

Transforming Agriculture in Murang'a County through the Inua Mkulima Support Program

County:	Murang'a		
Sector/s:	Agriculture	Sub-sector/Theme:	
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Target Audience:	Counties and partners		
Authors (contacts and their institutions can be included as well)	Mercy Gatabi- Program Officer, Knowledge Management		
Resource Persons (include their designations)	Esther Nduta- Director Governor's Press Murang'a County Mr. Paul Mugo - CECM - Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Trade.		

Introduction

Murang'a County's agricultural support previously relied on a cash subsidy system plagued by fraud and inefficiency. Many farmers received less than KES. 800 per month, which was insufficient to meet their needs. To address these challenges and enhance agricultural productivity, the County Government rebranded the Agricultural Subsidy Fund into the Inua Mkulima Support Program.

The Inua Mkulima Support Program aims to empower farmers by developing four key value chains: milk, mango, sorghum, and maize. The Program Policy 2023 focuses on providing training, certified seeds, and fertilizer to farmers.

For maize, 57,975 farmers were registered in the Kenya Integrated Agricultural Management Information System (KIAMIS) database. Each farmer received a 2 kg packet of certified maize seeds, 8 kg of planting fertilizer, and 8 kg of top-dressing fertilizer. Seeds were sourced from trusted institutions like the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) and Simlaw Seeds, while fertilizers were procured from the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB). The seeds were specifically tailored to suit the diverse climatic zones within the County, ensuring optimal growth and productivity. For instance, farmers in the tea zones received the H6213 variety, those in the Upper Coffee Belt were given the Embu variety, and farmers in the Lower Coffee Belt and Lower Murang'a received the Ukamez and DHO4 varieties.



H.E. Dr. Irungu Kang'ata, CBS handing over certified maize seeds to farmers during the launch of Inua Mkulima Program.



Farmers showcasing packets of certified maize seeds received for planting.

Additionally, a partnership with Joy Millers Limited guarantees market access for the farmers, with maize being purchased at KES. 3,500 per 90-kg bag. The distribution of inputs took place from 23rd September to 12th October 2024, aligning with the anticipated planting season.

Sorghum farmers also benefit from a partnership with East African Breweries Limited (EABL) ensuring a guaranteed market and price for their produce.

A key feature of the program is the Inua Mkulima Card, replacing the previous cash subsidy system. In partnership with Cooperative Bank of Kenya, this card allows farmers to access essential goods and services, including food, agricultural inputs, school fees, and hospital bills. Benefits are capped at KES. 2,400 per quarter, with hospital support having started in October 2024 following the rollout of the Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF) in July 2024. The card provides the County Government with real-time expenditure data, enabling better decision-making and planning for future agricultural interventions.

Implementation of the practice (Solution Path):

The implementation process leveraged on existing policy framework which was already in place to guide the program's transparency, accountability, and consistent support for farmers.

Establishment of Strategic Partnerships

Key partnerships were formed with stakeholders to ensure market access and input provision. For instance, Joy Millers Limited guaranteed a competitive price for maize, while EABL partnered with sorghum farmers. These partnerships provided farmers with guaranteed prices, eliminating market uncertainties and reducing post-harvest losses.

Farmer Registration and Database Management

To ensure transparency and accountability, the County Government used the Kenya Integrated Agricultural Management Information System (KIAMIS) for farmer registration. A total of 57,975 farmers were registered, spanning the milk, mango, sorghum, and maize value chains. This ensured that farmers across all sectors were included and properly tracked.

Distribution of Tailored Inputs

The program provided tailored inputs for each value chain. Farmers in all four sectors received essential resources like certified seeds, fertilizers, and agricultural tools sourced from trusted organizations, such as KALRO, Simlaw Seeds, and NCPB. The distribution of inputs was planned



according to the climatic zones and planting seasons, ensuring maximum productivity for each type of crop.

Issuance of Inua Mkulima Cards

The Inua Mkulima Card replaced the previous cash subsidy system. In partnership with Cooperative Bank of Kenya, farmers received KES. 2,400 worth of credits every quarter, which could be used to purchase essential food items, agricultural inputs, and services. This system provided flexibility to meet diverse needs and improved livelihoods.

Results of the practice (outputs and outcomes)-

- Farmers have earned additional income from the subsidies and utilized the Inua Mkulima Cards to purchase essential products and services, supporting their households and agricultural activities.
- Farmers now enjoy a guaranteed market for their produce, reducing market-related uncertainties and minimizing post-harvest losses.
- With enhanced inputs and guaranteed markets, maize production has increased, contributing to improved food security in Murang'a County.

Lessons learnt:

- Providing subsidies and guaranteed markets encourages farmers to increase production.
- Procuring farm inputs from certified organizations ensures higher yields.
- Tailoring inputs to specific climatic zones maximizes productivity.
- Aligning distribution with planting seasons enhances program success.

Recommendation:

The Murang'a County Inua Mkulima Support Program showcases the significant benefits of targeted agricultural interventions. By integrating subsidies, partnerships, and tailored solutions, the program has successfully boosted agricultural productivity, ensured food security, and improved farmer incomes. Other Counties are encouraged to adopt similar programs to enhance agricultural output, promote economic growth, and uplift farming communities through sustainable practices.



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Photographs captured during various distribution events highlighting the County's commitment to empowering farmers through the provision of certified maize seeds and fertilizers.





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