

Entrepreneurs for Rural Access (ERAs) Model: Supporting youth employment across the Global South with quality learning videos

Access Agriculture is a non-profit organization that promotes sustainable agriculture through farmer-to-farmer training videos in local languages. Its work supports sustainable land management by helping farmers and rural youth access practical knowledge on agroecology, natural resource management, and resilient food systems.



Region

Benin, Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia.

Partners

GiZ, Private Foundations, Community Groups

Project objectives

Establish a sustainable, private, youth-led extension model that triggers the involvement of rural youth in environmentally friendly food systems at scale

SLM practice

Agroecology, sustainable land management, agroforestry

Target Group

Youth, Students, Women, Farmers, Community members

Financing Type

Public and private funding to start up, self-sustaining model after two years

Duration

18-24 months

Contact

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Links

www.accessagriculture.org

Challenge and Context

Smallholder families in remote rural communities often lack access to knowledge needed to improve farm productivity sustainably. Agricultural extension services and education systems frequently lack the capacity to promote agroecological practices and practical green skills. Integrating sustainable land management into farmer, youth, and community education is therefore essential. Agroecology supports biodiversity, soil health, water efficiency, carbon sequestration, resilience, food sovereignty, and indigenous knowledge.

Innovation and impact of the practice

Peer-to-peer learning is key to strengthening rural youth skills and building resilient food systems. Access Agriculture has equipped teams of young Entrepreneurs for Rural Access (ERAs) to show farmer-to-farmer videos without electricity, internet or mobile phone connection. The key is having quality training videos available in 111 local languages, shown on a solar-powered smart projector from Digisoft Education. The main implementers are young people aged from 18 to 35, working as teams to implement their own business plans with local communities, schools, farmer associations, women and self-help groups, youth and individual farmers. Access Agriculture's network of young entrepreneurs and school teachers who operate as private extension service providers illustrates how screening agricultural videos can excite students and other rural youth to assume a role in local food systems, while strengthening intergenerational learning, cohesion and community resilience.

Results and impact

Many ERAs have used the video projection service to establish or strengthen complementary business activities. The topics covered in the videos have

proven interesting to young people. An evaluation of Access Agriculture's model in 2026 surveyed 1,353 people from 80 countries. The findings showed that 74% reported strong youth participation in training sessions, while 44% said the videos encouraged youth to start or expand agricultural enterprises. Respondents also reported improvements in resilience (89%), food and nutrition (85%), and farm income (79%), while 70% noted reduced production costs (Chen et al., 2026).

Scaling and replication

By 2026, more than 500 ERAs had been established across 20 African countries and six states in India. The model is particularly suitable for rural areas with limited electricity, internet, and mobile coverage. Learning videos are now used in over 400 educational institutions, a mobile app is available in 30 languages, and blended learning approaches are being tested through school gardens.

Lessons learned

The main lessons are:

1. Ensure sufficient availability of videos in local languages.
2. Provide teams with mentoring and business development support over 18-24 months.
3. Encourage partnerships with other organisations to expand business opportunities.
4. Build a professional service-oriented approach that covers a wider range of topics and serves community needs.