



AGRIFIN

# LEVERAGING DIGITAL PLATFORMS TO BUILD FARMER CAPACITY

## Edutainment: driving scale and impact through entertainment platforms

March 2020



# AgriFin Program Introduction



- Mercy Corps' AgriFin programming (MCAF) represents **USD 35 million in innovation funding** from the Mastercard Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Swiss Development Corporation to support development, testing and scale of digitally-enabled services to more than **3 million smallholders by 2021**
- Our objective is to develop sustainable services that **increase farmer income and productivity by 50%**, with **50% outreach to women and youth**
- MCAF works as an innovation partner with **private sector** scale partners and such as banks, mobile network operators, agribusinesses, as well as **technology innovators and governments** committed to serving smallholders at scale
- We help our partners develop, prototype and scale bundles of **digitally-enabled financial and non-financial services** supporting **partnership development** between market actors that leverage their strengths
- We combine MCAF team expertise with strategic subsidy to jointly implement **iterative, fail-fast engagements** with partners on a cost-share basis, **sharing public learnings** to drive market ecosystem growth
- Since 2012, we have completed more than **150 engagements with over 70 partners**
- **Currently, our work reaches more than 3.2 million smallholders**



# Introduction

## BACKGROUND

- Mercy Corps' AgriFin Accelerate Program (AFA) is a USD 25 million, six-year initiative supported by the Mastercard Foundation to support the delivery of digitally-enabled services to more than **1 million smallholder farmers** across **Kenya, Tanzania** and **Zambia**
- Our objective is to support service development and scale that helps smallholder farmers (SHF) **increase income and productivity by 50%**, working to ensure **50% outreach to women**

## PROGRAM APPROACH

- AFA is **leveraging the power, convenience, and prevalence of mobile phones** to help smallholder farmers boost their harvests and incomes.
- AFA employs **a market facilitation model** to drive scalable, commercial product innovation for SHF with agricultural ecosystem partners committed to serving smallholders at scale by driving product uptake and knowledge dissemination.
- We help our partners develop, prototype and scale bundles of **digitally-enabled financial and non-financial and information services**.

## SCOPE OF ENGAGEMENT

- Mediae is a **social enterprise dedicated to improving livelihoods through educative and entertaining media (edutainment)**, developing and producing a range of content offered through various channels across Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.
- Over the past 4 years, AFA has supported Mediae in developing farmer-focused communication interventions through edutainment programmes, specifically *Shamba Shape Up (SSU)* and *Don't Lose the Plot (DLTP)*.
- Mediae currently reaches **12 million users** across three countries, with SSU alone reaching 5 million farmers (60% of whom are women and the majority of whom are youth), and DLTP reaching 4 million youth viewers.
- This learning output focuses on the **potential of digital agriculture-related edutainment** in driving outreach and content engagement at scale, pushing knowledge dissemination and affecting perceptions of farming and achieving meaningful behavioural change. Social impact created through these channels justifies investment in digital edutainment vis-à-vis more traditional channels.

# Executive Summary

**Mediae** is a social enterprise working to address the informational needs of East Africans through sustainable and research-based media productions. Mediae's edutainment programmes range from educational reality shows for farmers (E.g. **Shamba Shape Up – SSU** – and **Don't Lose the Plot – DLTP**), edutainment for families (e.g. **Mpeke Town** and **Makutano Junction**), mobile and online agricultural information and subscription message advice (**iShamba**) and financial planning tools (**Budget Mkononi**).

## Key learnings:

- **Edutainment can drive affordable scale:** 12 million users in 3 countries are being reached through Mediae channels, with high content-based engagement shown by youth segments. Overall, pushing advice through digital edutainment channels is shown to be an **effective and low-cost option**.
- **Edutainment can have meaningful impact on farmer knowledge and attitudes:** On average, 2.4 million people report that they learn something new through each SSU season. DLTP users are **more knowledgeable** about farm practices than non-viewers.
  - Edutainment has the ability to **change perceptions of farming**, typically viewed as a loss-making activity. **84% of DLTP viewers** indicate they would take up farming as a business, with **72% of viewers** in Tanzania believing that farming is profitable, and **2.26 as many viewers** than non-viewers attributing household income growth to watching SSU.
  - **47% and 49% of DLTP high-intensity viewers** in Kenya and Tanzania reported farming to be associated with being a youthful activity, indicating an overall perception change of farming.
  - Wider impact of behavioural change triggered by edutainment content includes **food security improvements**, alongside self-reported improvements in **overall well-being**, self-confidence, social status and diversity in farm output.
- **Edutainment can trigger meaningful farmer behavioural change:** Overall conversion rates of knowledge translated into practise are high across categories. **56% of practices** were influenced by SSU, with viewers more likely to be engaged in **10 out of 12 promoted practices**.
- **Edutainment can drive uptake of financial services:** financial services are identified as **leading insights** farmers get from watching SSU and DLTP, with high intensity viewers very likely to implement learnings. **28% of viewers** purchased insurance as a result of watching SSU.
- **Overall impact of digital channels justify cost investment, with positive socio-economic impact demonstrated for users vis-à-vis non-users.**

So, what is **edutainment**?

“Entertainment (as by games, films, or shows) that is designed to be educational”

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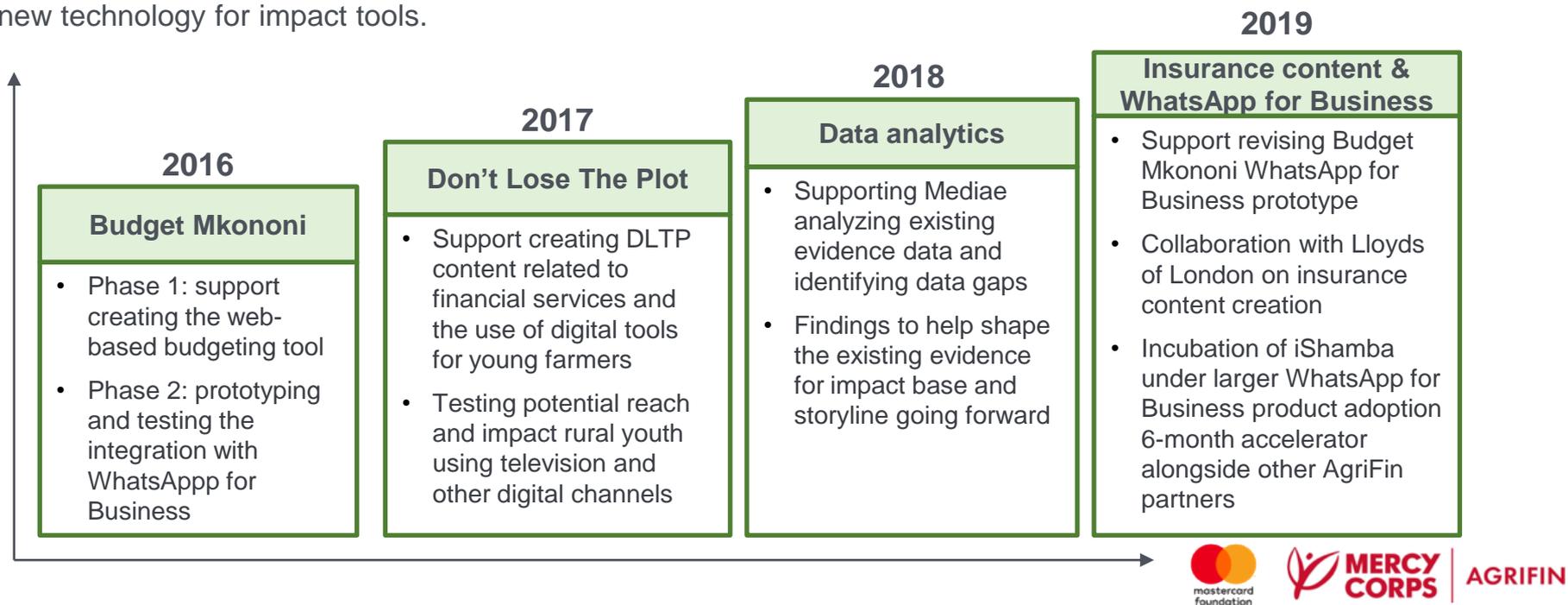
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# Mediae and AgriFin have worked together since 2016 to address farmer capability constraints using high-potential low-cost digital tools

Farmer capability has been identified as a key constraint to the adoption and usage of financial services and digital channels and also as a risk factor around farmer productivity and links to markets.

AgriFin has been supporting the development and roll-out of digital farmer capability tools through grants, technical assistance, research, piloting and experimentation.

**Targeting rural youth** has been a particular focus of AgriFin and Mediae’s engagement, with digital channels being identified as key tools affecting attitudes towards farming and behavioural change. Engagements have thus focused on developing targeted content covering AgriFin’s core areas of expertise, analyzing data and incubating new technology for impact tools.



# Mediae services range from reality TV shows to web-based budgeting tools and call centres



**TV**

Shamba Shape Up(SSU)  
Don't Lose The Plot (DLTP)  
Makutano Junction



**Radio**

Tembea  
Majira  
Pilika Pilika



**Social Media**

Facebook  
Twitter  
YouTube  
WhatsApp



**Print**

Mailed Leaflets



**iShamba**

Call Center  
WhatsApp Help Desk



**Budget Mkononi**

Web-based  
Budgeting Tool



**Example: Don't Lose the Plot (DLTP):**  
<https://dontlosetheplot.tv/en/>



**Example: Shamba Shape Up:**  
**Insurance Content :**  
[Full clip here.](#)



**Example: Budget Mkononi:**  
<https://budgetmkononi.com/>

## *Key learnings around edutainment are:*



**Edutainment can drive affordable scale**



**Edutainment can have meaningful impact on farmer knowledge and attitudes**



**Edutainment can trigger meaningful farmer behavioural change**



**Edutainment can drive uptake of financial services**

A man wearing a white raincoat, a hat, and red pants stands in front of a wooden structure with a corrugated metal roof. The structure is elevated on stilts. In the foreground, several chickens are visible on the ground. The background features lush greenery, including banana trees and other tropical plants. The scene is set in a rural, possibly agricultural, environment.

*1) Edutainment can drive  
affordable scale*

## Breadth of services and channels are key for scale: current reach covers 12 million users across 3 countries

Segmenting customer groups allows for targeted interventions. Cross-fertilization between channels has shown to increase visibility and outreach. Don't Lose the Plot (DLTP), for example, a weekly television program that followed the lives of select youth farmers, aimed at increasing youth interest and participation in agriculture as a viable business. DLTP was complemented by the online budgeting tool 'Budget Mkononi'.



**TV**

Shamba Shape Up(SSU)  
Don't Lose The Plot (DLTP)  
Makutano Junction



**Radio**

Tembea  
Majira  
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**Social Media**

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Call Center  
WhatsApp Help Desk



**Budget Mkononi**

Web-based  
Budgeting Tool



**12 million viewers**

**2 million listeners**

**>90k followers and subscribers**

**250k subscribers**

**300k farmers**

**14k users**

# Cracking the scale problem: edutainment platforms driving viewership through digital channels

DLTP and SSU show high engagement with the content streamed through its channels, particularly of youth segments.

**Don't Lose The Plot (DLTP):** an agricultural educational TV program targeting youth in Kenya and Tanzania; includes the online iShamba feature.

Estimated **4 million** viewers across Kenya, Tanzania.

**12%** (Kenya) and **16%** (Tanzania) of all youth watched DLTP.

**1.4 million** viewers are high intensity viewers (watched more than seven episodes).

An average of **1,111 SMS** are received during the series. **68k** Facebook fans, **12k** Twitter followers, **7k** YouTube subscribers.

**Shamba Shape Up (SSU):** a reality make-over TV show educating smallholders on good agronomic practices broadcast in 3 countries.

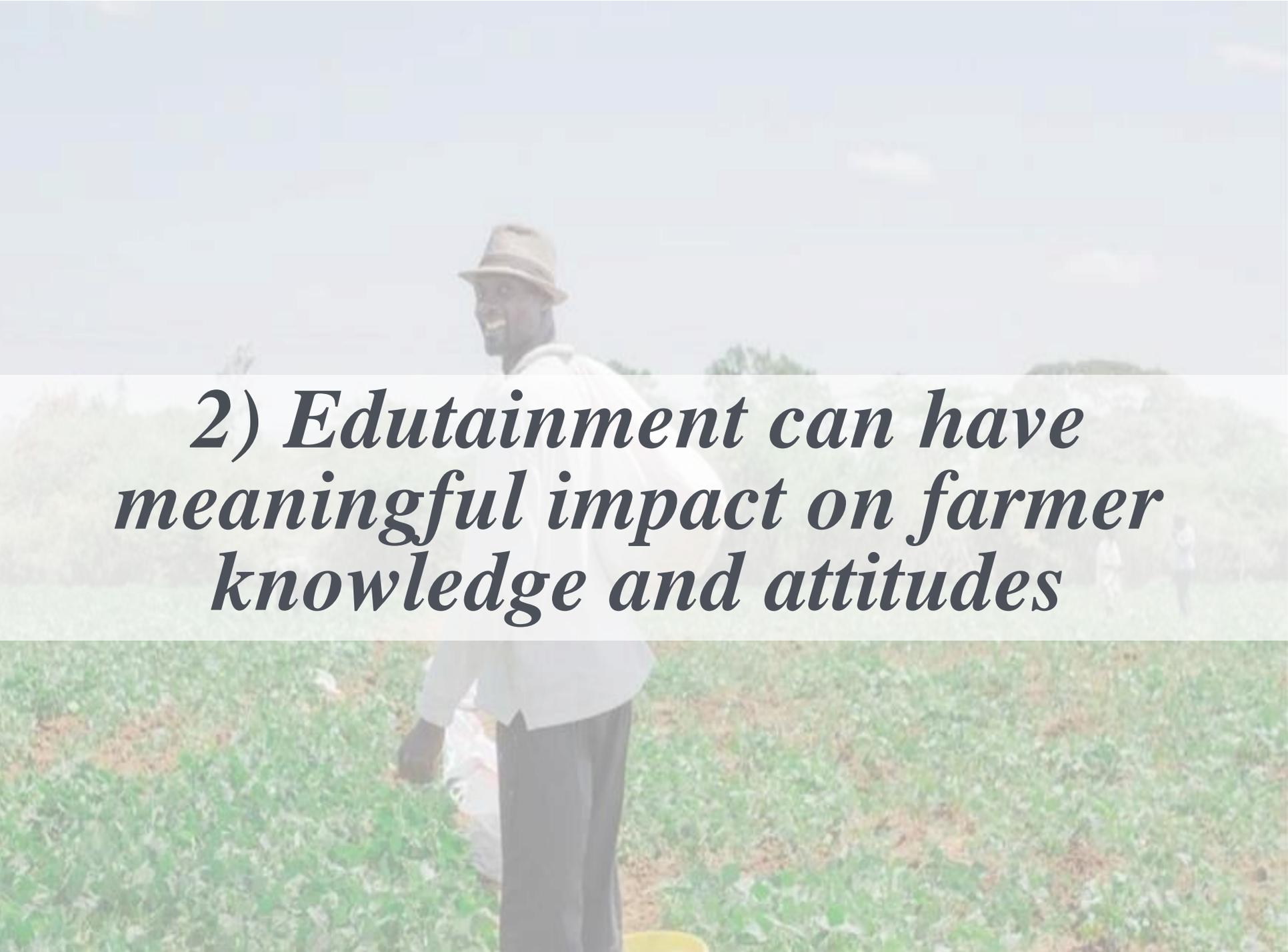
**Viewership:** estimated **5 million** viewers across Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania. **60%** of viewers are women; **60%** are youth.

An average **26k SMS** are received per series.

**69k** Facebook fans, **300** Twitter followers, **2 million** YouTube subscribers.

Overall, SSU viewers are richer and more educated than non-viewers. They are also younger, less experienced and more likely to use extension agents.

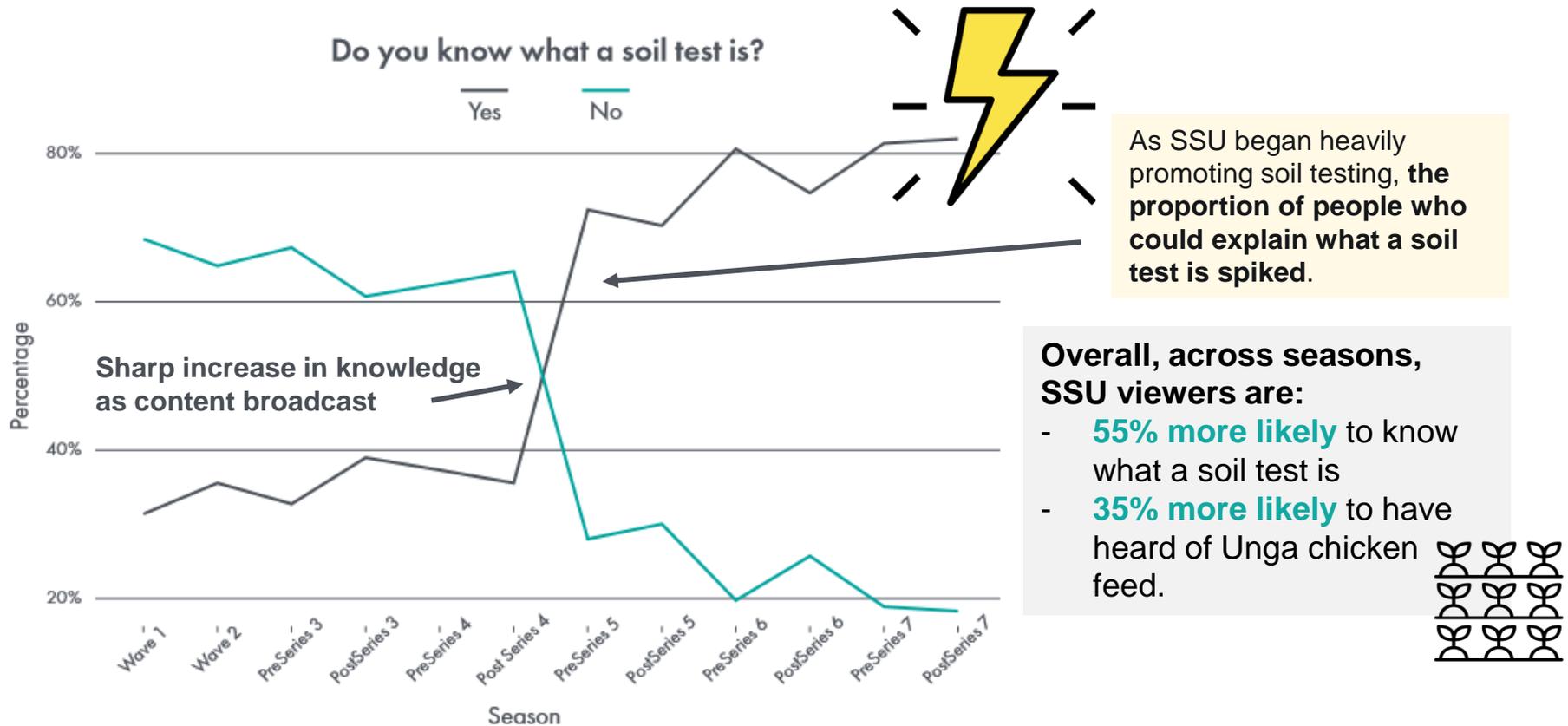
**A key SSU audience is thus new farmers looking for advice.**

A man wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt, dark trousers, and a brown hat is walking through a field of young green plants. He is smiling and looking back over his shoulder. The background shows a clear sky and some trees in the distance. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white banner across the middle of the image.

***2) Edutainment can have meaningful impact on farmer knowledge and attitudes***

# Using digital edutainment channels to disseminate ag-related knowledge yields positive impact results

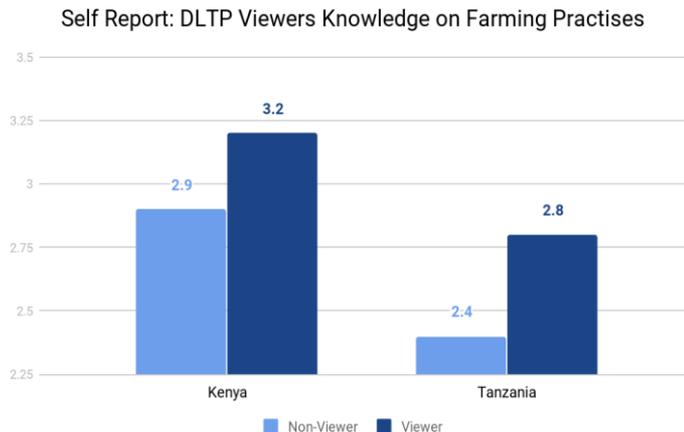
Research shows that over a range of questions, Shamba Shape Up (SSU) viewers display more knowledge than non-viewers. On average, 2.4 million people report that they learn something new from SSU each season.



# Engagement with digital edutainment platforms closely relates to better knowledge uptake

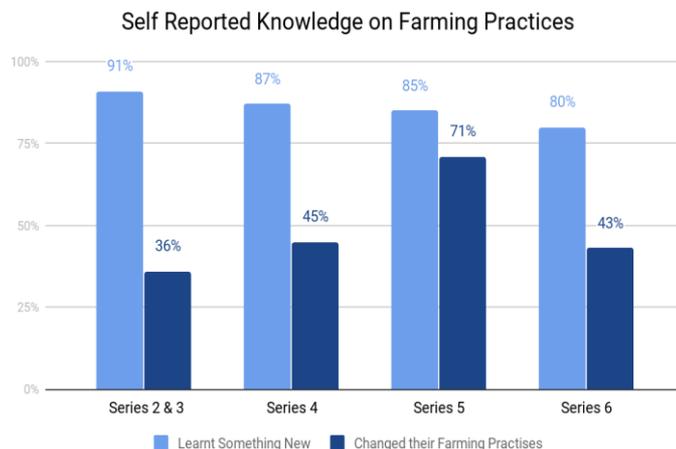
**High intensity Don't Lose The Plot (DLTP) viewers had a 3.2 out of 5 knowledge score against 2.9 for non-viewers in Kenya.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Questions on self-reported knowledge were summarized into a single score ranging from 1 to 5, with 5 representing the highest level of knowledge.



*“I like the program because it teaches about new technology in farming. I did not know about soil testing, but I got to learn about it there. How to prepare your land and how to prepare the nursery.”*

**- Adopter of farming activities**



# Agriculture and its 'image problem': edutainment changing perceptions of farming

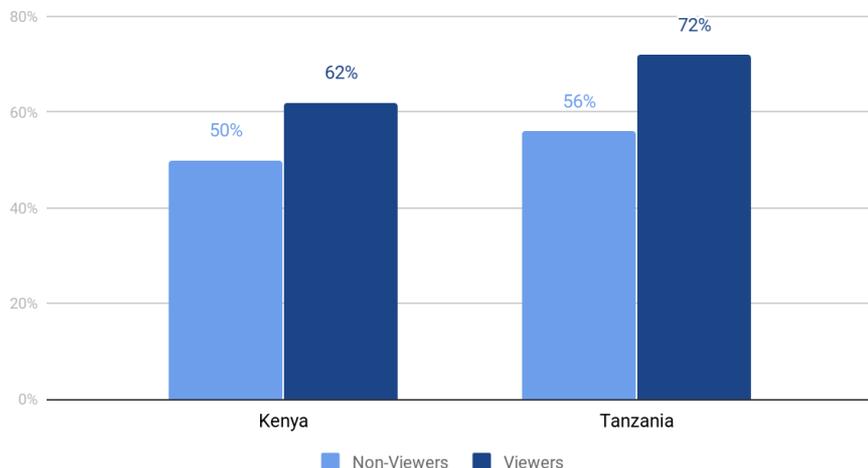
84% of DLTP viewers in Kenya and 90% of high intensity viewers in Tanzania indicated they would take up farming as a business.

## Farming is profitable

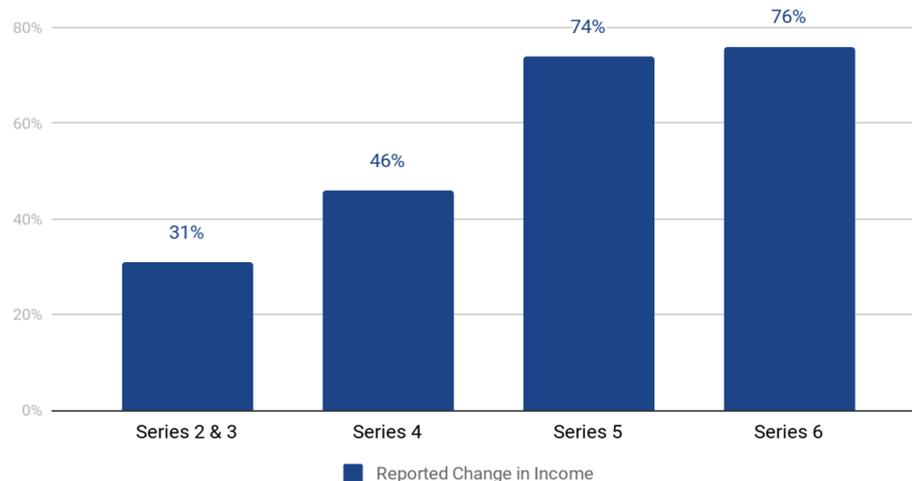
72% of high intensity viewers of DLTP in Tanzania believe farming is profitable over 56% of non-viewers

2.26 as many viewers in series 6 can attribute household income growth to SSU influence on farming relative to series 1

Self Report: DLTP Viewers agree to farming as being "Profitable"



Self Reported: SSU Viewers Change in Income in the Household



SSU: Shamba Shape Up; DLTP: Don't Lose The Plot

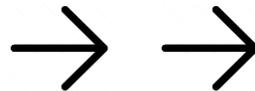
Source: 'Mediae's Learning Insights' (June 2018), produced by Busara for Mediae on behalf of AgriFin.



# Tackling a critical bottleneck for youth viewers: farming as a viable business

Perceptions of farming as a second rate / loss making venture have been identified as a key barrier preventing youth from seeking employment in the agriculture field. With the majority of East African smallholders being over the age of 60, this is projected to have severe food security implications over the coming years, and negatively affect employment prospects for new job-seekers.<sup>1</sup>

## Perceptions of farming are changing



**47% and 49% of DLTP high-intensity viewers** in Kenya and Tanzania reported farming to be associated as a **youthful activity**

Self Report: DLTP Viewers on Farming not being for "older" people



<sup>1</sup> See AgriFin Rural Jobs Landscape Study (January 2020).

A photograph of a farmer in a red shirt and a blue and red striped hat, bent over and working in a field. The farmer is positioned in the center-left of the frame, looking down at a large green leafy vegetable in a yellow bucket. The background shows a wooden structure with a corrugated metal roof and various plants, including corn and banana leaves. The ground is reddish-brown soil. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white banner across the middle of the image.

*3) Edutainment can trigger meaningful farmer behavioural change*

# Edutainment's effect on practices: behavioural change of SSU and DLTP viewers

Evidence shows that greater knowledge can lead to behavioural change, with overall conversion rates (knowledge into practice) being high.

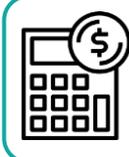
Overall, **56% of promoted practices** among farmers were influenced by SSU (self-reported). Viewers of SSU are more likely to be engaged **in 10 of the 12 promoted practices**, such as 'planted desmodium as an inter-crop'.



## RECORD KEEPING

SSU viewers are more likely to report an improvement in their record keeping activities, such as expenses, sales and harvest management.

57% of viewers (against 40% of non-viewers) in Kenya and 54% of viewers (against 36% of non-viewers) in Tanzania reported keeping better records.

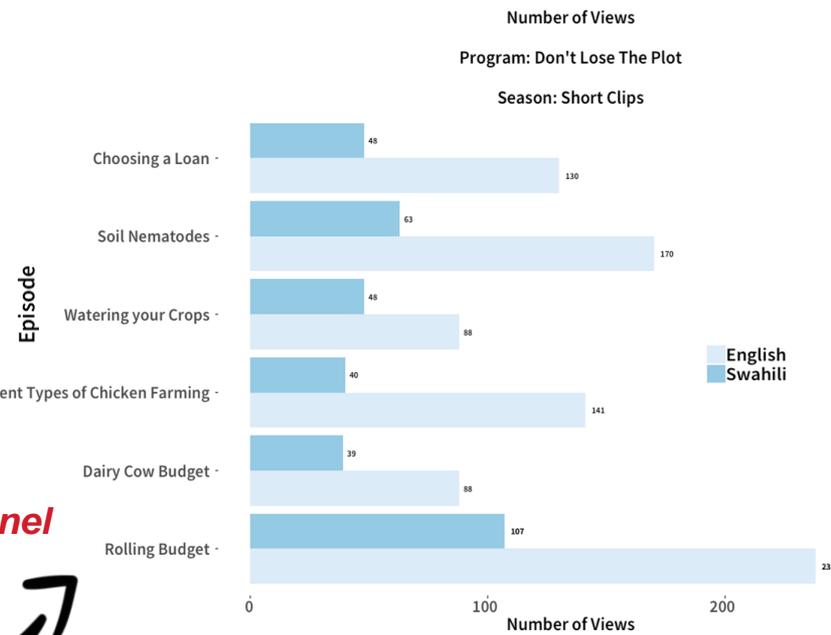


## KEEPING A BUDGET

DLTP viewers were 10% more likely to improve their budget keeping practices than non-viewers.

50% of DLTP viewers have farm budgets (top of head and written).

**Budget related clips on YouTube were the most viewed on the DTLP channel**



# Evidence shows that viewers seek more information, particularly around market choice

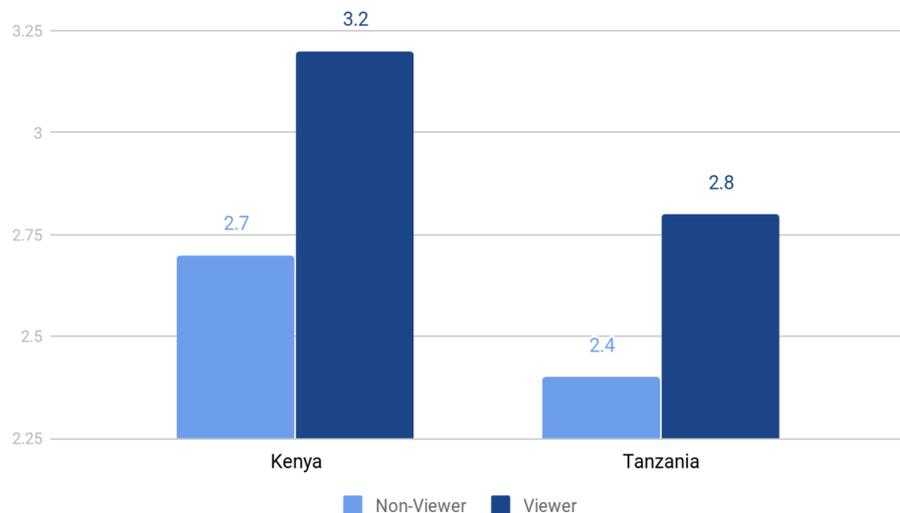
Opportunities for Digital Information Services (DIS) to plug in, pick up and leverage strides made by edutainment to help convert information provision into meaningful partner linkage.



## CONDUCTING MARKET RESEARCH

High intensity viewers on average are significantly more likely to conduct crop research in Kenya and Tanzania.

Self Report: Do they conduct market research



## iShamba as key resource providing access to further information

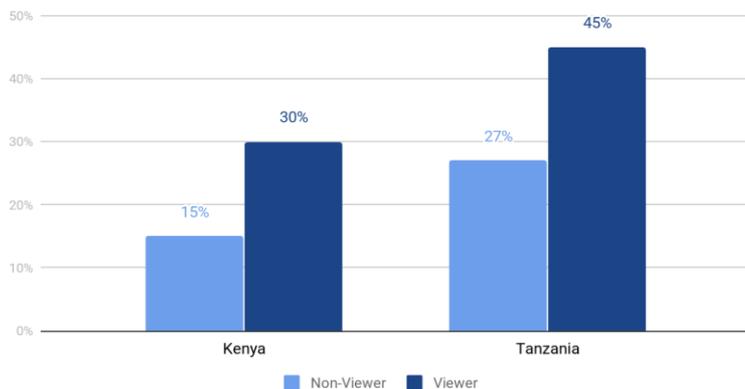
<p><b>Call Center</b></p> <p>Sign up to iShamba premium and get instant access to our call centre. Call in any day to speak to a farming expert.</p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE</a></p>	<p><b>Agri Tips</b></p> <p>Wondering when you should vaccinate your chicken? Or when is the best time to top dress your maize? Receive tips on your phone about the crops you are growing and the livestock you are keeping.</p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE</a></p>
<p><b>Q&amp;A Service</b></p> <p>SMS all your farming questions to 21606 on any day of the week and get advice from iShamba team of farming experts.</p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE</a></p>	<p><b>Weather</b></p> <p>Wondering when the rains are coming, or when to plant, or when to harvest your maize? Receive weekly weather updates for your farm location sent directly to your phone.</p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE</a></p>
<p><b>Market Prices</b></p> <p>Get weekly crop market prices on your phone from major markets countrywide.</p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE</a></p>	<p><b>Alert On Farmer Events</b></p> <p>Don't miss out! Get SMS alerts on farming shows, fairs and farmer trainings in your area.</p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE</a></p>

Ongoing integration with **WhatsApp for Business** to further engagement rates and customer interaction

# Pushing agronomy advice through digital edutainment channels proving to be an effective and low-cost option

Peer-to-peer learning promoted through Mediae channels demonstrate behavioural change impact comparable to more traditional in-field, face-to-face training of farmers on agronomy. Watching other farmers apply new knowledge, technology and practices seems to positively influence trust levels and acceptance.

Self Report: DLTP Viewers Increased use of Irrigation



## USE OF IRRIGATION



45% and 30% of DLTP high intensity viewers reported an increase in the use of irrigation in Tanzania and Kenya, respectively.

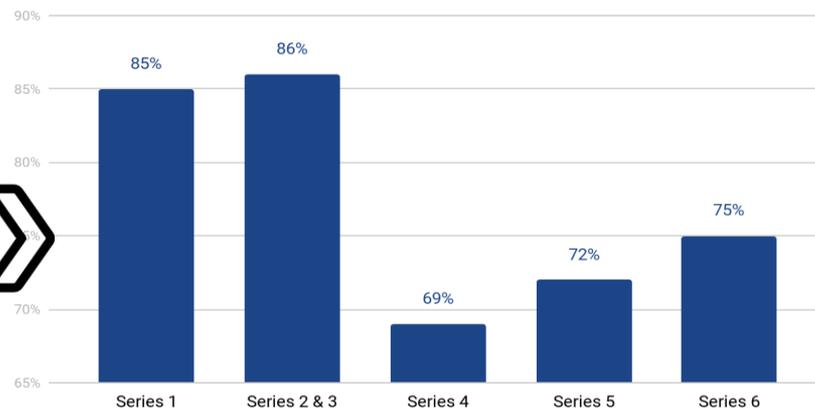


## FERTILISER APPLICATION

An average of 77% of SSU viewers reported the show having had a major influence on their use of fertilizer.

Additionally, soil testing awareness and knowledge gained from SSU increased from 74% in series 1 to 82% in series 6.

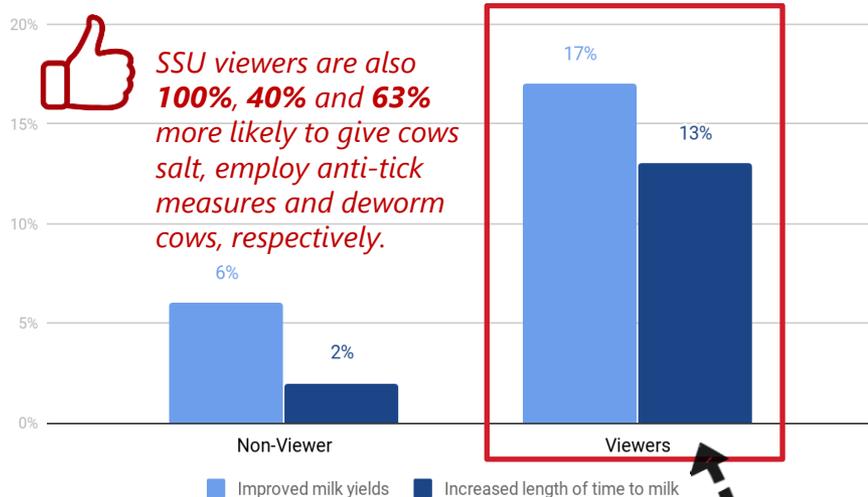
Self Report: SSU Viewers Use of Fertilizer



# Demonstrating value: impact of digital channels seem to show positive returns

Surveys show that SSU-influenced viewers milked 1.5 litres more per cow per day than non-viewers, resulting in an estimated USD 888 more per year in revenue on average. SSU-influenced viewers had approximately USD 6 more in maize yield.<sup>1</sup>

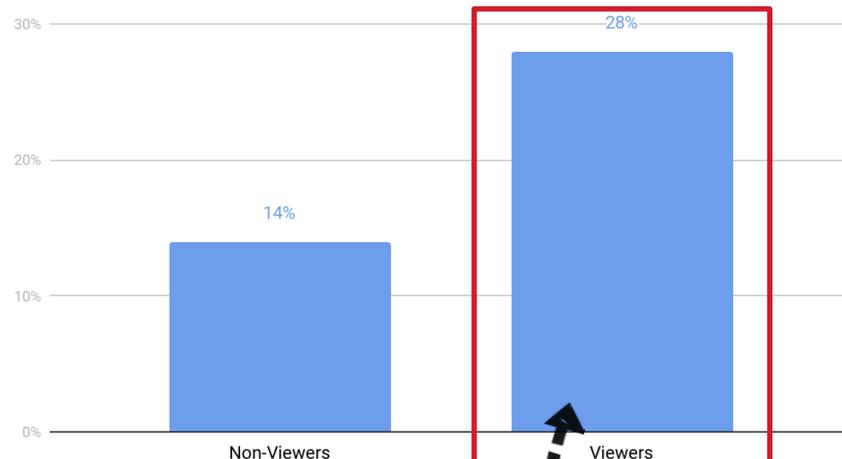
Self Report: Increased Dairy Yield



SSU viewers are also **100%, 40% and 63%** more likely to give cows salt, employ anti-tick measures and deworm cows, respectively.

Dairy farmers from **27,157 households** who were SSU viewers benefited by **\$24,139,863**

Self Report: SSU Viewers Increase in Maize Yield



Maize farmers from **97,446 households** who were SSU viewers benefited by **\$578,785**

# Wider impact of behavioural change triggered by edutainment content includes food security improvements

Across several measures of food insecurity, SSU viewers reported that their food consumption was more stable than that of their peers:

1

75% less likely to be worried about being able to eat

2

50% less likely to be “unable to eat healthy food”

3

35% and 40% less likely to report skipping a meal or going a day without food, respectively

In 2014, SSU viewers and non-viewers were asked to compare their lives now to 2012 (before the airing of the show). Viewers were significantly more likely to report increases in:

- Confidence in implementing new practices
- Social status
- Diversity of farm output
- Overall well-being



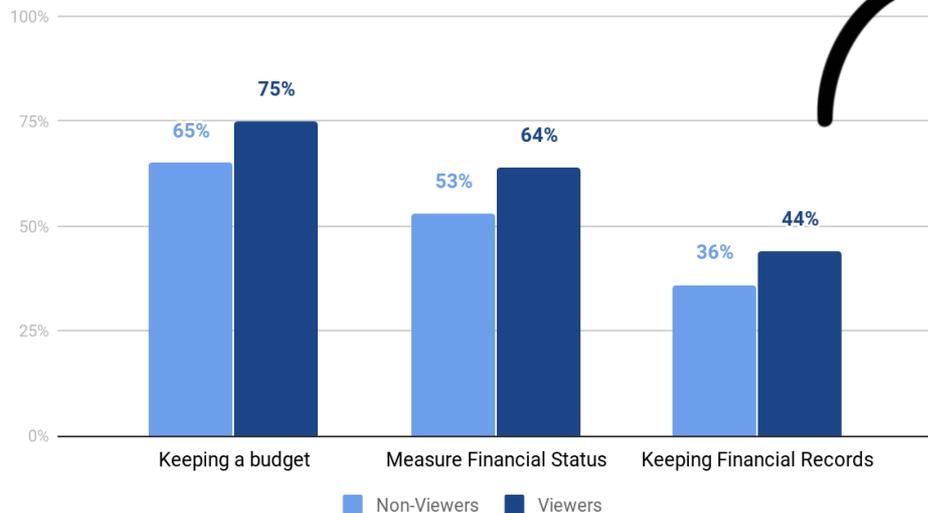


*4) Edutainment can drive uptake of financial services*

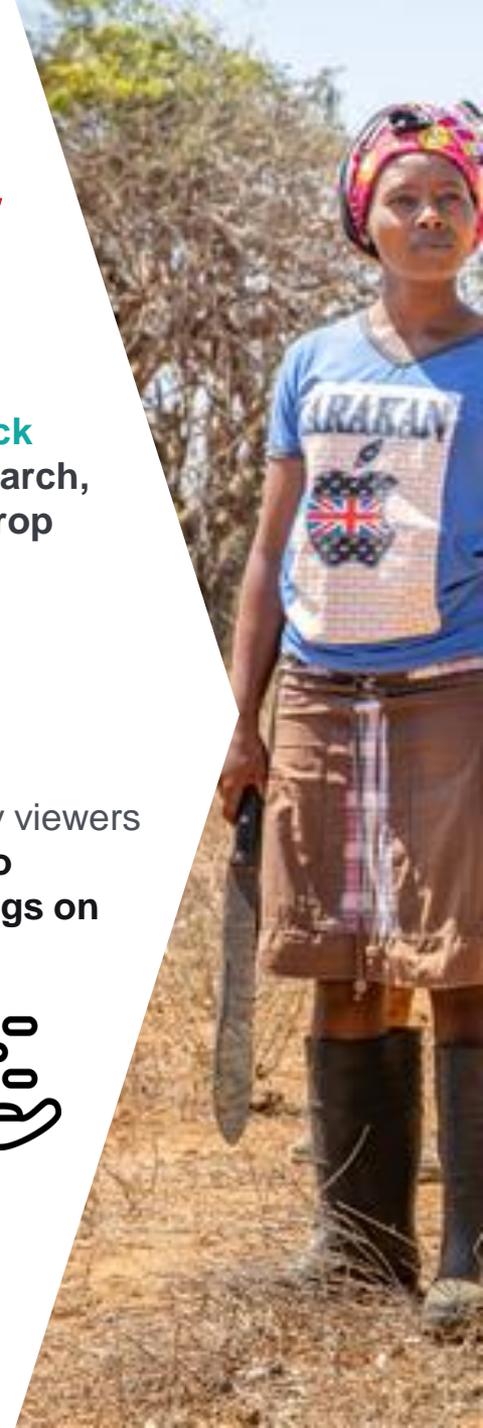
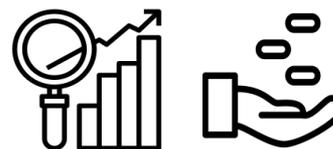
# Financial practices identified as leading insights farmers gained from watching SSU / DLTP

Knowledge gained ranges from **rolling budget techniques, record keeping, exploring finance options, generating financial reports, insurance of livestock and mobile money use**, and is supplemented by new knowledge in **market research, including contract arrangements and seeking sources of information, and crop maintenance**.

Kenya: DLTP Learnings from Financial Literacy



DLTP high intensity viewers were **more likely to implement learnings on financial literacy**



# Agricultural insurance promotion on SSU led to spike in uptake from low baseline and little prior knowledge

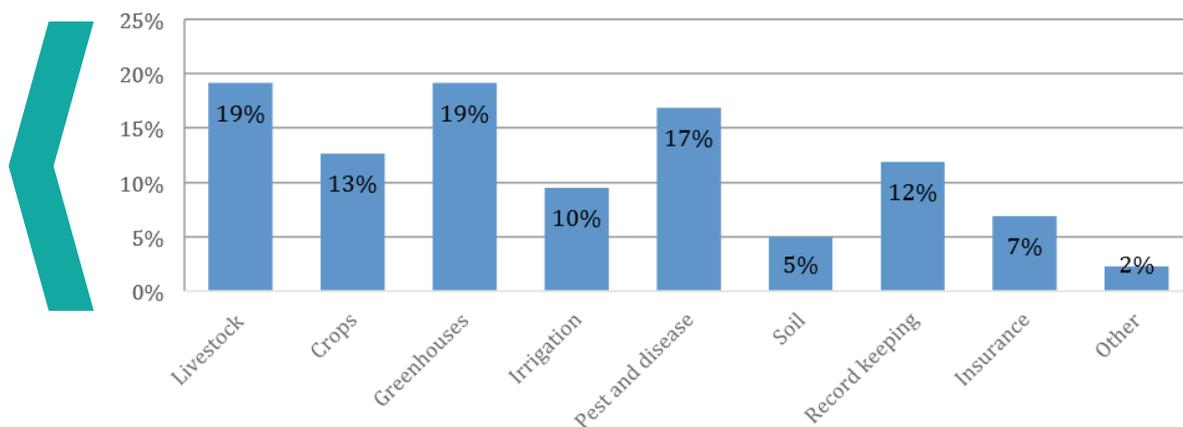
Prior to watching SSU, only 2% and 3% of respondents had crop or livestock insurance, respectively.

While only 12.5% of viewers recall watching an insurance programme, **28% of these purchased insurance as a result of SSU**. Compared to typical conversion rates for insurance uptake, this is significantly higher.<sup>1</sup>

While these results are positive for a first time broadcast, three areas require intervention: **(i) understanding low content recall rates; (iii) increasing recall rates; (ii) further increasing conversion rates.**

Despite agricultural insurance being relatively new to smallholders in Kenya, **nearly one tenth of respondents (7%)** stated that they would **like to see more on insurance** in the programme, showing high interest in the topic amongst viewers.

## What would you like to see on Shamba Shape Up?

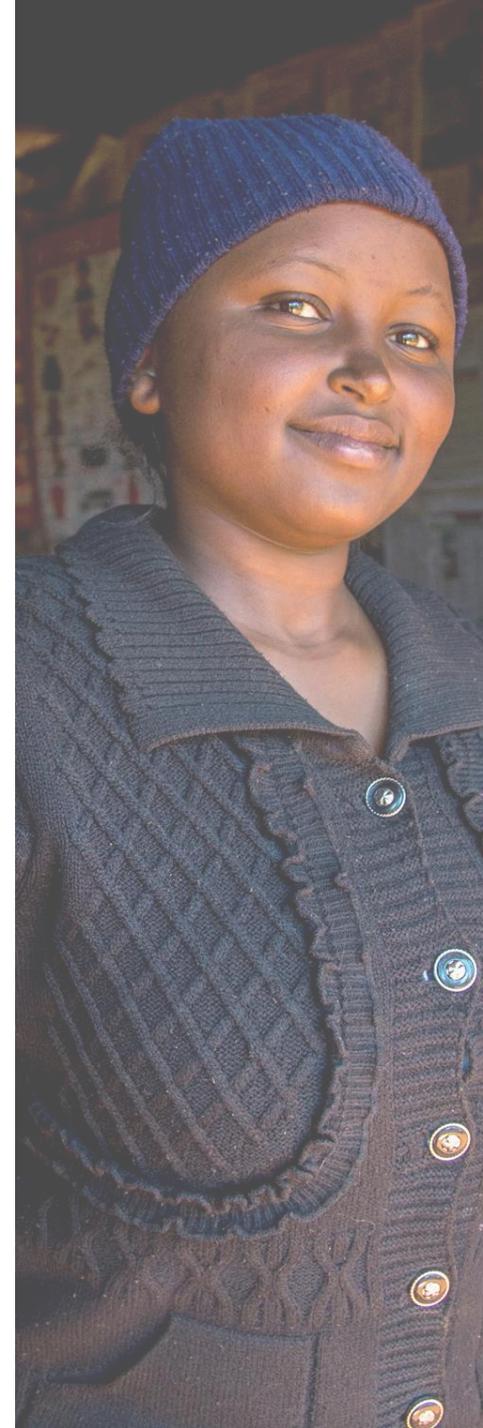


<sup>1</sup> Comparative conversion rates of commercial insurers show a 0.4% update of the 33.4% of farmers aware of insurance products (see [here](#)). **SSU**: Shamba Shape Up; **DLTP**: Don't Lose The Plot  
Source: 'Shamba Shape Up Series 9: Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Report, Focus: Insurance' (November 2019).

# Next steps

Edutainment has the potential to effectively disseminate smallholder-relevant knowledge, changing attitudes and spreading best farming practices, demonstrating positive overall social and economic impact.

- In enhancing farmer capability, a variety of separate yet interconnected channels form an **attractive value proposition** for farmers, with **peer-to-peer learning** generating positive behavioural change outcomes (e.g. DLTP and Budget Mkononi).
- Going forward, integrating existing edutainment channels into **high social impact technology solutions** holds great potential in fostering and tracking behavioural change at scale. The incubation of iShamba and Budget Mkononi under AgriFin's 6-month **WhatsApp for Business Sandbox** with six other AgriFin partners will allow for more deliberate strides in customer engagement and automated behavioural change tracking.
- Digital channels can either be **standalone knowledge dissemination tools** to reaching scale or used to **supplement existing non-digital tools**.
- **Cross-fertilization of learning outcomes** between and within partners in the AgriFin ecosystem is to be encouraged going forward. Findings of this report can be benchmarked against those of other AgriFin edutainment partners.





# *Thank You!*



**MERCY  
CORPS**

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