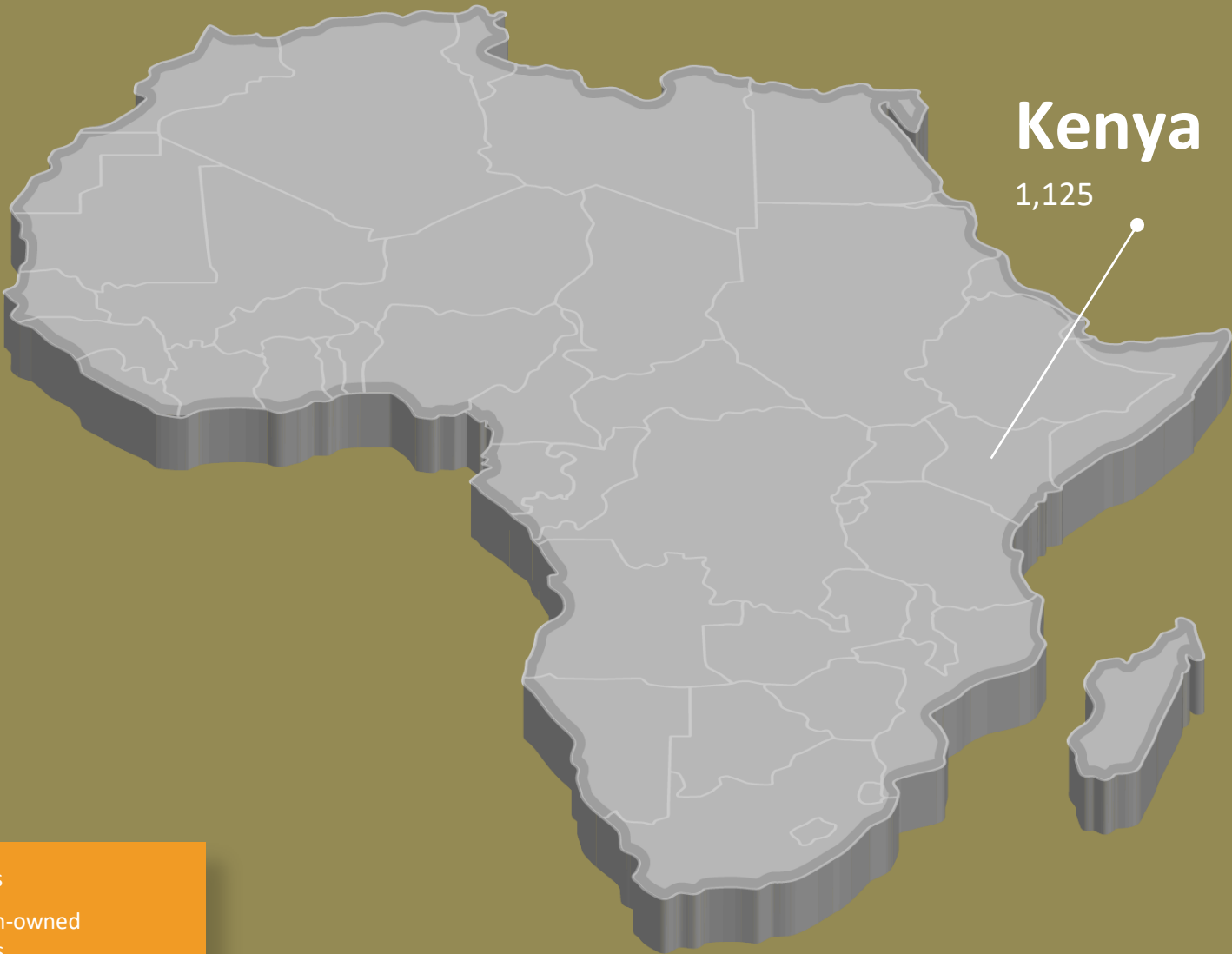
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SCOPE OF THE PROJECT



- 9 countries
- 2255 Youth-owned enterprises
- 9,020 Youth enter labour market
- 11,250 Opportunities for decent work and living incomes

Project Overview

The JOY Project in Kenya works with 3 agribusiness hubs in Kakamega, Kilifi and Nakuru and other actors in the ecosystem to provide young people with skills (technical and soft) to better prepare them for gainful employment and matches their skills with the the needs from employers. Stakeholders include existing iFAD investments, umbrella employer bodies, the private sector and financial institutions.

Key roles and responsibilities

Ustadi is the lead implementing partner in Kenya and serves as the principal hub with coordination, linkages and monitoring and quality assurance roles. Key stakeholders include the County Governments, Private Sector bodies (ASNET, KNCCI, FKE, and IFAD investments in Kenya.

Milestone

has accelerated over 48 businesses to provide additional employment, contributed towards better hub governance and monetization of hub services, created over 1,000 jobs (wage employment) and 380 jobs (self-employment). The hub model is being institutionalized by TVETs

JOB CREATION INITIATIVES - RELEVANCE

Among the various areas, the country specific Job Creation Initiatives have proved to have strengths in:

- Private sector
- Joint initiatives with other development actors
- Investment promotion

This has been achieved focusing on

- Supporting employers through the use of the “place and retain model”
- Business Acceleration of Small youth run Businesses to grow their enterprises
- Institutionalization of the hub model in interventions with actors within the ecosystem

Private Sector Partnerships in Project JOY: A Catalyst for Youth Employment

Private sector partnerships has been highly effective in creating job opportunities for youth in Kenya through

Job Placement and Internship Opportunities

The '**place and retain model**' provided a "foot in the door" for youth to gain valuable experience through on the job training and subsequent transition into the actual jobs

Skills Development and mentorship

Partnerships with the private sector have provided training and skill development programs tailored to the needs of the industry as well as in-company mentorship for young people in placement and internship leading to employment.

Sustainability

Prioritisation of long-term sustainability and profitability by strengthening hub governance, providing support to them to monetize their services, institutionalizing the "place and retain" model and actively engaging with private sector to match their needs with skills as well as providing support for green businesses. JOY has invested opportunities to the creation of stable and sustainable job opportunities that can withstand economic fluctuations. JOY has stimulated market-driven enterprises that respond to consumer needs, thereby ensuring sustainable job opportunities for youth

Entrepreneurship Promotion

Encouraged entrepreneurship among youth by supporting small enterprises and empowering young people to become job creators themselves by leveraging on different sectors, value chain nodes and skill levels.

Joint Initiatives with developmental actors and Investment promotion: Ecosystem drivers

Joint initiatives with other developmental partners and IFAD investments enhanced the effectiveness of job creation for youth in Kenya in several ways:

Pooling Resources

Collaboration with GIZ allowed for pooling of financial resources, technical expertise, and infrastructure for youth linkage through joint Job fair.

Complementary Expertise

Each developmental partner brings unique strengths and expertise. Light for the World enriched design and implementation of an inclusive targeting strategy for Persons with disabilities(PWDs)

Scale and Reach

Collaborative efforts with ABDP, KCEP-CRAL, KeLCOP enabled JOY to leverage on their networks and youth for targeting and selection to the project. JOY has also adopted curriculum from GIZ for the hubs and created a digital platform for employers and young people for easy access and use.

Learning and Adaptation

Collaboration has allowed continuous learning and adaptation based on shared experiences and evaluations. Agri-jobs4 youth/JOY exchange knowledge about what works and what doesn't, leading to improved program design and implementation effectiveness.

Advocacy and Policy Influence

Collective action through joint initiatives(Nakuru and Kakamega Youth strategies) that amplify advocacy efforts for policies that support youth employment in agribusiness.

APPROACH'S EFFECTIVENESS

Micro level

Individuals and Households Income Generation

direct employment opportunities for youth and women, who are often marginalized in rural areas, individuals earn incomes that improve their livelihoods and contribute to poverty reduction via access to nutrition, healthcare, and education for household members.

Entrepreneurship

Youth start their own small businesses and already running businesses accelerated to grow and become sustainable.

Meso level

Local Communities

stimulate economic activity in local communities by creating demand for goods and services. This includes increased demand for housing, food, transportation, and other services.

Supply Chain Development

development of a vibrant agricultural supply chain. This involves suppliers of inputs like seeds, fertilizers, and equipment, as well as buyers such as processors and exporters.

Skill Development

skill enhancement of local residents, increasing employability.

Macro level

Economic Growth

contribute to overall economic growth by increasing agricultural productivity, employment and income levels.

Employment Generation

generate significant employment opportunities, reducing unemployment rates and increasing the numbers of youth getting into the workforce.

Policy Influence

model institutionalization (policy on scale up) and implementation of policies related to agriculture, rural development, youth employment, and economic diversification.

EXAMPLE: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

- **Over 90 companies** linked to the 3 hubs to support Place and Retain model;
 - **Private-sector associations** Engagement with professional employer bodies (ASNET, FKE, KNCCI)
 - **03 IFAD Investments** linked to the JOY project: KCEPCRAL, ABDP, KeLCOP
 - **02 Youth associations** Kakamega County Youth Agriprenuers Association and Nakuru Youth Bunge onboarded 60% of all enterprises for acceleration
- **01 Joint Initiative** jointly with Agri jobs 4 youth(GIZ) organized a job fair for skills match up with industry players
 - **01 Investment forum** linked; Kakamega County Investment Agency
 - **02 social inclusion** organizations linked to JOY-light for the world to design inclusive targeting of PWDs and Disability Resource and Information Centre

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Need for a robust system to track youth progress in apprenticeship, internship, job placement and transition

2

Employers incentives (Subsidy to capacity building to access innovation, in company training, apprenticeship)

3

Human capital together with financial inclusion spur SME development

4

Digitalization and Monetization of Hubs services and strengthening of governance/semi autonomy of hubs for sustainability

Recommendations

- Learning routes for deeper engagement of the actors within the ecosystem and as a means of peer to peer, B2B
- Strong emphasis on Place and Retain model; Provision of support to youth placed and support to employers for in-company mentorship and coaching
- Business Acceleration support on soft and technical skills to spur business growth
- Outreach mechanisms (mapping of potential employers, business diagnostics, headhunting, placement (re-skilling and follow-up))

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES AND LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES

CHALLENGES

- Access to finance for youth led SMEs and women targeted employment opportunities
- Difficulty in accessing markets for SMEs (especially in the digital space)
- Limited technical skills, current technologies and entrepreneurship know-how among youth and rural communities
- Inadequate soft skills among youth seeking employment (especially in CV writing, problem solving, communication)
- Limited green skills among the young people and their businesses and green technology infrastructure to future proof their businesses.
- Provide adequate incentives for increased private sector participation and for employers to place young people in their enterprises

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES

- Design targeted programs to encourage women participation. Offer mentorship, leadership training, and access to networks and markets.
- Work with financial institutions to offer tailor-made products and services that can be accessed by SMEs
- Leverage technology for improved agricultural practices, value addition, and market access. Digital tools such as mobile apps for market information, e-commerce platforms for direct sales, and precision farming technologies
- Collaborate with private sector companies for investments, expertise, and market linkages(joint ventures, co-investments, and shared risk initiatives.
- Establish cooperatives or associations among hub participants(inclusive business models) to collectively negotiate prices, access inputs, and share resources.
- Deploy evidence based result management to compare the status of young people that have benefited from the project with those that have not.

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES AND LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES

- **Develop market** linkages and partnerships with buyers, processors, exporters, and retailers. Provide training on value addition and product quality improvement techniques.
- **Collaborate** with private sector companies for investments, expertise, and market linkages(joint ventures, co-investments, and shared risk initiatives.
- **Establish** cooperatives or associations among hub participants(inclusive business models) to collectively negotiate prices, access inputs, and share resources.
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- **Implement** comprehensive training programs on agricultural best practices, agribusiness management, financial literacy, and marketing.
- **Collaborate** with vocational and technical training institutions, and universities.
- **Advocate** for policies that support agribusiness development, youth employment, address regulatory barriers, and promote incentives for agribusiness investments.

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

- How can we institutionalize the JOY model within the TVET system in Kenya to support the “Place and Retain” model at all tertiary level of education? **Government and stakeholder buy-in**
- Achieving sustainability of the hubs beyond the project? How, by who? Examples of best-practices.
- How can we better engage employers and provide them with a one stop shop to match skills with employment opportunities?
- Social inclusion at the work-place (PWDs, single mothers, displaced persons and other marginalized groups)

THANK YOU!

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