



Self-Organized Agripreneurs

The power of a common vision

Curlstar Karegi and Hillary Omondi are two young people that have one thing in common: They have a passion for youth in agriculture, and they won't sit and wait until someone else creates opportunities for them – they will proactively go and be the change.

“Youth run away from agribusiness because they view it as something negative that can't bring them money. I'm not saying it's an easy journey, but as youth we have the energy to do something. Especially when we come together as a group,” says Curlstar. The 28-year-old woman is the founding chairperson of Vihiga Youth Agripreneurs Network (VIYAN), which she started in early 2021 with the goal of creating a network for youth in agribusiness. “I realized we have the same challenges and need the same solutions, like markets for our products, capacity building, access to information and so on. A mentor challenged me to come up with a concept for a youth group.”

Teaming up for success

Within less than two years, and after countless visits to farms in Curlstar's home county, the organisation has grown to 365 members, all of which are active in some form of agribusiness. Curlstar herself studied Animal Science and Production, but, apart from internships, was never able to find formal employment. As a volunteer community trainer in the dairy sector she learned how to interact with others, how to express herself, how to plan and research before visiting the farmers. With time, the farmers learned to trust Curlstar and her advice – an immense motivation for her to do better every time. But as a young woman she was also confronted with cultural biases. This experience led to her being especially dedicated to employing female staff in her poultry feed formulation

business, which she started targeting young women farmers who struggle to get access to quality feed resources – just like she did. As chairperson of VIYAN, Curlstar aspires to be a role model for the young female members.



Agri-Jobs 4 Youth Unlocking opportunities in the agricultural sector



Sustainable youth organisations and networks aim to help rural youth overcome obstacles such as lack of access to information, land, or finance. With a focus on women and young adults in Western Kenya, the project addresses the specific needs of particularly disadvantaged groups and supports the improvement of service delivery within the organisations and to their members.



Framework conditions play a significant role in the performance of the agricultural sector. The project supports the county governments in creating favourable policies and regulations for youth and businesses and helps introduce new formats for dialogue between youth, private, and public sectors. Youth participation is promoted through direct representation in district working groups and advocacy in public forums.



Learning through trainings

VIYAN organises regular trainings to build the capacity of their members, mostly organised around their value chains Poultry, Apiculture, African Leafy Vegetables and Passion Fruit. Last year, 65 of their youth had the chance to do a professional short course at Friends College Kaimosi with the support of Agri-Jobs 4 Youth. On top of this, Curlstar and her leadership team have participated in workshops to drive the organisational development and, thereby the functionality of their youth organisation forward.

Learning from each other

During their first steps, VIYAN was fostered by a more seasoned youth organisation, which has been a partner of Agri-Jobs 4 Youth for years: Siaya County Youth Network (SCYN) under its Director Hillary Omondi, who, despite his being only 33 years old, has lots of experience in youth advocacy and political participation. Under the guidance of Agri-Jobs 4 Youth, Hillary and his team engaged in a mentorship program over the course of six months and supported VIYAN in questions of leadership, budgeting, organisational politics and networking.

SCYN had already had the chance to sharpen their knowledge and exposure during trainings on advocacy and youth engagement in politics hosted by Agri-Jobs 4 Youth. For Hillary, being part of a youth organisation and youth advocacy go hand in hand: The work in the organisation gives him the insight and evidence for actionable political strategies, while the work on the political stage creates contacts and access to opportunities for the youth they otherwise wouldn't get.

Hillary happily calls Curlstar and her group his "children" and remembers: "When I first visited the young agripreneurs in Vihiga, I was impressed by their passion and commitment, their good ideas for their organisation." It's easy to see that Hillary and Curlstar are much more than mentor and mentee now: They are peers that have become friends. They both have a vision of making their county a better place for youth, to create new livelihoods for young people by motivating them to team up in self-organized groups, by overcoming structural challenges together, by sharing ideas and opportunities, and ultimately making more money together than they would alone.



Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Agri-Jobs 4 Youth
agri-jobs4youth@giz.de

As at June 2023

Text & Layout Julia Mueller & Katja Weber

Photos © GIZ/Katja Weber

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Addresses of
the BMZ offices

BMZ Bonn
Dahlmannstraße 4
53113 Bonn, Germany
T +49 (0)228 99 535-0
F +49 (0)228 99 535-3500

BMZ Berlin
Stresemannstraße 94
10963 Berlin, Germany
T +49 (0)30 18 535-0
F +49 (0)30 18 535-2501

poststelle@bmz.bund.de
www.bmz.de