

# COFFEE FARMERS IN DIRE STRAITS

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END OF PROJECT REPORT  
PHASE 1





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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIGAS	Alternative Income Generating Activities
CC	Climate Change
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
FCS	Farmers' Cooperative Society
PO	Producer Organization
SALM	Sustainable Agricultural Land Management
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

### FARMER FIELD SCHOOLS (FFS)

a participatory and interactive learning approach that emphasizes problem solving and discovery-based learning. It builds farmers' capacity to analyse their production systems, identify problems, test possible solutions, and eventually encourage the participants to adopt the practices most suitable to their farming systems (FAO, 2003).

### VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION (VSLA)

The Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) model creates self-managed and self-capitalized savings groups that use their savings to lend to each other. VSLAs are comprised of between 10 and 30 members and offers self-managed savings, insurance and credit services.

### SCOPE

The Scoring Professionalism & Entrepreneurship Assessment tool is used to assess management maturity and professionalism of farmer organizations and SMEs. The SCOPE tools comprise 8 Core Dimensions. Each dimension is scored on a 1 – 5 scale. The SCOPE takes a holistic approach to assessing an organization according to 8 dimensions. It doesn't just look at farming practices, or sustainability indicators, but also at all the aspects of a farmer organization or SME that determine its professionalism.

### 2ND-GRADE (PRODUCER) ORGANIZATION

A small-scale producer organization whose legal members are exclusively 1st-grade organization affiliates. (1st grade organizations are small-scale producer organizations whose legal members are individual small scale farmers.)



# PROJECT BACKGROUND

Coffee Farmers in Dire Straits is a climate change adaptation and mitigation focused project that sought to increase the resilience of coffee farmers in Kenya and Ethiopia to the impacts of Climate Change (CC). This was achieved through systemic dissemination of relevant information through a mix of theoretic and practical learning methods to facilitate adoption of new approaches to CC adaptation and mitigation in coffee farming. The first phase of the project was implemented among coffee POs in Machakos between 2017-2019.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The project aimed to increase the climate change resilience among coffee farmers, organized in Smallholder Producer Organizations (SPOs).

## PROJECT PILLARS

The project was founded on 5 principle pillars.

1.

Improved institutional and management capacity for better decision making on issues surrounding climate change

2.

Adoption of Sustainable Agricultural Land Management Practices and Disaster Management for increased farmer resilience to the impacts of climate change

3.

Adoption of Sustainable Agricultural Land Management Practices (e.g. coffee shading) and Disaster Management (e.g. water harvesting) for increased farmer resilience to the impacts of climate change.

4.

Promoting the green energy switch by fronting coffee waste and animal manure as more efficient sources of energy hence increased opportunity for forest conservation.

5.

Increase opportunities for small holder coffee farmer families through Alternative Income Generating Activities (AIGAs)

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

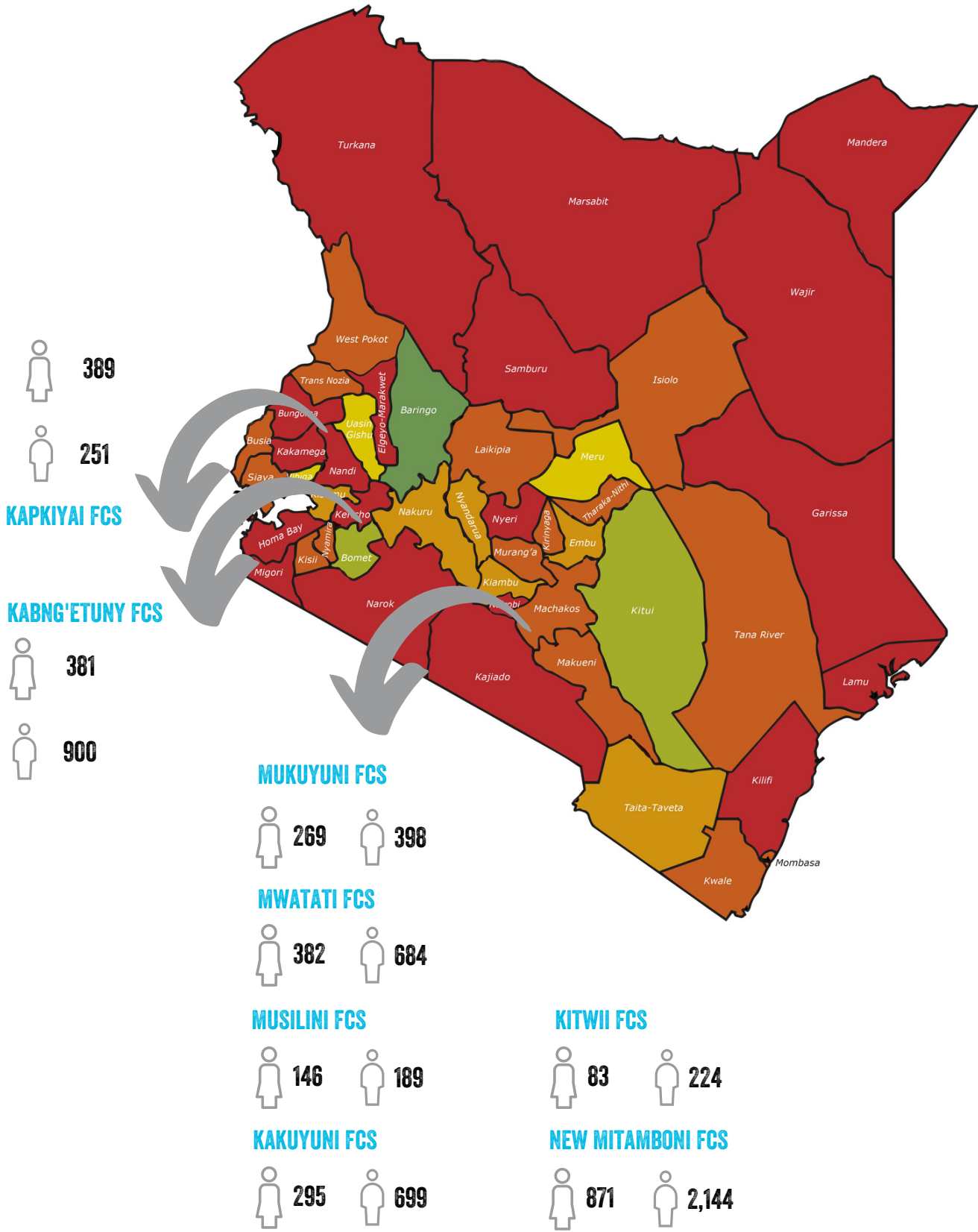
### KNOWLEDGE INFORMATION AND AWARENESS

Trainings

Farmer Field Schools (FFS)  
Demonstration plots  
Match making forums

Trainer of Trainees :- lead farmers in each PO trained and tasked with training other farmer members

# PROJECT SITES AND REACH BY GENDER





Implementation of Phase 1 of the Coffee Farmers in Dire Straits Project in Machakos sought to establish meaningful impact around the aforementioned pillars.

Over the past 2 years, the project has made good progress towards driving the adoption of best management practices among organized farmer groups as well as good agricultural practices that have helped coffee farmers to better cope with the impact of climate change. Further, the project has helped coffee farmers expand their economic horizons in terms of exploring a range of activities that can help them boost income from coffee earnings.

The achievements under the project are summarized below:

## RESULT AREA 1: IMPROVED INSTITUTIONAL AND MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

### Organizational capacity:

- 9 organizational capacity assessments conducted to identify capacity building support priorities
- 4 training modules developed &
- 14 training sessions held reaching 28 management members

### Financial management and premium use:

- 4 training sessions conducted reaching 30 PO members including management
- 8 Fairtrade Premium plans developed

### Internal Control Systems (ICS)

- 8 SPOs integrating ICS that outline clear governance and succession procedures

### Access to financial services:

- 8 POs with increased awareness and skills to access financial services

### Leadership and governance:

Improved SCOPE score on leadership and governance by end of year 1

- 46 SPO board members trained on leadership & governance

### Social policies - gender inclusion and child protection

- 12 training sessions held and 180 PO members reached.
- 8 gender policies developed among all POs out of which 4 have been ratified and are currently being implemented. Further, gender committees have been established among all 8 POs.
- 3 POs amended their constitutions to include a clause on the 1/3 gender rule according to the Kenyan law. 2 POs have also had women appointed to leadership positions.

### County & National CC adaptation

- 80 farmers trained on existing strategies and funding opportunities
- 3 POs developed advocacy plans on climate change in line with government commitments

# IMPACT AND RESULTS

Through the use of SCOPE insight assessment methodology, gaps were identified at producer organizations. This informed the real needs that needed to be addressed. Based on the findings, targeted trainings were conducted focusing on organizational strengthening aspects such as leadership and governance, business planning, financial management and sustainability. The areas were collated into a farmer-centric curriculum covering four modules. The curriculum was used for training with realization of the intended organization capacity strengthening. Key results included:

## IMPROVED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

As a result of training on financial management that targeted the boards of management and supervisory committee members there is improved financial management practices among the producer organizations. Financial data entry and record keeping has greatly improved enabling easy access and retrieval of documents. Further, POs have put in place financial accounting systems that guarantee accountability to members, compliance with regulatory agencies and credibility with partners and donors. Equally, policies and procedures on financial reporting and auditing have been operationalised thus ensuring sustainability.

## IMPROVED INTERNAL OPERATIONS

There is evident separation of the boards of management roles in oversight and operations that has allowed smooth running of the producer organizations enabled through the revision of the existing internal control systems. This has in turn enhanced the democratic and transparency processes. The roles and responsibilities of board members are well defined as well policies in place for managing conflict of interest. Leadership succession plans have also been developed and agreed on by 5 out of the 8 project target producer organizations. As result of the interventions, deliberations during meetings are conducted in participatory manner that reinforces producer ownership of POs.

## GENDER AND YOUTH INCLUSION

Through training on leadership complimented by training on gender, there is exhibited inclusivity in producer organizations which has seen involvement of youth and women in POs operations. 5 of the boards now have women representatives as opposed to 2 when the project started. Further, gender and child protection policies were developed. Additionally, there are systems in place for the identification of gender-based violence, child labour and sexual harassment.

## TECHNOLOGY FOR CLIMATE AWARENESS

Leveraging on technology, sharing of climate related information has been enhanced. Through a bulk short messaging system, farmers get to be informed of what is happening and are able to adjust their farming calendars appropriately.



THE SMS PLATFORM HAS BROUGHT A REVOLUTION IN OUR SOCIETY. THERE ARE NO COMPLAINTS OF FARMERS NOT RECEIVING INFORMATION AT THE RIGHT TIME. THE SHORT MESSAGES WILL GET TO YOU WHEREVER YOU ARE AS LONG WE HAVE YOUR CONTACTS AND YOU HAVE A PHONE.

MR. JOSEPH MBINDA  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
MWATATI FCS



The achievements under the project are summarized below:

## RESULT AREA 2: IMPROVED FARMER RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

### Sensitization on climate change:

**24** sensitization sessions held reaching 650 farmers



### Risk and opportunity assessments:

**8** assessments conducted among all people to establish need specific SALM options



### Farmer field school curriculum:

**1** Climate Academy guide developed based on the farmer field school methodology to train POs on identified SALM practices



### Adoption of SALM practices:

**410 HA** of land improved through diversified & resilient production methods including agro-forestry; conservation agriculture

**30** demonstration plots established

**3,200** farmers reached through promoter trainers



### Promotion of coffee shading:

**30,000** tree seedlings distributed

**6** tree nurseries established

**3,000** shade trees planted and still viable at end of project



### Training promoter farmers (ToT):

**30** promoter farmers trained per SPO

**3,200** farmers reached through promoter trainers



### Disaster and Risk Management:

**650** farmers trained on Disaster Risk Management

**7** disaster risk management plans developed among 7 POs.



# IMPACT AND RESULTS

Approximately 80% of the target farmers did not exactly know what climate change meant and how it impacted their lives. Some related climatic changes to the will of God or punishment from the Deity. This created a recipe for the kind of the interventions that were needed. Planned activities that included, sensitization on CC, development of a Farmer Field School Curriculum, promotion of SALM, establishment of demo plots and PO support in SPOs in development of Disaster Risk Response and Management Plans resulted in the following:

## INCREASED CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS

Farmers are now knowledgeable on climate change phenomenon, its manifestation, causes and effects. This was enabled through the sensitization and awareness sessions carried out in the 6 SPOs. Through the use of Trainer of Trainees' approach, more farmers were reached thus enabling them to understand the individual roles played in climate change and steps needed to withstand the effects and associated risks. Knowledge transfer has led to the adoption of practices such as tree planting and adoption of clean energy sources to mitigate climate change effects.

The SALM manual defined the modules (soil and water conservation, agronomic practices, agroforestry and nutrient management) that are key for farm activities related to climate change and mitigation measures. With the aid of the manual for farmers' training, key results were:

- Better practices such as mulching and terracing that led to improved soil conservation and water retention for crop(s)/coffee use. Water harvesting is also practiced at household and PO level. This has significantly reduced the rate of coffee leaves withering during moisture dearth periods.
- Improved coffee productivity enabled through adoption of shade management practices for 3,200 of the target 4,000 farmers.
- A better approach to coffee field activities management as a result of developing a coffee calendar. The calendar guides the farmers on what are activities to be undertaken and at what time of the year.
- Adoption of a SALM practices by farmers. 24 demonstration plots (model farms with good agricultural practices e.g. bench terraces for soil and water conservation, shade trees, organic farming etc) were established that saw the adoption rate of such practices soar to 80%. The sites were used by lead farmers for training and in some cases for match making and for Farmer Field School activities.



A DEMO FARM AT MUKUYUNI FCS



**DEMO FARMS ALLOW FARMERS TO SEE WHAT THEY NEED TO DO. THE FARMERS REPLICATE WHAT THEY HAVE OBSERVED ONTO THEIR FARMS.**

**MARTHA**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
MITABONI FCS



The achievements under the project are summarized below:

## RESULT AREA 3: PROMOTE ENERGY SWITCH TO GREEN ENERGY

### Briquette making:

**300** women using coffee husk briquettes instead of firewood for fuel



### Promoting adoption of solar energy:

**4** solar panels installed among 4 POs

### Youths training on construction of bio gas digester units and production of energy saving cook stoves:

**36** youth artisans (15 males, 21 females) trained on making cook stove fabrication

**34** masons (8 females and 26 males) trained on bio gas construction

**34** of the trained youths earning an income from bio gas construction and energy saving cook stove fabrication

### Promoting use of energy saving cook stoves among female coffee farmers at Machakos Farmers Cooperative Union:

**300** cook stoves distributed

**60%** reduction in tonnage of firewood used among women adopting energy saving cook stoves

### Promoting use of bio-gas among women farmers in Kapkiyai and Kabng'etuny

**60%** reduction in tonnage of firewood used among women adopting bio-gas

**280** households using bio-gas





# IMPACT AND RESULTS

With increased pressure on the forest, the need for adoption of alternative forms of energy to reduce reliance on firewood for fuel any consequently manage the impacts of climate change is necessary. With women being decision makers on fuel use in families, the project sought to promote the use of clean energy at the household level. Further, they bear the largest burden in time spent in wood collection and exposure to harmful emissions during meal preparation. Demonstration sites were also set up at the producer organization premises to act as the learning sites for farmers.

## ADOPTION OF SOLAR ENERGY

As a result of sensitization, demonstration and match making sessions conducted to promote the use of solar energy, there is increased use of solar energy at the household level which as seen 15% of the households procure the solar kits for domestic use.

## REDUCED WOOD FUEL USE

- The promotion of bio- gas digesters for women coffee farmers has reduced the time spent in firewood collection. More time is now being dedicated to other economic activities.
- The by-product from bio-gas, bio-slurry, is used on coffee farms for soil nourishment. This has caused coffee plants to be more productive thus increasing the volumes of coffee harvested per tree from 1.9 Kgs to 3.2 Kgs.
- Further 34 masons (8 females and 26 males) have received employment; through the project, they were trained on bio-gas construction and oversaw the construction of 215 bio-gas digesters. Presently, they provide after sales services to the functional units.
- In addition, 300 locally made improved cook stoves were distributed to women coffee farmers in Machakos County. This has reduced the amount of firewood used in cooking and as a result the amount used by households on firewood purchase by 65%.







MARY SYOKAU SHOWS THE NEWLY INSTALLED SOLAR SYSTEM CONTROL PANEL IN HER HOME. IN HER RIGHT HAND, SHE IS HOLDING A SOLAR RADIO THAT CAME WITH THE KIT PROVIDED UNDER THE PROJECT





**WITH THIS TORCH AND THE  
SECURITY LIGHT OUTSIDE, I  
WILL NOT FEAR TO EAT OR  
DRINK LATE. I CAN GO TO  
THE WASHROOM AT ANY  
TIME.**

**MARY SYOKAU**

Mary Syokau is a 75 year old widow and a member of Musilili FCS. She was born at a time when communities and families sorely relied on glowing embers for lighting at night.

"We were very happy whenever there was moonlight because we would extend the nights and play outside with age mates. Life is different today. It is not safe even during the brightest moonlight. Before I got my solar kit, I used to sleep at 7 PM because I had no way of lighting my house," Mary says this as she dances to celebrate the glowing solar lights in her 3-roomed house and security light outside.

Mary's homestead is among the many that are not connected to the national grid as they cannot afford the connection and monthly bills. While she has been using a kerosene lamp, she confesses that many nights are dark especially when she doesn't have money or someone to send for kerosene at the local shops which are 3 Km away.

To light up her evenings, Mary received a solar kit that contains a rechargeable battery, wiring cables with 4 sockets and switches, 4 bulbs, a solar radio and solar torch.

As the connection is finalized, Mary requests for the solar radio to be tuned to Musyi FM and then bursts into a joyous laughter. Musyi FM is a radio station broadcasting in Mary's local dialect-Kamba."I will not be going to my neighbors to listen to politics and music. They will now be coming here," asserts Mary who is happy that her nights will no longer be lonely.

"With this torch and the security light outside, I will not fear to eat or drink late. I can go to the washroom at any time," she adds.





MASONRY TRAINEES SHOWCASE THEIR CERTIFICATES AFTER SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING TRAINING





**“  
DEPENDING ON THE  
SIZE, THE CONSTRUCTION OF  
A BIO-GAS PLANT COSTS  
BETWEEN KSHS. 15, 000  
AND KSHS. 33,000 (USD  
150-330).**

**SIMON KIPROP**

Meet Simon Kiprop, soon to be proprietor of Marirmoi Investment, a Kenyan- based company dealing in bio-gas and greenhouse construction. The 23-year-old traces his journey back to 2016 where following the successful completion of his secondary school education and obtaining a C- in the national examinations, he was eager to embark on a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) course in Eldoret – his home town.

Faced with the challenge of raising required fees, Simon shelved his dreams and found solace in a poultry business which served as a means of sustenance. This was until 2017 when he came across Fairtrade Africa advertisements that sought to enroll 28 youth to a masonry training program that would see them construct 400 bio-gas plants in Kabng’etuny and Kapyikai. “I had heard that masons make a quick income, so when I learnt about the training opportunity I applied,” he says.

Simon was among the 28 youth who made it to the one-month training program – masonry for bio-gas. “We would go to class in the morning and attend practical sessions in the afternoon. This went on for one month after which we all constructed our first bio-gas plant together with the instructor. After that, each of us was tasked with an independent project. That is how I started constructing bio-gas plants for women,” he explains.

Simon went on to construct 9 plants under the program, each worth Kshs. 20,000 (USD 200). Today, he is a master of his art and has gone ahead to implement similar projects for other 5 farmers within his locality and neighboring towns. “Depending on the size, the construction of a bio-gas plant costs between Kshs. 15, 000 and Kshs. 33,000 (USD 150-330),” he says. Determined to grow himself, Simon has bolstered his skills with additional training from the Kenya Bio-gas Programme (KBP).

“Together with other youth, we receive training on how to market ourselves and greenhouse construction. Currently, I am receiving support from KBP to establish a company of my own and recently got a name for it – Marirmoi Investment.”



The achievements under the project are summarized below:

RESULT AREA 4: INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALL HOLDER  
COFFEE FARMERS TO DIVERSIFY AND ENGAGE IN ALTERNATIVE  
INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES

Training on farming as a family business:

650 families trained in family farming as a business



Financial literacy:

650 farmers trained on saving and loans

52 Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) groups with 1,040 members established



Establishment of greenhouses and drip irrigation systems:

7 POs set up with greenhouses and drip irrigation kits



Training on marketing for Alternative Income Generating Activities:

650 farmers trained



# IMPACT AND RESULTS

Coffee is a seasonal crop which is under threat due to climate change thus the need for supplementary Alternative Income Generating Activities (AIGAs). With most farmers facing difficulties in meeting their needs like school fees as proceeds from coffee are realized only once a year, AIGAs were meant to cushion households against dependence on a single source of income, thus making coffee farming communities less vulnerable.

## GROWTH OF FARMING AS A BUSINESS

Farmers were supported to develop skills and knowledge to professionalize their farming practices for maximum returns. Through training on the basics of farm business management techniques such as record keeping and financial management 30% of the trained farmers are now able to maintain records of their farm operations. Record keeping has enabled decision making on farming business viability further informing which farm enterprise to be pursued. Enterprises such as kitchen gardens, micro-greenhouse farming, poultry farming, apiculture, aquaculture and banana farming have been established.

## INCREASED ACCESS TO FINANCE

As a result of trainings conducted on financial literacy and the formation of the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) schemes, a saving culture is now institutionalized among the farmers. From the savings the farmers are able to borrow and cater for pressing needs. 39 VSLA groups with a total of 1,170 members in 6 SPOs were formed with a portfolio of USD 160,000. Members have been able to borrow from the schemes and businesses enterprises such as green grocery, poultry, goat and dairy farming established. Others have borrowed to pay for school fees and related pressing family needs.

## INCOME DIVERSIFICATION

- With follow up trainings and financial support for potential AIGAs, fish farming (6 fish ponds) was established at Mwatati FCS. Each pond produces an average of 200 mature tilapia fish that fetches KES. 150 (\$1.5) at the local market. This earns much needed income for the cooperative members.
- Additionally, apiculture, poultry and tissue culture banana farming enterprises were set up in all the primary cooperatives. The enterprises act as demo sites but with sustainability measures in place that allow accrued benefits for members. For instance, the incubator purchased is used by members to hatch eggs which in the process had led to farmers adopting improved poultry farming with higher returns (45% more than traditional poultry farming).
- Greenhouses were established at the PO level to showcase best practices in managing the effects of climate change. The greenhouses have been used to grow vegetables which earn an additional income stream with returns of between USD 2,000 -3,500 per harvest that are shared among members as dividends.

## VALUE ADDITION

The purchase of a coffee roaster with a roasting capacity of 10 Kg/Hr has seen expanded capacity of the Machakos Cooperative Union coffee mill to produce more value-added coffee for the local market through the LECOM brand. The value-added coffee is sold to hotels, local shops and schools earning a double income for farmers from sales. This has also created employment opportunities, 5 youth have been employed to roast and market the coffee.



# CASE STUDY

## HELPING COFFEE FARMERS EMBRACE THE UNCERTAINTIES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

IT IS A LONG WINDY ROAD, THE LAVENDER POP OF JACARANDA TREES AND THE SIGHT OF WELL-MANICURED FARMLAND ALL AROUND US A SIGHT AND SCENT TO BEHOLD. AT OUR DESTINATION, HILLS SURROUND US, THE MOIST RED SOIL REVEALING THAT THE SKIES HAVE BEEN GENEROUS LATELY.

In fact, we look up and sagging dark grey clouds seem eager for the next pour, men and women are beginning to pick up their hoes, they have done their part, its time the rain did its own. “The weather has been changing around the country leaving farmers accustomed to a planting schedule in limbo, but here, we have received more rain than we ever have in the last two years,” Mr. Ndeto, our guide and Project and Finance Manager at Machakos Cooperative Union tells me.

I find it hard to believe but quickly brush my doubts aside at the glistening of brand-new leaves. The compound is endowed with a dense leaved cabbage plantation each weighing about the size of a healthy new born. Across this is a greenhouse, in it tomato vines making their way to the skies. Last year, farmers made a bumper onion harvest from the green house, making a little over Kshs. 100,000 (\$1,000).

A terraced coffee plantation, inter-cropped with macadamia, banana and avocado thrives on another section of the farm. An effort to shield coffee bushes from unforgiving sunshine. In a little corner, a brood of hen’s peck at a bundle of vegetation hanging loosely from a mesh wire structure. I learn that these were a product of the incubator machine installed at the farmers’ cooperative. The thousands of other hens you will find foraging in the surrounding community have come from the same incubator. A day-old chick goes for Kshs. 100 (\$1) and older ones Kshs. 120 (\$1.2), half the price you will find in any local market nearby.

“Hens are easy to raise and when a community member has a few in his home, it means he cannot go hungry,” a farmer tells me. The current lush greenery may fool you, in fact, you may be forgiven to think of this as one of the regions on the windward side of the mountain, generously gifted with a stable downpour.





## HELPING COFFEE FARMERS EMBRACE THE UNCERTAINTIES OF CLIMATE CHANGE



CHICKS HATCHED FROM THE INCUBATOR INSTALLED AT MUKUYUNI FCS

But stretches of hunger do come. At times and actually for most part of the year, the dark clouds retreat, ocean looking skies and scorching sunshine that sucks up every bit of moisture replaces them. This is Machakos, more known for its sun, heat and drought that bites.

We have learnt to prepare for such times,” Mr. Shadrack Nzeki, Chairman at Mukuyuni Farmers’ Cooperative Society tells me. A 10,000 Litre water tank labelled, Climate Academy Project stands at the entrance of Cooperative Society, “this is a demonstration that we use to teach our members how to harvest water during rainy seasons like this,” Mr. Nzeki says. At a distance, a metallic pipe sinks into the ground showing signs of a borehole, members from this coffee producing cooperative will buy a 20 Litre jerry can of water at five (5) Shillings (\$ 0.05) when taps at home run dry. Since life must go on as they wait for the rains to induce the flowering of their coffee bushes, community members will get the same amount of water at ten (10) shillings (\$ 0.1).

Next, the cooperative has set its sight on water packaging and distribution. I handed over 200 Shillings (\$ 2) to Mr.Nzeki in exchange for a 250 Grams can of honey. This and any other inflow from small income generating activities means that farmers don’t have to sit and wait for the rains that now come as they wish. It means that Mukuyuni Farmers’ Cooperative, which represents hundreds of coffee farmers can pay its bills and keep a few workers as they wait for the rains leading to coffee harvest.

As I leave, a truck is driving into the compound, a man alights and pays his dues for renting it. Seemingly a jack of all trades, this is preparation and a much-needed cushion against the uncertainties of climate change.





Catherine Ndunge is a member of Musilili FCS. The wife and mother of 4 joined the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) in her cooperative after a training on financial literacy in 2017. Then with 29 members, each contributed Kshs. 100 (USD 1) on a weekly basis thereby growing a pool of funds they could borrow from and repay at an interest.

Catherine leveraged this to obtain finances for a vegetable garden and grocery kiosk whose profits she used to repay her loan. With the dividends earned at the end of each calendar year, Catherine invested in a goat, house improvement project, maize farming and also paid her child's school fees.

"Coffee is good but the payment method discourages us. We can't use the money to buy food or invest in other sustainable businesses. The truth is that most farmers do not know how to invest the huge coffee payment that comes once a year. Being a member of the VSLA has helped me get money to take my child to a good boarding school, buy a goat and chicken, improve my house and above all start a grocery business. The grocery helps me to get money to repay the VSLA loan. I can also buy input for the coffee and maize garden using funds from the savings group. My entire family life has changed since I joined the VSLA group at Musilili FCS," says Catherine.



**THE TRUTH IS THAT MOST FARMERS DO NOT KNOW HOW TO INVEST THE HUGE COFFEE PAYMENT THAT COMES ONCE A YEAR. BEING A MEMBER OF THE VSLA HAS HELPED ME GET MONEY TO TAKE MY CHILD TO A GOOD BOARDING SCHOOL, BUY A GOAT AND CHICKEN, IMPROVE MY HOUSE AND ABOVE ALL START A GROCERY BUSINESS.**

CATHERINE NDUNGE  
MUSILILI FCS



## LESSONS LEARNT

Several lessons were picked in the course of implementing the project. These will shape implementation of subsequent phases.

1. The use of participatory approaches was key in project success and realization of the key milestones. For instance, the project principle actors were involved in needs assessment, design of interventions, implementation and the periodic review of the project's progress. This enabled tracking of project outputs against resources allocated thus realizing project ownership.
2. Climate change mitigation and adaption take various forms. Based on the risk analysis and opportunities assessment carried out and later coupled with sensitization sessions, it was evident that farmers preferred mitigation-based activities such as tree planting, installation of cook stoves and bio gas units as opposed to adaptation activities. Mitigation activities had approximately 95% success rates. This means that in future, funding should be targeted at mitigation practices.
3. The use of different approaches in reaching the target outputs such as the match making forums and demonstration sites were significant in enabling learning. For instance, through the demo sites farmers were able to easily implement the SALM practices.
4. Strong commitment from SPOs board of management and communities is essential to any gender mainstreaming approach, including involving women in post project activities beyond the requirements set out in the Fairtrade Standards.
5. Farmer Field School and the lead farmers approach enabled wide reach of the target farmers. However, they should be aided to carry out follow up activities on Sustainable Land Agricultural Management practices considering that they are a direct contact with farmers. The project did not have the means to follow-up and continue future project activities. While the 140 trained lead farmers is a positive start, more and larger scale support is needed especially to help cope with the likely increase in the number of farmers embracing SALM practices. Each lead farmer was able to reach between 10 and 20 other farmers in their zones.
6. Protective clothing and transport facilitation is a great motivation for promoter farmers. Hospitable practices such as providing refreshments encourages participation during trainings by promoter farmers.
7. A strong partnership works best for project implementation. Due diligence and agreeing on the terms of engagement beforehand is also critical for the success. For outcome 2 and 4 project activities, follow up proved challenging considering that the initially contracted partner sub-contracted a producer organization later posing project coordination challenges.
8. The initial needs assessment and gender analysis was critical in identifying the different vulnerabilities, needs and capacities of men and women in regard to climate change adaptation and drought resilience. If gender considerations are missed during the project design phase, it may not be as easy to bring them on board during implementation.
9. The project duration was too short according to participating cooperatives to realize full impact. A minimum of 5 years would be ideal in order to bring long lasting change and impact.



# CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a summary of key challenges encountered during project implementations. Recommendations to facilitate better planning in future are also outlined.

CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Political uncertainty in the project sites and the country as a whole: this affected most of the 2017-2018 planned activities leading to the postponement of several activities. As a result, the project implementation phase was prolonged.	<p>CAN WE REVISE THE STATEMENT HERE? IT IS NOT A RECOMMENDATION PER SAY.</p> <p>The work plans were revised to take care of the activities not implemented within the initial work plan</p>
Dung collection especially for farmers without a proper cowshed caused initial bio-gas feeding to take longer than planned.	Train project beneficiaries on dairy farming especially on cowshed construction (this should include demo cowsheds).
Unpredictable weather conditions in some of the project sites. For instance, in the Rift Valley where the construction of bio-gas took place, the onset of rains rendered the timely delivery of the construction materials impossible. This has led to delays in the construction of bio-gas plants.	Future activities should take the suitability of weather conditions in account with those likely to be most affected planned for warmer seasons.
Infrastructural challenges especially during the rainy season in Rift valley. This increased costs and travelling time more so during bio-gas construction.	Farmers need to be trained on how to lobby county and national governments for improved infrastructure.
Poor connectivity: some POs were out of reach making communication difficult.	Identify a link person with reliable connectivity and who can be trusted to relay information to other POs.





## PROJECT PARTNERS



- 01** No better cure for poverty than the ability to provide for one's own income. The Max Havelaar Foundation helps small producers in developing countries to acquire a better place in the supply chain, so that they can live on their work and invest in a sustainable future.



- 02** We Effect works in more than 20 countries in Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa through its regional offices in partnership with local CSOs, farmer organisations, cooperative federations and other democratic organisations.

We Effect applies a human rights-based approach in its international development cooperation programmes, assisting people living in poverty to secure their rights and entitlement to adequate living conditions and broad empowerment.

- 03** The Dutch Postcode Lottery was founded in 1989 to support charitable causes. Today, 2.5 million people in the Netherlands play every year, vying for hundreds of thousands of prizes each month. As they play, they're supporting good causes. Since the start in 1989, the Dutch Postcode Lottery (Nationale Postcode Loterij) has contributed over 6.2 billion euros to charity organisations dedicated to 'people' and 'planet'. It now supports 123 charities worldwide and plays a pioneering role in the quest for a fair and enterprising, green and responsible world.





# COFFEE FARMERS IN DIRE STRAITS

## END OF PROJECT REPORT

### PHASE 1

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