

Vertical Farming Technology a Solution to Food Security in Africa

Peter Nyateng*

Hydroponics, Aquaponics (CEA) and Agronomy Consultant, Kenya

***Corresponding Author:** Peter Nyateng, Hydroponics, Aquaponics (CEA) and Agronomy Consultant, Kenya.

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Africa's population is growing rapidly: currently standing at 1.2 billion people, this number is estimated to double in the next 30 years. Urbanisation is also on the rise: 45% of people currently reside in urban areas, of which 60% live in overcrowded and under-serviced areas. In 2050, Africa will have 2.4 billion people, of which 65% will be in urban areas.

Complicating this problem, food production in Africa is slower than population growth and has declined per capita since the 1970s. Furthermore, Africa's climate is warming 1.5 times faster than other continents.

This calls for the use of technology to produce food. A technology that is climate smart, one that uses less space to produce mass, water saving, a technology that produces fresh food readily available and accessible to the kitchen. Moreover, Africa needs a technology that will bring youths to farming, not farming system that hurts the back (jembe). The aforementioned factors spearheaded the need to bring a solution based farming technology. Mr. Peter Nyateng, Kenyan youth and a Vertical Farming expert has been working closely with African Association for Vertical farming to train vertical farming technology to Africa particularly South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria.



Figure 1: Peter Nyateng training youths at their training centre in Nairobi Kenya.

Mr. Peter through African Association for Vertical Farming train hydroponics, Aquaponics, aeroponics and agricultural products value addition. Our vision is to improve food security and provide a platform for economic empowerment, especially for youth and women. AAVF uses innovative food production practices to alleviate Africa's' growing population, urbanisation and climate change challenges.

One of our successfully trained participant is Zandile from South Africa. She was trained on hydroponics technology. After the trainings she received funds which enabled her to build one vertical farm. Zandile is now self-empowered and has employed mass. She is an inspiration to many. She is now training her peers on Vertical Farming.

Our target group for trainings are youth and women. Our platform ties youth and women empowerment by supporting each effort so that Urban Agriculture in Africa is seen and understood as an inclusive and empowering tool. Since unemployment is catastrophe and regional discourse in Africa, AAVF has a tool for skills retooling. This tool evaluates youths skills and unveils their potentials. After evaluation, portfolio is developed about them and put in Aavf’s platform. This platform is visible to companies who shall be ready to employ these individuals.



Figure 2: Peter Nyateng showing 4 weeks old swish chard grown using hydroponics technology.

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