

PROJECT PROFILE

Waitrose Partnership



Location	Kenya: North Rift and Mt. Kenya regions
Project duration	October 2022 to September 2024
Activities	Providing gender technical expertise and resources to strengthen the Waitrose Climate Resilience programme
Partners	UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office Work and Opportunities for Women Waitrose Foundation CARE International UK
Delivery partner	Farm Africa

The WOW programme aims to improve economic opportunities for women working in global value chains. The programme has developed business partnerships to reduce the barriers that prevent women from securing dignified, equal and economically empowering work. It is being delivered by an alliance of experts, led by PwC, working with CARE International UK and Social Development Direct.



This WOW project was undertaken with the Waitrose Foundation to support gender-responsive climate resilience in Waitrose's horticulture supply chains in Kenya. WOW contributed technical expertise and resources to strengthen the Waitrose Climate Resilience programme, implemented by Farm Africa.

The project targeted smallholder farmers and farm workers, particularly women, to enhance livelihoods and climate resilience while promoting clean energy use and sustainable agricultural practices. It aimed to foster inclusive decision-making, empower women economically, and address social and cultural barriers to gender equality. Activities resulted in increased female leadership, improved training materials and the widespread adoption of inclusive, climate-resilient agricultural practices.

This profile looks at the project's activities and its impact on the lives of these women, their families and communities.

Project activities

Providing gender and social norms training for Farm Africa staff.

The WOW partnership strengthened the gender capacity of the Climate Resilience programme by delivering a two-day gender and social norms awareness-raising course to Farm Africa's entire training team. This included guidance on facilitating discussions that deal with potentially sensitive topics, and the opportunity to practice facilitation skills through role play exercises.

Developing training materials and tools to support Training of Trainers and Village-Based Agents.

The team facilitated the cascading-down of this training throughout the Climate Resilience programme using a Training of Trainers approach. WOW developed a two-day gender and social norms training curriculum with supporting training materials, including slides and practical exercises, as well as a facilitation guide for trainers. In addition, WOW developed a standalone module on gender and social norms which could be used alongside all other training delivered in the Climate Resilience programme to ensure a gender lens was applied throughout.

WOW also produced a simple, accessible community engagement guide in English and Swahili for lead farmers, known as Village-Based Agents (VBAs). This ensured that they were better equipped to pass on information to other farmers at their weekly meetings. VBAs could use these to open space for conversations in farmer groups about gender roles and social norms.

Expanding the scope of the CR programme

Participants were supported to plant trees, which enhance biodiversity and soil health. Tree nurseries were established and seedlings were distributed, expanding agroforestry and conservation initiatives. Practices like rainwater harvesting and terrace construction were also promoted to ensure more sustainable irrigation.

Energy-efficient cookstoves were distributed to households to reduce firewood consumption and improve air quality. WOW undertook an evaluation of this project, exploring the scope, implementation and impacts of the energy-efficient cookstoves within the wider programme, with a specific focus on gender and social outcomes.

WOW also contributed to supporting village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) and improving financial literacy among women, enabling participants to invest in alternative livelihoods.

WOW's gender experts ensured a gender lens was applied to all activities.

"I used my savings to buy chickens, and now I earn enough to pay school fees for my children."

A female participant

Impact

Leadership and financial independence

The programme significantly transformed women's roles in their households and communities, creating opportunities for economic participation, leadership and improved social dynamics.

- Women's participation in decision-making increased by 85%, with greater shared responsibility in household decisions, particularly around resource allocation and agricultural planning.
- The partnership contributed to expanding VSLAs and improving financial literacy among women, enabling 89% of participants to invest in alternative livelihoods.
- Female VSLA members were more confident in handling family finances and leading income-generating activities.
- Women's confidence in voicing their opinions and advocating for their needs improved, with many citing the training as a turning point in their personal and professional lives.
- Women spent less time on unpaid domestic work, with average hours reduced from 3.4 to 2.3 hours per day in Mt. Kenya, and from 2.9 to 2.0 hours in North Rift.
- The project improved time management for women, saving an average of three hours daily due to energy-efficient cookstoves. This time was redirected toward activities such as poultry farming, horticulture and small business ventures, leading to a 25% increase in women's routes for generating independent income.
- Women who trained as VBAs or VSLA leaders assumed leadership positions in community groups, becoming role models and advocates for sustainable practices.

Farming practice, energy and climate change

- Climate-smart techniques were adopted by 98% of participants, including intercropping, agroforestry and drought-resistant crops. These methods increased crop yields by 30% on average, improving food security and surplus for sale.
- Over 97% of participants planted indigenous trees, which enhanced biodiversity and soil health. Tree nurseries were established, and seedlings were distributed to expand agroforestry initiatives.
- Water conservation practices like rainwater harvesting and terrace construction reduced runoff, ensuring more sustainable irrigation.
- The WOW partnership trained 75 VBAs, including 50 women and 25 men, to support gender-responsive climate resilience efforts.
- Over 15,000 tree seedlings were distributed using WOW funding, benefiting 60% female and 40% male participants, enhancing agroforestry practices and promoting environmental conservation.
- 92% of households adopted a form of renewable energy, a major increase compared to pre-programme reliance on firewood and charcoal.
- 66% of North Rift and 44% of Mt. Kenya participants transitioned to energy-saving cook stoves. Households saved up to 67% on fuel costs, freeing up funds for other investments.

“For the first time, I feel my opinions matter in decisions about our farm and income.”

Female participant

5,390
participants

(3,209 female) were impacted directly by Waitrose's Climate Resilience programme across North Rift and Mount Kenya regions.



75
Village-Based Agents

(50 women and 25 men) trained to support gender-responsive climate resilience efforts.



400
energy-efficient cookstoves

distributed, reducing firewood consumption, saving time and money and improving air quality.



15,000+
tree seedlings

distributed, enhancing agroforestry practices and promoting environmental conservation.



In 2024, the John Lewis Partnership (JLP) won the edie Net-Zero Award in the 'Just Transition to Net-Zero' category, recognising the Climate Resilience project supported by the WOW programme. This award is for organisations that champion a Just Transition and embed social sustainability into decarbonisation projects. It highlights the positive impacts of centring women's needs in supply chains while working towards a just transition to net-zero.

“I am immensely proud that the Waitrose Foundation Climate Resilience Programme has won the Just Transition to Net Zero category at the edie Net Zero Awards. Smallholder farmers in Kenyan supply chains face growing challenges from climate change, leading to low productivity and food insecurity. The Waitrose Foundation’s Climate Resilience project supports vulnerable communities by empowering workers, diversifying incomes through new agri-business opportunities, and promoting women as leaders in climate adaptation. Thank you to Farm Africa and the Work and Opportunities for Women programme for their support.”

Marija Rompani, Director of Ethics and Sustainability



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