



A youth exhibits a coffee demonstration garden during the symposium. PHOTO/MIKE SEBALU

9,000 youth benefit from Shs43 billion partnership

The seven-year initiative, supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), was implemented by Action 4 Health Uganda (A4HU), Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS), and Whave Solutions, with co-funding from Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (DSW), HRNS, and Siemens Stiftung.

BY MIKE SEBALU

More than 9,000 youth in Mityana and Kassanda districts have benefited from a Shs43 billion (€10 million) development cooperation partnership focused on health, agriculture, and water and sanitation.

The seven-year initiative, supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), was implemented by Action 4 Health Uganda (A4HU), Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS), and Whave Solutions, with co-funding from Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (DSW), HRNS, and Siemens Stiftung.

Speaking at a youth-centred symposium and exhibition held at the Action 4 Health Uganda Bonita Training Centre in Kampala recently, Ms Sarah Kintu, the chief executive officer of A4HU, said the project began with a pilot phase in 2018 before scaling up.

"They have participated in good health practices, agribusiness, and access to safe water," she said.

In the agriculture sector, Ms Rhodah Kulabako, the project manager, said the initiative was implemented across several sub-counties in both districts to improve youth livelihoods through agribusiness.

The programme established 180

youth farmer field schools and 120 coffee demonstration gardens, reaching at least 5,670 youth.

"We focused on enterprises such as coffee, maize, beans, and tomatoes, while equipping youths with practical farming and business skills," Ms Kulabako said.

The project also integrated climate-smart interventions, including the construction of energy-saving stoves and promotion of apiculture to boost pollination and yields.

In Kassanda, youth set up a maize value-addition facility managed under organised groups. The plant produces flour and animal feeds, marketed under the brand Kamuli Youth Millers.

Mr John Bukunya, a youth leader and facility manager, said the project has transformed their lives.

"Before this, we worked in isolation and had little respect in the community. Now we are organised, skilled, and even elected into leadership," he said.

The facility processes up to two tonnes of maize per hour and supports over 700 youth organised in 24 groups.

Ms Angella Bahr, the chief programmes officer at DSW, said the project's integrated approach was key to its success.

"The synergies between health, water, and agriculture are essential in improving the livelihoods of young people," she said.

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The project is expected to conclude in July with partners expressing optimism that its impact will be sustained.

The symposium brought together youth leaders, government officials, development partners, civil society, and private sector actors to reflect on lessons learned and the impact of coordinated interventions on youth livelihoods.

The head of cooperation at the German Embassy in Uganda, Ms Alicia Van den Boom, said this cross-sectoral approach that combined agriculture, water and health interventions targeting specifically youth in rural areas, provided lessons for implementation of Uganda's Fourth National Development Plan.

"It targeted youth, who constitute 70 percent of the population, with many of them being out of school and unemployed," she added.

Mr Frédéric Bergeron, the deputy chief executive officer of Whave Solutions, said the programme strengthened rural water management systems in the two districts by working closely with local governments and training stakeholders on the national framework for operation and maintenance of rural water infrastructure.

The model promotes professionalised services through contracted area service providers responsible for maintenance, technical support, and fee collection.

"In Mityana alone, about 200 rural water points are now under active management," Mr Bergeron said.

He added that youths were also engaged as sales agents for portable handwashing stations, improving hygiene access in schools, shops, and other institutions.

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