



German- African Trainee Program

Success Stories

A stepping stone for a sustainable future in farming

In May 2021, a group of 30 Kenyan agricultural students travelled to Germany for a unique learning experience. They were placed on different farms in Southern Germany for a six-month traineeship organized by AgrarKontakte International (AKI). The motto of the program is “learning by doing”, so after some introductions, the students from Bukura Agricultural College rolled up their sleeves and got to work.



Travice Kyangi remembers how much passion and effort his host family puts in their work. Seeing their example motivated Kyangi to start a small poultry business once he returned to Kenya. The young man began with two chickens and within a few months has grown his poultry farm to 120 birds. “The farm manager of my host farm often reminded me that he, too, started small, and steadily grew his business over the years. He encouraged me to be determined and work hard,” says Kyangi.



Quite a number of the former trainees decided to venture into poultry, which you can start with little capital and on a small piece of land while getting a return on investment in a very short time. While in Germany on an organic farm who also had poultry and did direct marketing, **Kevinah Ochekit** got the idea of running her own little farm shop back home. “I have some chickens and sell their eggs directly, without a middleman, the way my host family did it. My customers know that I have good quality. The demand is so high, I can’t even produce enough,” shares Ochekit. Her next project is to venture into organic farming, for which she has already started preparing a piece of land.



During his traineeship on a dairy farm, **Derrick Obado** gained additional knowledge about feeding strategies that he is now transferring to his work as a farm manager in Western Kenya. He reports: “Around here we mostly give the cows fresh grasses. I learned from my host family that fermented feeds are very good for the animals. I started introducing this on my employer’s farm and we are seeing very good results. The farm owner is very happy with my efforts.” Obado takes care of 40 pigs, four cows and some poultry and is implementing work safety protocols, another learning area from Germany. Besides being a farm manager, he assesses other people’s farms and gives them recommendations on how to improve or diversify their farm.





Felix Nyongesa also ventured into consulting, almost immediately after he returned to Kenya. Through his network, he gets calls from dairy farmers who need advice on how to achieve a higher milk output. Nyongesa gathers them into small groups and trains them based on his combined expertise from his college studies in Kenya and his practical training on a dairy farm in Germany. Furthermore, he is engaged in poultry production. When asked about his time in Germany, he says: “My host family and I were quite close. They took me to a friend’s poultry farm and that’s what got me motivated to start breeding chickens, something I can easily do on the limited land I have at my disposal.”



Pascal Musala worked on a dairy farm in Southern Germany during his traineeship. There, he acquired a lot of skills that helped him enhance his agricultural knowledge from his studies at Bukura Agricultural College. “My passion is teaching,” says Musala, who found employment as a secondary school teacher. He teaches Agriculture and Biology. “The practical skills I gained also help me share my rich knowledge with the learners who need it the most,” explains Musala.



One young woman was placed on a pig farm. What inspired **Macrine Ochieng** the most, though, wasn’t even the professional pig raising her host family taught her. They also engaged in value-addition, making potato salad from their home-grown potatoes and offering it as part of their catering for different events. Once back in Kenya, Ochieng gave it a try and made her own potato salad, but couldn’t get it quite right with the local ingredients. To generate some income, she plants and sells local vegetables that are highly marketable in her region, and occasionally engages as an extension worker for a company that produces and sells organic fertilizers, teaching potential customers on how to use the products in their farms.



Jared Owinyi is one of the few former trainees who got an employment with an NGO upon his return. He says: “I quickly realized that just having been in Germany isn’t enough to secure me a job. But it sure helps me in my work. I didn’t know how disciplined I could be, motivating myself to work hard – the example of my host family taught me that.” Owinyi’s job is to train small-scale farmers in sustainable farming methods, whereby he draws from his knowledge gained at college and during his traineeship, and also teaches the farmers the same work ethics that drive him.

All of the young people agree that the experience has changed them in many ways, personally and professionally. Most importantly, it has given them a stepping stone for creating a sustainable income within the agricultural sector while also supporting local small-scale farmers around them. As one of them said, “We are a source of hope in the community.”

www.agrarkontakte.de

The traineeship program in Kenya at a glance:

- Motto „Learning by doing“
- Agricultural sectors: Livestock farming, crop farming, fruit and vegetable farming
- Trainees are agricultural students (ages 18–26) from Bukura Agricultural College
- Part of the special initiative “One World Without Hunger” of the German Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation; implemented as part of the cooperation with Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and its global project “Green Innovation Centres in the agriculture and food sector”
- Goal: To improve the economic and social perspectives of young people in Kenya by promoting self-help

