

Stories of Impact

Changing perceptions one greenhouse at a time



Nicholas Koris, Esther Ndichu's mentor observing her crop of tomatoes

With Nicholas support, not only did Esther build her own greenhouse and break even on her first harvest but also, a major cultural change took place in Esther's community. Many neighbouring farmers who had previously been unconvinced about modern farming methods watched her farming success and began to replicate her methods.



The tomatoes harvest from Esther's greenhouse

Esther Ndichu, a lecturing floriculturist and budding greenhouse farmer from Kikuyu, Kenya, was one of the 15 mentees at the YPARD Face to Face mentoring program in Kenya. The program, focusing on building soft skills, comprised of face to face workshops, ongoing coaching and monthly catch up with mentors.

As a young female farmer, Esther encountered many challenges including access to land and community skepticism. But through the program and in particular the support of her mentor Nicholas Korir, Esther was able to convince her family to allocate a small plot of their farm for her greenhouse. She started growing tomatoes and lettuce and broke even on her first harvest. Currently, she employs one full-time member of staff and hires up to four people on a casual basis.

Additionally, Nicholas, a lecturer at Kenyatta University, helped Esther fight fusarium wilt a soil borne disease that previously claimed around 30% of her production - and as a result she successfully supplied tomatoes to her local area in a time of scarcity. She plans to open a second greenhouse and is already mentoring others in her community. She believes that Nicholas has been instrumental in helping her overcome challenges:

“Consistent communication with my mentor has played a very big role in success of my farming. This being my first greenhouse it had a lot of challenges which, if I had no advice from my mentor, I probably would have given up along the way.”

Nicholas saw a major cultural change in Esther's community as neighboring farmers had watched Esther's success and were replicating her methods.

“I was able to help convince Esther's parents to give her land in a highly male centric community. Explaining YPARD and its vision to the parents helped them to have a light bulb moment and they finally said they would support her all the way.”

Stories of impact is a series that seeks to highlight YPARD's work and its impact on young professionals over the years. Find more of these stories on <http://ypard.net/showcase>