

Eugene Nyiricyubahiro, a tomato farmer from Rwamagana district hurdles to find market for his tomatoes and vegetables after harvest.

Nyiricyubahiro, 38, explains that market for his perishable produce has always been a challenge because he has to endure a long distance from his village to the marketplace besides spending hours waiting for clients.

“We have to walk while carrying the produce to the market, at times we don’t sell and carry it back home, as perishables they sometimes go bad which means losing money,” he underlines.

Nyiricyubahiro notes that they spend more time, energy and when quality is not good, buyers offer only a fraction of the price, if they are buying at all.

Reflecting on his experience during the pandemic, Samuel Harorimana, a vegetable farmer from Kabarondo in Kayanza district notes that sometimes they have an abundance of produce but demand at the market is very low.

He says that the pandemic adversely made it even very difficult sell, “We didn’t have any market to go to,” he adds.

In addition, these farmers lack post harvest facilities like storage facilities for handling, storing, and transporting agricultural produce to markets.

Hence, these lose up to one third of produce, this affects farmer’s income not just in Rwamagana, Kayanza or Kabarondo but in other districts too.

To help farmers find solutions to these challenges, Afri-farmers Markets, a social enterprise in Rwanda, is helping farmers to access stable markets.



Using E-Commerce in rural communities, Afri-Farmers has created the linkage between farmers and buyers. The organization picks farmers produce with their own vehicles from the garden and delivers it directly to consumers.

The initiative uses an online platform and farmers can use a code to communicate the kind of produce they want to sell and the expected period of harvest, and can easily schedule a pick up.

Norman Mugisha, the founder and CEO of Afri-Farmers explains that they empower farmers to access stable markets for their produce without walking long distances with fresh produce on their heads.

Afri-Farmers also acts as a bridge that connects farmers to consumers online by adding value to reduce food waste and post-harvest challenges.

By enabling farmer's access fair prices for their products, they're also helping consumers get fresh food directly from the farm to their doorsteps.

"Agriculture is not about holding a hoe and spending hours in the garden, there are more opportunities like adding value through logistics, markets, distribution and other opportunities," observes Mugisha.

By doing so, the enterprise reduces processing at the same time directly developing and offering support to local farmers by improving their incomes.

"The whole idea is to create an impact in communities by supporting people with challenges among others unemployment in youths, hunger and poverty" he explains.

Afri-Farmers started with a group of 30 youths in one cooperative in 2020. These youth were identified by local authorities and given a piece of land, inputs and trainings.

Trained on how to grow in a sustainable way, within a period of three years, they've been able to raise the income and build their own green houses."



The organization also trains farmers on how to create water systems which contain water reservoirs. The reservoirs help move the water by gravity to gardens.

On the platform, the enterprise sells diverse fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, herbs, spices, chili, dairy products, fish, meat, chicken, and eggs.

Afri-Farmers works with over 5,000 farmers in Rwanda. Mugisha explains that they reach out to the local farmers through their local cooperative groups and give them inputs like fertilizers, improved seeds, pesticides and trainings.

“The inputs include among others, improved seeds, pesticides, and fertilizers so they get them on credit and after harvest they pay the loans which go back to support other farmers,” Mugisha said.

Farmers observe that the benefit of working with Afri-Farmers is that there is no time wasted, farmers don’t walk long distances to market and it is profitable since they’re get time to do other household activities.

Annonciata Batamuliza, a female farmer from Gahengeri sector believes that the enterprise is helping them in market linkages.

“We used to wake up at 4:00 am to walk a long distance to the market carrying a heavy load of around 50kgs. The journey was hectic, if we didn’t sell we had to carry it back which also affected quality,” Batamuliza said.

Another farmer, Carine Ndikumasabo from Kabare sector in the Eastern Province underlines that she has improved her livelihood after transferring the skills and knowledge she acquired from training with Afri-Farmers.