

## Kenya

# ICT boosts services for coffee farmers in Kenya



### BACKGROUND

Farmers' organizations in Kenya often face challenges in communicating with their members, whether it be to disseminate the most current agricultural techniques that would improve yields, or sharing market prices to help their members get a fair price. Lutheran World Relief (LWR) has partnered with BUCCODEG, a consortium of six coffee cooperatives in Western Kenya, to use an information and communication technology (ICT) approach to improve services. The approach has enhanced the effectiveness of their extension system, improved sales transaction documentation, and overall, increased accountability, transparency and trust among their members. As a result, farmers have become more active in the cooperatives, improved coffee growing and processing practices, and accessed previously unused financial services.

### LOCAL PARTNER:

Bungoma County Coffee Development Group (BUCCODEG)

### PROJECT PERIOD:

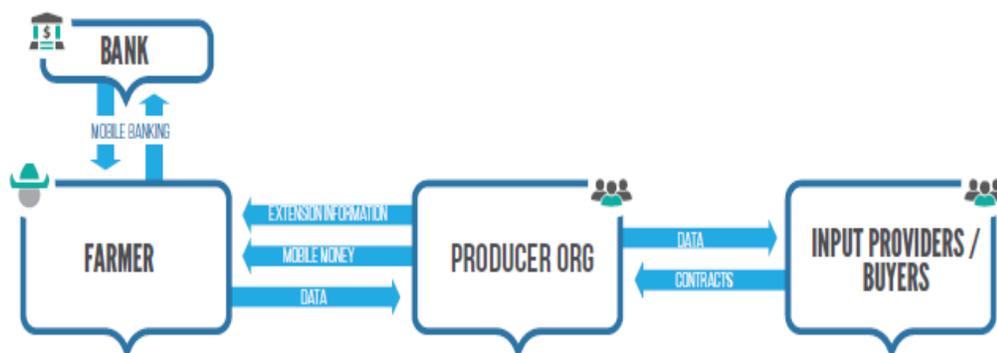
April 2014 – September 2016

FUNDING: \$416,194

### RESULTS

ICT has improved the ability of BUCCODEG to **communicate efficiently and effectively, increase visibility**, and establish systems that **promote data accuracy** and **reduce transaction costs** – overall, allowing BUCCODEG to be more **transparent** with its members.

- Created an ICT-enhanced extension system with 80 trained community knowledge workers who use a smartphone application to help farmers look up market and weather information, access farming tips and advice, and reference an input supplier directory.
- Collected data from over 5,000 farmers allowing BUCCODEG to forecast members' coffee production, track the quality of coffee grown, and map clusters of farmers that require additional support.
- Initiated text messaging services that improve communication between cooperative management and members.
- Linked electronic farmer records to digital coffee scales.
- Digital scales allow very accurate weighing, ensuring farmers are paid for the exact amount delivered.
- Farmers receive a printed receipt, allowing the farmer to verify the cooperative's electronic records are accurate.
- Established a mobile money payment system to pay farmers for the coffee delivered, reducing the risks associated with cash transactions.
- Broadcast interactive radio programs to disseminate good farming techniques, engaging listeners through social media and call-ins.
- Opened mobile banking accounts for 80 village savings and lending groups, saving time and reducing costs to travel to physical bank branches.



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