



## From the Office of the Executive Director

Greetings from AWAN AFRIKA,

It is with great pleasure that we share highlights of the latest activities on empowering young women agripreneurs across Eastern Africa. In our quest for progress and transformation, the agricultural sector remains the key player in the economies of the African continent, offering employment and income opportunities to millions of our youth. However, marginalised groups, particularly young women and men, despite their substantial representation, often find themselves excluded from reaping the full economic benefits of this sector.

This situation presents both a challenge and an opportunity to empower our young women and men to harness the potential of our youth demographic to drive economic, food security, and social advancements across the continent.

*Beatrice Gakuba*

Executive Director | AWAN AFRIKA



## Mentorship and Coaching Services for Young Women Agripreneurs in Eastern Africa (KENYA, UGANDA & RWANDA)

Founded by the common challenges faced by young women agripreneurs across East and Central Africa, there was a need to identify the existing and emerging opportunities, good practices and priority interventions that could help inform policy recommendations to support young women agripreneurs in their journey to embrace agriculture as a descent and profitable means of livelihood. Accordingly, a training, coaching and individual mentoring program was jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and AWAN AFRIKA (AWAN AFRIKA) to empower the young women agripreneurs in advancing their business-related agenda.

In collaboration with FAO East Africa, AWAN AFRIKA curated a mentorship and coaching project from the 22nd of May 2022 TO the 30th of November 2022 in **Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda**. This project aimed to empower young women agripreneurs.

Before the training, AWAN AFRIKA conducted a thorough needs assessment study on 90 participants from the three countries. This ensured that the training was tailored to meet the specific needs of the participants and was effective in achieving its objectives.



The main findings of the study are as follows:  
In all the 3 countries-

- An average of **85%** of the participants had attained a college-level education.
- An average of **57%** of the participants had access to an internet connection
- An average of **88%** had smartphones
- The most frequent digital platform used was **WhatsApp**
- In Kenya (**33%**) and Rwanda (**71%**), the dominant agricultural sector was Crop Production; however, in Uganda (**50%**), Livestock Production was the dominant agricultural sector.
- **84%** of participants exhibited the highest level of knowledge in Crop Management, Post-harvest, and Marketing.
- Bookkeeping was the most commonly received training across all three countries.
- Marketing and Price Setting are the two areas of focus that most respondents require assistance with, as **88%** of the participants indicated.

In regards to Business Development Services, each country had its own distinct requirements that may not always be satisfied by existing BDS offerings. In Kenya, there was a lack of services in mentorship; in Rwanda, market development and financial linkages and in Uganda, leadership skills.

As per the feedback received from the participants, a lack of awareness and the cost appeared to be the primary reason behind the lack of access to BDS.

In terms of the benefits of the participant's agribusinesses. In all three countries, businesses have been able to create employment opportunities and promote better working conditions.

## Mentorship and Coaching Services for Young Women Agripreneurs in Eastern Africa (KENYA, UGANDA & RWANDA)

The purpose of the coaching and mentorship program was to equip the participants with knowledge and skills in agribusiness under AWAN AFRIKA's overall objective to reduce rural poverty and enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems.



Following the selection of the beneficiaries, the mentorship programs and preparation of the training materials, the practical training, individual mentorship and physical sessions were organized and delivered to the selected young women agripreneurs through face-to-face interactions that were held in the 3 countries of Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda.

Cognizant of the challenges of connectivity and unforeseen technological challenges, AWAN AFRIKA, in agreement with the FAO team, appreciated the need to blend the online virtual sessions with face-to-face interactive sessions as these would be very key to providing practical insights, hands-on advice and handy tools to grow and sustain the young women agripreneurs' agribusinesses. Accordingly, it was harmonized to organize and deliver a blended coaching and mentorship program using both the online virtual and face-to-face (physical) sessions for the participants.

Two virtual sessions were conducted per module and were delivered on the AYA Platform created by FAO. AWAN AFRIKA developed a manual for virtual training, coaching sessions and guidance notes for trainers and coaches, and other relevant materials to facilitate conducting the virtual training and coaching sessions with young women agripreneurs.

Provisions related to digital access (Internet connectivity, digital induction) and skills for the young women agripreneurs were made to ensure that the participants were able to access and benefit from the online group sessions equally. The enrolment of the participants onto the AYA platform was an opportunity for critical information access, sharing ideas and experiences. This would then help them pitch their products and learn effective communication methods with clients.

The project achieved success through youth-sensitive tailored mentorship and coaching programs, equipping participants with Financial Literacy, Market Access and Soft skills. A total of 76 participants were present for the training across the 3 countries, recording an 84% success rate. In Uganda, 26 young women agripreneurs, In Rwanda, 26 and Kenya, 24.

The main area of concern noted by AWAN AFRIKA was attendance. Most of the participants mentioned a loss of income due to less demand for their product because of the rise in the cost of living from July 2022 to date (High cost of fuel, increase in transportation and loss of jobs).

## MEMBER TESTIMONIALS

Through the training, the participants were able to:

- Acquire knowledge to manage their personal and business finances better;
- Share and appreciate the opportunities and challenges that exist in the agricultural markets within their respective countries and gain knowledge and skills on effective marketing strategies,
- Acquire the needed soft skills for networking, pitching, leadership, adaptability, and problem-solving for application in their business;

The following member testimonials speak to the success of the training.



"The training I received was invaluable. I gained insights into managing finances in a small business, effectively accessing and utilizing loans, and leveraging social media to penetrate the market. This newfound knowledge is transforming my business of cultivating vegetables using hydroponics. Thanks to AWAN AFRIKA, I am equipped to thrive in the competitive agripreneurship world."

**Marie- Rwanda**



## MEMBER TESTIMONIALS



"I discovered the significance of conducting a SWOT analysis in agribusiness. Furthermore, I learned that the financial needs of a business owner differ from the financial needs of the business itself. This understanding has prompted me to separate these two aspects for better financial management. AWAN AFRIKA's coaching and mentoring have been enlightening and empowering."

**Monica- Uganda**

"This program empowered me and gave me valuable insights into networking and leadership. I feel equipped to manage the workplace effectively and achieve my aspiration of becoming a manager. I'm committed to making agribusiness more attractive for young women and highlighting our capabilities to the world."

**Rhisper- Kenya**



For more information about the study kindly email us at  
[inquiries@awanafrika.org](mailto:inquiries@awanafrika.org)

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