

G-SEARCH CASE STUDY

Sanergy

INVESTOR: Acumen**SECTOR:** Food and Agriculture**REGION:** Sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya)**GENDER-SMART TECHNICAL****ASSISTANCE:** Training stakeholders**SAMPLE SURVEYED:** 127 agrovets
(person running an end-to-end supply
store for farmers)

Introduction

Founded in 2011, **Sanergy** is an award-winning social venture that builds healthy, prosperous communities by taking an innovative, zero-waste circular economy approach to transforming how cities in emerging economies manage their waste. With more than 350 employees (24% women), Sanergy currently operates the largest insect-based animal protein manufacturing facility in Africa, which is also the largest organic fertilizer manufacturing facility in East Africa. Sanergy ensures a consistent and reliable supply of its organic fertilizer, Evergrow¹, to smallholder farmers through a network of local agrovets.

Gender-smart technical assistance (TA) activity: Training agrovets to empower and increase women's participation in the distribution of agricultural inputs

Sanergy implemented a program from April 2021 - 2022 to support and train new and existing agrovets in their distribution network on sales techniques for products. During this period, Sanergy trained 184 female-led existing and new agrovets², with the goals to include and empower women in the distribution of agricultural inputs and increase sales of Evergrow. The training program included sessions on how Evergrow benefited soil and crops, how to develop leads and connections, and education and resources shared with female smallholder farmers who often are not the household decision-makers. This TA was co-funded and co-created between Sanergy and Acumen based on the results of a gender diagnostic assessment and conversations with Sanergy staff on critical gender and business challenges. Acumen also provided technical support throughout the program.

- 1 Sanergy "co-composts the waste collected from their Fresh Life toilet network with organic waste from around Nairobi to create a nutrient-rich, pathogen-free organic fertilizer, which increases crop yields while improving soil health". For more information on the product, please visit [here](#).
- 2 Sanergy recruited and trained eight new female-led agrovets per month during this period.

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Methodology

The [William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan](#) (WDI) measured the business and social outcomes of the training program in January 2022, as part of the [G-SEARCH](#) research. The sample consisted of 127 agrovets (40% were women, 55% had more than five years of agrovet experience, and 72% served less than 1,000 customers per month). WDI, in collaboration with [Dalberg Research](#), administered one survey to participating agrovets via phone that included questions on the period before (baseline) and after (endline) the program. To learn more about the methodology and access the surveys, please [click here](#).



Results: Social outcomes

25% of respondents **gained access to such training** with the Sanergy program

77% of respondents often or always **applied the information learned** from the training sessions

The training contributed to improved self-confidence and aspirations for the future among respondents:

	Baseline	Endline	Growth in the number of agrovets
More agrovets felt confident in their ability to sell new products to customers	16%	56%	↑ 3.5X
More agrovets were hopeful about the future of their business	24%	70%	↑ 3X

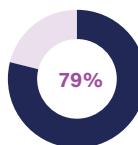
69% of respondents reported **increased sales of all products**, including Evergrow, since attending the training

- Respondents who reported increased sales, further shared this breakdown:

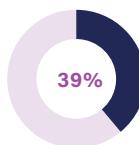


"The commitment from Sanergy leadership was a strong factor in our success; furthermore, our field team was able to work very well with the agrovets as they had a clear understanding of the goals of the project. And given the challenges of the pandemic that caused delays to our timeline, we were still able to adapt and manage for it." —SANERGY

- When asked how they used the additional income earned from increased sales, the most common responses were:



Invested in their agrovet business such as new mobile, internet, data, etc.



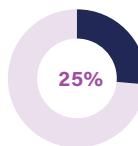
Purchased food



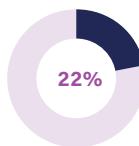
Invested in education for their children/family

44% of respondents reported that the **time to complete the sale** of a new product to a customer **reduced** by a *little* or *a lot* since attending the training

- When asked how they spent the additional time gained, the most common responses were:



Served more customers and attended to the needs of the business such as accounting, inventory management, etc.



Spent time with family



Worked on their farm and tested products such as Evergrow to inform farmers

The training also contributed to improved household and business decision-making among women respondents and increased social capital among all agrovets:

26% of women respondents were more involved in their household decision-making as well as their business decision-making, and a further 2% made these decisions on their own^{3,4}

90% of respondents reported that the number of farmers who approached them for advice increased a *little* or *greatly* after they shared resources and information supplied by Sanergy with them

49% of respondents received a *lot* of support (frequent communication and sharing of ideas) from the agrovets they met at the Sanergy training (while 46% of respondents gained *some* support and engaged from time to time with this group)



▶ Click here to listen to two respondents share their experience about the training.

Sanergy is further improving the training to cover more topics such as access to finance (also requested by 31% of respondents), grouping agrovets into cluster-level associations so they can problem-solve together, and developing guaranteed markets for agrovets in their distribution network.

Respondents also shared **challenges faced by women agrovets**:

- **200%** increase in sales of Evergrow during the project period.
- Improved retention of agrovets and brand loyalty among the group.
- Higher skilled agrovets in the distribution network.
- Improved net margins (no quantitative data available for this indicator).

17% of respondents requested that Sanergy market to large co-operatives and train smallholder farmers (especially women) on the benefits of organic fertilizer and the official government policy to use organic matter in farms, to develop the customer pipeline

Conclusion

The TA had positive business and social outcomes: product sales increased and women agrovets were empowered and included in Sanergy's distribution network through the program.

Sanergy is continuing and improving the training to refresh skills among agrovets and recruit new female-led agrovets into the distribution network.

For more information, please contact Yaquta Fatehi
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³ Before the program, 59% of women respondents either already made household decisions on their own or shared them with their family members.

⁴ Before the program, 57% of women respondents either already made business decisions on their own or shared them with their family members.

⁵ We did not ask the respondents why their stress increased due to restrictions on the length of the survey. The TA was implemented when COVID-19 peaked in Kenya, and regulations to reduce virus spread were burdensome. This may have contributed to the stress/anxiety that agrovets experienced. In the survey, work stress was defined as: "the stress and/or anxiety you feel when running your business, gaining new customers, selling products, gaining repeat customers, managing inventory and finance, etc."