

Access to vegetables and a better standard of living

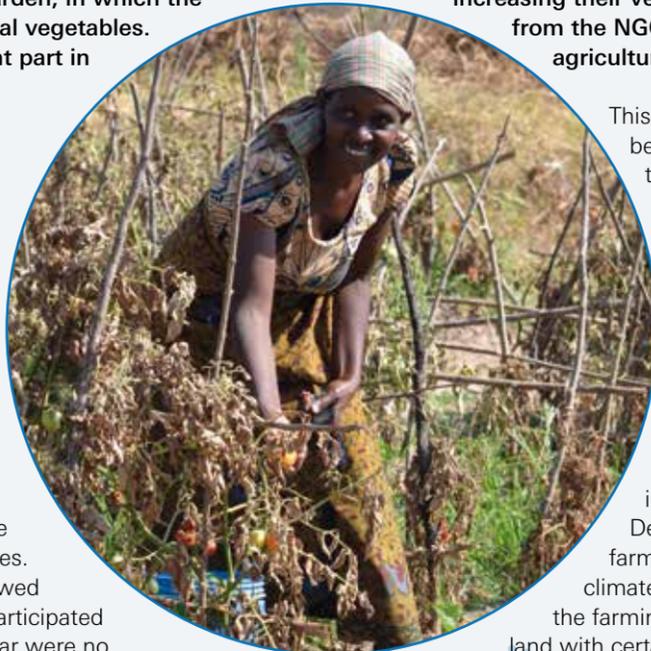
Worldwide initiatives to grant people anywhere in the world access to healthy, varied vegetables. Enza Zaden supports several CSR projects with the aim of improving the standard of living of for example farmers in developing countries. This is done in a practical way, by using resources and knowledge to increase the production of vegetables. A survey of some ongoing projects.

Tanzania: Baraa Primary School

Baraa is a primary school with hundreds of pupils. Enza Zaden's support has enabled the school to invest in an irrigation system for its kitchen garden, in which the pupils learn how to grow traditional vegetables. The garden also plays an important part in providing food for the pupils.

"Having drip irrigation enables the growers to spend a great deal more time in productive work," says Assistant Station Manager Monique Salomons. "And the consumption of water will decrease as each plant will receive it directly where it is needed, so less water will be wasted."

The vegetable garden provides nutrient-rich green vegetables that are consumed as part of the daily lunch. We know that our programme has a big impact on our students' lives. In 2016 our malnutrition checks showed that 66% of the students who had participated in the programme in the previous year were no longer malnourished. We will, however, continue to feed them, because without school food their status cannot be maintained. And hungry children do not learn, and often drop out of school."



Tanzania: Vi Agroforestry

Eight hundred small-scale farmers in the Sengerema region on the southern shore of Lake Victoria have succeeded in increasing their vegetable production with help from the NGO Vi Agroforestry and sustainable agricultural methods.

This project has two aims, the first being to increase yields and improve the vegetables' keeping quality. The modern hybrid varieties improve the quality of the crops, making them suitable for transport to the nearby cities, too. This greatly boosts the local economy.

Enza Zaden also supports Vi Agroforestry's second aim, which is to further develop sustainable vegetable production in Sengerema. Sales Manager Yann Delmas: "This includes helping the farmers to adapt more effectively to climate change, for example by improving the farming system on and around their arable land with certain larger tree species. This way they can to some extent counterbalance deforestation while simultaneously generating extra income from the sale of wood on top of that of their fruit and vegetables."

Ethiopia: Fair Planet

In Ethiopia, Enza Zaden works together with Fair Planet, an organisation that bridges the gap between large seed producers and small-scale farmers, so to speak. The first results of the ongoing projects in this country are very promising: the tomato crops that can be obtained with hybrid seed are five times larger than the average national crops. And the tomatoes themselves are larger and of better quality.

Dr Shoshan Haran, the driving force behind the project: "Our aim is to break through the circle of poverty with good vegetable varieties. We have observed that even the farmers who are using the simplest cultivation methods can substantially improve their crops with seed of good quality and basic training in irrigation, crop protection and fertilisation. These families are now able to grow sufficient vegetables for themselves, plus some extra to sell. And the money they earn by selling those vegetables they can invest in high-quality seed for the next season and in the school for the children. We train large groups of farmers and they then pass on their newly acquired knowledge to the other members of their cooperative."



Nepal: Agriterra

Together with Agriterra, a specialist in agricultural cooperatives, Enza Zaden helps small-scale farmers by sharing its expertise with them. These farmers produce good-quality seed of their own varieties themselves, to ensure better crops for themselves and for them to sell. The project focuses on three local crops: chili peppers, dry beans and broad leaf mustard. Each of these projects takes place in a different Nepalese village south of the Kathmandu valley.

Joep van Balen, Enza Zaden's Product Development Manager for Asia: "We first identified the specific problems facing these farmers, such as undesired cross-pollination and diseases. Once we'd done that we gave the growers tips and advice on how best to select and maintain local varieties, and how to collect, dry and store seed. In other words, we help them in their efforts to achieve success by improving quality."

Nepal: Children's Home Dharan

Every Christmas, Enza Zaden's employees in the Netherlands are offered the possibility of donating the value of their Christmas box to charity. In 2016 that charity was Children's Home Dharan, a foundation focusing on small-scale projects. Two of those projects relate to orphanages, but Enza Zaden's contribution goes to a third project: the primary school 'Dipendra'.

"We want to erect fences around the premises of this primary school to make it a safe, protected place for the children," explains Henk Hooghuis, the foundation's chairman. "Our second aim is to create a kitchen garden, flower garden and playground for the children, all for educational purposes. And right now we are in the process of establishing a day-care centre, to offer children who have always had to stay at home to look after their siblings the opportunity to go to school too."

Indonesia: Yayasan Bina Tani Sejahtera Foundation

Yayasan Bina Tani Sejahtera Foundation is an initiative of the PT East West Seed Indonesia (Ewindo) joint venture launched for the purpose of helping small-scale farmers grow vegetables, especially in remote areas.

Edwin S. Saragih, who is responsible for things on behalf of the Ewindo team: "YBTS uses its knowledge and technology to increase farmers' capacity and production to help them support themselves better. Since 2014 our foundation has supported more than 11,000 Indonesian farmers. We have for example helped 1,014 farming families in West Timor with 49 wells and with pipelines with a total length of 19 kilometres from those wells to the fields in which the crops are grown. More water is now available for consumption and irrigation. And we have had 48,000 manuals on vegetable cultivation printed, the great majority of which – 33,000 manuals – we handed out to local farmers."

