

# Boosting rural livelihoods in Thika, Kenya

## Results summary

*Over the course of a five-year programme, Hand in Hand, in partnership with Hilti Foundation, supported 9,815 entrepreneurs in some of Kenya's most disadvantaged rural communities to launch and grow 8,006 sustainable, climate resilient agri-businesses, creating 11,687 jobs.*



**93%**

of businesses  
still operational  
at the end of  
Hand in Hand's  
project



**88%**

income uplift



**27%**

of project  
members are  
financially  
resilient

## Problem

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In Kenya, around 49 percent of people in rural areas live below the poverty line. 9.8 million Kenyans are food insecure, meaning they cannot afford enough food to meet their daily needs, and poor families often spend between 40-60 percent of their household income on food.

Thika is a town located in Kiambu, Kenya's third largest county, only 40km north east of Nairobi. The area is famous as the capital of Kenya's prime pineapple -growing region and hosts some of the largest food manufacturing companies in Africa, such as Del Monet and Bidco. The area's natural beauty – evinced most famously by the Fourteen Falls – means tourism is another employer.

Yet not everyone participates in this economic growth: although the county is statistically one of the wealthier counties in Kenya, 435,000 of its residents earn less than KES 1,562 (US \$12.09) a month. Under-employment in Thika is very high, with Kenya's most vulnerable young people, who have flocked towards the capital in search of work. These are the people the project would support.

## Objectives

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Following our well-proven model, Hand in Hand aimed to train 9,600 participants, supporting the creation of 6,720 enterprises, and 8,736 jobs and transforming 28,000 children, women's, and men's lives. We aimed to boost:

- incomes
- sustainability: enterprise survival rates
- financial resilience: participants with the capacity to deal with a financial shock without borrowing money or selling assets
- women's bargaining power: women participating in household decision-making

## Our solution

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The project aimed to tackle economic inequalities in the Thika district of Kenya. It acknowledged that those at the lower end of the economic scale lacked access to opportunities and the skills needed to earn income, which trapped them in poverty.

By offering tailored training and skill development, the project intended to give participants the tools to start and manage their own businesses. This was achieved through Hand in Hand's four-stage training model. The model was as follows:

- **business training:** The project started with business training, focusing on essential skills such as basic bookkeeping and price setting. Participants identified their enterprises based on their own skills and market opportunities. The enterprises were diverse, with the majority being small agri-businesses such as fruit farming, beekeeping, poultry, or goat rearing.
- **financial literacy:** Trainers provided financial literacy training next, covering topics around saving and borrowing. Participants were encouraged to start saving into and borrowing from their own group fund. They were advised on considerations before taking up a loan and how to manage credit repayments.
- **market linkages:** The project helped scale up participants' businesses by providing mentoring on how to produce to the quality and quantity required by larger customers.
- **climate resilience:** Recognizing that many participants ran agri-businesses susceptible to climate change, they were trained in mitigating risks, such as planting drought-resistant crops or diversifying into goat rearing.

The project's approach was based on the belief that skill development and empowerment could create a positive impact on the lives of the beneficiaries and the broader community. By promoting self-sufficiency and economic independence, the project aimed to create a lasting impact that went beyond the project's duration.

## Results

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### Enterprise survival rate

- 93% of businesses still operating at the end of Hand in Hand's project.



### Income

- The overall average monthly net enterprise income is 7,701 KES (\$179 PPP). This is an increase of 88% since midline when the average monthly net enterprise income was 4,105 KES (\$94 PPP).
  - The average monthly net enterprise income for women is 7,104 KES (\$165 PPP). This is an increase of 101% since midline when the average monthly net enterprise income was 3,529 KES (\$81 PPP).
  - The average monthly net enterprise income for men is 9,553 KES (\$222 PPP). This is an increase of 69% since midline when the average monthly net enterprise income was 5,664 KES (\$130 PPP).
- 50% of participants have daily net enterprise income above \$2.15 PPP, including 48% of women and 56% of men.
  - This is an increase of 9 percentage points since midline overall, when 41% of members had daily net enterprise income above \$2.15 PPP.
- Additionally, 39% have a daily net income above \$3.65 PPP, including 38% of women and 42% of men.
  - This is an increase of 8 percentage points since endline overall, when 31% of members had daily net enterprise income above \$3.65 PPP.



### Financial resilience

- 27% of participants said they could raise emergency funds within 30 days without borrowing money or selling assets, including 26% of women and 30% of men.

## For more information

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Or to talk to our monitoring, evaluation and learning team in more detail about our impact and evidence, please contact [admin@handinhandinternational.org](mailto:admin@handinhandinternational.org) or call us on +44 (0)20 7514 5091.

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