

Amiran Takes the Agribusiness Revolution to Kenya's Youth



(R-L) Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Hon. Dr. Paul Otuoma, Ministry of Youth and Sports PS James Waweru, Amiran's Head of Agro-Division Yariv Kedar, Chairman of the Poverty Eradication Commission Lt. Gen. (RTD) John Koech, Amiran's Integrated Projects Manager Chris Nzuki (inspects) and Cooperative Secretary Daniel Manzu at the launch of the Amiran Youth Polytechnics Next Generation Farmers Initiative at Mangu Youth Polytechnic.

Farming has for a long time been seen as an undertaking for the old, illiterate and the unemployed; simply put the last resort. However, Amiran Kenya Ltd is revolutionizing this thought by coming up with initiatives that seek to present the economic potential of engaging in agribusiness to the youth. The company is working towards food security and economic sustainability of its farmers better known as 'Amiran farmers'.

In June 2009, Amiran introduced to the Kenyan market the tailor made Amiran Farmers Kit (AFK). The AFK which has so far won two MDG Awards, one for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and a second one recently for



17 year old Hawi Sintenayu, a student at Matuu HGM School in Yatta speaking at the launch of the Amiran Next Generation Farmers Initiative

youth empowerment, allows small scale farmers to afford modern agricultural technologies to suit the climate, terrain, and agricultural experience of the farmer. For two years now Amiran, which is credited with playing a major role in creating Kenya's flower and horticulture sectors, has made a serious impact on the small scale farmer's market in its efforts to create a new type of farmer in Kenya; a young, energetic, business minded farmer, who understands that there is money to be made by doing things the Amiran way.



An Amiran Farmer's Kit (AFK) in North Eastern Kenya

Next Generation Farmers

The Amiran Next Generation Farmers Initiative (ANGFI) was launched by Hon Wycliffe Oparanya, Minister for Planning, Development and Vision 2030 at an event hosted by Yatta Member of Parliament, Hon. Charles Kilonzo and the Yatta CDF in Partnership

with Amiran Kenya and the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS). The launch held at Matuu Memorial Girls High School in Yatta, marked the end of the first successful season of implementation of the AFK in 22 schools in the constituency, a brain child of the youthful and visionary Yatta MP. During the launch, the very impressed Minister in charge of

Vision 2030 said "I have never seen such a big tomato. It is quite evident that with such produce, the market price will rise thus giving good income to the young farmers."

In May this year, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in partnership with Amiran Kenya

Students of Milimani Secondary School in Naivasha look on as Prime Minister Raila Odinga launches the Amiran donated AFK at their school





Amiran Next Generation Farmers from Yatta schools welcome guests at the launch of the BAACH led 'Imarisha Kenya' campaign

installed 100 Amiran Farmers Kits (AFK) to 100 youth polytechnics across the country in the first phase of the 'Amiran-Youth Polytechnics Next generation Farmers Initiative'. The installation of the AFKs and the training of the youth polytechnics and Ministry staff by Amiran was intended to create a virtual classroom to support the new Agribusiness Curriculum designed by Ministry of Youth Director of Youth Training, Dr. Dina Mwenzi. The new curriculum

aims to nurture entrepreneurial skills in agribusiness among the youth using the AFK model. Most of the polytechnics are located in very remote places and with the introduction of this technology in such environments, it is expected that there will be increased level of crop production and sustainable use of agricultural resources.

Less than a year from the launch of the Next Generation Farmers Initiative, following a joint effort of

the Kenya Red Cross Society, which has placed AFKs in hundreds of schools throughout Kenya's drought stricken areas, and dozens of CDFs throughout the country, Amiran is proud to boast of over 500 schools, totaling over 100,000 students, who are now studying modern agribusiness methods, using state of the art agro-technology in schools and youth polytechnics all over Kenya.



Ministry of Youth Affairs Assistant Director of Youth Training Irene Kamau, Amiran Head of Agro- Division Yariv Kedar, Ministry of Youth Affairs Deputy Director of Youth Training Maria Cheron and Amiran Integrated Projects Manager Chris Nzuki, celebrate the Youth Empowerment MDG award

Farming is Cool



(R-L) Assistant Minister for Agriculture Hon. Gideon Ndambuki, Israeli Ambassador to Kenya H.E. Gil Haskel, ASK Committee member and Amiran's Head of Agro-Division Yariv Kedar in the AFK at the launch of the Farming is Cool Initiative at the Nairobi ASK show



Amiran's student dance crew rocking the 2011 Nairobi ASK show

Farming is Cool

For there to be a real impact on the mindset of the youth, who perceive agriculture as a 'punishment', Amiran has chosen to present agribusiness as 'cool' and profitable, with the potential to orchestrate the rise of successful agropreneurs if it is taken seriously and treated like a business. Engaging the youth in farming is the right strategy given their numbers, versatility, quick reception of new ideas and technology and spirit of entrepreneurship. "In a region where many young Kenyans are making a move from their rural homes to Nairobi to find livelihoods, such agribusiness education and the ability to acquire technology needed to implement it, is gradually changing negative perceptions that young people have towards agribusiness" says Christopher

Nzuki, Amiran's Integrated Projects Manager, who designed the AFK training and is responsible for the massive operation, which serves thousands of Amiran Farmers in every corner of the country.

It is for this reason that Amiran Kenya Ltd enlisted the presence of Hon. Gideon Ndambuki, Assistant Minister for Agriculture and the Ambassador of the State of Israel, H.E Gil Haskel to the launch of the "FARMING IS COOL" campaign, which stole the show at this year's Nairobi International Trade Fair, better known as the 'Nairobi Show'.

In his remarks outside the AFK at the Nairobi Show, Ambassador Haskel said that Israel is a desert country, yet the entrepreneurial spirit of its youth and the fact that

from the birth of the country the youth embraced agribusiness as a cool, hi-tech way to make money, has brought the country to its present position as a global leader in agricultural technology and production.

The 'farming is cool' also served as an "intern boot camp" for University students. To dance alongside the DJ that was brought it to entice youth visiting the show to take a closer look at the AFK, Amiran engaged 25 students from Egerton University and 25 students from JKUAT all who would be trained on the Amiran Farmers Kit (AFK) and had them compete for 2 spots for internships at Amiran's public relations department and Integrated Projects department.



Egerton University students who starred at the Nairobi ASK show during the AFK training at the university

Facebook Farmers

With the average age of Amiran Farmers dropping every day, a presence on facebook is another way of showing a younger audience that agri-business is an attractive route to take. Amiran's Facebook page, Amiran K, allows young would-be agropreneurs, who have chosen to 'like' Amiran K, to engage and 'chat' with members of the Amiran team with questions and queries on prices, options of crops to grow, requirements and much more

Empowering the Youth

In the spirit of the MDG Award for Youth Empowerment, presented to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and Amiran Kenya Ltd for the 'Amiran-Youth Polytechnics Next Generation Farmers Initiative', at this year's award gala held at the National Museum of Kenya, representatives of the two organizations were presented their award from the winner of Big Brother Amplified 2011, Wendall Parson.

Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Planning, National Development and Vision 2030, Dr. Edward Sambili, an ardent supporter of Amiran's approach, pointed out

in his remarks that Amiran Kenya is headed in the right direction with their focus on empowerment of youth saying "Everywhere the youth resent being marginalized in decision making process and are eager to have greater control over their lives and Amiran Kenya is urgently addressing the existing gaps to avoid a missed generation".

Recently it was announced that in a bid to fire up young agropreneurs, Amiran Kenya will partner with the Youth Enterprise Development Fund to introduce loans for the Amiran Farmers Kit (AFK) to youth throughout Kenya.



Egerton University students who led the Farming is Cool Initiative at the 2011 Nairobi ASK show during a practical session of the AFK training



Creating a next generation of agropreneurs.

“Attitude will take time to change” says Youth Enterprise Development Fund CEO, Juma Mwatata adding “but there are those who have realized that they are making more from farming than sitting in the office”.

The passionate team at Amiran, who are empowered by the success of their efforts not only in the areas of poverty eradication, but also with their unprecedented success in engaging young farmers, envision a day when there will be tens and

even hundreds of thousands of young agro-preneurs, who make a good, honest living from their successful agribusinesses. Such a reality would mean that not only would Kenyans not be hungry, they would be in a position to feed the world.



Mangu Youth Polytechnic students harvesting from the institution’s Amiran Farmers Kit (AFK)