

Biovision

Newsletter March 2018

“Smart farmers” back organic

Organic farmer Mama Pallangyo is a star in Tanzania



20
YEARS
REAL HELP



A future for all, naturally

Elinuru Pallangyo

Celebrity farmer and activist from
Tengeru in Tanzania



“I almost died from contact with the Parthenium plant and so I am very grateful that MkM also tells us about dangerous weeds”.

Project “Mkulima Mbunifu”

(MkM – farmer magazine in Swahili launched in 2011)

The magazine provides well-researched, relevant and practical information on ecological farming practices. Objectives: Increase the yields and incomes of farmers whilst preserving the environment.

- Objectives of current project phase:
 - Deliver in-depth training module on agricultural supply chains
 - Reach young farmers through Social Media
 - Improve the cost recovery ratio for project partners

- Project budget 2018: CHF 377725

- Account for donations: PC 87-193093-4

- Sustainable Development Goals: Biovision is helping to bring about a shift to sustainable development in accordance with the UN Agenda 2030. This project is making a concrete contribution to three of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



Organic farmer and TV star

Mkulima Mbunifu (The Smart Farmer) is the only farmer magazine in Tanzania in Swahili. Thanks to a reader who won a reality TV show, demand for the magazine has increased throughout the country.

Shruti Patel, Biovision

The majority of Tanzania’s 19 million small-scale farmers lack access to relevant information on agricultural practices. Only one in ten farmers have access to this information and only a few communication channels reach remote areas.

Since 2011, Biovision has been working to remedy this deficit by publishing a monthly magazine for farmers called “Mkulima Mbunifu” (MkM – The Smart Farmer). Distributed free of charge to farmer groups, churches, schools, NGOs and agricultural training institutes, MkM is written in the national language Swahili and contains practical advice for farmers published at an appropriate time in line with seasonal activities.

From chicken farmer to TV star

58-year old Elinuru Pallangyo, known as Mama Pallangyo, is one of the best known readers of MkM. In Tanzania she is known as “Mama Shujaa wa Chakula” (food heroine), after she emerged as the winner of a reality TV show called “Women in Agriculture”. She attributes her success to MkM. It taught her how to breed and rear chickens and how to prevent the diseases that affect poultry. Mama Pallangyo has significantly reduced what she spends on veterinary products and since adopting ecological methods in her vegetable garden her yields are much higher. This allows her to support five children, four relatives and two neighbours with a physical disability.

Now a role model and activist for women’s rights and sustainable agriculture, Mama Pallangyo uses MkM to teach other members of her women’s group as well as her neighbours. One of them, Evaline Anthony sings her praises: “I learned organic methods of farming from Elinuru and since then my life has changed. My children no longer suffer from stomach aches and we rarely have to visit the hospital”.

High demand – limited supply

In Tanzania, more than 130000 farmers would like to read Mkulima Mbunifu – about 8 times more than can be reached with a circulation of 15000. This includes a group of 60000 coffee producers from Kagera, the most northerly district of Tanzania on the shores of Lake Victoria. Many are members of the Kagera Cooperative Union (KCU) and in addition to coffee many keep livestock and use traditional methods to grow bananas, maize, beans, cassava and sweet potatoes. About 20000 KCU members – all small-scale farmers – are already producing organic coffee. This coffee, which is sold under the name “Baraza Coffee” – is also available in the *claro* shops in Switzerland.

The content of MkM is ideally suited to the needs of farmers in Kagera and so Biovision is now supporting the KCU by providing copies of the magazine. At present, copies are only available for a few of the farmers who want to read it. To change that, we need the support of our donors.

More information and photos:
www.biovision.ch/tv-star-en



Members of the Isuki farmers’ group in Tanzania are some of the lucky coffee producers who can now rely on the practical information published in the farmer magazine “Mkulima Mbunifu” (top). Mama Pallangyo, organic farmer and winner of a Reality TV show has improved the way she keeps chickens thanks to advice from the farmer magazine (bottom right). She gives courses in ecological farming in her demonstration garden (middle left) and of course fruit and vegetables from her own organic garden are part of Elinuru’s own diet (guava fruit, bottom left).

“Be the change...”

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world”. I used this quote from Gandhi at the start of my acceptance speech for the World Food Prize in 1995. It may sound obvious but seemingly it is not so easy to implement in practice. When we established Biovision 20 years ago and started the first self-help projects to combat hunger and poverty it was clear that we could not offer a solution to all the world’s problems.

However, the things I learned as a student farmer, young scientist, research manager and later as an adviser to policy makers, made me realise that you can achieve a great deal as long as the will to change exists.

Biovision is now active at all levels: We work with farmers in the field, scientists in the laboratory and lead negotiators at global conferences. We are also an advocate of sustainable consumption in Switzerland.

We must keep on asking the same question: “Are we doing the right thing and are we doing it right”? Both success and failure provide lessons from which to learn. A successful approach creates prospects for the future and can, if conditions are right, also encourage young people to remain in agriculture and not to move to a city slum. All that takes a long time and an inner conviction that our vision of a world without hunger and poverty is not only possible but absolutely essential.



Hans Rudolf Herren
President of the Biovision Foundation

20 Years of real help

Since it was set up in 1998, Biovision has always advocated help for self-help. Is that principle still appropriate and can it be effective over the longer term?

Andreas Schriber, CEO Biovision

“Actions speak louder than words”, as the writer Erich Kästner so astutely observed. However, sustainable development and cooperation need more than just deeds; good intentions on their own are not enough. For example, any partnership approach to development must be based on a common understanding of the main fundamental issues: Who contributes what to which objective and why? In addition, it should not be about “donors” on the one hand and “aid recipients” on the other. Rather, beneficiaries should also be stakeholders.

Biovision has found this principle to work; any development project must be geared to actual needs and there must be a mutual willingness to cooperate. In line with its stated purpose, Biovision encourages and facilitates ecological development in specific regions and areas of activity where support, information, start-up funding or the transfer of know-how are needed.

Development aid is often pilloried

Examples of misguided development aid are often cited as reasons why public monies should be redirected from one pot to another. Scandals make for more exciting copy than reports on long-term, solid development work. Some people take great delight in writing about projects that misuse the label “development aid” in order to further the self-interests of donor countries or identify corrupt governments and collusion amongst donors and well-meaning aid that in reality has the opposite effect. Similarly, the increasing criticism by many African intellectuals is often based on such cases, e.g. the recent media reports on the words of

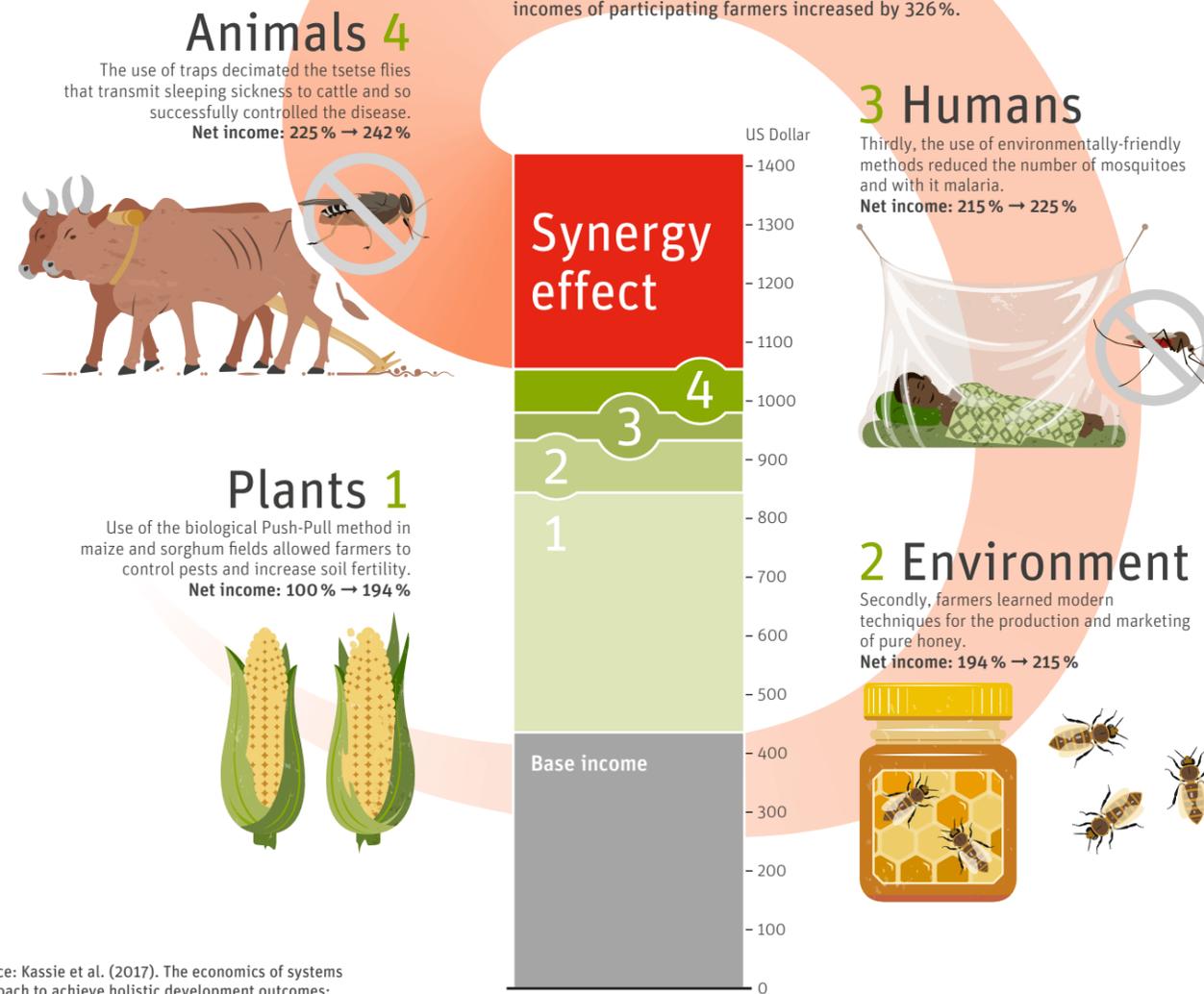
the Senegalese writer and Africa expert Ken Bugul: “What is the use of wanting to help if the support does not reach those who need it?” Ken Bugul is right to ask this question. She is calling for a new approach to cooperation: “For me, the top priority is that the people themselves also have a responsibility and are empowered to help themselves,” she says.

Knowledge brings progress

Biovision has pursued a holistic approach for the last 20 years. Our development work is concentrated in Africa, a continent where 70% of the population rely on agriculture for their livelihood. At the same time, most

Synergy effect from 4 interrelated interventions

This is how it works: The control of pests and improvements to soil fertility (1) increase yields and incomes. Honey (2) generates additional income and the bees, acting as pollinators, increase yields. Healthy humans and animals (3, 4), as well having an increased sense of well-being are better able to do their work and this increases agricultural yields. Result: The interaction between the 4 interventions produced a synergy effect* and the incomes of participating farmers increased by 326%.



Source: Kassie et al. (2017). The economics of systems approach to achieve holistic development outcomes: Pilot evidence from Ethiopia. icipe, Nairobi, Kenya.

* Scientific analysis of Biovision’s 8-year project in Tolay, Ethiopia

The priority projects of Biovision in the area of food security concentrate on the development and spread of ecological methods that are suitable for less-developed areas and improve living conditions. Through the targeted development of strong local partners we are helping to establish a bridge between research and practical application.

From farmer training to policy adviser

This interaction with competent partners has allowed Biovision to evolve. In addition to providing advice to farmers it now advises policymakers and its work includes the provision of information and advice to politicians, government officials, the private sector and farmer organisations. If Biovision is to enable rural populations in Africa to help themselves, the underlying framework must be right.

Last but not least, there is also a great deal to be done at home: Switzerland has an enormous ecological footprint and we as a country must assume responsibility for this. If we are to achieve the aim of ending global hunger, we must all work together. We need to stop food waste and change our profligate patterns of consumption. We need to start at home. In this context, Kästner was quite right. Actions do speak louder than words.

African countries – despite promises to the contrary – neglect this sector: The average annual investment by governments is 3% – at variance with the declaration by the African Union of 10%.

In many areas of Africa, young people have no prospects. There are many reasons for this but one is the lack of access to education and useful knowledge. Biovision is seeking to remedy this by investing in the preparation and dissemination of information and the development of reliable communication channels such as magazines and radio programmes for farmers and an online information service for farmers and agricultural advisers.

Biovision is investing in local people and here the two-way flow of information is crucial: Farmers must be more than just the recipient of new knowledge. They have their own experiences and practical know-how, both of which must feed into the process to identify research topics.

The results of a scientific analysis of the long-term Biovision project in Tolay (Ethiopia) were revealing: Sociologists found that if individual interventions were carefully coordinated, the total effect was greater than the sum of the individual interventions; in other words, the whole was greater than the sum of its parts – see information graph).



Ken Bugul, combative Senegalese writer and Andreas Schriber, CEO Biovision agree that exploitative, misguided activities on the African continent under the guise of “development aid” must stop.

Small gesture – big impact

There's excitement in Boji, a Borana village in Kenya's dry north east: Under the shade of an acacia tree a colour brochure is doing the rounds. It is headed "Biovision Newsletter" and at the top above the picture of a young nomad girl is the title "Living between drought and flood".

Two Biovision staff took copies of the Newsletter with them when they visited the project "Camels for drought areas". The camel owners in Boji may not understand a word of German but the Newsletter was still the cause of animated discussion and mirth. They took a great interest in the photos and seemed to understand the meaning. The Newsletter has a report of the first phase of the project in 2013 in far-off Merti District. Fast-forward to 2018 and Boji is one of six locations where camels are being reintroduced as a way of coping with the ongoing drought.

Suddenly, a man shouts out and points to a photo. "That is my brother-in law, Abdi Jattani from Bulesa!" He's right. His name is above the photo. Bulesa is located at the other end of the country, many miles north of Boji. He had not seen Abdi for years, says the man. He takes the Newsletter and goes off – with a huge grin on his face – to show it to his wife, Abdi Jattani's sister. | pl

More information and photos:
www.biovision.ch/nl-en



The article in the Biovision Newsletter on the project "Camels for drought areas" generates keen interest amongst the camel owners in Boji.



A lovely moment – but a critical one: the Rift Valley Fever virus can be transmitted from animals to humans, e.g. when animals are born.

Risk for humans and animals

Rift Valley Fever is caused by a virus and is transmitted by mosquitoes or air-borne infection. In Kenya, Biovision is providing information to local people and helping to develop an early warning system that will allow them to fight this dangerous disease.

Peter Lüthi, Biovision

Rift Valley Fever (RVF) is found throughout Africa south of the Sahara and primarily affects sheep, goats, cattle and camels, although it can affect wild animals as well. If it is transmitted to young animals, RVF is usually fatal. Amongst adult animals the losses are slightly less but if pregnant animals become infected, they often miscarry.

Rift Valley Fever can be transmitted from animals to humans. The latter are usually infected by mosquito bites or direct contact with infected animals, e.g. when animals give birth or when they are slaughtered. In East Africa, at least 550 people and many animals died during the last outbreak in 2006/2007. The World Health Organisation (WHO) classes RVF as one of the 10 diseases most likely to cause an epidemic. There are no medicines

or vaccines for humans and only about 50% of the population at risk are aware of the symptoms, causes and prevention methods. To help change the situation, a pilot project, supported by Biovision was started in 2014 at Garissa near the border with Somalia.

Early detection of outbreak

In Garissa, the project helped veterinary and health authorities to develop an early warning system for RVF. Local and regional representatives were trained as RVF experts and the project established a monitoring network using mosquito traps. As soon as RVF pathogens were found in the trapped mosquitoes, people could take targeted action, e.g. the emergency slaughter of infected cattle and animal vaccination campaigns. With the early warning system, the authorities had the opportunity to respond in time and so prevent larger RVF epidemics.

Because of the risk of terrorist activities by the Al Shabaab militia, the project in Garissa had to be suspended. As a result, in 2017 the project moved its activities to Isiolo County, where the first initiative was to ask livestock farmers in the four villages what they knew about the disease. The project then used this local knowledge to run a series of campaigns that provided communities with information on the disease and effective ways to prevent it.

More information and photos:
www.biovision.ch/rvf-en

Come to Basel!

We would love to see you at Biovision's Spring Event on Wednesday evening, 23 May 2018; it starts at 19.00 hours at the "Union" Cultural Centre, Klybeckstrasse 95, Basel.

Switzerland's ecological footprint is far too high. What can we do to reduce it? The event will consider this controversial question through a series of short but stimulating presentations. It will focus on our programme in Switzerland and the responsibility that we have as a country.

During the subsequent refreshments, there will be an opportunity to exchange ideas with the speakers and Biovision staff.

Information and registration:
www.biovision.ch/basel-en



Imprint

Newsletter 49, March 2018, © Biovision Foundation, Zurich

Published by Biovision, Foundation for ecological development, Heinrichstrasse 147, 8005 Zurich

Editor Peter Lüthi

Text Shruti Patel, Peter Lüthi, Andreas Schriber, David Fritz, Martin Grossenbacher

Languages This Newsletter is available in German, French and English.

Translations Sue Coles (English), Daniel Wermus (French)

Cover photo Elinuru Pallangyo, Organic farmer and winner of a reality TV show in Tanzania. Photo: Gabi Grau

Other photos Gabi Grau: Pages 1, 2, 3; Jürg Weber/Biovision: Page 3 (middle left) 7; Verena Weber; Page 3; Peter Lüthi/Biovision: Pages 4, 5, 6, 7; BvAT: Page 8; Infografik.ch: Page 4/5

Design Binkert Partner, Zurich

Printing Koprind Alpnach AG, Alpnach

Paper quality Cyclus Offset (100% recycled)

The Biovision Newsletter is published five times a year and is available on subscription for a minimum donation of CHF 5.-.



Urs Wiesmann; Katrin Muff, conference moderator, Bertrand Piccard, pioneer and initiator of Solar Impulse; Jacques Dubochet, Nobel Prize Winner of Chemistry; Océane Dayer; Michael Bergöö, Secretary General SDSN Switzerland/Biovision (from l. to r.).

"Exploit opportunities for sustainable development now"

How can Switzerland become sustainable in future? 250 decision-makers discussed this at a conference to launch SDSN Switzerland.

Von Martin Grossenbacher, Biovision

At the launch of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) on 15 February 2018 in Bern, the two co-chairs, Océane Dayer from Swiss Youth for Climate and Urs Wiesmann, Emeritus Professor of the University of Bern stressed the following: "Agenda 2030 undoubtedly represents a major challenge but it also offers numerous opportunities and incentives to come up with innovative solutions that trigger genuinely sustainable development". We should exploit these opportunities without delay. As an example, Dyer cited the CO₂ legislation. She sought to embolden decision-makers, saying that "the priority during the revision process should be to exploit latent opportunities without delay and not to be afraid of change". Bertrand Piccard backed up her statement and referred to his flight around the world without using a single drop of fuel: "In principle, the technical solutions already

exist but we are not yet exploiting them sufficiently", said Piccard.

Switzerland is facing a challenge

"We also have a global responsibility," stressed Urs Wiesmann. "In view of our own consumption and the associated use of resources abroad, we need much greater coordination between internal and external strategies". That is why SDSN Switzerland plans to start work on appropriate projects this year, including one on sustainable consumption and production.

The Federal Council is required to submit a report by July 2018, indicating where and how Switzerland will deliver its contribution to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are the central plank of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. Biovision will encourage action by politicians, industry and society that is fair, just and based on solidarity. This will be achieved in part by the development of coalitions and partnerships, which is why Biovision and the CDE at the University of Bern have come together to launch SDSN Switzerland.



Story from the life of Musdalafa Lyaga, radio and video journalist, Kenya “Many friends are better than one love”

Shruti Patel, Biovision

A group of 18 farmers – men and women – are crammed into Catherine Akhayati’s living room and watch with interest as two members of staff from the Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT) place a video projector on a small tower of wooden tables. Someone closes the door and it’s dark. As the machine starts to whir, the show begins.

Some 15 minute later, the room is buzzing with excitement and debate. The video “Unpeeling the rot in Kenya’s mango chain” has raised many questions. Some of the farmers are sceptical about the methods put forward. Others feel inspired by the prospect of earning more money from healthy fruit. Enter Musdalafa Lyaga, a journalist with the Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT) in Nairobi and his colleague Michael Wangalwa, an agricultural adviser. First of all they calm down the mood in the room and then give competent answers to questions from the group. “Dialogue between the farmers is very important,” says Musdalafa. “It encourages

mutual trust and is crucial to fostering a willingness to help one another. Of course, members of the group also need to return home armed with useful information and must be able to put into practice the advice and tips”.

Since joining BvAT in 2014, Musdalafa has produced more than 100 radio programmes and many teaching videos. He wants to showcase sustainable farming practices to as many small-scale farmers in Kenya as possible and demonstrate how they can increase their incomes.

The radio programmes are broadcast every Thursday on Kenya’s national station KBC. In addition to the broadcasts themselves, the videos also find their way onto a variety of social media channels. Musdalafa recently won an international media award for his film on the problems of mango farmers in eastern Kenya – evidence of the high quality of his work.

His desire to share knowledge and at the same time give a voice to small-scale farmers began at a young age. “My grandmother did not go to school,” he explains. “When I was young, my father was in Nairobi and she dictated letters to him. Most of the letters asked questions about farming”. Musdalafa saw how frustrated his grandmother was when the replies failed to answer her questions properly. “When I was older that

encouraged me to pursue a career as an agricultural journalist”. He spent the first few years focussing on radio until his father remarked one

day: “Son, farmers only believe what they see...” That persuaded him to explore visual media such as videos. “Radio remains my first love,” says Musdalafa, “but farmers don’t need love – they need as many friends as possible”.

“Radio remains my first love”

