

Farming Communities
Helping People Grow Together

Farming Communities (Terra) 5 Year Milestone

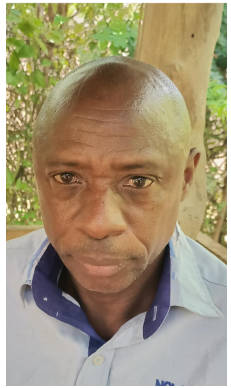
Presented by Farming Communities International President
Cam Schubert

DISCLAIMER

In order to compile the information in this presentation, I searched through company meetings, documents, and social media. I have done my best to be accurate, but it is entirely possible that certain information needs adjustment. In order to ensure accuracy, please submit any inaccuracy to the Director's Meeting after the presentation concludes. This will help with accurate company history in the future.

First, some history…





- **November 2019**: Cam Schubert is Director of Community Development at Aeroaquaponic
  - Company with similar goals, but with very limited scope
- **December 2019**: Silas Kenga reaches out to Aeroaquaponic through Cam to discuss meeting mutual goals of food security and community improvement
  - During this time, it was mutually agreed that Silas and Cam would work together on a new organization which met the scope of this challenge
- **Late December 2019**: the **Terra Organization** was conceived

Onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic

- Shortly after the formation of the Terra Organization, the global pandemic was declared which significantly impacted all aspects of organizing this effort
- Global concerns led to high volume of petitions for support and funding
  - Terra, with very limited funding, managed to supply more than $1,500 to individuals, farms, and communities in Africa during this time
- However, it quickly became apparent that more structure and funding would be necessary to truly meet our goals

What was Terra all about?

- **Terra** was founded as a solution to the multifactorial problems facing communities around the globe:
  - Food insecurity
  - Lack of social and economic development
  - Community disintegration
  - Climate change

- Terra took a radical approach, by bringing together stakeholders from the communities themselves and empowering them to share and access resources.



More about Terra

- Initially, Terra was present only in Kenya and the United States
  - The Kenya branch was led by Silas Kenga
  - The United States branch was led by Cam Schubert
  - Several other people attempted to join under false pretenses and were unfortunately barred from the organization

- This time led to significant changes in how we organized:
  1. Critical approval of new members through democratic means
  2. Rigid application of internal standards via creation of organization rules and guidelines

FarmCom is Born

- Beginning in April 2022, as part of the ongoing structural reformation of the Terra Organization, leadership sought a new name and program for the company
- At the suggestion of Silas Kenga, the name Farming Communities was chosen to represent the multiple interests of the organization:
  - Aiding farms in becoming self-sufficient
  - Developing communities through resource infusion and assistance
  - Synthesizing the farm and the community to strengthen both
- For ease of speech, the name “FarmCom” became the unofficial name of the business



New Directors and Membership

- **Ubong Patrick Udo** from Nigeria, **Francis Okai** from Ghana, and **Cody Kratzmeier** from the United States joined the organization as new Directors of incoming local branches
- Membership, defined as those served by the organization, grew to around 200 people during this time, and has remained steady since
- Shortly after this time, the current leadership structure of FarmCom International was solidified

A Flurry of Restructuring

- The restructuring and formalizing of FarmCom required extensive paperwork, rebranding, and connecting new people to our organization

- Documents created starting May 2022:
  - Kilifi County and Akwa Ibom Farm Fundraising Request
  - Kilifi County Tree Planting and Conservation Funding Request
  - By-Laws and Branch By-Laws
  - Articles of Incorporation and Branch Articles
  - Rules and Guidelines for Members and Directors

New Way of Doing Business



- As a 21st century organization, FarmCom needed to be able to communicate easily between Directors and Members, while also allowing for democratic decision making between Directors
- It was decided that FarmCom would create social media pages for membership and company updates, a Director's Meeting group on Facebook Messenger, and later, a Member's Meeting group on the same platform
- This change in communication has allowed us to keep up a semi-regular meeting schedule

Branch Composition up to the Present Day

- Existing (though some unregistered) branches that began at this time:
  - Farming Communities Kenya
  - Farming Communities Nigeria
  - Farming Communities Maryland
  - Farming Communities Ghana
  - Farming Communities Colorado

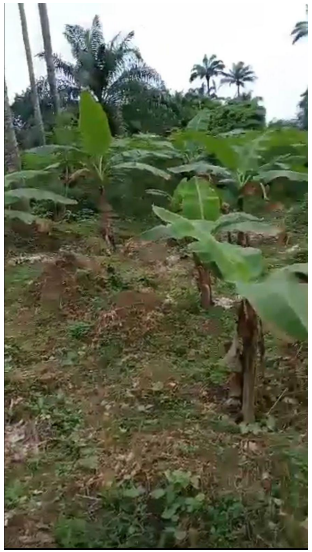
- Push for Registration led to the formalization of FarmCom Kenya, FarmCom Colorado, and Ubonglife Farms (FarmCom associated branch in Nigeria).

Achievements of FarmCom in its 3 Year History

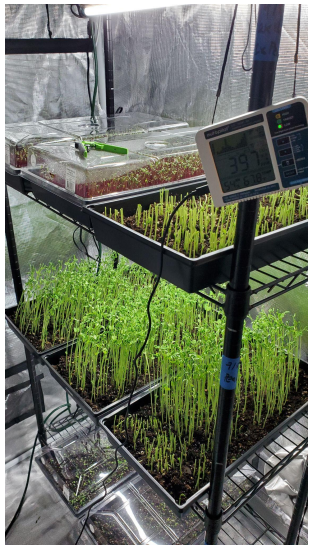
- 150+ Projects in 5 countries
- Support of community members in member countries to a total of $3,895.00 (excepting certain individual donations) with limited funds raised from individual sources outside the company.
- Support for the development of:
  - Kilifi County Farm under Silas Kenga
  - Akwa Ibom Farm under Ubong Patrick Udo
  - Ghana Farm under Francis Okai
  - Kilifi County Dam project under FarmCom Member Daniel Jefwa
  - Colorado Microgreens and Mushroom Farm under Cam Schubert
  - Website and Social Media Development by Cody Kratzmeier and Ubong Patrick

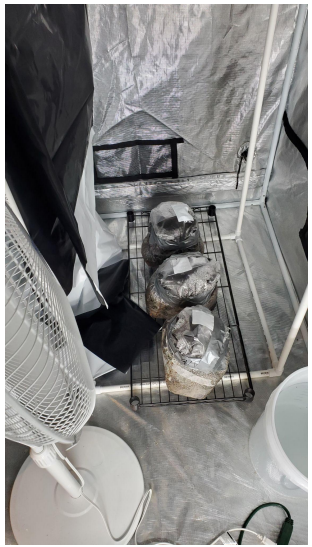


FarmCom Projects over 3 Years









gofundme

Farming Communities

Helping People Grow Together

Startup Projects in Africa and the U.S.

230 $ USD raised of 2000 $ goal

Share

Donate now

Cam Lowry is organizing this fundraiser.

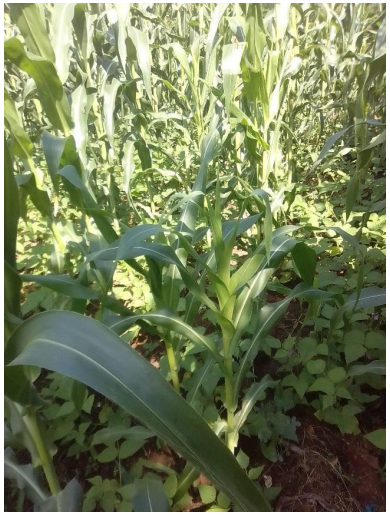
Achievements of FarmCom Kenya

As the most developed branch in our organization, special recognition must go to FarmCom Kenya for their tireless efforts to develop their branch and the achievements they have secured. Here are just a few of the things FarmCom Kenya has achieved:

- Kilifi County Farmer's Association (2022)
- Successful Kilifi Farm distribution of food to avert food insecurity
- Tree Planting and Conservation Program (May 2023)
- Kilifi County Beach Cleanup (June 2023)
- Partnership with Fridays for Future
- Formation of FarmCom CBO in Kenya
- Commitment to Holding both In-Person and Online Meetings during our history

Kilifi County Farms







FarmCom Kenya Beach Clean Up





Kilifi County Beach Cleanup 2023

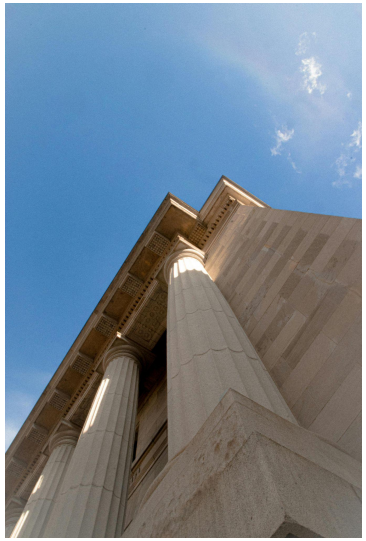
Significant Obstacles for FarmCom

- **Funding**: the principle source of funding so far has come from individual donations to assist with urgent or emergent needs in member countries
    - The drawbacks to this type of funding are significant:
        1. Limited to immediate social circles or social media reach
        2. Dependent on economic conditions of individual donors
        3. Prone to high early volume and diminishing returns



Significant Obstacles, Funding, Cont'd

- **Banking**: pursuit of banking for this organization has proved exceptionally complex, given that it is an international organization sharing funds across borders
    - U.S. Banks are not open to creation of bank accounts whose primary purpose is to intake funds for reinvestment in other countries
    - Individual Directors took on the role of holding funds and distributing them as needed



Significant Obstacles, Registration

- **Registration**: many branches struggle to complete registration of their local organization
    - Due, in large part, to cost of formalization, but also due to limited incentive
    - Costs of formalization range from $50 to well over $1,000, depending on the locality
    - Incentive to register is diminished by limited financial resources of the company and inability to support new branches



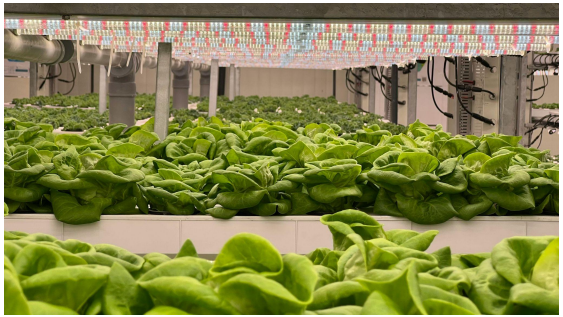
Significant Obstacles, Consistency

- We have seen the participation in social media, Member's Group, and Director's Group meetings drop in the last few years
- My role as President is to ensure these elements are consistent, and I am recommitting to this as part of our 5 Year Milestone and new 5 Year Plan.
- Most of this is logistical in nature, but we should continue to discuss goals and their attainability given current organization resources

Significant Obstacles, Consistency, Cont'd

- Social Media saw limited participation, even during periods of higher posting
- Member's Group meetings have been limited, though fairly active during times they have occurred
- Director's Group meetings have about a 66% continuation rate, though meetings that did occur were fairly well-attended and discussed a wide variety of subjects

Looking to the Future



Farming Communities is, and always has been, an exceptionally ambitious project. We are essentially attempting to rework the way that global communities share resources and support one another, while also investing most of our organizational funds into the development of community farms, small-scale infrastructure, and individual or community support.

We should be proud of how much we have accomplished with very limited resources, but we have a long way to go to achieve our goals. As part of this ambition, we can produce a 5-year plan to meet the strategic needs of the company and those it serves.

Solution 1: Funding

- **Business Conduct**: By forming and beginning the conduct of a business, each branch can begin to become self-sufficient and grow its own resources.

- **Mutual Reinvestment**: There are two ways to reinvest funds
  1. Voluntary sharing of excess funds during early growth of the business
  2. Mandatory reinvestment (10%) once the business has a stable profit

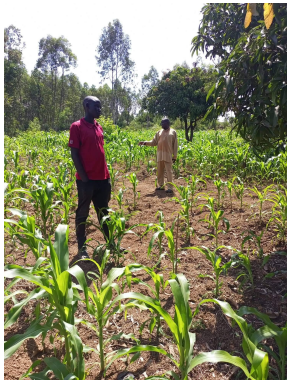
- By ensuring that our growth supports the growth of other branches and the international organization, we ensure our own needs as a branch will be met in the future. There can be no growth of the organization without internal revenue generation.

Solution 1: Funding - How to Succeed

- Mutual Support: As each business gets going, we have the unique asset of one another's experience and knowledge
  - We have seen this effect with our creation of various documents, strategies, the website, and dissemination of individual knowledge about farming
  - **Framework for Experience Sharing**: use of social posts and one-on-one assistance in starting businesses

- Commitment to Success: By committing to our own individual businesses, we can guarantee a future in which Farming Communities can share resources with more new businesses.

Solution 2: Registration



- **Registration Focus**: beginning in January of the next year, registration of existing branches will take top priority
    - Funds shared by Directors should be focused around this goal and existing need (i.e. urgent or emergent need for funds)

- Sharing experience and supporting one another will be the most critical aspect of this process, as we will need all available support to ensure that existing branches can register their companies

Solution 3: Consistency

- **President's Commitment**: As the elected President of Farming Communities International, I pledge to support the organization in meeting all of its goals, especially as it comes to consistent meetings, social posting, and community support

- **Directors' Commitment**: As the existing and incoming Directors of Farming Communities Branches, we pledge to support the development of our own businesses, the growth of FarmCom International, and the mutual dissemination of knowledge and reinvestment of funds.

- **Role Commitment**: As a Director or Member with a particular role in the organization, we commit to the fulfillment of our role and responsibilities to the best of our ability

Bringing it All Together - 5 Year Plan

- To ensure our success in the coming 5 Years, we must:
  - Commit to a program of growing our businesses
  - Register and fund new businesses through mutual reinvestment
  - Share our knowledge and experience
  - Consistently grow the global brand through social media and website posting.

- To ensure this plan is successful, we will begin to formally list the status of branches and organizational roles in a communal document, which allows for both accountability and record of achievement

Let's Grow Together



In order to find focus on our goals, we can always return to the organizational motto:

HELPING PEOPLE GROW TOGETHER

We can achieve all of the goals created at the outset of the Terra Organization, and now Farming Communities, through a mutual commitment to grow our businesses and our communities alongside one another. Speaking from my position, I am remarkably honored to stand alongside such driven, compassionate people that share Silas' and my original goal to help our communities grow. Thank you all for the hard work you do. I look forward to the next 5 years and beyond working alongside all of you.