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Sprouting new potential for a new family farm

Mercy Corps

Communities in Kenya, and around the world, are already bearing the brunt of climate change in their everyday lives. And, to make matters worse, those same communities — some of the poorest in the world — are often the least equipped to take on these new challenges.

With help from Mercy Corps, a Global Impact charity partner, farmers are downloading new tools to improve their harvests. Through our AgriFin program, we partnered with companies in Kenya to create a new platform with services that farmers can access with their phones. AgriFin is helping farmers get the most out of their harvests each season by providing critical resources like accurate weather information, soil testing and other key programs for optimizing crop management.

Lydia originally started farming in 2015 as a means of feeding her family. In the past four years, farming has evolved into an additional source of income. With support from Mercy Corps' AgriFin program, Lydia is increasing her crop yield, buying livestock and insuring her seeds in case they don't produce crops. In the two years, she's been using AgriFin's new platform, she's been able to get support for her farm in a wide range of areas, including soil testing and advice on what kinds of fertilizer to use and seeds to plant. Local seeds can often be low in quality and produce no crops when faced with inconsistent rainfall. Seeds certified by AgriFin partners still struggle due to low or inconsistent rainfall — but produce more yield than local seeds, Lydia says.

With her earnings, Lydia was able to make her first livestock purchase, a brown and white goat to provide milk for her and her family. She also uses the mobile platform to learn about which vaccinations her goat needs to stay healthy. Good crop yields and sufficient rainfall mean that a better life is within reach for everyone in the community. Families are fed. Communities live in peace. They're healthy. Children get the quality education they deserve and can build a better future for themselves. Life is good.



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However, when there isn't enough rainfall she, her family and her community suffer. Interpersonal relationships in the community and surrounding areas suffer. Diseases spread with ease. Growing children lose weight. Families skip meals. The overall quality of life decreases substantially. For Lydia and her family, AgriFin is a lifeline. If her crops dry up, her seed insurance will ensure that she doesn't lose any income because of something she can't control, which is especially important.

With the additional income she's earned through the mobile platform, she's been able to expand her business and open a stock shop, which she runs with her husband. Climate change is no longer a distant worry for Lydia and her community. It's here and it's now. Farmers — and the business owners who support them — are disproportionately affected by the growing climate crisis, and while other countries are working to slow climate change, they need support now as they experience the impacts of a warming planet.