



# Youth Employment in the Agri-Food Sector in Western Kenya

## Promoting employment opportunities while transforming the agri-food sector

### Background

Kenya's agri-food sector is the backbone of the nation's economy, employing 60% of the workforce and contributing significantly to over half of the GDP. Despite its critical role in economic development, youth engagement in agriculture remains low. Although 75% of the population is under 35, only 10% of young people work in agriculture, even as youth unemployment hovers around 64%.

With 70% of Kenyans living in rural areas, 80% of rural residents depend on agriculture for food, self-sufficiency, and employment. Yet, young people—who make up over one-third of the labor force—are notably underrepresented in the sector, largely due to the perception of agriculture as high-risk and unappealing.

Recognizing this untapped potential, the government is prioritizing youth employment and skills development in agriculture through key policies like the Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy (2019-2029), the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), and Vision 2030. However, challenges such as limited access to education and training continue to hinder higher youth participation in the agri-food industry.

### Our Objectives

This project focuses on boosting job opportunities and training for rural youth in key agricultural and food industry value chains. It targets 7,000 rural residents in Western Kenya, with the goal of helping 1,000 young adults, aged 18-35, secure new or supplementary employment. Additionally, the initiative promotes greater economic and political engagement for 3,000 young people by empowering youth organizations across the counties, strengthening their role in shaping the future of the agriculture and food sectors.

<b>Project Name</b>	Agri-Jobs 4 Youth
<b>Commissioned by</b>	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)
<b>Project Region</b>	Counties of Bungoma, Kakamega, Kisumu, Siaya and Vihiga
<b>Legal Executing Agency</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
<b>Duration</b>	2020 – 2025
<b>Budget</b>	15 million Euros

### Our Approach

Through its Agri-Jobs 4 Youth initiative, the German Development Cooperation in Kenya aims to bring more youth into employment by promoting sustainable, lucrative and attractive income and employment opportunities in the agriculture and food sector in Western Kenya.

Agri-Jobs 4 Youth uses its innovative 360° Agri-Jobs approach to empower Africa's rural youth with the tools they need for success—access to vital information, professional guidance, start-up capital, markets, networks, and specialized training. By embracing the agri-food system model, the program fosters an inclusive, climate-resilient, and sustainable transformation of the agri-food sector in Western Kenya, unlocking opportunities for young people to thrive.



## Our 360° Approach

### Conducive Framework Conditions

The institutional and personal capacities of state and non-state actors to manage and implement the "County Youth Agribusiness Strategies" have been strengthened.

### Access to Resources

Young farmers' access to sustainable agricultural production resources, in particular services, markets and inputs, is improved.



### Entrepreneurial Growth

The entrepreneurial skills of young entrepreneurs in the agricultural and food sector are strengthened.

### Attractive Opportunities

The perception of young people in the agri-food sector is enhanced through a mix of media and learning formats, showcasing it as a modern, inclusive, and profitable path for employment and income generation.

## Our Impact

Over the past five years, Agri-Jobs 4 Youth has developed into a transformative initiative, achieving numerous successes in empowering youth and enhancing the agricultural landscape. While the project has delivered a wide range of impactful outcomes, we would like to spotlight two exemplary interventions that illustrate our commitment to fostering youth engagement and supporting the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises within the agri-food sector.

### Organised Youth Empowerment

Agri-Jobs 4 Youth is actively supporting youth-led organisations to address the barriers preventing young people from engaging in the agricultural sector. In Bungoma, Kakamega, Siaya, Kisumu, and Vihiga, five independent youth organisations have successfully registered 3,500 members, with one-third being women. These organisations receive targeted assistance for organisational and business development, enhancing their service delivery to members. Additionally, the project amplifies the advocacy efforts of youth leaders, ensuring that the voices of young people are heard in public forums and district working groups. By providing tools for effective civic participation and fostering dialogue between youth, the private sector, and county governments, we contribute to the creation of favourable policies that promote youth and business engagement.

### SME Acceleration

Through collaboration with business development service providers like Afriscope Research Ltd, Agri-Jobs 4 Youth has implemented a tailored one-on-one acceleration programme for ten selected SMEs in the agri-food sector. This initiative has empowered these enterprises to develop and optimise new business models, enabling them to adapt to changing customer demands and explore diverse revenue streams. Within the project duration, these SMEs have made significant strides toward scaling their operations and transforming the agri-food landscape.

Their business progress in numbers:



#### Job Creation

820 temporary jobs  
252 full time jobs  
2,373 farmers engaged



#### Revenues

Steady growth at an average of **30%**  
Exponential growth at an average of **174%**



#### Profits

Average steady growth of **20%**  
Average exponential growth of **184.1%**



#### Funds Raised

KES **40.1 million** in loans  
KES **71.1 million** in grants  
Total: **KES 111.2 million**

Published by:  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices  
Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Agri-Jobs 4 Youth  
P.O. Box 2968  
40100 Kisumu  
Kenya  
agri-jobs4youth@giz.de  
www.giz.de/en

Kisumu, 2024

**Responsible:**  
Julia Müller, Kisumu  
Sean Otieno, Kisumu

**Design & layout:**  
Julia Müller, Kisumu  
Eric Lugaka, Nairobi

**Photo credits/sources:**  
GIZ/ Katja Weber  
GIZ/Philip Maguta  
GIZ/Dorine Awino  
Shujaaz Inc.