
NEWS & FEATURES

Young Agripreneurs in Tanzania: Voices from the YEFFA Training Program

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By Nelson Kowero

In Morogoro, Tanzania, SAGCOT Centre Limited, in collaboration with partners, conducted a transformative training program under the *Youth Entrepreneurship for the Future of Food and Agriculture (YEFFA)* project. This initiative aimed to enhance food safety compliance, boost market competitiveness, and create employment opportunities in the rice and maize value chains.

Held from February 12-15, 2025, the training convened 60 young entrepreneurs—33 women and 27 men—from the maize, rice, horticulture, and sunflower value chains. Participants acquired critical skills in food quality assurance, safety standards, post-harvest management, and nutrient fortification. Supported by AGRA and the Mastercard Foundation, the Youth Entrepreneurship for the Future of Food and Agriculture (YEFFA) project—led by SAGCOT—seeks to create 30,000 dignified jobs by strengthening market linkages and promoting youth-led agribusinesses in Tanzania.

Experts from TFNC, SIDO, MIT, Intermech, and TBS facilitated the training, provided hands-on knowledge in biofortification, food fortification technologies, post-harvest handling, quality certification, regulatory compliance, and entrepreneurship strategies. These skills empower Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to scale up operations, improve product quality, and gain better market access.

Below is what some participants had to say about their experiences:

Participant Voices

Joseph Peter

"My name is Joseph Peter Kioga, and I am a farmer and producer of fortified porridge flour for children. Before attending this training, I was unaware of critical aspects such as TBS regulations, the importance of adding nutrients to food products, and the health risks associated with nutrient deficiencies—like vitamin A deficiency, which causes eye problems.

I have learned a lot, and the knowledge gained will also benefit those who couldn't attend. I encourage my fellow youth to seize opportunities related to agriculture, especially those provided by GEMI, SAGCOT, and AGRA. This training has opened my eyes to value addition and the existence of agro-processing industries. Many young people think AGRA and similar organizations are not genuine, but I can now confirm that they are true partners, making a real impact."

Nasibu Said

"My name is Nasibu Said, and I am the Executive Director of Mfalme Jiko, a company specializing in maize flour processing. Before this training, certain concepts were new to me, such as technical assistance for exports, small-scale food preservation technologies, and biofortification.

After these sessions, I now understand how a business owner can ensure product compliance with TBS regulations, navigate export assistance programs, and implement food safety measures. This training has been an eye-opener in many ways."

RITCHIE RAPHAEL

"My name is Rich Raphael, and I process maize under my company, Africa Harvest Enterprises Ltd, based in Kihonda Industrial Area. The IHEFA training has been an incredible experience—we've gained a wealth of knowledge and interacted with the right people to help grow our businesses.

The training covered essential topics such as fortification, TBS standards, and compliance. Experts from SIDO and various stakeholders guided us on how to navigate the business sector successfully. I am grateful for this opportunity and eager to implement what I have learned."

Mwajuma Zuberi

"My name is Mwajuma Zuberi, a farmer from Morogoro Rural District. I came to this training without prior knowledge of value addition, but now I understand how enhancing my farm produce can significantly increase my income.

Previously, I only sold raw produce, but today, I have learned that processing maize into rice or even making snacks like vitumbua can yield better profits. I also learned about aflatoxin contamination—I used to think that moldy maize could be fed to livestock, but I now understand the health risks, even to the animals consuming it.

This training has transformed my thinking, and I deeply appreciate SAGCOT, IHEFA, and GAIN for providing us with this life-changing knowledge."

Mwambagi Yusuph Lule

"My name is Mwambagi Yusuph Lule. I am both a farmer and a business entrepreneur. This training has been extremely beneficial, allowing us to explore opportunities for value addition and increasing the market potential of our agricultural products.

One key takeaway for me has been the role of TBS in business compliance—I was unaware of their regulatory functions before this training. I also learned about packaging techniques, food fortification, and alternative storage solutions.

I appreciate the trainers and sponsors for equipping us with such valuable knowledge. I am confident that applying what I have learned will create a significant impact on my business and the community."

Philipo Ruthu

"My name is Philipo Ruthu, and I am the CEO of Ruthu Agro Solutions and Smart Agripreneurship Innovation Center. We support young farmers and women by offering services such as soil testing, seedling production, irrigation system installation, and financial linkages.

Today, I have learned about three major challenges that hinder business growth: access to capital, market constraints, and productivity. Through this training, we have explored solutions provided by institutions like TBS, SAGCOT, and GAIN.

The demand for food is increasing globally, yet agricultural land remains constant. By 2050, the world's population will reach 9.2 billion, with a 70% increase in food demand. Agriculture presents a massive business opportunity, and those willing to invest in value addition will benefit significantly."

Stephanie Kaaya

"I am Stephanie Kaaya, a Senior Standards Officer at the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS). In this IHEFA training, we have been assisting young entrepreneurs in understanding how to add value to their products.

Most participants are involved in maize and rice processing, and we have guided them on obtaining the TBS quality mark, proper packaging, and expanding market access. The response has been very positive, and we have educated them on how to utilize our online application system for product certification."

SIA S. MOSHI

"My name is Asia Sama Moshi, a farmer and agricultural processor. I am a beneficiary of the IHEFA training funded by GAIN, AGRA, and SAGCOT. This training has provided invaluable insights into value addition and product quality.

We have learned about fortification, TBS certification, and financial resources available through SIDO. One key lesson for me was the danger of aflatoxin-contaminated maize, which we previously thought could be safely fed to animals. I now understand the health risks it poses to both livestock and humans.

Additionally, I discovered Genge Kiganja, a platform connecting farmers with markets to prevent middlemen from exploiting them. This has been an incredibly enlightening experience."

Festo Kapela

"I am Festo Kapela, a Senior Trade Officer at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Through this training, we have emphasized the vast business opportunities available to young entrepreneurs.

Tanzania is a signatory to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, which allows inter-African trade. We have guided participants on meeting market standards, complying with food fortification laws, and accessing government-supported initiatives like SIDO.

The government now subsidizes quality certification costs for small-scale entrepreneurs, covering up to 75% of the fees. This initiative aims to improve product standards and competitiveness in local and international markets."

REDEMTA MASUDI

"My name is Redenta Masudi Mashaka from Mvomero District. I am a maize farmer and a graduate of the Camfed program, which introduced me to agriculture.

With support from Camfed, we leased two acres of land for farming. While our rice crop failed,

we succeeded with maize. Through the HEFA project, I am seeking financial assistance to expand our farmland from two to five acres.

Agriculture is the backbone of our economy, and with the proper knowledge and support, young people can thrive in this sector."

This training has equipped young agripreneurs with essential skills and inspired them to explore new opportunities for business expansion and market access. Through strategic partnerships, SAGCOT and its collaborators continue to pave the way for a brighter future for Tanzania's youth in agriculture.

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