

SPORTS FOR AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Football is a powerful tool that can be used to enhance youth empowerment and employability through Agribusiness!

Photos Caption; From top left – clockwise: Girls embracing each other at the end of their soccer match during SEP National Annual Event – Sports help in building relations; Robson conducting a training w/shop during SEP Annual Event – Sport provides a platform to disseminate information to the target audients; U.K. High Commissioner to Kenya pats goal keeper on the back, after the high commissioner scored a penalty kick out – Youth need strong role models both on and off the pitch; SEP members who are also footballers working on their Agriculture plot, a ball – a powerful tool for community development; it can be successfully used to boost Agriculture and Agribusiness – SEP maize plantation, a product of Football!

Preface:

This concept on “Sports for Agribusiness Development” does not in any way constitute to a training manual. It is the intention of this concept to highlight how exactly Sports can be used to promote Agriculture and Agribusiness. It therefore points out the practical paths through which this innovation can be achieved; it pitches a holistic approach towards implementing the idea, stretching from both on and off the pitch.

The idea of Sports and agribusiness has always sounded quite complex to most people, especially those coming across this idea for the very first time. This should be taken very normal since there is no any existing data or research work for that matter, which has investigated the role of Sports in the development of Agriculture and Agribusiness, thus this concept presents the first ever innovative approach towards the same. What appears at first encounter to be extremely impossible notion is presented here in a manner that is both understandable and practical, from football point of view. The concept is not in any way designed only for “professional” coaches, but also community coaches with basic coaching skills. They will find the information contained herein to be easily implementable. If well implemented in accordance with the training manual, the concept should aid in achieving huge success in the area of youth empowerment and employability through Agriculture and Agribusiness.

It is my hope that this concept document will serve as an advisor; one that will provide homegrown solutions in meeting the challenges that arise in reality, hence other than providing opportunities to the youth, will also support the wider spectrum of our community in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty.



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“A BREAKING OF THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF POVERTY”

PREAMBLE

Sports as a tool for empowerment and employability: The concept of sports or sporting has two dimensions: development of sports in the communities and development of communities through sports. The development of communities through sports, aims at social inclusion. Although it aims to reduce barriers and increase participation, it is also concerned with the use of sports as a means to an end. Whereas the traditional sports development approach might be regarded as a product led and sports centered, such projects are more ‘needs based’, using sports to address broader aspects of social inclusion and as a means to promote aspects of personal, social, and community development. Sport has been used to address issues of community safety and reduce levels of vandalism and crime, contribute to improved schools attendance and educational performance, develop social and technical skills and increase employability. It is on this maxim that SEP Agribusiness Projects are rooted, *“development through sports.”*

There is natural affinity between young people and sport, which can be used to open dialogue about a range of pertinent issues. Sport can be used as a positive vehicle to advocate good practices like gender equality, food security, Health education, tolerance, inclusion, peace building and democracy. Sport is also a good tool for social inclusion, economic development and can assist young people with the development of life skills and participation in community projects. In this project, SEP is specifically focusing on youth empowerment and employability through Agribusiness.

Agriculture and Poverty Reduction: The Government of Kenya committed itself at independence to the eradication of poverty. However, hitherto the poverty scourge is still rampant and especially in Southern Nyanza (now the Homabay and Migori Counties) where 73% of the population is perpetually malnourished and deprived of basic needs. Generally basic needs can only be met at the expense of food. For example, food has to be sacrificed in order to take a sick person to hospital, school etc. Such poverty within Homabay County has been due to major factors;

- Unbalanced strategic vision to development because of lack of commitment to bottom–up approach in decision making.
- The Top-bottom decision making system which has caused the “vicious cycle of poverty”. This backwardness in poverty creates income per-capita too low and no savings altogether. Low savings result in too low investments. This concept of vicious cycle of poverty is a countercurrent flow of low income- low savings and subsequent low investment. The concept can reasonably be related to crop production and consumption balance, and even to education. The poor produce less food and also buy less food. Alternatively, more income may lead to more consumption and less poverty.
- Limited access to education: - It is equally important to note that in the vicious cycle the poor households are less educated and even though they would wish to take their children to schools,

they cannot be able to afford the exorbitant cost of education which is why there is continuity of the vicious cycle of poverty. There is therefore urgent need to break this cycle.

Agriculture is the major driving force in other regions of Kenya and the whole country in general. The agricultural sector, in particular the agri-business is indeed recognized by the government; coupled with its value addition (manufacturing, processing and marketing) systems, it is critical, if it has to realize the primary goal of poverty reduction because agriculture can be a source of food security, employment and income generation for the majority poor who live in the rural areas.

It is therefore practically meaningful that the only perfect way to reduce poverty within Homabay County is to improve the agricultural productivity and competitiveness through intensification and crop substitution. This works well where smallholder farmer works on his/her own area of interest (self employed) and is guaranteed direct benefits from the returns and participating in the finishing process. For this reason, larger foreign investments in terms of loans (venture capital) or grants / aid can be used. Due to greater flow of capital, huge amounts can be invested to break the cycle. Higher level of investment results in greater income and higher income means more savings which will result into more investments.

It is the breaking of vicious cycle of poverty that this Project concept is seeking for working partnership, in terms of technical assistance, venture funding, grants/Aid and good will to invest within the regions of Homabay County on the principle of “Private ownership-community participation arrangement” within the culture of entrepreneurs”.

To address these problems there is need to undertake initiatives to start Agribusiness development aimed at improving standards of the poor and the vulnerable, by creating availability and affordability of food for the local population. The Agribusiness aims to improve farming practices for poverty reduction in the area.

Sport and Agribusiness: Why Sport to Address Agribusiness?

Problem Statement:

Despite the continent’s abundant agricultural resources, sub-Saharan Africa remains the world’s most food insecure region. This lack of food security has persisted in the absence of political will, quality leadership and continued gross under-investment in the sector. The improvement of the lives of hundreds of millions of Africans will not occur unless Africa can feed its growing population. As youths are increasingly attracted by the lure of urbanization across the Continent, farming is often left to older generation to carry on a subsistence basis. The average age of the African farmer is approximately 60, implying a huge generation gap that needs to be addressed immediately.

The marginalization of youth and women in Kenyan society is neither coincidence nor conspiracy. They are vulnerable for multiple and complex reasons; there is an education system that is designed to be highly individualistic and competitive, in which “paper” examinations determine one’s life opportunities, and majority “fail” before attaining qualifications that are needed for formal sector employment; the system raises expectations, leading school leavers to disdain agricultural work,

without providing the capacities and disposition to seek livelihood through enterprise and self employment. Most of the youth and women who are not from wealthy and connected family have little opportunity for wage employment in the formal sector. Generally, the Kenyan Youth and women with specific reference to Homa Bay County are in fact excluded from viable economic livelihoods and positive citizen engagement in policies that affect them.

Solution/Way forward – How Sports Concept is used:

Use the power of sport to convene girls, young women and boys to educate them on Agriculture and Agribusiness. Give them opportunities to practice the basic skills that they need to be empowered in Agriculture as a source of food security, income and self employability. SEP through its well designed football programmes is determined to watch the girls, young women and boys change towards defining their own destiny to socio – economic development. We want the youth to see that they are special, they have talents, they have skills; that they can participate in decision-making, and they can participate in farming – things which are not always recognized by the community. That the youth can be seen as field workers, as trainers and model farmers, and help see themselves as important economic producers. This is being achieved through training the youth as Community Mentor Coaches. Investing in rural youth is an investment in the future of African agribusiness. Investing in new technologies means a departure from the outdated methods that rely on manual labor and exhaust the soil. These new technologies will be more readily adopted by encouraging youth, and a modern generation of business minded farmers to embrace a new and modern system of agribusiness.

Introduction:

In five years of Sports and Agribusiness Enterprise, the following results are expected to be realized:

- Increased understanding of how sports influences development
- Increase the participation of mixed sex in sport
- Increased knowledge on integrated Agribusiness management e.g. farming as a business.
- Improved soil fertility and raised sustainability of crop production in the Green House Agribusiness Farming.
- Increased capacity to enable the implementation of a long term Agribusiness Enterprise – “pamaculture”
- Increased collaboration and partnerships with the line Ministries and other related institutions for continued developments in Agribusiness
- The Agribusiness will offer a platform for lessons learned for further larger investments

Sport has the potential to reach out to hard-to-access and vulnerable groups such as communities who don't believe in undertaking Agriculture as a core business, learners who dropped out of school and unemployed young adults, migrant populations and adolescent girls. Sport can be introduced to these groups through existing structures like schools, churches/mosques, members clubs, and grassroots community-based initiatives with a low threshold for participation and at a low cost. Sport offers the opportunity for repetitive contact with coaches and peers, thus creating a natural forum for interactive discussions, life skill building, and peer education. For all of the above reasons, this concept intends to

present to the readers sport as a feasible, accessible and affordable vehicle for promoting and enhancing Agribusiness and Agriculture. The following is a list of the reasons why.

1. SPORT PROVIDES AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT AND RELEVANT ENTRY POINT FOR DIALOGUE:

Sport provides an environment where important life skills such as decision-making and agency are learnt. Sport builds essential life-skills that the youth need to effectively and successfully exercise their socio – economic development. The underlying assumption is that empowering the youth through sport and Agriculture will result into improved life skills and can contribute to increased food production at house hold level, increased income per capita, and create self employment opportunities for the youth.

Sport provides an entry point to boys, girls and young women and communities that lead into discussions on thematic issues such as Agriculture and Agribusiness. It is only natural for the youth to ask questions and receive guidance on their socio – economic and health issues in relation to sport. This may start off with questions about healthy eating, gaining economic independence, getting stronger or increasing endurance. In this sense, sport programmes have unique opportunities to start non-threatening dialogues that could lead to elaborations on more sensitive issues such as food Production and Processing System, Fruit beverage production, develop livestock industry, apiculture and kales /vegetable production among others. Basing on the Football 3 concept, community coaches should be able to design a training session that can effectively lead to the intended discussion, while maintaining high standards of mutual respect, values and dignity among players and the coaches.

Football 3 concepts has three components; 1. It encourages gender equality and gender equity through provision of equal opportunities– (inclusion), 2. It encourages Fair Play – players make their own playing rules - it has no referee on the pitch; 3. It encourages decision making – Players are empowered to discuss issues and make viable decisions – e.g. conflict resolution.

2. SPORT ENCOURAGES BOUNDARY SETTING

All games have rules. Most sport settings have boundaries. Part of playing the game revolves around learning the rules, abiding by them and demanding that others do as well. (*Sports for Development Manual, 2013 edition*). When it comes to Sport and Agriculture, a key to educating the youth about Agriculture and Agribusiness is helping them understand what acceptable behavior is and what a violation is. In cultural settings where the youth have misconceptions of agriculture, it can be very challenging for them to observe these rules. Using the framework of their sporting experience can help them subconsciously develop an understanding for respect, fairness, justice and speaking out when there are violations. Agriculture and Agribusiness, when organized and implemented along sports structure, calls for individual efforts where every player has a role throughout the project cycle.

3. **GIRLS PARTICIPATION IN SPORT UNSETTLES GENDER ORDER.**

The ways of life and standard of living of the Kenyan youth and women are pathetic. They lack a stable community with leadership mentors who guide their own social, economic, cultural and spiritual development. As a consequence, their lives are perpetually characterized by idleness, petty and at times violent crime, prostitution and other vices that threaten the very social fabric. The mere existence of girls participating in sport - a male-dominated sphere - shakes the gender power order, where only men dominate. If girls and women can play football or basketball, they show that they can be aggressive and physical. This adoption of masculine space and demonstration of strength can contribute to changing gender norms. When girls play, they raise questions about deeply rooted notions of masculinity and femininity. In doing so, they challenge the primary building block of their submission. This goes a long way into empowering them into being economically independent, through participating in Agribusiness and Agricultural projects.

4. **SPORT GATHERS A CAPTIVE AND MOTIVATED AUDIENCE.**

With properly trained community coaches, the sport setting can be an ideal place to deliver Agriculture and Agribusiness education. It offers an opportunity to convene the youth – boys, girls and young women - out of or in school, home, church or work. The coach has a captive audience, often without distractions or external pressures. Playing games, wearing uniform, socializing with teammates and spending time in an environment where they are valued; all serve as incentives for the youth to learn about their roles and resources. Several programme partners report pairing training sessions with life skills lessons. If young people want to play, they are required to attend educational sessions. These sessions are always offered basing on the Football 3 concept. When coaches and peer leaders develop youth's trust, they can serve as a vital outlet for discussing sustainable Agricultural ventures.

5. **SPORT LESSONS TRANSLATE 'OFF THE FIELD.**

Given positive coaching, sport can be filled with lessons on self-esteem and confidence building. Youths are afforded rare opportunities to become leaders, to build physical strength, to be exposed to strong role models, to witness and be applauded for their own progress and to use their voices. Youths need adequate opportunities of meaningful exposure for self efficacy and sufficiency, because when youths feel positive about themselves, they are much more likely to replicate the skills acquired on the pitch right in their small own farms/vegetable gardens. This way, they become well prepared to improve their skills basing on practical implementation at their level and subsequently developing them into young entrepreneurs.

Sport for social change has the ability to realize the following out comes:

- Sport is helping girls, boys and young women to claim space, build self-esteem, develop leadership skills and strengthen social relationships in the community.

- Sport and Agribusiness programs promote entrepreneurship skills, food security, healthy eating habit, leadership, teamwork, critical thinking, networking and negotiation skills and enhance youth empowerment.

The following questions have been designed to give a **practical example** of what discussions can be held during the Football 3 concept training session by the participants/players who are also the target group: The sessions are always be lead / guided by SEP trained community coaches.

Note: Some of the questions and answers used herein have been found from a secondary source of data. It is vital that community coaches only pose the questions, and give the answers later at the conclusion of the discussion, just as a guide or input. This way, the coach doesn't seem to push his/her answers, but to add onto what the youths have deliberated upon.

Q: Is agriculture a viable business option?

A: Traditionally, our forefathers engaged in subsistence farming. But with the onset of technology, high cost of living and rising population, the mind set has to change and instead farmers engage in practicing farming as a business. Value addition of farm produce instead of selling them in raw form holds great advantage for producers. Hence the need for agribusiness approaches to commercialize agriculture.

Q: How has the agricultural products market been?

A: Fragmented markets, price controls, and poor infrastructure also hamper production. Many of the agricultural products produced in the region, such as maize, rice, and sugar, are not competitive globally or have low profit margins. This means that Sub-Saharan Africa is ill equipped to meet its food requirements, which are set to double in the next 30 years or even sooner.

Q: How has the agricultural products market been in Oyugis Region/Homa Bay County?

Majority of agricultural produce that supplies Homabay County come from the neighboring Kericho, Kisii, Rongo and Migori Districts. The agricultural production by SEP is planned to take advantage of the overwhelming market needs. The sales of the produce are done at the SEP center through business women and youth who also add value by transporting them to other markets, particularly to Oyugis Market. The youth and women are the major collaborators whilst subsequently forming a bigger centre for marketing the farm produce. In fact the agricultural production would not even suffice the local market of Oyugis.

Q: What measures is SEP taking to ensure best use of land and to prevent crop diseases?

A: Agricultural crop rotation with other short term crops like, Kales, Tomatoes, Watermelon, etc is carried out to give the best use of land and prevent crop diseases.

Q: What are some of the best Agricultural Crop Husbandry employed by SEP?

A: SEP uses the best Agricultural crop husbandry for example by making and using decomposed organic manure for planting (also to reduce global warming effect from gases e.g. methane) The application of economic efficiency, optimal resource utilization and adoption of environmentally friendly methods are the SEP guiding principles and targets

Q: What can Kenya do to fully exploit agri-business sector?

A: Agribusiness in Kenya needs to urgently undergo a profound structural transformation, diversification, technological upgrading and value addition during the next 10 years in order to generate jobs and income so urgently needed by Kenya's growing population. It also needs to adjust to the pressures of rapidly changing consumer demand and new technologies in order to enable Kenya to catch up with other developing countries in the competitive space. Most importantly, the government of Kenya should invest in new ideas like Agribusiness through Sports for youth and women empowerment and employability.

Q: Is adding value a consideration?

A: Yes. Promoting this transition involves viewing value addition, both in farming and in agro-industry, within the context of a structural transformation of the economy. The Action Platform advocates for a model that links the small and medium businesses with large scale producers and creating and sharing value along the chain in a sustainable manner.

Note: Through Football 3 concept, more relevant questions can be formulated to guide the capacity building of the targeted youth and young women. These sessions should well be included in the coaching delivery session plan, possibly on a daily basis, focusing on different topics. The discussion topics should be guided by the Agribusiness training course outline and manual.