

Campaign for better deal for Africa's women farmers



Ethical business **6**



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It doesn't take a miracle to end hunger- it takes a farmer



The images of hunger and suffering in Africa that we have been seeing night after night on our television news was something that we had all hoped would be a thing of the past.

Yet almost three decades since the 1984 famine in Ethiopia – which in fact provided the genesis for the formation of Self Help Africa – we are again confronted by the horror of starvation in the Horn of Africa. In the recession-hit economies of the West, there has been much debate in recent times on the cost of aid to Africa. But in the face of the unfolding crisis in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia, that conversation has quietened, as people talk instead about how much aid is needed, and how quickly can it arrive.

At the heart of the crisis in the Horn of Africa are two political failures. The first is Somalia's - the anarchy that grips the southern part of the country, in particular, has frustrated efforts to ease the burden of suffering. But the second political failure is very much our own - in the West. Because it didn't need to reach this point.

"When it comes to fighting hunger, the reality is that we either pay today or we pay more tomorrow," a senior US aid official said recently. The comment is cruel, because it ignores the heaviest cost of this crisis - no-one can put a price on the death and suffering across the Horn.

But the comment is also half right, because Western governments know that failing to invest in Africa today will lead, in the long run, to a crisis which will demand a Western intervention, and which will then cost much more to resolve.

Development aid is a choice in the same way as education is a choice - short term cuts store up significant problems for the years ahead.

For the moment, the famine can only be 'fixed' by bringing large quantities of food aid to the region.

After the wave of chronic hunger is dampened, however, the world will be left with the same problem - how can Africa, with increasingly prevalent droughts and increasing populations, feed itself?

The answer is pretty simple.

The solution to hunger rests in the soil. If Africa is to feed itself, it needs help to grow more food. Put another way, it doesn't take a miracle to end hunger; it takes a farmer.



The horror of famine has returned to the Horn of Africa.

There are 80 million smallholder farmers in Africa, most of them eking out a living on a hectare or two of land.

Together with their families, they make up a group of about half a billion people. Up to one in three of them are hungry. Their farms are poor and unproductive. But more than anything else, they are the solution to Africa's problems.

Agriculture is the way out of Africa's poverty. It accounts for 70 % of employment and 30 % of GDP in the sub continent. With the exceptions of a few city states, no nation in history has managed a rapid rise out of poverty without significant increases in agricultural productivity.

No less an authority than the World Bank states that investment in developing world agriculture is between two and four times more effective in reducing poverty than investment in any other sector.

Farms around the world have made great leaps in productivity in recent decades. Since 1960, global productivity has increased by 145%, due in large part to the widespread use of irrigation, fertilizer, improved seed and improved farm practices.

In Africa, yields have fallen by 10% over the same period. It happened not because

Africans are bad farmers. It happened because at a time when the world had massive food surpluses, it didn't make any sense to invest in the most unproductive farms on the planet. So aid for agricultural development fell consistently from the late 1960s.

Today, everything has changed. The food mountains are gone, and the UN estimates that global food production must double by 2050 to avoid mass hunger. Productivity increases in developed world farms have leveled off - most have the best seed, fertilizer and technical assistance available, and irrigation is widespread where needed. In Africa, meanwhile, where 96% of agricultural land is not irrigated, experts estimate that over 75% of agricultural land has a medium to high potential for increased productivity.

African farms, for so long ignored and left to wither, are a resource for the entire global community. Investing in African farms will bring significant increases in yields. It will cut both hunger and poverty across the continent. Africans with an income from food production and processing are Africans who can afford healthcare and education for their children. A vibrant agricultural sector will drive economic growth. African farm produce will increasingly find its way onto Western tables.

Food, in other words, lies at the very heart both of Africa's current difficulty and its future prosperity.



Thousands join campaign for Africa's women farmers

A public campaign that has pressed for a fairer share of support for African women farmers has been the focus of drive mounted by Self Help Africa in 2011. More than 5,000 people have signed a petition to support the cause of Africa's women farmers, while over 1,200 joined a cause on the Facebook platform to back the campaign.

'Change Her Life' has asked that funding agencies – including the governments of Ireland, the United Kingdom and the USA – take steps to ensure that a fairer share of funding to agricultural development should be targeted towards women farmers in Africa.

"This is not about asking for more money," said Self Help Africa CEO Ray Jordan, "It's about doing more with the money we have. We all want aid to be more effective and this is a clear way to achieve that.

"Studies have shown that if African women farmers receive the same supports as their male counterparts, food production increases by 20%. That's a massive difference, and can be achieved with the stroke of a minister's pen." "There is no other section of society on earth which is so marginalised and yet

so productive," said Mr Jordan. "Quite literally, women do most of the heavy lifting when it comes to growing food in Africa, but their role and their value is completely unrecognised."

Ugandan diplomat Sylvia Gavigan agreed: "Young African mothers are under huge pressure. They care for the family and prepare the food, and also produce it."

An informational video produced by 'Change Her Life' 'went viral' this Summer, and has to date attracted close to 60,000 views on YouTube.

Copies of the 'Change Her Life' petition are being sent to US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, UK Development Minister Andrew Mitchell, Irish Minister for Overseas Development and Trade Jan O'Sullivan, European Union Commissioner for Overseas Development Andris Piebalgs, and to African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture Rhoda Peace Tumusiime.

Meanwhile, Self Help Africa's country staff and partners are identifying key ways to ensure that women farmers can get fairer access to advice, training, tools, seed, credit, and to transportation and markets for their surplus produce.

African women own 1% of land, create 80% of production

Women play a vital role in agriculture in Africa, and are responsible for producing up to 80% of food in many countries, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

But despite the critical role they play in food production and in the management of natural resources, women are denied access to much of the farm support that is available to agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa.

According to the FAO, Africa's women farmers own just one percent of the land, access just five per cent of the farm extension and advice, and are frequently denied access to the farm credit that they require to purchase seed, fertilizer and the other inputs. The role women farmers can play in supporting food production and eradicating poverty in sub-Saharan Africa is widely acknowledged. Indeed, the 2008 report of the Irish Government's Hunger Task Force explicitly recognized amongst its three priorities the importance of increasing 'the productivity of smallholder, mainly women farmers, in Africa'.

A wide range of cultural and social explanations lie behind the present inequality, but there is a growing acceptance that supporting women farmers provides a key to increasing agricultural production, and to lifting millions of African people out of poverty.

Studies in Kenya show that when women farmers have equal access to inputs, education and technology, farm productivity increases by 20%. And in Burkina Faso, the World Bank found that, by moving labour and fertilizer from men's to women's farms, women could increase their crop production by 10% to 20%.

Achieving food security, increasing rural incomes and reducing poverty requires women to be at the forefront of any strategy.

The needs to put women at the centre of future farm strategies is persuasive- but other underlying issues that affect women must also be addressed, including low literacy rates, poor nutrition, and the huge demand that is placed on the energy and time of women and girls who spend hours each day gathering fuel wood and water for the family. Studies show that where support is provided for women, the whole family benefits.

When women and girls earn an income, they invest as much as 90% of it in the health and welfare of the family, and where women, rather than men control the household income, a child's probability of survival is increased by 20%.



- In many sub-Saharan African countries, women do up to 80% of the farm work. These women often own just 1% of land.
- African women receive as little as 5% of farm inputs and other supports.
- If women were given equal access to inputs, studies estimate that food production would increase by 20%
- Benefits from farming that are received by African women are more likely to be invested in family health and education.

Giving credit where it's due



Members of Urji Berisa savings and credit cooperative.

Urji Berisa is one of 240 small savings and credit unions being supported by Self Help Africa in Ethiopia. This is their story.

Alem Abebe is proud of her credit group, proud of the role she has played in an initiative that has 'transformed the lives and fortunes of hundreds of families' living in and around Amolo Tebo village in Ethiopia's Oromia Province.

Chairperson of the Urji Berisa Savings and Credit Co-Operative (SACCO), Alem says that the biggest challenge they face is managing the expectations of members, and satisfying the demands of people who want to join the group.

Established in the Sire district of Oromia's Arsi Zone during Self Help Africa's Dodota rural development project in 2004, Alem Abebe was one of the founder members of the community-based SACCO.

With a current membership of 556, the Urji Berisa SACCO will this year disburse more than 636,000 Ethiopian Birr (€26,000) in loans to 540 of its members, providing them with small sums of credit to support a wide range of income generating activities, most of which are farming-based.

Urji Berisa SACCO isn't just about providing loans either, as the group is also providing members with a facility where they can accumulate small savings for future use. At present, this SACCO has more than 191,448 Birr (€7,800) held on deposit – providing scores of members with a vital nest egg that they can call upon if required - to invest in future business enterprise or, at times of financial pressure, in the family. Lending money to support income-generating enterprise is the primary function of the SACCO however, and loans in the past year have allowed members to invest in a range of activities, including animal rearing and fattening, grain purchase and sale, small-scale shop trading, and farmer investment

in fertilizer, seed, pesticide and the rental of additional land. Close to 70% of all loans provided to group members are invested directly in agriculture-related activities. The average size of loan is 1,170 Ethiopian Birr (€47), and the single largest loan provided to a member last year was 3,600 Ethiopian Birr (€147). Urji Berisa SACCO is one of seven primary savings and credit cooperatives attached to Keleta Women's SACCO Union, set up in 2005, and with a membership of just under 2,000 people. More than 70% of the Urji Berisa SACCO are women. Like the other 240 primary savings and credit cooperatives being supported by Self Help Africa in Ethiopia, most loans are provided for farm-based enterprise because most of the members are farmers, says programme coordinator Kelifa Hassan. "In some cases people rent land, and in others they set up off-farm businesses. But it is mostly about farming- giving people a chance to invest in livestock, in seed, in irrigation, or in developing some other food production activity." "We are all very grateful that Self Help Africa brought this credit service to our village,"

says Alem Abebe. "Many households have prospered as a result of the loans we received." "Urji Berisa SACCO has been a great success in our community. Our biggest challenge at the moment is to match the desire of new members to join our group. Sometimes there is frustration, because there is a waiting list of six months to join." "We have to encourage people to be patient, and also understand that before they can take a loan, they must start to save, and show that they will be able to save, and make the repayments that they will need to on their loans," she adds.

45-year-old Emebet Lema from Amola Tebo village joined Urji Berisa SACCO shortly after it was formed in 2004. A mother of seven children aged from 11 years up to 26, Emebet has taken six loans from the SACCO – sums from as little as 400 Birr (€16) to 3,000 Birr (€122). She has used the money to buy goats and sheep for fattening, established a local brewing business, and leased land to expand the family's two-acre farm.

Today, Emebet and her family farm eight-acres, own a pair of oxen that she uses herself and hires to others for ploughing, and also keeps dairy cows, sheep and goats. Last year she replaced the thatched roof on her house with corrugated tin.

"We had nothing, we were poor. Now, I send two of my children to high school, and my eldest son has gone to university."

Urji Berisa is one of 240 primary savings and credit cooperatives being supported by Self Help Africa in Oromia and Southern Nations regions of Ethiopia. The primary SACCO groups, which are affiliated to five savings and credit cooperative unions, have a total membership of approximately 40,000, with plans to increase that number to 60,000 in the coming years.

Self Help Africa's rural SACCO programme receives donor and technical support from the Irish League of Credit Unions Foundation and from Terrafina Microfinance. The project is also supported by Ethiopian local and regional government agencies.

- Self Help Africa is currently supporting over 32,000 people in Ethiopia with small loans to start income generating businesses.
- Over 70% of borrowers in Self Help Africa's Savings and Credit (SACCO) programme are women.
- The average loan that is taken out from a primary SACCO is €47.
- 60,000 people will be affiliated to Self Help Africa SACCOs by the end of 2012.
- 80% of people in sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to any banking facility.





Zambian communities are producing their own seed.

Seeds success

A major programme to develop effective local seed distribution through producer networks has been gathering pace in Zambia.

A year after work on Self Help Africa's SEEDFS Project was launched, close to 1,400 seed growers are producing and supplying groundnut (peanut), beans, soya, rice and maize seed for local distribution.

The EU-backed project is aiming to make good quality local seed available to 100,000 Zambian farmers, and is putting into place the infrastructure for a sustainable local seed production and distribution system.

Project implementation is being undertaken through a number of local partners, including Keepers Zambia Foundation (KZF), Mthilakubili Sustainable Agriculture Project (MK-SAP), and Eastern Province Farmers Cooperative (EPFC).

Ten grower associations are being supported to run sustainable seed loan revolving schemes, seed and out-grower schemes, measures to ensure access to testing and quality control, and steps to enhance local marketing and packaging of seed products. Field trials of potential new crop varieties are currently under way – with farm trials of rice, beans, soya bean and other crops - while construction of seed storage sheds and retail/agricultural shops is also taking place.

Funding boost for new ideas

A new funding initiative designed to support and foster programming innovation has been established by Self Help Africa.

Launched on a pilot basis in 2011, 'The Innovation Fund' has been established with private donor support to encourage and facilitate new ideas and approaches that can support rural livelihood initiatives and eradicate poverty for Africa's rural poor. Funding is available to trial activities that address some of the challenges faced by rural Africans in a sustainable way, and in a manner that can, if successful, be replicated in other Self Help Africa programmes.

A number of project concepts have been submitted for consideration by the new Innovation Fund, which has already provided seed funding to pilot a new peanut project in Ethiopia (see page 7 for more), while two additional projects are expected to receive Innovation Fund approval this autumn. Self Help Africa's policy and strategy team are managing the new Innovation Fund, and are adjudicating proposals that are submitted based on relevance to country priorities, cost effectiveness, sustainability and the contribution that the initiative might make to the achievement of Self Help Africa's strategic planning objectives.



The Innovation Fund will support African farmers to source new markets for their produce.

Self Help Africa teams up with other agencies

Collaborating with other agencies has always been a hallmark of Self Help Africa's work, and a new initiative in Malawi will continue this tradition but with an added, international flavour.

For over 25 years the organisation has collaborated with local communities and with local agencies, and has also sought out local partners to support the implementation of projects in some of Africa's remotest and poorest areas.

The new DISCOVER project sees Self Help Africa teaming up with a set of international aid agencies - Concern Universal, Goal, and an Italian development agency, Cooperational Internazionale (COOPI) - to help communities

as they struggle to continue farming in a changing climate.

Funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), by Irish Aid, and by the Norwegian Embassy, the project will help the rural poor to adapt and improve food production through a series of targeted practical actions. The work will take place over five years.

The approval of DISCOVER follows another recently-agreed collaboration, between Self Help Africa and the UK-based agency FARM-Africa, on a DFID-backed programme to improve productivity and access to markets for small-holder farmers across a number of sub-Saharan African countries.

Also this year, Self Help Africa has launched a pilot collaboration in Uganda with the local arm of UK-based 'Send a Cow' on a project that will seek to improve household income of communities in northern Uganda. Particular focus will be placed on developing a revolving-fund 'pass-on' scheme for livestock breeding and rearing.

Meanwhile, Self Help Africa continues to receive both technical and financial support from the Irish League of Credit Unions Foundation for its Ethiopian micro-finance programme, and is also receiving assistance with this work from two Dutch agencies – Terrafina Microfinance and ICCO.



200 farmers are growing peanuts.

New peanut crop to fight malnutrition

Ethiopian farmers are now growing peanuts for a widely-used food supplement, thanks to the intervention of Self Help Africa.

A pilot programme in the East Hararghe area of the country sees 200 smallholder farmers growing allotments of peanuts alongside their traditional crops, in the knowledge that a secure market is available for their harvest. The peanuts will be used to make a highly-fortified, nutrient rich paste used by relief agencies in feeding malnourished populations. Their crop will be sold under contract to a humanitarian organisation, Valid International, who include peanut in their energy-dense, ready to eat food range. Further research support for the initiative has been provided by University College, Cork. Peanuts have significant potential for cultivation in Ethiopia, but their production has been limited in the past for a variety of reasons, including limited knowledge of the crop, poor quality seed, pest damage and uncertain markets.

There is a tradition of production in the East Hararghe, however, and Self Help Africa has collaborated with a number of primary cooperatives attached to the Afran Kelo Farmers Union, with research institutes and with local groundnut processors on the current initiative. Self Help Africa is collaborating with its partners in the project on a range of activities, including the production and distribution of good quality peanut seed, the promotion of modern farming practices and post harvest handling and storage of peanuts, and improvement of production and productivity on the participating small farms.

New enterprise to target markets

A new enterprise that helps African farmers and other workers to link fairly with international markets has been launched by Self Help Africa. Ethical Business Services is a non-profit enterprise service provider that also offers an assessment and ethical auditing consultancy for international companies doing business on the African continent.

EBS helps farmers achieve internationally-recognised certifications, while also promoting better working conditions for African workers through workplace audits. The venture is a successful Nairobi-based going concern that came under the umbrella of Self Help Africa in mid 2011.

Using a network of skilled auditors and advisors across 18 different African countries, the charity has business relationships with a wide range of international companies including Marks & Spencer, Waitrose, Starbucks, Gap, Tesco and Diageo. Commodities that have been 'audited' by the EBS company on behalf of international business have included coffee, tea, textiles and crafts, vanilla, fruit and other food products.

In addition to auditing workplace and environmental practices, EBS provides training, technical support and advice to

companies, to help them meet international standards.

The venture is driven by a mission to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and workers, while providing international brands, retailers, governments and non-governmental agencies with an assurance that codes of practice, labour regulations and other standards are being met by African trade partners.



Craft makers in Zambia.

Money grows on Kenyan trees

Re-planting a depleted local forest isn't just about environmental conservation for a Kenyan community group – the effort also offers members a valuable source of income.

For two years, the 'Ex-Lewis Self Help Group' has been re-establishing trees on 20 acres of barren scrub at Eburra Forest in Gilgil, and just this year planted more than 30,000 mixed seedlings they had reared in local nurseries.

The 30-member group, who received tools, training and technical support from Self Help Africa, also realised a commercial dividend from their actions – as they have sold more than 18,000 seedlings to local households, to establish homestead woodlots to provide a source of fuel-wood and assist landowners by providing shelter and shade on their farms.

The group, comprising 16 women and 14 men have also run a series of village information sessions at Eburra and surrounding villages, educating households on the value and importance of forestry both as a saleable commodity, and as a means of counteracting climate change.

The enterprise is part

of a scaling-up of nature-based enterprises being supported in the wider Naivasha region, and is being undertaken by Self Help Africa in collaboration with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), and the Eburra Community Forest Association (ECOFA).

David Huhoro says he was sceptical at first about the benefits of the project, but believes that it could soon become his primary source of income. "I have sold seedlings to hundreds of households, and there is great potential for the future," he said.

Meanwhile, 25 members of the Lake Nakuru women's group in Game village, Mitimingi, are now earning a dividend of €100 a month each from the production and sale of fuelsaving cooking stoves in the area. Initially established five years ago as a poultry group, the members diversified into fuel stove production after receiving training and technical support from Self Help Africa. Group member Anastasia Gathini says that householders who buy their 'jikos' need to use less fuel wood for cooking every day. "Wood is scarce in this area, so there is a real benefit in a very short space of time," she said.

Eburra Forest is a part of the wider Mau Forest Complex, a 675,000-acre indigenous forest and vital ecosystem in Kenya's Rift Valley Province that has witnessed widespread deforestation in recent decades.



Building a community network

Local communities are the heart of the development work of Self Help Africa, and in Uganda an increasing number of community development agents (CDAs) are being trained and resourced to carry out activities at grassroots level. Last year, 175 new agents were trained in the Kayunga project area – and are at the forefront in field monitoring, reporting, gathering feedback from rural communities, and distributions of inputs and technical advice.

The community development agents work on a voluntary basis, but are supported with agricultural activities on their own small farms. They are provided with basic farm advice skills, receive boots, bicycles and repair kits, and gather and correlate information from village level back to Self Help Africa's field development officers.

The agents are also being supported by a network of farm extension workers, and their advice and support covers a range of activities, including organic farming practices, gender violence, farmer group mobilization and community development.

CDAs also provide an early warning systems on crop pests and diseases, supplying information for project 'crop doctors' to diagnose problems and treatments for affected plants.

Income boost to Malawi village

The number of tin-roofed homes in a Malawian village can be a telling barometer of the economic health of the community.

And such is the case in Nankumba, where the sun bounces brightly off the corrugated zinc that is but one indicator of the modernisation that has taken place in this remote rural community at Kalembo, in southern Malawi.

It's five years since Self Help Africa first began working with the people of Nankumba. The community has seen much change, of which tin roofs are just one part. Elsewhere, home owners will show off the cement that has replaced their traditional mud floors, while farmers point to compounds of healthy livestock and fields in which cash crops are being grown alongside traditional staples. Lufeyo Kachepa hasn't yet replaced his traditional straw roof, but he plans to do so. The 33-year-old father of four is proud though of the concrete floor he laid last year. "It is much better. We brush out the dust very day," he says of the work, made possible by the money earned from the sale of peanuts (groundnut) to a local buyer.

"When Self Help first came here we were poorer than other people, we were not producing enough food to survive for the whole year, and most people were earning very little," Lufeyo says.

"A lot has changed. Next year I want to get a tin roof, and I also plan to start saving, so

that I can send all of my children to school." 68 year old Felix Benongwe talks too of the economic benefits of the Self Help Africa project, saying that he is earning much more since starting goat rearing in Nankumba. Felix says that the trade in goats has been good to him, while he has increased his crop yields since starting to use animal manure as fertilizer.

30 villagers in Nankumba now rear goats, with more joining in the activity each year under a 'pass-on scheme' that requires that the original 'startup' animals be returned once the recipient's herd is been established. In neighbouring Chim'dipiti village, 73-year-old Bakali Maulidi says that he has been saving money from the sale of groundnuts, so that some day he will be able to realise his dream of owning a cow.

"I am saving now, and when I own a cow, my economic problems will be over. There is a demand for milk here, and I could earn a good living."

21 households took part in the initial Self Help Africa groundnut project in Chim'dipiti, and over 200 farmers are now involved.

"A lot has changed. Next year I want to get a tin roof, and I also plan to start saving, so that I can send all of my children to school."

Livestock project targets returned refugees

Recently returned refugees and other vulnerable people are the target of a new pilot project to improve crop production and livestock farming in northern Uganda.

Self Help Africa has teamed up with the Ugandan branch of UK charity 'Send a Cow' to support 300 families in an initial pilot to develop livestock farming and support crop production activities in Amuru region.

In a region that has endured close to a decade of severe disruption, during which tens of thousands of households were forced from their land in the face of rebel activity and civil unrest, the work will be carried out in five communities in Paiyech and Pagak districts of Amuru.

While years of neglect have seen farmland become overgrown, waterways choked, and local road networks fall into disrepair, this pilot agriculture and livestock project is seen as a key first step in enabling smallholder farmers to return their land to productivity. The project will focus on crops and mixed livestock – the latter to be carried out on a 'pass-on' basis that will see participants return calves, goats and pigs to the project once breeding has been started – so that other households can use the start-up livestock to



New livestock production has started in Amuru, Uganda.

begin their own breeding activities. The scheme was launched in late July, and is targeting 300 vulnerable families including households headed by women and widows, by orphans, by people with disability, and by rural youths living in Amuru district. Training in a range of activities, including social development, sustainable organic agriculture

and animal husbandry, is currently under way. 'Lead farmers' are also being trained in the local community, and will be largely responsible for the management and operation of the scheme, and for the mentoring of others. It is expected that up to 2,000 people will directly benefit over the three years of the pilot project.



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Tree conservation
West Africa

Beekeeping
Zambia

Farming
Uganda

Animal ploughing
Ethiopia

CALENDAR

March

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- Feb 20** World Day of Social Justice
- Mar 8** International Women's Day
- Mar 21** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- Mar 22** World Water Day
- April 7** World Health Day
- June 17** World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
- June 20** World Refugee Day
- Oct 16** World Food Day
- Oct 17** International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- Nov 20** Universal Children's Day & Africa Industrialization Day
- Dec 1** World AIDS Day
- Dec 10** Human Rights Day



Seed harvesting
Ethiopia



Irrigated vegetables
Kenya



Treadle pump irrigation
Malawi

Kathryn supports African women



One of the leading young presenters on Irish television has become a goodwill supporter of the work of Self Help Africa. RTE presenter Kathryn Thomas has agreed to assist Self Help Africa's work, and was at the forefront of the 'Change Her Life' campaign for women farmers in Africa this year. 'Women do most of the work on African small farmers, yet they get only a fraction of the support,' she said. "When you look at the facts, it's shocking, so I was delighted to get involved and do what I could to support Self Help Africa, and specifically its work to support women farmers," she said. The star of Irish television's 'No Frontiers' travel programme, and a presenter of the National Lottery's 'Winning Streak', Kathryn

travelled with Self Help Africa to Zambia in June and wrote about her experiences in an extended feature in The Sunday Independent newspaper. A native of County Carlow, where Self Help Africa too has its roots, Kathryn said she was delighted to lend her backing to the charity, and looked forward to doing all that she could to champion its work. "Seeing the projects on the ground in Zambia was inspiring. People are receiving simple, practical support and they are using this to turn their lives around," she said. "I saw evidence time and again of the issues that were raised by the Change Her Life campaign and I believe that Self Help Africa is absolutely right to be arguing the case for a fairer deal for African women," she added.

Church collections



Church-goers in Ireland and the UK play a vital role in supporting our work. In Ireland nearly €300,000 was raised at church gate collections in the past year, while in the UK, hundreds of churches lend their support every Autumn to our long established and successful 'Harvest Appeal', which raises tens of thousands of pounds for our development projects.

Take me to the Treadmill

More than 30 supporters from Limerick and Carlow took to the treadmill in a fitness fundraiser for Self Help Africa. 'Change Your Life Bootcamp' put recruits through their paces with participating volunteers losing well over 100 kg, while raising in excess of €5,000 into the bargain.



L-R: Josephine Hannigan, Danielle Clohessy, Tara Fitzgerald, Clodagh O'Carroll, Jennifer Mc Carthy, ladies from Limerick Change your Life Bootcamp who lost inches and raised funds for SHA

News in brief

Self Help Africa has a number of charitable events and activities in the pipeline in Ireland for the weeks and months ahead.

ETHIOPIA RUN

A handful of places are still available to take part in 'The Great Ethiopian Run' to support Self Help Africa. 'Operation Transformation's Ronan Scully will lead a team of 20 runners to the 10k event in Addis Ababa on 27th November. Participants must raise at least €3,000 to cover the cost of the week long trip, that will include visits to Self Help Africa's projects in the country.

CHARITY DINNER

More than 160 friends and supporters joined Self Help Africa as it held its second annual charity dinner at The Berkeley Court in Dublin, last May. Organised to coincide with the organisation's AGM, and with a week-long planning session attended by a number of senior African staff, the event raised close to €15,000 on the night to support our African programmes.



TV presenters Kathryn Thomas, rugby star Dennis Hickie, Siobhan Bastable and Self Help Africa CEO Ray Jordan at the dinner

BAG A BARGAIN

Charity bag sales for Self Help Africa will be held at The Strand Hotel, Limerick on Thursday, 13th October and at The Bridge House, Tullamore (Friday, October 28th).

IN HER SHOES

An 'In Her Shoes' charity auction, where buyers can support charity while bidding for celebrity's shoes, will be held across the country between October and December next.

WINE FAIR

On November 17th we will be the beneficiaries of a Christmas Wine Fair at Cases Wine Warehouse in Galway.

BUSINESS BREAKFAST

A charity business breakfast, attended by Stockbyte digital image founder and the creator of 'Tweak.com' Jerry Kennelly takes place in September at The Savoy Hotel, Limerick. If you'd like to attend, participate or find out more about any of these events, please contact our office at 1850-757678, and ask to speak to a member of our fundraising team.

BBC presenter lends her support



One of Britain's best-known gardeners has signed up as a goodwill ambassador for Self Help Africa in the UK. A well-known celebrity gardener, broadcaster author and grow-your-own champion, Pippa Greenwood says that she's delighted to be able to lend her support, and back our approach to helping small-holder farmers produce more food.

A regular presenter on BB2's popular *Gardener's World* and a panelist on BBC Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time*, Pippa is the author of a number of best selling

books including *1001 Ways To Be a Better Gardener*, Pippa Greenwood's *Gardening Year* and the Royal Horticultural Society's *Pests and Diseases*. She lent her backing to Self Help Africa's radio appeal - on BBC Radio 4 - early in 2011 that raised more than £15,000 in public donations to support our work.

A botanist by profession and one of the UK's foremost authorities on household gardening and food production, Pippa said that she was delighted to become involved because while growing food was something that she loved doing, she was acutely aware that for millions of the world's poorest people, growing food was a matter of survival.

"Self Help Africa's view that African people have the potential to tackle the problems that they have is very healthy, and their belief that farming and food production are critical to any efforts to end hunger and poverty on the continent is an outlook that I wholeheartedly support," she said. "Self Help Africa is a charity well worth supporting, a cause that, as a gardener who loves growing food to feed my own family, is very close to my heart."

Grants key to farming work

Self Help Africa received support in the past year from more than 35 private trusts and foundations for different aspects of our development work in sub-Saharan Africa.

Trust supporters donated a total of more than £320k during the year, and backed a broad range of activities in Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, West Africa and Zambia.

More than 40 grants were received – with several funders making more than one donation, and a wide range of projects, including community beekeeping, drinking water, sanitation and irrigated water development, seed multiplication, backyard gardening, poultry rearing, gender training and marketing were supported. Grants received range from £500 up to £37,000. Self Help Africa received funding support

from trusts and foundations based in England, Scotland, Ireland, Jersey and the United States during 2010.

The biggest single trust and foundation to support our work is Global Ethic's 'One Foundation', who are providing us with support through the sale by the company's 'One' brands of toilet tissue, eggs and ethical vitamin water at retail outlets across the UK and in Ireland. One Foundation support horticultural, small scale agriculture and sanitation projects in Malawi. Their funding also has supported activities such as poultry rearing, vegetable gardens and building toilets in schools. The programme includes lessons for schoolchildren on health and hygiene, and how to grow a diverse selection of vegetables- all skills that they can take back to their families and communities.

Santa goes to Las Vegas

The greening of Africa will be brought to the American desert when Self Help Africa's very own Father Christmas will take part in the world's biggest ever charity Santa Run in Las Vegas in December.

Community fundraiser Dougie Bancroft will sled all the way to the Nevada Desert to join up to 15,000 other Santas at the charity event, but before then is on a mission to raise £5,000 in sponsorship for his effort. Dougie's the founder of the very first official 'Santa Run' in his native Wales, and has been invited as a guest of honour to compete in the Las Vegas show-piece. And he's planning to stand out as an oasis in a sea of red Santa

suits – as he'll be wearing the green of Self Help Africa at the US event. The annual event in Las Vegas attracts well-known politicians, actors and other celebrities, and raises hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. "I hope to attract support for Self Help Africa and would urge anyone interested to lend their support to the world's greenest Santa before I go, Dougie Bancroft added. Supporters in the UK who would like to lend Dougie their backing can donate £1 to £10 by just texting the word 'SANT11 and the amount you want to give' to the number 70070.



News in brief

WORLD RECORD SMASHED

Close to 700 parents and children joined Self Help Africa for a unique record breaking readathon in Sheffield this year. The event was held as part of the annual Peace in the Park Festival, and saw parents and children take part in a world record-breaking 'readathon' for charity. The event, which was led by storyteller Shona Leigh, set a new Guinness World Record for the largest parent-to-children reading event.



LUDLOW FOOD FESTIVAL

Self Help Africa was official charity of choice of 'Ludlow Food Festival' for the fifth successive year in September. Hundreds of visitors called to our stand at the event, and supported our bag drop fundraiser and other activities during the weekend. Our thanks to Ludlow's operations director Beth Heath for the event's continuing support.

ROYAL BALL HELPS AFRICA

Self Help Africa was one of the beneficiaries of this year's inaugural 'Royal Four Charities Ball' at The Park Inn Hotel in Telford, Shropshire. Long-standing supporter Penelope Stokes was one of the principal organisers of the event, which included ballroom dancing, live music and much more.

COMEDY IN THE COUNTRY

Top British comedians – including Jimmy Carr, Russell Kane and Rufus Hound - are among the stars set to appear in a fundraising festival set to benefit Self Help Africa and a number of other UK charities. The 'Comedy in the Country' benefit was hosted by the Students Union at Harper Adams University College at Edgmond, near Newport, Wales.

HOT FOOT

Supporters were literally hot-footing it for charity when they staged a firewalk in aid of Self Help Africa at the RAF Cosford Museum in Shropshire last spring. 15 volunteers took part in the charity fire-walk, and raised a total of close to £2,000.



Climate change challenge for women

Droughts are more frequent, storms more intense, rainfall patterns are changing, and groundwater levels have dropped, leaving Africa's women farmers even more burdened and disadvantaged.

Such were the conclusions of an International Development and Food Policy student who spent six weeks in West Africa this year, conducting research for her Master's thesis on the impacts that climate change is having on rural women's livelihoods.

Supported in her work and facilitated by Self Help Africa and our local partners in Ghana, TRAX, Julie Dwyer talked to scores of villagers in Dachio and Pelungu in Ghana's Upper East Region as she conducted her study into the effects of climate change.

'Before I went I had read reports about how women were being disproportionately affected by climate change, but I wanted to find out for myself, and I wanted to look at the issues as they affected specific communities, and how they were coping and adapting to the change in weather patterns,' she explained.

Julie carried out household surveys and interviews with a total of 113 women from the two villages, and heard time and again how lives had changed.

'Changes in weather patterns are having a number of implications for households – and are both affecting crop yields, and the amount of time that women must spend working the land, collecting water and much more besides. Many of the women I spoke to were genuinely worried about their ability to survive off the land in the future.'

She said that she saw little evidence of government initiatives to support the people of Pelungu and Dachio, and that Self Help Africa's partners TRAX Ghana apart, there were no other development agencies working with the two communities.

'TRAX has been helping – providing farmers with information on how they must change their crop types and their planting dates, and how they should carry out work to conserve both the fertility of the soil, and of their water.'

In her study Julie concludes however that a great deal more is needed, and that both the government, and non-Governmental agencies must take steps to specifically address the challenges that women face in adapting to a changing climate. 'There must be a focus on sustainable agricultural practices, on environmental rehabilitation, on borehole development, and also on agriculture and livestock diversification, and on measures that can support people with skills, so that they have new opportunities available to them.'

Orange potato to save lives



A biofortified new strain of sweet potato is being piloted by Self Help Africa in Uganda, in a bid to combat health problems resulting from vitamin deficiency in the local population. Farmers in Kayunga district are taking part in trial production of a beta-carotene enriched orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) – a food crop with the potential to combat widespread Vitamin A deficiency in the region. One of just a few food crops that can provide high quantities of beta-carotene, which is converted to Vitamin A in the body, the orange-fleshed sweet potato was introduced by Self Help Africa for field testing to around 375 households in Kayunga last year.

The trial was launched to provide a local agricultural solution to a vitamin deficiency that claims the lives of tens of thousands of Ugandan children each year.

Sweet potato is a common staple food in most Ugandan households, but the traditional white-fleshed variety of the tuber remains the more popular – for reasons of both availability and tradition, although it lacks the same nutritional value.

The orange-fleshed sweet potato piloted by Self Help Africa has been developed at the Ugandan National Crops Resources Research Institute, whose research director, Dr. Gorrettie Ssemakula, explained that NASPOT 8 plants were used because of the added fortification with beta-carotene.

Keelin Tobin, a UCC student who researched the project during a development internship with Self Help Africa, said the Kayunga field trials had answered many

questions, but that a number of issues still needed to be addressed if the crop was to be adopted more widely by rural farmers.

'As things stand, the amount of Vitamin A content in the crop variety is not the primary concern to farmers - yields are,' she said. Villagers in Kyato who were involved with the trial told her that the survival of stored orange-fleshed sweet potato vines between one planting season and the next was one of the challenges that they faced..

'This was partly to do with the fact that there was a particularly dry season this year,' she said.

Dr. Ssemakula of NaCRRRI believes that the key to the sustainable production of the new crop will be the development of planting opportunities in wetland areas, and the establishment of a local commercial enterprise that can produce and sell the vines. But Keelin Tobin reckons that an effective information campaign will also need to be mounted if the orange variety of sweet potato is to be used. 'The health and nutritional benefits of eating a more enriched variety of sweet potato will only be seen by people in the longer term. Information leaflets, recipes and other education and training are needed, while the access that Self Help Africa has to local farmer radio can be effective ways of raising awareness, she says.

'Self Help Africa currently participates in programmes on Victoria FM local radio, providing instruction to farming communities on crop storage, plant disease and other topics, and this will also be a valuable

medium to raise awareness of the issues surrounding the sweet potato.'

Keelin Tobin and James from Uganda look at a sweet potato sample.



Food success starts with the right seed

Establishing local seed production systems, so that farmers can access good quality seed at the right time is vital to the work of Self Help Africa.

Improving farmer access to seed is key to increasing food production in Africa.

Seed and other planting material forms the basis of crop production, and access to affordable good quality seed is critical to successful farming.

Self Help Africa recognises the potential that community-based seed enterprises can play in improving the effectiveness of seed provision, and by bringing farmers, government researchers, seed quality control authorities and private seed companies together, is supporting the development of seed grower associations who can improve access to locally available quality seed.

It is a collaborative process that seeks to strengthen the inter-action between private commercial seed producers and farmer-saved seed multiplication systems, to benefit food production in rural poor communities.

The impact of good quality seed at the right time can be enormous – and particularly in Africa where it can be vital for small-holders to get their seed into the ground at a time that coincides with seasonal rains.

In Ethiopia and Zambia, where successful seed enterprises are now flourishing, farmers have recorded crop yields that are more than twice those achieved in the past. Growers have also earned better prices paid for crops – as produce brought to market is of better quality.

Local seed production systems also have a further benefit – as it provides small-holders with alternate crop varieties, allowing farmers to diversify their activities by growing new crop varieties.

The chairman of the Kamasika Seed Growers Cooperative in Zambia, Mulule Mazeko says that his members have been producing and multiplying maize, sorghum and groundnut seed on farmland that have been set aside for the purpose in Kaoma District of the country's remote Western Province.

Their seed is tested and certified at a Ministry of Agriculture run seed testing laboratory that was built in Mongu with support from Self Help Africa, and is sold by members of the 100 strong cooperative at two-farm input shops that the group have established in the district. 'Farmers who never grew groundnuts

before are producing groundnuts on their land, and farmers are growing sorghum in greater numbers than in the past', Mulule Mazeko says.

The Kamasika Seed Growers chairman says that local production of their traditional crop – maize, has also been boosted by the local availability of better quality seed, while they are trading more widely too – with the sale of more than 50 tonnes of their maize seed to the Lusaka based Progen Seed Company, last year.

In Ethiopia, households who had been producing just enough food to last eight and nine months of the year are now growing enough to last them the full year, says Self Help Africa's country director Wubshet Berhanu, who added that many farmers were also earning a profit from selling food surpluses as a result of their increased yields.

1,200 Ethiopian farmers are multiplying certifiable quality seed on over 2,400 acres.

In 2010 Self Help Africa also supported the establishment of Ethiopia's very first seed producers union – the Edget Farmers, Seed Multipliers and Marketing Cooperative Union, which is an umbrella body of 14 primary seed cooperatives in Guraghe and Silte zones.

The seed cooperatives are an important player in agricultural development in Ethiopia,



says Wubshet Berhanu, who points to the fact that 80 and 90% of seed demand is currently filled by farmer-saved seed systems.

In Guraghe and Silte areas the income of seed producers has grown by between 250-350% as a result of their increased production and the dividend earned from their cooperative seed multiplication.

The strengthening of Ethiopia's informal (farmer) seed production systems is being undertaken in collaboration with the country's regional agricultural research institutes, Hawassa University, the Bureau of Agricultural Research, and the state-run Ethiopian Seed Enterprise (ESE).

Self Help Africa is also working to strengthen seed policy in Africa, and is collaborating with the African Union's Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP) and Wageningen University in Holland to prepare seed sector assessments across six countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The objective is to highlight the potential for seed sector development to address the demand for improved seed on the continent.

- Self Help Africa's latest seed multiplication programme in Zambia will assist up to 100,000 people.
- Between 1997-2007 there was only enough maize seed in West Africa to support one-third of farmer demand.
- Agricultural research in sub-Saharan Africa in the 20 years before 2000 grew by just 0.6% per annum – and actually decreased for several years in the 1990s.
- Between 90-95% of all seed used by small-scale farmers in sub-Saharan Africa is produced informally (by local farmers).
- 90% of cooperative members working with Self Help Africa in Ethiopia are reporting improved access to seeds and other inputs since seed multiplication was started with farmers' coops.



Bill Gates award for SHA

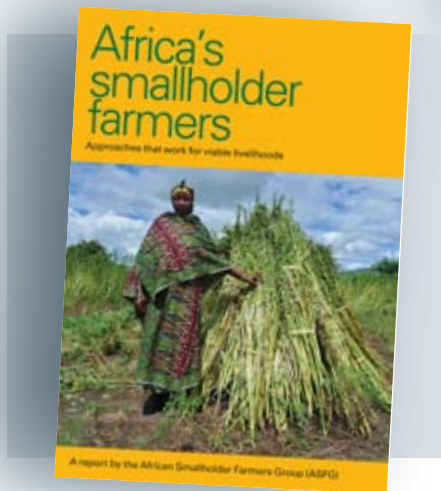
A Self Help Africa informational clip on seed production was selected by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation as the best video submitted to an 'Answering the Challenge' contest this summer. 'It starts with a seed', which describes the importance of local seed sovereignty for poor communities in Africa, was edited and

produced by Self Help Africa supporter and film-maker Hugh Chaloner.

"I enjoyed this movie about seeds, especially because I'm so optimistic about the potential for improved seeds to help small farmers confront the drought, pests, and diseases that can destroy their crops," said Bill Gates.

Smallholder Farmers

Self Help Africa has joined with a number of other international development agencies in a consortium that will campaign in support of African smallholder farmers. The UK-based African Smallholder Farmers Group (ASFG) is a network of international organisations that share a common commitment to working with and learning from smallholder farmers in Africa. The ASFG will undertake joint research, share experiences and good practice, and advocate for appropriate investment and development policies to support Africa's millions of smallholder farmers. The group will specifically focus on lobbying the UK government on smallholder agriculture issues.



Developing Education

An education module devised by Self Help Africa schools unit has been approved for inclusion on the Transition Year (TY) programme, in Ireland. The course was developed over the past year to provide secondary school students with Development Studies options during their TY year. It recently received accreditation from the Department of Education, and is now one of the modules available on the course syllabus.

Self Help Africa's Development Education programme is marking its 10th year in 2011, and during the last school year organised workshops, seminars and other activities at nearly 100 post primary schools across Ireland. The school's unit collaborated with Irish Aid to present the 'Science for Development Award' for the sixth year at the BT Young Scientist Exhibition- a prize presented to Clonakilty Community College in Cork, while the programme also organised its 9th annual schools visit to Africa – a trip that saw a group of 18 students and teachers travel to Zambia for a week during the Easter School holidays.

Women key to hunger fight



Prof. Jane Grimson, Trinity College, Dr. Mgt Kigosi, Uganda Investment Authority, Marcella Villarreal, UN Food & Agriculture Organisation, and Kalongo Chitengi, Self Help Africa, at the Africa Day conference.

"There would be 150 million less hungry people in the world if women were given the same access as men to agricultural supports," an Africa Day conference at Trinity College in Dublin was told earlier this year. Dr. Marcela Villarreal, director of Gender and Equity at the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, told a capacity attendance that food production would be increased, and that millions in Africa would escape a life of hunger if women farmers were to receive their fair share of support.

Dr. Villarreal was one of a panel of speakers who participated in the annual 'Africa Day' conference, which was hosted by Trinity College International Development Institute, in conjunction with Self Help Africa and University College Dublin (UCD), and was formally opened by the Minister for

Development and Trade Jan O'Sullivan. Minister O'Sullivan said that conference theme of 'Investing in Africa – Society, Agriculture and Trade' was highly relevant today, and said that business and trade had an important role to play in future efforts to eradicate poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. Other speakers included Prof. Margaret Kigozi of the Uganda Investment Authority, Dr. Eoin Gahan of Forfas, Ireland's enterprise advisory board, Prof. Keith Palmer of public-private development advocates AgDevCo, and Self Help Africa Zambia director Kalongo Chitengi.

The event was the second annual international conference organised by Self Help Africa with university partners, to celebrate 'Africa Day'. In 2010 Self Help Africa hosted a day-long conference on climate change in Africa, at UCD.

Farm work continues on Capitol Hill

Self Help Africa's work with smallholder farmers is not confined to the fields of Africa. We also continue to work with governments and international organisations in the drive to improve farming practices and entrepreneurship in rural Africa.

There are two main aspects to this work: the first involves promoting innovations which help smallholder farmers, such as our work with seeds outlined on page 13. The second involves speaking with governments around the world to highlight smallholder farming success, in an effort to ensure continued funding for this work.

As the world economic outlook continues to be bleak, a significant part of this effort

is focused on limiting cuts to funding for African farming development.

For much of this year, Self Help Africa has been involved in the campaign in the United States to limit cuts to overseas agricultural development. That campaign has taken us onto Capitol Hill, to meet with senators, congressmen and women, and their staffers, and it continues to this day, as new cuts to the US foreign aid budget are drafted.

In the UK, in addition to our work with an all-party committee on development agriculture, our recent work has also included an analysis of how UK aid is being spent, so that we can highlight ways in which smallholder farmers across Africa can be helped to grow more food and trade their way out of poverty.





Leave a legacy for the future of Africa.

If you could do one thing to make the world a better place, what would it be? Would you help to feed people, not just for today, but for tomorrow?

For too long, people in Africa have been dying for want of enough to eat.

For too long, they have been unable to earn enough to protect their children from diseases that do not need to kill.

For too long, they have struggled while the rest of the world has prospered.

Africa's land is the key to ending hunger and poverty – permanently. Most farm land in Africa can grow much more, and farmers simply need advice and support to unlock this potential.

By remembering Self Help Africa in your Will, you can help to make the world a better place for Africa's poorest people.

Legacies help us to expand our work

A modest sum that is left to Self Help Africa will allow us to invest more in the tens of millions of farming families who are the future of Africa. A small sum left to us in your Will allows us to replicate again and again some of the stories of progress and success that you can read about in this newsletter.

What to do next

Legacies have helped us to achieve incredible things in the past. Yours will too. A bequest to Self Help Africa is also exempt from Inheritance Tax.

Find out more

To find out more contact us at our offices in Ireland (1850) 757678 or in the UK (0) 1743 277170, and speak to one of our advisors. We will be happy to send you our legacy information pack.



Self Help Africa

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**There is a solution
to hunger and poverty
in Africa.
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