

Research Application Summary

**Contribution of TAGDev Program on Students Agri-entrepreneurial Development: A case of Egerton University**

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**Abstract**

Agricultural transformation in developing countries such as Kenya depends on the level of youth involvement in the agricultural sector. The Kenyan government recognizes the potential of the youthful population in agricultural sector development through her Agriculture Sector Development strategy (2010-2020). Various efforts such as provision of affordable credit, capacity building by the government and other stakeholders have been made to attract the youth into agribusiness. However, despite these efforts, youth involvement in agriculture is still low. Moreover, higher education training in agriculture has mostly concentrated on increased production ignoring entrepreneurial skills development, which is a necessity in transitioning to commercialized agriculture by smallholders. To address this, Egerton University in partnership with the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is implementing a program funded by MasterCard Foundation named TAGDev program. The program seeks to transform African agriculture through students' entrepreneurial development, community engagement and experiential learning. This paper therefore highlights the TAGDev program contributions on students' agri-preneurship development. Through its various entrepreneurship trainings and field trips to model farms organized by the program, the 6 MSc. Agrienterprise students in groups of three have formed 2 business ventures namely Tamu Nuts enterprises and CMS Agropriprises. In addition to that, one BSc. Agriculture student in partnership with his friends has started an agri-enterprise, Comrade Dairy and Foods Enterprises, dealing with the manufacture and sale of fresh milk and yogurt. The TAGDev students have also adopted kitchen garden farming in their hostels selling the extra produce to their fellow students, a technology they learnt at Amiran Kenyan Limited during a field trip. In conclusion, the program has so far made tangible contribution to the students' entrepreneurial growth. There is need to extend program benefits to the non-TAGDev students to ensure wholesome contribution to Africa's growth and development by the students' community.

Key words: Agricultural finance, agri-enterprise, entrepreneurship, experiential learning, transformation, youth

**Résumé**

Agricultural transformation in developing countries such as Kenya depends on the level of youth involvement in the agricultural sector. The Kenyan government recognizes the potential of the youthful population in agricultural sector development through her Agriculture Sector Development strategy

(2010-2020). Various efforts such as provision of affordable credit, capacity building by the government and other stakeholders have been made to attract the youth into agribusiness. However, despite these efforts, youth involvement in agriculture is still low. Moreover, higher education training in agriculture has mostly concentrated on increased production ignoring entrepreneurial skills development, which is a necessity in transitioning to commercialized agriculture by smallholders. To address this, Egerton University in partnership with the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is implementing a program funded by MasterCard Foundation named TAGDev program. The program seeks to transform African agriculture through students' entrepreneurial development, community engagement and experiential learning. This paper therefore highlights the TAGDev program contributions on students' agri-preneurship development. Through its various entrepreneurship trainings and field trips to model farms organized by the program, the 6 MSc. Agrienterprise students in groups of three have formed 2 business ventures namely Tamu Nuts enterprises and CMS Agroprises. In addition to that, one BSc. Agriculture student in partnership with his friends has started an agri-enterprise, Comrade Dairy and Foods Enterprises, dealing with the manufacture and sale of fresh milk and yogurt. The TAGDev students have also adopted kitchen garden farming in their hostels selling the extra produce to their fellow students, a technology they learnt at Amiran Kenyan Limited during a field trip. In conclusion, the program has so far made tangible contribution to the students' entrepreneurial growth. There is need to extend program benefits to the non-TAGDev students to ensure wholesome contribution to Africa's growth and development by the students' community.

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## Introduction

Globally, the population is expected to rise to 9 billion from 7 billion by 2050 with young people accounting for about 14% of the total population (ILO, 2014). With this increasing population, there is an increasing demand for food hence increasing food insecurity in the third world countries such as Kenya. Due to the increasing population, there is a growing demand for employment opportunities especially among the young people. Agricultural sector has the potential to directly or indirectly provide employment opportunities to the millions of unemployed youth as well as contribute to the GDP of the developing countries. According to ILO, (2014), globally, the agricultural sector contributes to 32% of the total employment; hence, it is important to involve the young people to solve food insecurity and unemployment through agribusiness. In Kenya, the agricultural sector is the major source of the GDP contributing to 15.2% (Kenya Economic Report, 2017).

All over the world, there has been a growing interest in agribusiness development. The Kenyan Government through its Agriculture Sector Development Strategy (2010-2020) recognizes the potential contribution of the youth in the development of the agricultural sector. The government and other stakeholders such private sector, development have undertaken different activities to address youth participation in agriculture including; youth mobilization in all counties to form farming groups, technical support and provision of start- up farming equipment's and capital, promotion of 4-K and Young farmers clubs among others. However, despite the potential of agricultural sector to provide employment and improve their livelihoods, few of these young people see a future for themselves in agricultural sector leading to withdrawal from the sector. The major underlying issues affecting

youth participation in agriculture include but not limited to; access to land, agricultural finance and insurance, knowledge, skills and extension services; and use of innovative technologies and markets.

Egerton University is implementing a program titled **Transforming African Agricultural Universities to meaningfully contribute to Africa's Growth and Development (TAGDev)** for a period of eight years (2016-2024). The program is funded by MasterCard Foundation through the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM). The Program provides scholarships to students from across Africa. It aims at strengthening entrepreneurship and agribusiness skills among students in African universities meant to foster a robust entrepreneurial culture within the university that will maximize individual and collective economic and social success on a local, national, and global scale. In its first cohort, Egerton has admitted 15 students, 5 undergraduate pursuing BSc. Agriculture, 5 students pursuing MSc. Community studies and Extension and 5 students pursuing MSc. Agri- enterprise Development. This paper therefore highlights the contribution of TAGDev program to enhancement of the entrepreneurial development of the students through trainings, class work, field trips in which the students have participated.

## **Methodology**

TAGDev program in collaboration with RUFORUM recruits BSc and MSc students from disadvantaged communities to take agricultural related courses at Egerton and Gulu universities in Kenya and Uganda respectively. This abstract will focus on the students enrolled at Egerton University. In order to inculcate the entrepreneurial spirit in the students, the program organizes various trainings and trips as discussed below:

**Students Joint Orientation Program held on July 2017.** In particular, the students were trained on Entrepreneurial Development by Enterprise Uganda. The trainers adopted a more practical and participatory approach in training the students on the following topics; the Concept of entrepreneurship, Business opportunity identification, Business plan development, Running a successful business among other topics. At the end of the training, the students were challenged to start a small enterprise as a way of putting into practice what they have learnt.

**Financial Management.** This was conducted by by, KCB Egerton, Branch Manager. The trainer emphasized the importance of prudent personal financial management. She took the students through development and implementation of SMART financial goals as a way of ensuring efficient financial management plan implementation. The students were also introduced to different types of investments opportunities such as Share investment where they were taken through a step-by-step procedure on how to trade in shares.

**Students' trips to various established agribusiness firms.** These trips are organized by the TAGDev program. They also contributed to the improvement of the students' entrepreneurial development. Notably, a trip to Thamuru farm in Murang'a County, Kenya was an eye opener to the students. The 16-acre farm is an integrated farm having horticultural crops such as (kales, spinach, and cabbages), livestock (dairy, sheep and rabbits), poultry (chicken and geese), fish and biogas plants. The students learnt how to set up and successful manage different types of agri-enterprises.

In the first cohort (2017 class), the program admitted students into the MSc. Agri-Enterprise Development program offered in the department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Management. In this program, the students are taken through 3-semester course work where they learn

concepts in Agri-enterprise and agribusiness. In addition to that, the Agri- enterprise Fund Scheme (established through EDULINK 11 Program and up-scaled by the RECAP program) provides the students with seed capital in groups of 3 to 4 start and run an Agri-enterprise which will be examined and graded according to the university set standards.

## **Results and discussion**

Since its inception in 2016, TAGDev @Egerton has admitted 15 students, six of them have been able to start business enterprises in agriculture. The student's enterprises are discussed below:

Tamu Nuts Enterprises is a partnership business owned by Geoffrey Ngeno, Mercyline Jerusa and Brian Vigeedi all MSc. Agri-Enterprise Students. The business will focus on selling value added nuts such as cashew nuts, macadamia nuts as well as providing entrepreneurship trainings along the nuts value chain. The business is trying to tap into an increasing and unsatisfied demand for nuts. The business will be located at Egerton University, with lecturers and students being its target market.

John Agbolosoo, Redempter Mbula and Samburumo partnered to form CMS Agropprises. Their business, which will be located at Egerton University will deal with production and sale of quality potatoes and cassava crisps. The business annual sales projections are estimated to be KES 576, 000 with an annual growth rate of 10% for the first three years of operation.

One BSc. Agriculture student (Gabriel Kwendo Mahindu) has partnered with other two (2) non TAGDev students to start Comrade Dairy and Foods Enterprise, located at Njokerio Village, Egerton University. The business, which has opened its doors to the Egerton community, specializes in production and sale of yoghurt in three different flavors: vanilla, straw berry and peach. The enterprise seeks to reduce farmer exploitation by milk brokers at the same time meet the growing demand of value added milk products especially among the student community. The enterprise is registered under the Business Name Act of Kenyan Laws and has undergone two (2) inspections by the Kenyan Dairy Board and certification by Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) is underway.

The TAGDev students have also adopted the Kitchen Garden Farming in their hostels, a technology they learnt during a visit to Amiran, Kenya Limited, Nairobi. In the gardens, they grow kales, tomatoes and capsicum. The produce from their kitchen gardens is used as food; with the remainder sold to other students.

As a result of the entrepreneurial training during 2017 joint orientation, Mercyline Jerusa, an MSc. Agri-enterprise student started three (3) businesses, two at her home village and one at the University campus. At home, she helped her mother to diversify and commercialize her farming. She introduced her mother to the growing and selling of spinach, Irish potatoes, carrots and beetroot. Mercyline has been able to help her husband who has been jobless for the last two years expand his poultry enterprise. Currently, he is rearing 10 indigenous chicken, turkey and guinea fowl for sale at the local market. In addition to that, Mercyline has been selling eggs, fruits, mobile phone airtime and sundries to her fellow students. She has taken advantage of the high demand of the commodities and distance to Nakuru that many of the foreign students are not conversant with.

The above efforts by the TAGDev students can be attributed to the entrepreneurial trainings and trips organized by the TAGDev program.

## **Conclusion**

Significant contributions to Africa's Growth and Development begins with the transformation of Africa's young population. TAGDev program has made remarkable contributions in enhancing the entrepreneurship development of its students. It was noted that the benefits of the program are only felt by its direct beneficiaries. The program should work towards extending these benefits to other non-TAGDev students, these will enhance effective participation of the entire students community.

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