

Services Development

Developing sustainable business services for independent farmers' organisations

Why do farmers' organisations need business services?

The Purpose of member-based farmers' organisations' (FO) is to represent the needs and interests of their mainly small-holder farmer members in lobby and advocacy. However, this core and essential task is not always perceived by their members and does not generate a sustainable income for the organisation. That is why AHA includes business service development in its approach of systemic organisational development. The aim is to create attractive benefits within the organisation that, for example, provide members with knowledge, access to sales and procurement markets, financial and technical support or the sharing of resources. By establishing sustainable services, we support FOs in building a stable membership as well as achieving self-sufficiency and independency.

Our approach:

AHA partners with various organisations in Africa and India that have their own target groups, thematic focus, cultural as well as location-dependent backgrounds and operate on national, regional, or global levels. Depending on this and together with the partner, AHA adapts the focus of its approach to the prevailing circumstances.

To fulfil this requirement, AHA employs trainers and experts from its local and international pool of trainers and experts

for service development who are not only highly qualified in the fields of business administration and marketing, but also have a thorough understanding of the local conditions and the system of FOs. Together with the partners, AHA assesses the needs of the FO members, recognises gaps in local supply and extension markets, and develops holistic concepts. AHA ensures the implementation of these concepts through appropriate capacity building, adequate cooperation with business partners, both international and local, regular backstopping, and monitoring and evaluation.

Methods:

The first step in AHA methodology is to empower the organisations to evaluate their current situation from the members' perspective by in-depth discussions and interviews with members. These fact-finding missions are accompanied with a close monitoring of the results.

In the following team coaching sessions and workshops, the focus is to analyse the needs and expectations of the members towards the organisation and develop solutions within the given limited resources.

The developed business plans aim on self-sufficient and member-driven services. The project plans allow a close monitoring of the milestones and responsibilities.

Next, target group-relevant communication of these benefits and services are defined by using modern but relevant and low costs methods as for example social media.

Finally regular stock takings on learnings allow adaptations due to current developments.



Developing a service portfolio with KENAFF in Kenya

The Kenya National Farmers' Federation (KENAFF) is the apex body of farmer organisations in Kenya, its members are organised in and through commodity associations, cooperative societies, producer business groups, self-help farmer groups, and farming firms. AHA has supported KENAFF in their devolution from national to county level in selected counties since 2016. To further strengthen the county associations' independence from national level, in 2022 the need for county-specific services was assessed. In multiple county visits and workshops with county representatives, various possible services were identified and applied in the respective counties, including the following:

- **Field days** to educate farmers on specific topics, encourage networking (in) between farmers and farming firms as well as to broadcast KENAFF as a brand.
- **Linkages to markets** for farmers, exporters, producers of farm inputs and processors of farm produce as well as wholesalers.
- **Proposal writing** to enable county associations to acquire projects and funds as well as capacitate them to offer proposal writing for farmers or farmer groups.
- **Bulk supply** to access favourable conditions and volume discounts from suppliers for farmers.
- **Peer-to-peer Learning** concepts to capacitate lead farmers to facilitate trainings in specific topics, e.g. integrated soil fertility management or entrepreneurship.

"We as County Association leaders need to provide services that respond directly to the needs of our farmers, allowing them to recognize the value of being part of KENAFF."



Prof. Kaburu M'Ribu
KENAFF Meru County
Chairman and National
Chairman

Professionalisation of Agricultural Shows with UNFFE in Uganda

In Uganda, AHA partners with the Uganda National Farmers' Federation (UNFFE), the country's largest farmers' organisation, established in 1992 under the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries, and Fisheries. UNFFE's main income source, the National Agricultural Show (NAS), has faced significant revenue declines due to the COVID-19 pandemic and rising competition from other trade fairs.

To address these challenges, AHA supported UNFFE in developing a unique selling proposition and strategic rationale for the NAS. This involved conducting a qualitative workshop with key stakeholders and a quantitative online survey to identify improvements and tailor the show to its target audience. Based on the findings, the UNFFE show team was coached in creating a clear corporate identity, show program, communication strategy, and a robust project and business plan.

"There are very few national level platforms like NAES that offer young people and students an inclusive approach to development!"



Peter Kisambira,
UNFFE
Showmanager

Additionally, AHA assisted in conceptualizing the National Agricultural Education Show (NAES), a pioneering initiative aimed at inspiring Ugandan youth—spanning students, young farmers, and university attendees—to explore agriculture as a rewarding career. By focusing on youth engagement, the NAES seeks to foster a sustainable agricultural sector with strong potential to drive employment in Uganda.

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