



Kenya

ACDI/VOCA has worked in Kenya for more than 40 years, strengthening cooperatives, developing staple crop value chains and improving food security, often drawing on the skills of U.S. volunteer experts.

Volunteer consultants have played an important role in our Kenyan agricultural and co-op development projects since 1973, when the first volunteer worked with the Horticultural Cooperative Union on fresh fruit exports. Between 1990 and 2008 over 200 volunteer consultants provided technical assistance through the **Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) Program** and cooperative core grants in business and accounting systems, crop production, nutrition and other facets of agriculture and co-op management.

Cooperative Development

Cooperative development is a core part of ACDI/VOCA's work in Kenya. In 1965-67 the Farmers Union International Assistance Corporation, a predecessor organization of ACDI, implemented a project to strengthen and professionalize cooperatives throughout the country. At the end of the two-year period, the project continued as part of a large-scale cooperative development program funded by Norway, Sweden and Denmark. From 1980-1987 ACDI implemented the USAID-funded Cooperative Training Project, which helped



the Ministry of Cooperative Development improve and expand its training of field officers, staff, and directors, as well as cooperative members.

ACDI/VOCA continues its co-op support through the Kenya Cooperative Development Program (CDP), which is funded by USAID. The program's farmer trainings and coaching on technical assistance and strategic management build on ACDI/VOCA's prior work in Kenya. To date, the program has hosted five volunteers who helped build cooperatives' capacity in recordkeeping, strategic planning, financial planning and quality control.

Maize and Staple Crop Development

One of our flagship staple crop interventions was the USAID-funded **Kenya Maize Development Program (KMDP)**, which ran from 2002 to 2010. Collaboration with local entities, including the Cereal Growers Association of Kenya, Farm Input Promotions Africa Ltd., the Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange, private sector service providers and various Kenyan government agencies, was key to KMDP's success.

KMDP increased production of maize in target areas overall, and up to fourfold in some areas, through practical, on-farm training on improved varieties of seed and fertilizer, conservation tillage and other natural resources management practices. In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, ACDI/VOCA also established a network of 160,000 largely private-sector-funded demonstration plots. In the 2009-2010 season, farmers produced an additional 133,380 MT of maize from the beginning of the project in 2002.

While implementing KMDP, ACDI/VOCA modified its signature training curriculum in **Farming as a Business (FaaB)** to address gender roles to increase the training benefits for smallholder maize farmers. The resulting **Farming as a Family Business (FaaFB)** module trains men and women together, emphasizes shared decision making and conveys that everyone benefits if labor and control of assets are allocated more equitably.

KMDP's interventions improved knowledge flow and transparency in the maize subsector as the program demonstrated that smallholder farmers add substantial value to the maize value chain. KMDP achieved an estimated incremental household income of \$208 million, and increased household incomes by \$533 or \$1.46 per day by increasing the profits of smallholders (Kshs. 26.25 in 2002 to Kshs. 1,213 per 90 kg bag in the 2009 season).

In an 18-month follow-on project, **KMDP II** continued critical activities to improve the livelihoods of maize and other staple farmers, created demand for diversified staple crop production and laid the groundwork for future USAID investment in staple crop sectors.

Building Resilience and Local Capacity

ACDI/VOCA implements the USAID-funded **REGAL-AG (Resilience and Economic Growth in the Arid Lands – Accelerated Growth)** program, part of the U.S. government's **Feed the Future (FtF)** strategy in Kenya. REGAL-AG aims to increase economic growth in Marsabit and Garissa by building a more inclusive and competitive livestock value chain. The program facilitates behavior change in actors all along the chain—from livestock keepers to middlemen, traders, transporters and buyers—in order to improve incomes and stimulate growth. Like KMDP, REGAL-AG emphasizes gender inclusion with its FaaFB curriculum.

ACDI/VOCA also strengthens the technical capacity and operational systems of first-time USAID awardees through the USAID-funded

African Institutions Innovation Mechanism

Assist (AIIM-Assist) program. Through AIIM-Assist, we bolster the efforts of regional public, private and civil society actors to innovate, scale up successes and share learning to reduce poverty through agriculture.

Firsthand Storage Testing Provides a Glimpse of the Future

Although much of our work relies on already-conducted research, in the **AflaSTOP** project ACDI/VOCA will directly test dryers and storage options to reduce the growth of aflatoxin in maize. AflaSTOP will be a three-year collaboration between ACDI/VOCA, the Meridian Institute and Agribusiness Systems International (ASI), with funding from both USAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The program will select, test and deploy low-cost storage and drying options for maize and other staple crops in Kenya.

After working with local businesses to pilot a commercialization model, AflaSTOP hopes to scale up the technology to other African countries while ensuring the affordability of these post-harvest technologies.

Initiatives like KMDP and AflaSTOP provide hints at what ACDI/VOCA's future in Kenya might look like. Building on our rich history of cooperative and staple crop development, we hope to continue addressing smallholder needs while incorporating gender inclusion and other social strategies into our work.

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