

“THE ORGANIC FARMER” MAGAZINE – PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR FARMERS



Project

The Organic Farmer is an information magazine for Kenyan small-scale farmers who until recently have had only scarce access to information on sustainable agriculture. With this application-oriented periodical: **The Organic Farmer** (TOF), Biovision provides them with information on possible ways out of the poverty trap. The farmer magazine is distributed every month free of charge to interested farmers' groups in Kenya and selected neighbouring countries. TOF readers receive concrete guidance and practical tips on how they can increase their harvests using simple, environmentally friendly methods. This information is disseminated via radio also (the weekly TOF radio programme in Swahili is received in Kenya and Tanzania and has up to 3 million listeners) as well as through flyers and brochures. Farmers particularly often use the opportunity to pose questions to the newspaper and receive feedback via SMS and readers' letters.

Relevance

In Africa, organic farming has a different meaning than in Europe. Since conventional agriculture using pesticides and fertilisers is vastly unaffordable for most farmers, using organic methods is an important avenue to achieving good yields. For poverty-stricken farming families it is vital they receive guidance and advice on how they can increase their crop yield without huge expenditure. The thirst for knowledge is enormous, since basic and further agricultural training is largely non-existent in many places in Africa.

Beneficiaries

By distributing 18,000 newspapers to farmers' groups, over 100,000 farmers are reached in Kenya and other African countries. The TOF-radio programme with listeners' questions reaches up to 3 million people every week.

Development Goal

Sustainable improvement of the level of nutrition and of living conditions of small farmers in East Africa by guaranteeing application-oriented information on ecological agriculture, pest control and disease prevention.

Project number:
BV IS-02

Project active since:
2005

Project duration:
Phase III – until 2011

Budget for 2009:
150'000 USD

Editorial management:
Peter Baumgartner, Journalist
Peter Kamau, Farmer and Journalist

Program responsibility:
Andreas Schriber



Up to 80 percent of the population are involved in agriculture, yet there is often a lack of training and knowledge in sustainable agriculture and how to protect the crops with ecologically sound methods.



Help for self-help: Farmers receive practical guidance from “TOF – The Organic Farmer”.

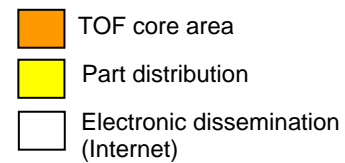
Goals

1. Monthly **production of the farmers' newspaper** „*The Organic Farmer*“ and its distribution to Kenya's small-scale farmers; as well as production of the weekly radio programme.
2. Further education of the target groups through the expansion of **access to relevant information** in the fields of health and agriculture.
3. Utilisation of synergies with existing media channels (Newspapers / Radio / TV and Internet), to **disseminate goal-oriented information** to the rural population.
4. Establishment of an **SMS-Advice Service (via mobile phone)** for TOF readers and listeners.



Partner Organisations

Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL www.fibl.org;
International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology *icipe* www.icipe.org;
Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute of CIAT (TSBF-CIAT) www.ciat.cgiar.org;
Coop Switzerland www.coop.ch;
Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation SDC www.deza.admin.ch



Sustainability

Sustainability calls for a holistic vision: healthy people, animals and plants in a healthy environment. (4x Health, 4-H Strategy). Every project supported by Biovision effects considerable improvements in at least one of the four health areas. The key to effectively replicating the success of the project is the availability of



specific information on the methods applied and the results achieved. With this approach and its 'helix of effects', living conditions are improved and the poverty of the people is gradually overcome while the environment is protected.

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