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# Fastenaktion

## External Evaluation of the Country Programme Kenya

Evaluation Report

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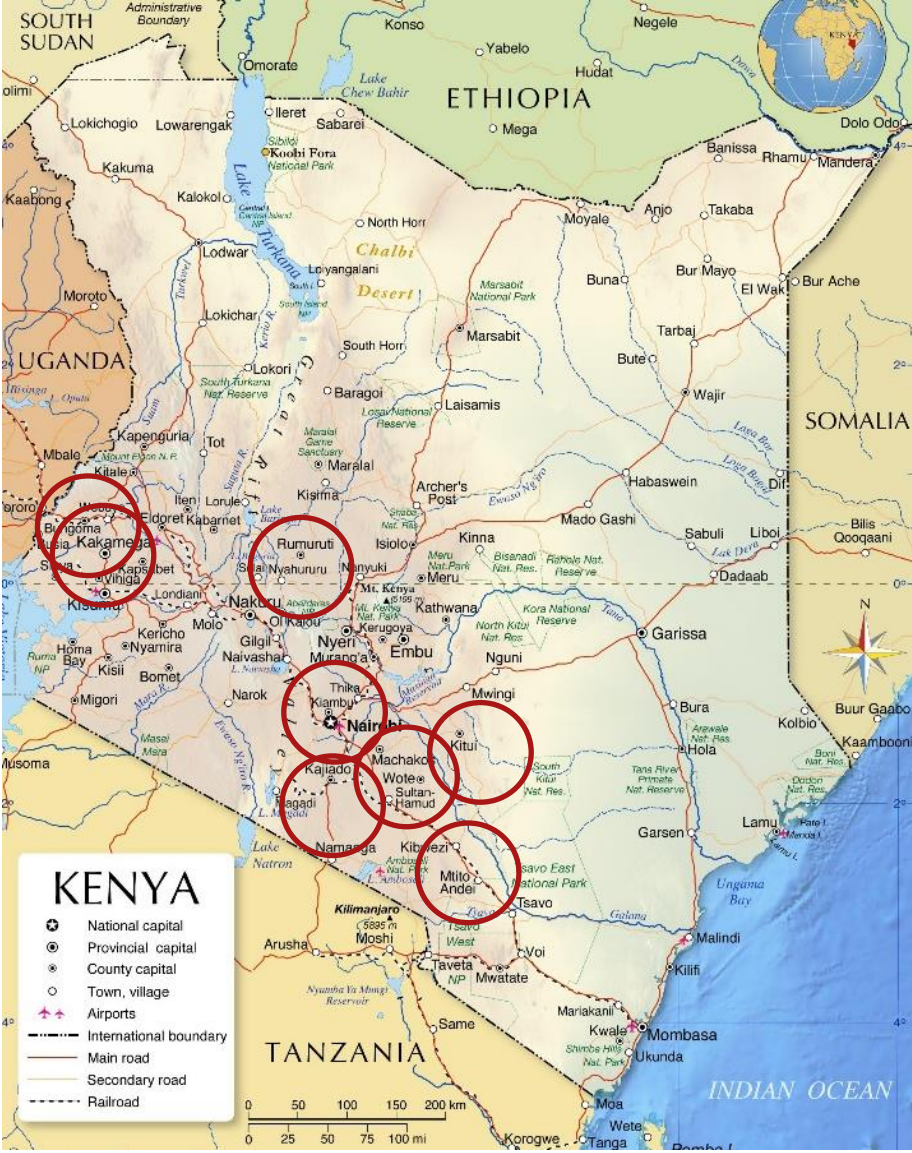
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# List of Abbreviations

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A4C	Act for Change (FA Programme Coordinator)
BSC	Balanced Score Card
CP	Country Programme
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	OECD DAC evaluation criteria
FA	Fastenaktion
FG	Focus Group (discussion)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HQ	Headquarters
ICS	Improved Cooking Stove
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IP	International Programme (of FA: Food justice, Energy and climate justice and Mining & human rights)
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IZA	International Cooperation (Internationale Zusammenarbeit)
KCCB	Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops
KSh	Kenya Shilling (126 KSh = 1 CHF)
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PM	Programme Manager
PO	Partner Organisation
PRE	Programme Development (Programmentwicklung)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SG	Solidarity Group
Sufosec	Alliance "Sustainable Food System and empowered community"
TG	Target Group
TOC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VSF	Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Suisse

Figure 1: Tentative map of Kenya (and major project regions of FA)



Source: See [website and own information](#)

# 1 Executive Summary

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**Background:** Kenya is a middle income country and has still a high level of poverty. COVID-19 and climate change (droughts) have negatively affected the population

Fastenaktion (FA) started working in Kenya in the 1970s with pastoral activities. The current Country Programme (CP) 2017-2024 was developed on the background of the FA strategy 2017-24, following the strategic focus on the 'Right to Food'. The CP has three core themes: Agroecology, Savings Groups and Peace. Additionally, FA supports a carbon emission reduction project through the construction of fuel saving stoves and obtaining CO<sub>2</sub> compensations. The target groups are the most vulnerable small-farmer households (mainly women) in areas that are suitable for agro-ecological measures (excluding the dry northern part of Kenya). FA supports 10 Partner Organisations and has an annual budget of around CHF 0.8m. The CP is coordinated by the local company 'Act for Change' (A4C).

**Methodology:** This external evaluation was mandated by FA Switzerland. The evaluation applied a multi-method approach: document review, validation of the theory of change, 20 briefings and semi-structured interviews, 10 focus groups of Solidarity Groups (SGs) and peace committees, 3 focus groups with cookstove artisans, beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries covering in total 198 beneficiaries (153f/45m), and field visits to three partners and a validation workshop with all Partner Organisations (POs).

**Findings:** The CP consist of eight projects with agro-ecology, saving or peace components, one carbon emission reduction project (improved cook stoves) and a few smaller measures regarding advocacy (support for election campaigns) and humanitarian aid (mainly for drought affected communities) and is highly relevant for poverty reduction in rural areas.

Between 2017 and 2022, 557 SGs have been created with almost 9,000 members engaged in agro-ecological measures (establishing fruit forests and/or vegetable gardens and saving schemes. The agro-ecological approach using compost but no fertilizer, applying integrated pest management, elaborated planting scheme, product diversification, water management and others has brought tangible impacts in terms of improvement of the nutritional diet, promoting common work and solidarity. 77% of SG members are female and they compose 72% of the leadership positions (chairperson, secretary, treasurer, etc.). The CP has invested substantially in capacitating the staff of the Partner Organisations and the beneficiaries to implement the agro-ecology measures, which has not only improved the technical skills but also social competencies (incl. gender) and conflict mitigation.

While the project has overachieved the targets by 2022 there remains challenges for the agro-ecological measures: many areas are suffering from droughts which limits the production potential of the food forests. The operation of the 40 nurseries, which cater for 6-10 SGs with 20-25 members each, depends on project inputs and raises the issue of sustainability. Further, the marketing of surplus products is promoted through agro-ecology markets but this needs to be scaled up. Another issue is that in many areas the land registration is not completed so land ownership is unclear. Furthermore, women traditionally do not own land and have to get permission of the husband to engage in agro-ecology measures.

About 27% of the SGs had accumulated savings and some were giving out small loans for food, school expenses and other basics. However, given the loan sizes, costs of living especially the cost of education, eliminating indebtedness remains a challenge.

The carbon project has constructed 19,530 improved stoves between 2017 and 2022 (and in total 23,516) each reducing the firewood demand by half and reducing carbon emissions by 1 ton of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. While the implementation in the field in 6 of 8 sub-counties of Kitui is consolidated the obtaining of the carbon credits is a super-complex process managed by FA Switzerland.

The advocacy work is done at various levels, through Partner Organisations which are members of agro-ecological networks and have good relations to county governments. More strategically the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops is an important partner when it comes to influencing (agricultural) policies and engaging in campaigns for transparent presidential elections.

The peace committee of the project visited (and affected by bandits who steal cattle) was rather a sounding board for escalating community concerns to authorities but lacked the capability to negotiate with the conflict party. Thus, the concept might require a re-analysis.

The current geographical areas (excluding the arid and semi-arid areas in the North) are appropriate and the projects are implemented in areas with high level of poverty. The dramatic drought situation in many parts of Kenya will pose challenges to choose suitable areas for agro-ecological projects in future.

The cooperation between the PCU (A4C) and the partners is transparent and built on mutual trust. The efforts in cooperating with Sufosec alliance are substantial although the interfaces are limited.

**Recommendations:** The report makes 18 specific recommendations. The most relevant and pertinent ones are:

- The transition of SGs needs attention as they cannot be supported forever. In this regard the operation and (financial) sustainability of the nurseries must be addressed.
- The networking between SGs should be emphasised. This is especially important for enhancing the marketing situation by clustering SGs or progressive farmers and linking them to local/regional markets.
- The role and purpose of the peace committees should be reviewed.
- Address the land issue (the farmers in Nyahururu have no land titles thus pastoralists might claim its theirs). This especially refers also to women who are traditionally not owing or inheriting land.
- The SG approach is convincing and its concept and achievements should be better show cased.
- The carbon project should review its incentive structure to promote the work of the artisans. The project is well on track and is currently the only regular project outside the 'right to food' theme. In view of the substantial return flows from the carbon emission credits obtained through technical assistance from FA Switzerland the project should be handed over to Caritas Kitui in 1-2 years. This,

however, requires a clear agreement of all parties about the roles and financial implications of this transition.

- The indicator system for a new CP should be streamlined and used in a consistent manner over the period of the CP.