



German- African Trainee Program

Success Story

Kenyan youth are ready to take agriculture to the next level

After finishing high school, young people often find it difficult to decide what's next. Especially in Kenya, where youth unemployment is very high and many families lack the funds to send their children to university, high school graduates are often left in limbo. It is therefore remarkable that **Kitsao Charo Kahindi**, a young man from the coastal region in Kenya, made a most unlikely choice: He decided to venture into farming.

Kahindi's approach was learning by doing. He planted kales, okra and tomatoes on his family's land by looking at how his neighbor, an agricultural officer, did it. The experience was so rewarding that he joined Bukura Agricultural College to study farming in theory and practice. What happened towards the end of his studies spiked his learning curve even more: He got accepted for a 6-month traineeship on a German dairy farm, organized by AgrarKontakte International (AKI). "At first, I thought that doing agriculture in Germany is easy-going, with all the technology they have. But I soon found out that the farmers take their work very seriously, they work hard, they follow certain procedures and it all adds up to a profitable enterprise," recognizes Kahindi. "I had to notch up my work ethic and have kept it up since I returned to Kenya. It's the only way to success."

While still in Germany, Kahindi decided to do two things in the future: Enhance the family's dairy business and start his own agribusiness. Some changes that he has already implemented in his dairy management might seem small, but are very effective: Kahindi now gives the cows water frequently instead of the traditional daily ration. Also, he doesn't hit the animals anymore in order to guide them. Kahindi started talking with his cows, patiently training them to follow his instructions the way he saw his German host family do it. The young man is firm in implementing what he learned: "My neighbor thinks I've gone crazy when he sees me talking with my animals. But I know with all my efforts I will get more milk and more income at the end of the day."

As to his own agribusiness, Kahindi quickly realized that it would be best to team up with a group of like-minded young people. After some research, they settled on starting a cooperative with the goal



to establish the first maize milling company in their county. Kahindi serves as Project Manager and is on the cooperative's board. Within a few months they registered more than 150 cooperative members who committed to embracing climate-smart agriculture and delivery of their maize harvest to the communal mill for value-addition. As another income-generating project, the cooperative already has an agricultural shop up and running, creating employment for one of them.

As soon as the participant list for the next group of college students going to Germany in 2022 came out, he looked for those coming from the coast to congratulate them: "I want to mentor them before and after their traineeship. With good networking, we can take agriculture at the coast to the next level." And his advice for high school students? "Get into agriculture, it guarantees your employment. All you need to do is start, no matter how small."

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

