

## AGRA Impact Series

Silvania Monthe winnowing maize gains from her mother demo plot, Makueni County, Kenya. Monthe is one of 114 Village Based Advisors offering extension services to over 14,005. Photo: CGA



# VBA model boosts sales for value chain actors

### Limited Access to Farmers

Limited direct linkage to rural farmers is a challenge value chain actors have faced in Makueni County. Factors such as poor road networks immensely contributed towards creating the accessibility gap between rural farmers and value chain actors.

“Initially, we could not reach farmers at the rural areas. Furthermore, the farmers were not even aware about our products and services,” says Nicholas Oula, a value chain actor.

The lack of access affected agricultural productivity for rural farmers and poor sales for value chain actor's products and services.

### VBA Model Links Farmers to Value Chain Actors

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), sustainable Village Based Advisors (VBAs) model has enabled farmers to adopt regenerative agriculture and climate smart agriculture practices and technologies such

as soil and water conservation, minimum tillage, crop rotation, mulching, intercropping, cover crops, the use of organic manure and agroforestry.

The VBA's trained by CGA work closely with farmers at the rural areas where they train farmers on best farming practices through mother and baby demos. The VBA model establishes a strong linkage amongst farmers and farmer groups. These linkages enhance easy access to the farmers by value chain actors dealing with mechanization, post handling services and seed manufacturing actors etc.

“55 value chain actors in sections of input, mechanization, post-harvest handling, agroforestry, spraying service providers etc. work with VBAs in Makueni”, says George Mabuka, CGA, RA Project Manager.

Silvania Monthe, a VBA says the meeting organized by CGA for VBAs to meet with all value chain stakeholders was a game changer.



“In the meeting, we were tasked to link farmers to value chain actor’s products and services. Like for me, I bought DK 8033 maize variety at KES 500 and sold to farmers at KES 530 per packet. This earned me a commission of KES 30”, she says.

George attributes the impact the VBA model has had to farmers and value chain actors. He says 70 VBAs were able to earn a commission of KES 2.5 Million through sale and transaction of products and services to the farmers at a cost of KES 10.5 Million.

“Seed companies have been an instrumental stakeholder in the success of the VBA model. They have provided seeds for the mother demo plots as well as small packs of seeds to farmers for practical lessons in their baby demo plots”, he adds.

Susan Muia, Bayer East Africa’s Crop Science Departments Customer Advisory Representative says the VBA model has enabled the company to showcase their product portfolio to farmers and issue certified seeds for mother and baby demos.

“We have also been involved in their field days and have been meeting VBA’s aggregated demands” she says.

Susan confirms that the VBA model has helped her reach more farmers on the ground and this has increased her product sales.

“The VBAs have been mobilizing farmers on the ground,” she adds. The farmer mobilization by VBAs has helped her reach more farmers and made sales of their product by giving them at commissioned prices.

### **Facilitated Value Chain Actors Meetings**

AGRA through CGA has been able to facilitate meetings between VBAs and relevant value chain actors and service providers such as CSA

technology providers, input suppliers, output buyers, financial and ICT service providers.

VBAs facilitated contract farming where appropriate and aggregate demand for green gram, maize, cowpeas and pigeon peas; and linked the farmers to suppliers such as local agro-dealers, KALRO, Bayer East Africa, ICRISAT, Dryland Seed and other seed suppliers. The VBAs earned a commission for the volumes of inputs procured by farmer groups.

Joy, an agronomist from Dryland seeds confirms that she has been working with VBAs by training farmers and providing seeds to them.

“I have increased sales because VBAs have helped me reach farmers in remote areas” she reiterates.

Apart from training farmers and providing certified seeds, Dryland Seeds has helped VBAs earn commissions.

“Many VBAs own agrovets and other businesses because of the commissions”, she adds.

### **Prioritized Partnerships with Value Chain Actors**

CGA has prioritized it’s partnerships by developing smallholder friendly models by working on backward linkages from market needs and has maintained a holistic approach to value chain actors interventions.

It is worth noting that CGA has established a trusted working relationship with the county government, agriculture departments as well as the value chain actors in the county. The lessons and experiences (input and output linkages, farmer extension support and technology transfer actions) gained in these interventions have been useful in the development of the pulse value chain.

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