

HEALTHY SOIL HEALTHY FOOD & AGROECOLOGY SUCCESS STORIES



Trees planted on the farm in form of a woodlot (picture taken during the wet season)

Kenyan farmers triumph over climate adversity with agroecological practices

In the heart of Kenya's Kisumu West Sub-County, a remarkable transformation is unfolding, nurturing hope among small-scale farmers who have battled the wrath of nature for years. Spearheaded by the Kisumu Community Development Program (KICODEP) under the World Neighbours (WN) umbrella, this initiative is empowering farmers with agroecological practices to enhance their agricultural yield, mitigate climate change effects, and march towards food sovereignty.

The journey commenced in 2015 and has since burgeoned, impacting over 1,500 farmers across 7 villages and improving the lives of 6,000 household members. Amid the lush, rolling hills, the echo of triumph resonates through tales of farmers like Florence Otieno from Kanyamony village, who has seen her maize yield soar from 4 bags to 13 bags over an eight-year span.

Kisumu County, nestled by the Lake Victoria basin, is home to marginalized farming communities that bear the brunt of climate change. A panorama of challenges - dwindling soil fertility, scanty rainfall, and destructive

windstorms has often left the fields barren, hurling the populace into the chasm of food insecurity and poverty.

Determined to rewrite this gloomy narrative, Florence, like many others, embraced the sustainable farming techniques imparted through the KICODEP. With a modest grin, she narrates, "Heavy windstorms destroyed my maize crop, soil erosion and inadequate rainfall reduced productivity. I had to find a suitable and sustainable solution."

The core of the intervention has been to instil a suite of agroecological practices tailored to local conditions. This includes the construction of ridges to control water flow, bolstering soil's water retention, and the establishment of woodlots and agroforestry which not only curtail soil erosion but also serve as windbreakers, safeguarding the crops from nature's fury. Furthermore, the promotion of organic manure has revitalized soil health, enabling the soil to kiss the seeds into fruitful crops.

In Florence's farm, now a living classroom of sustainable farming, the ridges direct rainwater towards an underground storage, quenching the

thirst of the soil and her livestock in drier spells. The trees she planted, swaying gently to the winds, bear not only a shield against windstorms but also fruits, enriching her family's nutrition and pocket.

This transformation has rippled through the community, with income levels rising by an average of 30% among households embracing these practices. The saga of enhanced yields has wooed over 1,000 farmers to adopt soil and water conservation practices, making a bold stride from a mere 200 in 2017.

One of the golden threads of this initiative is the symbiosis between the farmers and the facilitators. Through community-led organizations, farmers are at the forefront of planning, executing, and monitoring the projects. Peer-to-peer learning sessions, fostered by WN, have become a crucible of knowledge exchange, enriching the community with skills to adapt and innovate.

Despite the strides, challenges like labour shortages and the initial patience required before the benefits of these practices materialize do

loom. However, the farmers' spirits remain unbroken, their eyes fixed on the verdant horizon of possibilities.

In conclusion, the reverberations of this initiative underscore the imperative of agroecological practices in bolstering food sovereignty. The narrative woven in the farms of Kisumu West sub-County isn't just about enhanced yields; it's a narrative of resilience, community, and the promise of a lush, food-secure future in the face of climate adversity.



Ridges that slow down and control the flow of the water, which is directed towards crops or harvested and stored in an underground storage or a small earth pan on the farm and later used to irrigate crops.



Water harvested on the farm.

This transformation has rippled through the community, with income levels rising by an average of 30% among households embracing these practices.

STORY BY:
Makonge Righa
World Neighbours, kenya.jrigha@wn.org
+254 722902561

WHO IS AFSA?

AFSA brings small-scale farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, faith groups, consumers, youth and activists from across the continent of Africa to create a united and louder voice for food sovereignty. AFSA encourages the use and reproduction of this case study for non-commercial use provided that appropriate acknowledgment of the source is given.



For more information and more African case studies see our website www.afsafrica.org