

YEFFA

YEFFA PROJECT

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Empowering and Building youth farmers' Resilience on Inclusive Markets for Maize and Rice Value Chains

About the Project

The Youth Entrepreneurship for the Future of Food and Agriculture (YEFFA) program is a bold, continent-wide initiative led by AGRA, with strategic support from the Mastercard Foundation. The project is unlocking opportunities for youth across Africa by transforming agriculture into a viable path to employment and enterprise.

At SAGCOT YEFFA is being brought to life through a three year project namely “**Empowering and Building youth farmers' Resilience on Inclusive Markets for Maize and Rice Value Chains**”. The project seeks to expand inclusive markets, strengthen policy engagement, and create over 30,000 dignified work opportunities, directly reaching 70,000 youth and young women across six key regions: Morogoro, Mbeya, Njombe, Ruvuma, Iringa, and Songwe.

This project represents YEFFA's mission in action: Turning food systems into engines of job creation, inclusion, and growth powered by young people especially young women.

Why Youth, Why Maize and Rice, Why it matters?

Tanzania's agriculture has the power to transform the economy but only if it works for everyone. Right now, fragmented markets, outdated policies, and weak trade systems hold back both farmers and food systems.

At the same time, Tanzania is one of the youngest countries in the world, with nearly 60% of its population under the age of 25. Yet, most young people remain unemployed or stuck in low-paying, informal work disconnected from real economic opportunity.

Maize and rice, the country's staple foods, are also powerful economic engines. But they're underperforming due to poor yields, limited market access, and low investment in innovation. These value chains hold untapped potential especially for youth.

By positioning young people as producers, processors, aggregators, and entrepreneurs in the maize and rice sectors, we can solve two problems at once: food insecurity and youth unemployment.

This project flips the current system. It strengthens the maize and rice value chains through inclusive market models, bold policy reforms, and strategic partnerships with youth and young women at the center of change

Our Solution

SAGCOT's solution is built on five strategic pillars that connect youth with inclusive markets, unlock trade, and drive policy change.

1. Market Access & Employment

We create structured, demand-driven markets that link youth and smallholder farmers to real buyers locally and across borders.

- Connect youth to innovation hubs, off-takers, and structured trade platforms
- Facilitate business relationships with leading maize and rice buyers
- Strengthen aggregation, contract farming, and collective marketing models

2. Capacity Building

We build youth capacity to compete and lead in modern agribusiness.

- Train 3,000+ youth in business development, contract farming, and marketing
- Equip 100 youth-led SMEs to meet regional and international food trade standards

3. Financial Inclusion

We remove financing barriers for youth and women in agribusiness.

- Support 80 youth and women-led agribusinesses with financial literacy and access to finance
- Promote inclusive agro-dealer networks and aggregator models

4. Food Quality & Safety

We improve standards so local products can meet growing demand and compete across markets.

- Promote food fortification and safety standards across the EAC
- Partner with GAIN, SIDO, and SANKU to expand compliance tools like Aflasafe and local fortification tech
- Train millers and SMEs in good manufacturing practices and aflatoxin control

5. Policy Advocacy

We align market systems with national priorities and youth-inclusive reforms.

- Work with the Ministry of Industry and Trade to strengthen SME-friendly policies
- Advocate harmonized food and trade regulations across the region
- Support LGAs in translating and implementing relevant policies on the ground

Impact Targets

- **70,000 youth trained** in markets, finance, and post-harvest management
- **30,000+ jobs created** in farming, agri-services, SMEs, and extension roles
- **100,000+ MT of maize and rice** sold through structured platforms
- **500 youth VBAs** trained and deployed

- **Regional trade expanded** through harmonized standards and certifications

Partners & Support

This project is driven by a diverse, multi-sectoral alliance of partners committed to unlocking youth potential and strengthening Tanzania's agricultural economy:

- **Consortia members:** SAGCOT leads the consortia alongside key partners, including ACT, ADP-Mbozi, Wezesha, Nafaka Kilimo, Smart Village Foundation, NYDT
- **Private sector anchors:** Strategic agribusinesses helping drive demand and market linkages, including but not limited to AKM Glitters, Khebanza, Diklukala Agro Co, Raphael Group Ltd, Silverlands, Real World
- **Farmer associations:** Engaging smallholder networks and driving grassroots participation, including but not limited to KTC, MTC, Madibira AMCOS
- **Financial institutions:** Unlocking finance and investment opportunities for youth, including but not limited to TADB, Equity Bank, NMB, PASS Trust and CRDB.
- **Government Partners:** Enabling policy, coordination, and extension services at all levels, including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Regions and Local Government Authorities, SIDO, TBS, TFNC and TANTRADE.

Join Us

We're investing in youth to transform agriculture into a vibrant, inclusive, and profitable sector. If you're a farmer, a financial institution, a tech company, or a development partner, there's a role for you.

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