Women and youth turn symposium learning into enterprise growth

Women's and youth entrepreneurship, advisory capacity and climate-smart agriculture

Scope • Southern Africa; regional symposium in Kasane, Botswana
Partners • CCARDESA and CAADP-XP4, with women, youth and agricultural stakeholders

The starting situation

Women and young people in agriculture benefit from practical knowledge, mentorship and connections to finance and markets, but often need support that extends beyond a single training event.

How partners contributed

CCARDESA convened more than 70 women, youth and agricultural stakeholders in Kasane. The symposium created space to share knowledge on climate-smart agriculture, indigenous seed preservation, value addition, digital farming, access to finance and markets. It also offered mentorship, networking and exchange of practical innovations.

What changed

Follow-up findings report that about half of participants applied knowledge gained. In Zambia, Abel Hangoma adopted banana propagation techniques and expanded supply of planting materials to small-scale farmers; he reported cash flow rising from US$100 before training to more than US$5,000 after applying the techniques. Joshua Zizombwe of Greenfarms Organics established a Training and Extension Services Unit that reached 156 smallholder farmers with training in climate-smart agriculture, livestock feed formulation and value addition.

Greenfarms Organics reportedly created 18 additional jobs—six for women and 12 for young people—and mentored 28 young agripreneurs, 14 of whom started or expanded businesses within six months. Ninety-two farmers adopted improved practices; 65 reported average crop-yield gains of 20%, and 48 reported production-cost reductions of 15%.

Evidence and source

The figures demonstrate reported application and diffusion beyond direct symposium participants. Refer to the Endline evaluation and country case study reports.

Source record • SS15 Infographics

Sustainability and lessons

The case suggests that learning can multiply when linked to enterprise services, mentorship and peer training. Continued support for market access, finance and follow-up monitoring can help establish whether businesses and productivity gains persist. Disaggregated tracking can also show who benefits and how women and youth participate in the value chain.