

Building the Agriinfluencer Network

LESSONS FROM A PAN-AFRICAN YOUTH-LED LEARNING COMMUNITY



Building the Agriinfluencer Network

This report is part of a broader multi-country research study on social agriculture. <https://caribou.global/projects/social-agriculture/>

It is also part of the Platform Livelihoods Project, exploring working, trading, renting, and creating in a digital age. <https://caribou.global/projects/platform-livelihoods-project/>

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Sifa Florence Sangwa (Rwanda) onstage
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Executive summary

The Agriinfluencer Network (AiN) is a pan-African community of 24 young agricultural leaders across 11 African countries using social media to share knowledge, inspire peers, and amplify the visibility of agriculture across the continent.

Its members — whom Caribou and the network identify as “**agriinfluencers**”¹ — are farmers, processors, traders, and advocates who combine hands-on agricultural experience with strong digital skills. Collectively, they reach over five million farmers across Africa, creating and sharing trusted, relevant, and actionable content that helps others adopt new practices, connect to markets, be part of a community, and see agriculture as a viable and rewarding career.

AiN members work collaboratively, exchanging ideas, creating joint content, and supporting each other’s growth. Together, they contribute to the practice of **social agriculture**, which Caribou defines as the use of mainstream social media platforms to share agricultural knowledge, access markets, and build communities.²

The AiN grew out of Caribou’s earlier research on social agriculture, which revealed the untapped potential of young content creators to unlock economic opportunities in agriculture. Early research collaborators expressed a desire to connect with peers across the continent and understand the impact they have online. Through the Mastercard Foundation–Caribou Research Partnership, the AiN was established to strengthen this community of practice and generate evidence on its impact. The AiN’s learning agenda centered on three areas: how agriinfluencers create and share agricultural content, how they learn from one another through the network, and what early signals reveal about their visibility and engagement online.

1 An agriinfluencer is a young agricultural actor who uses social media as a peer-to-peer extension channel — sharing practical knowledge, demonstrating techniques, validating information, and helping other youth navigate agricultural livelihoods — while cultivating an engaged online following that relies on their content for guidance and inspiration.

2 Caribou, “Social Agriculture.”

The research was conducted using a **participatory action research (PAR) approach**, positioning AiN members as co-researchers who shaped the research questions, collected and analyzed data, and reflected on findings together. Peer-led interviews, collaborative workshops, and ongoing discussions, ensured that insights were grounded in the lived realities of youth shaping Africa's food systems.

Key findings: From influence to impact

The AiN's PAR process shows that agriinfluencers are emerging as critical connectors in Africa's social agriculture ecosystem. They bridge formal research and innovation with grassroots realities — reshaping how knowledge, technology, and opportunities reach farmers. Their influence spans three interconnected pillars:

- **Trusted information exchange:** Translating complex agronomic concepts into practical tips, creating interactive spaces for dialogue, and making new tools and practices more accessible.
- **Expanding market access:** Showcasing real examples of marketing, branding, and customer engagement, and helping youth and women — who are often excluded from formal systems — access new digital marketplaces and opportunities.
- **Strengthening networks and social capital:** Building digital communities grounded in trust, shared values, and shared learning; reducing isolation and fostering belonging among youth in agriculture.

The AiN experience also revealed what it takes to sustain a youth-led network: peer learning that builds trust over time; engagement models that balance structure with flexibility; and in-person connection that anchors community bonds. These insights now guide the network's future direction — from scaling peer mentorship and digital skills training to formalizing structures for long-term sustainability and credibility.

Core initiatives of the network include:

- The **“Introduction to Social Agriculture” online course**,³ now available in English and French and integrated into platforms like UNICEF's Youth Agency Marketplace (YOMA) digital learning platform.
- An eight-week **mentorship program** that links experienced agriinfluencers with farmers and other value chain actors to support them in building their digital presence.
- Regular, ongoing **peer learning sessions**, both virtual and in person, fostering cross-country collaboration and knowledge exchange.

³ Learn.ink, “Agriinfluencer Academy.”

Looking ahead: Sustaining and scaling impact

As the AiN transitions from a successful pilot to a pan-African platform, sustaining and scaling its impact will require clear priorities, stronger structures, and deeper alignment with ecosystem actors. The next phase of growth centers on six priorities:

- 1 **Measuring impact and credibility:** Undertake dedicated studies to understand how agriinfluencers shape access to information, income, productivity, and opportunity, and to assess the credibility and perceived trustworthiness of their agricultural content.
- 2 **Building for sustainability:** Establish the AiN as an independent entity with clear governance, operational structures, and financial systems, enabling access to both grant and commercial funding while preserving its youth-led ethos.
- 3 **Fostering strategic partnerships for scale:** Deepen collaboration with governments, development partners, research institutions, and private-sector actors to align efforts on youth engagement, digital agriculture, and rural transformation.
- 4 **Strengthening the digital agriculture ecosystem:** Equip agriinfluencers as trusted guides who help farmers navigate digital tools and technologies, translating innovation into practical adoption through relatable, community-grounded content.
- 5 **Making learning visible:** Amplify member insights through coordinated storytelling, audiovisual features, live sessions, and thematic campaigns, ensuring learning is consistently surfaced and shared across the ecosystem.
- 6 **Shaping policy from the ground up:** Strengthen youth-led advocacy by creating structured pathways for engagement with ministries, regional bodies, and extension systems so that policy reflects real-world youth and farmer experiences.

Recommendations for ecosystem actors

Agriinfluencers already demonstrate the power of peer-led communication to spread knowledge, inspire innovation, and expand opportunity. To unlock their full potential, ecosystem actors must work intentionally to strengthen, connect, and invest in this emerging layer of the agricultural extension ecosystem.

- **For development partners:**
Support social agriculture capacity-building by partnering with agriinfluencers on tailored digital-skills and outreach programs; create structured opportunities for collaboration with policymakers, researchers, and innovators; and strengthen learning systems that track behavior change and impact.
- **For research institutions and think tanks:**
Translate agricultural research into accessible, social-media-friendly formats through collaboration with agriinfluencers; develop certification pathways grounded in validated research; and expand evidence on influence, adoption, gender inclusion, and content credibility.
- **For governments and policymakers:**
Recognize agriinfluencers and social media as part of the national extension ecosystem; build frameworks for their certification and integration into public advisory systems; expand equitable digital access through connectivity, affordability, and device-financing reforms; and institutionalize youth voice in policy processes.
- **For commercial actors:**
Partner with agriinfluencers on marketing, product testing, demonstrations, testimonials, and community onboarding; ensure fair and professional compensation across all engagements; and champion diversity by working with influencers who reflect varied genders, languages, abilities, and regions.

The AiN stands ready to work with partners across the ecosystem to scale social agriculture's impact and ensure millions more farmers benefit from youth-led knowledge and innovation.

Youth, social media, and the changing agricultural landscape

Africa's agricultural landscape is evolving. A growing range of digital agriculture technologies developed by local startups and global companies is driving this shift. In pockets across the continent, digital agriculture solutions are addressing longstanding barriers farmers face, such as limited access to information, low productivity, financial exclusion, and climate-related risks, while improving efficiency for value chain actors, including agribusinesses, cooperatives, and input providers.⁴

Organizations such as CTA,⁵ GSMA,⁶ FAO,⁷ and Beanstalk AgTech⁸ have developed frameworks to map and categorize this evolving landscape. Digital agriculture solutions are reshaping the ways agricultural services are delivered and accessed. These innovations are emerging in nearly every part of the agricultural value chain, from advisory services and market linkages to financial access, enterprise management, and supply chain oversight to research and development.

4 GSMA, *Digital Agriculture Maps*.

5 CTA, *The Digitalisation of African Agriculture Report 2018-2019*.

6 GSMA, *Digital Agriculture Maps*.

7 FAO, "Taxonomy and Terminology."

8 Beanstalk AgTech, *State of the Digital Agriculture Sector*.



Despite these gains, many solutions continue to face hurdles. Reaching scale and sustaining user engagement, particularly among smallholder farmers, remains a challenge.⁹ Investment is limited, and persistent barriers such as poor connectivity, high data and device costs, limited digital literacy, and one-way communication formats continue to constrain impact.¹⁰

Digital agriculture solutions are purpose-built for agricultural actors. But a parallel set of practices is emerging on everyday social media platforms not originally designed for agricultural use. **Young farmers, traders, and producers are using social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube to enhance their livelihoods.**

Since 2021, Caribou has been exploring this growing set of behaviors and has coined the term **social agriculture**¹¹ to define them. We define social agriculture as **the use of mainstream social media platforms to share agricultural knowledge, access markets, and build community.**

From left to right: Akintobi Olanrewaju (Nigeria), Sindy Nguégim (Cameroon), and Sifa Florence Sangwa (Rwanda) in a discussion facilitated by Caribou's Fernanda Matsinhe at the second AiN meeting, Nairobi, Kenya, May 2025.

⁹ GSMA, *Digital Agriculture Maps*.

¹⁰ Beanstalk AgTech, *State of the Digital Agriculture Sector*.

¹¹ Caribou, "Social Agriculture."

Unlike formal digital agriculture platforms, social agriculture is not delivered through top-down products or services. Instead, it emerges on mainstream social media platforms not designed for agriculture. Social agriculture is practiced through peer networks, real-time content, and culturally grounded interactions.¹² These evolving practices complement digital agriculture by centering trust, immediacy, and human connection, often in spaces where formal systems fall short.

This report shares insights from the creation and development of the Agriinfluencers Network (AiN), a pan-African community of young agricultural influencers who collaborate to share knowledge and amplify agriculture's visibility through social media across the continent. This report outlines the network's formation, its achievements, and the lessons it offers about youth-led agricultural innovation in a digital age. It also presents practical recommendations for policymakers, development partners, research institutions, and agtech companies seeking to engage more effectively with this emerging ecosystem.

As institutions look to build more inclusive agricultural food systems, the AiN demonstrates that the future is not on the horizon. It is already in motion, and it is digital, community-based, and youth-driven.

The rise of social agriculture

Social media platforms are becoming essential tools for actors across agricultural value chains. They offer interactive spaces where farmers, traders, and producers connect, share experiences, and access practical, user-generated content. Through features like real-time messaging, multimedia formats, and group functionality, these platforms make it easier to learn from peers, reach new markets, and build relationships.¹³ Social media spaces are reshaping how farmers learn, organize, and adapt.¹⁴

¹² Learn.ink, Caribou, Habitus Insight, and Kilimo Source, *The Ecosystem of "Social Agriculture."*

¹³ Takahashi et al., "Using Social Media for Agricultural Information Dissemination."

¹⁴ Kilimo Source and Caribou Digital, *Social Agriculture in Kenya: A Literature Review.*

As this digital ecosystem expands, so too do concerns around the ethical risks of the spreading of mis-dis-mal-information in food systems.¹⁵ Without robust quality control mechanisms, inaccurate or misleading content can spread quickly and affect decision-making, often with serious consequences.¹⁶

Despite these risks, social agriculture offers three distinct benefits:

- 1 **Information exchange:** Social media offers a practical, low-cost opportunity to bridge gaps in traditional agricultural extension, especially in areas underserved by formal systems.¹⁷ This shift accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to grow.¹⁸ Young people in particular use short videos, tutorials, and interactive posts to share timely, localized knowledge.¹⁹ The use of local languages and region-specific content builds trust and increases the uptake of new farming practices. For many, these digital exchanges are a first point of access to relevant farming knowledge.
- 2 **Access to markets:** Social media is also transforming how agricultural products reach buyers. Through informal digital commerce on platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, producers connect directly with customers, negotiate fairer prices, and build local brands. Content on pricing, packaging, and customer engagement is widely circulated in these spaces, supporting others to navigate the shift to online sales.²⁰ This visibility supports market inclusion and opens new income streams, particularly in rural economies.
- 3 **Networks and social capital:** Online communities create space for peer-to-peer learning, mutual encouragement, and shared problem-solving. Groups like the Africa Farmers Club illustrate how digital platforms support real-world productivity gains.²¹ These networks normalize agricultural entrepreneurship, foster belonging, and create a sense of shared identity, particularly for youth navigating the sector on their own.

15 The intentional or unintentional spread of false, misleading and right information related to agri-food topics. Chowdhury et al., "Systematic Review of Misinformation in Social and Online Media for the Development of an Analytical Framework for Agri-Food Sector."

16 Beanstalk AgTech, *State of the Digital Agriculture Sector*.

17 Kilimo Source and Caribou Digital, *Social Agriculture in Kenya: A Literature Review*; Aguilar-Gallegos et al., "Social Network Analysis of Spreading and Exchanging Information on Twitter."

18 Chowdhury et al., "Systematic Review of Misinformation in Social and Online Media for the Development of an Analytical Framework for Agri-Food Sector"; Phatty-Jobe, "Trends in Digital Agriculture Advisory as the Pandemic Wanes."

19 Klerkx, "Digital and Virtual Spaces as Sites of Extension and Advisory Services Research."

20 Kilimo Source and Caribou Digital, *Social Agriculture in Kenya: A Literature Review*.

21 Kilimo Source and Caribou Digital, *Social Agriculture in Kenya: A Literature Review*.



Diverse agricultural actors are increasingly using social media to promote financial inclusion, improve farm management, and connect producers to suppliers and services.²² These behaviors are shaping the future of farming, shifting the ways agricultural knowledge, value, and voices circulate.

Fred Munene Nyamu (Kenya) at the second AiN meeting, Nairobi, Kenya, May 2025.

Telecom providers have played a critical role in enabling the growth of social agriculture. Many now offer affordable “social bundles”: mobile data packages designed specifically for social media access. For example, Airtel (Zambia),²³ Digitel (South Sudan),²⁴ and Africell (The Gambia)²⁵ offer low-cost packages that allow unlimited access to selected platforms for a fixed period. These bundles reduce the cost of digital participation, making it more feasible for agricultural value chain actors to engage with platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok.²⁶ These offerings can bridge opportunity to bridge gaps and lower the entry barrier for engagement in social agriculture.

22 Aguilar-Gallegos et al., “Social Network Analysis of Spreading and Exchanging Information on Twitter.”

23 Willems, “Beyond Free Basics: Facebook, Data Bundles and Zambia’s Social Media Internet.”

24 Digitel, “Social Bundles.”

25 Africell, “Social Media Bundles.”

26 Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa, *Digitalisation and Agroecological Markets in Africa*.

Digital influencers in social agriculture

Across Africa, a new wave of leaders is emerging within social agriculture: **agriinfluencers**. These digitally enabled, youth-driven, and community-oriented leaders combine a passion for agriculture with digital storytelling and strategic communication. They use social media platforms not just to showcase their own work, but to advocate for agriculture, offer practical advice, spotlight innovations and success stories, and support other value chain actors.

The rise of agriinfluencers mirrors broader shifts in influence across other sectors, where digital creators have moved from the margins to the mainstream. From influencer Kaby Lane's appointment as a UNICEF Ambassador²⁷ to YouTuber Wode Maya's celebration of African excellence,²⁸ social media figures are shaping public narratives and driving global conversations. Agriinfluencers are emerging as influential voices and knowledge brokers in agricultural food systems.

Many agriinfluencers are gaining visibility through consistent and culturally relevant content and are building large and engaged followings online. Some speak in local languages and share context-specific content, making them uniquely effective at reaching farmers in ways that formal extension systems often cannot. Their influence extends beyond information-sharing. By modeling new behaviors, sharing success stories, and normalizing entrepreneurship in agriculture, agriinfluencers are reframing agriculture as a viable, modern, and aspirational career path for young people, especially in contexts where such narratives are limited.

Despite their growing reach and value, most agriinfluencers operate informally, without professional networks, dedicated training, or institutional recognition. There is limited data on how their influence scales, how it interacts with existing extension models, and what kinds of support would enable them to deepen their impact. These gaps are particularly significant given the urgency of building inclusive, youth-driven food systems across the continent.

27 UNICEF, "Kaby Lane."

28 Africa Prosperity Network, "Exclusives: Winners of Africa Prosperity Champions Awards (APCA) 2025."

The Agriinfluencer Network:

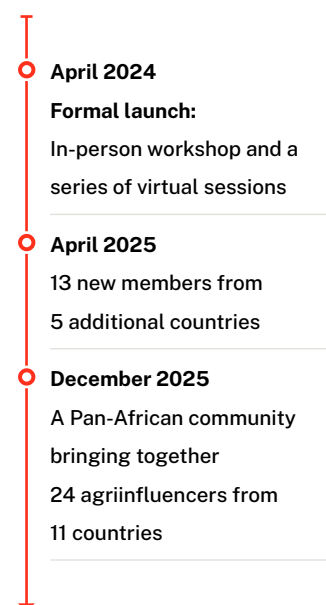
From concept to Pan-African community

The idea for the AiN emerged during Caribou's early research on social agriculture. Several agriinfluencers who contributed to that work, including Catherine Kamanu (Cathy Kamanu), Akintobi Olanrewaju (Naija Farmer) and Fred Munene (Farm with Fred), expressed a shared desire to connect with peers across the continent, learn from one another's experiences, and better understand the impact they have online. With support from the Mastercard Foundation, Caribou facilitated a co-design process that brought these early collaborators together to create a network based on learning, trust, and practice.

The AiN was formally launched in April 2024 with an in-person workshop and a series of virtual sessions to build relationships, define goals, and shape the network's identity. From the outset, the AiN was designed as a platform where agriinfluencers would share experience, collaborate, and lead inquiry into their own influence and reach. This commitment to learning by doing was intentional: meaningful insights about influence in agriculture must be grounded in lived experience and co-owned by those driving the work.

The network started with 11 members from 6 countries — Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda — who collectively reached nearly 3 million followers across major social media platforms. In April 2025, 13 new members joined from 5 additional countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and South Sudan. This expansion strengthened the network's presence in francophone Africa and extended its reach across the continent.

Today, the AiN is a Pan-African community that brings together **24 agriinfluencers from 11 countries**, with a combined following of **over 5 million followers**²⁹ across all major social media platforms, the majority of whom are smallholder farmers.



²⁹ This figure represents the combined total across all agriinfluencers' social media platforms. The number of *unique* followers is not yet known, as overlap across platforms has not been assessed; a follow-up study will examine this in more detail.

Recruitment and selection

Membership recruitment combined open calls on social media with targeted outreach to known creators and communities. Hundreds of applications were received. A multi-stage process, including application reviews and interviews, was used to identify those candidates with both digital reach and relevance to social agriculture.

Selection was guided by a structured scorecard and a commitment to equity and inclusion. Priority was given to gender balance and the inclusion of youth with disabilities and displaced populations. Candidates were assessed across five criteria: content relevance, reach and audience engagement, diversity (demographic, thematic focus, and value chain representation), impact potential, and innovation.

While applicants were generally expected to have at least 5,000 followers, flexibility was applied to reflect varying platform penetration and audience size across countries. The AiN recognizes four tiers of digital influence:

- Micro (5,001–30,000 followers)
- Macro (30,001–100,000 followers)
- Meta (100,001–500,000 followers)
- Mega (500,001+ followers)³⁰

The final cohort reflects a spectrum of influence, from micro-creators with smaller, highly engaged communities to mega-influencers who reach more than 500,000 followers.

Who the AiN members are

AiN members combine lived agricultural experience with formal training and strengths in storytelling, shaping the relevance and resonance of the content they create. Most hold university degrees and have backgrounds in a range of professions, including education, agronomy, business, and journalism. While this reflects certain educational and professional privileges, it also helps explain their effectiveness in connecting rural realities with digital opportunities. Many deliberately transitioned to agriculture, combining technical knowledge with storytelling and charisma.

³⁰ Wowzi, “Creators.”

Their backgrounds position them as powerful intermediaries: skilled, visible, and driven leaders who can mobilize attention, model success, and shape behaviors. In a context where formal agricultural systems often fail to reach farmers, the ability of a few hundred agriinfluencers to engage millions of farmers, and shift narratives and practices across entire value chains, deserves serious attention.

What the AiN members do

As a community, AiN members have created peer-learning spaces on topics such as digital branding, platform growth and monetization, and using tools like artificial intelligence for content creation. They have co-developed a digital curriculum for social agriculture, participated in research design and reflection, engaged in upskilling through workshops, and mentored aspiring value chain actors across the continent to support their strategies for using social media in their agriculture ventures.

Individually, AiN members continue to engage in a wide and growing range of digital and offline activities:

- Sharing agronomic and health-related information through short videos, short text-based posts, and tutorials.
- Creating storytelling content and agro-journalism that highlights innovations in farming practices and stories of local changemakers.
- Providing on-farm and online training, coaching, and mentorship, and farm tours in their local contexts.
- Expanding market access by showcasing products, customer experiences, and pricing strategies.
- Advocating on critical issues such as climate resilience, gender equity, and youth inclusion in agriculture to influence public discourse and policy conversations.

AiN members are united by their commitment to positively impact Africa's food systems by making agriculture more visible, more connected, and more inclusive, particularly for youth, women, and rural populations. This commitment has shaped both the network's identity and its impact.







SPOTLIGHT

Meet the Agriinfluencers

These profiles offer a window into the diversity of AiN members. Rather than a comprehensive list, these are illustrative examples drawn from across the network, showcasing different types of agriinfluencers, their backgrounds, reach, platforms, and focus areas. Collectively, they reflect the breadth of voices, strategies, and impact shaping the network's influence across the continent.









Fred Munene

-  Kenya
-  Farm with Fred
-  YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, Facebook
-  linkedin.com/in/fred-munene-612648111/
-  1.4 million
-  Agronomic practices, irrigation, youth-targeted learning

Fred is a farmer, agronomist, and irrigation specialist who simplifies technical agronomic practices into engaging videos tailored to farmers. His content focuses on practical, on-farm problem-solving, from soil health to pest management, and encourages followers to try low-cost innovations. Fred helps farmers understand input choices, seasonal planning, and customer demand patterns. His work fuels peer-to-peer learning and promotes community-driven experimentation; followers frequently engage, ask questions, and share back their own experiences.



Gifty Hodey Manye

-  Ghana
-  The Ghanaian Farmer
-  YouTube, Facebook, Instagram
-  linkedin.com/in/enyonam-the-ghanaian-farmer-5b10a11aa/
-  307,519
-  Agro-journalism, agrotourism, women in agriculture

Gifty is an agri-journalist and founder of Count On Crops Hub, a partnership-driven hub dedicated to transforming farming in Africa from an isolated struggle into collaborative, thriving businesses through storytelling. Through her platform The Ghanaian Farmer, Gifty brings visibility to farmer-led enterprises, women's leadership, and emerging agribusiness trends. Her work documents practical business models and success stories from across the continent, combining storytelling with advocacy to shift perceptions of agriculture. Gifty has been recognized with the IFAJ/Alltech Young Leaders Award and the Agricultural Journalist of the Year Award from the African Women in Agribusiness Forum.

SPOTLIGHT: MEET THE AGRIINFLUENCERS



Jean Claude Niyomugabo

📍 Rwanda

👤 JC Niyomugabo

📱 X (Twitter), Facebook, LinkedIn

🌐 [linkedin.com/in/jcniyomugabo/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jcniyomugabo/)

📄 617,497

🔍 Climate-smart practices, youth engagement, advocacy

Jean Claude is co-founder and CEO of Agririte, an agtech company that leverages social media to promote sustainable farming and inspire youth engagement in agriculture. His content blends science, technology, and innovation with traditional knowledge, offering practical guidance for smallholders and aspiring young farmers. More than sharing techniques, he champions agriculture as a purposeful and professional path for digital-native youth. His impact has been recognized with the Ban Ki-Moon Youth Agri-Champion Award (2022), a Global Citizen Award nomination (2024), Best Young Achiever–Agribusiness Man of the Year 2024/25, and African Agripreneur of the Year 2025 from TTYBrand Africa Magazine.



Chidinma Mary Ezeh

📍 Nigeria

👤 ChiAfrica

📱 X (Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn

🌐 [linkedin.com/in/dinmaezeh/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/dinmaezeh/)

📄 26,441

🔍 Climate-smart agriculture, workforce development

Chidinma focuses on climate-smart agriculture, rural employment, and youth empowerment. She serves as the team lead at farmCAS, an agricultural HR platform that connects, trains, and manages skilled youth for agribusiness opportunities across Nigeria. Through her digital presence, she shares motivating and practical content on careers in agriculture, policy developments, and strategies for climate resilience. As the Country Representative for YPARD Nigeria, Chidinma supports a nationwide network of over 3,000 young people through mentorship, skill-building, and job placement initiatives. She has earned recognition as Africa's Agriculture Influencer at the Bayern Youth Agric Summit Award (2021), and the British American Tobacco Foundation's Farmers for the Future Award.

The AiN Learning Agenda: A youth-led participatory research model

As the AiN took shape, members and Caribou recognized a shared opportunity to generate new insights about the evolving role of agriinfluencers in agricultural food systems, and to do so in a way that was grounded in their lived experience. While social media is already widely used by farmers to share advice, coordinate activities, and access new markets, there is little empirical research on how digital influence works in agriculture, particularly in understanding the informal, trust-based networks that form online.³¹ This gap informed the design of the AiN as a participatory action research (PAR) initiative.

PAR is a collaborative approach that positions participants as co-researchers. It draws on lived experience and local knowledge, emphasizing shared inquiry and collective learning.³² Unlike traditional research methods that often treat participants as subjects, PAR involves them in every step of the process, from defining the problem to collecting data, interpreting results, and shaping action.³³ The approach is grounded in the belief that meaningful knowledge is created in partnership, and that this knowledge can drive both individual and systemic change.³⁴

AiN's participatory research model rests on three interlinked pillars — **participation**, **action**, and **research** — each reinforcing the others to build an authentic, youth-led process of learning and transformation.

- **Participation:** The network consists of the influencers it studies. Members work alongside Caribou to shape the research agenda, co-create knowledge products, and explore the challenges and opportunities they face. This peer-led model reflects the Mastercard Foundation's commitment to youth-centered systems change: knowledge is not extracted from communities, it is generated and owned by them.
- **Action:** The AiN is already live and growing. Its members are reaching large audiences across the continent, sharing advice, translating complex information into accessible content, and modeling practical, culturally relevant innovations in real time. Through ongoing collaboration, mentorship, and co-created resources, the AiN is strengthening how agriinfluencers support farmers, engage peers, and build sustainable livelihoods, creating the infrastructure for informal extension, community organizing, and agricultural transformation.

31 Aguilar-Gallegos et al., "Social Network Analysis of Spreading and Exchanging Information on Twitter."

32 Cornish et al., "Participatory Action Research."

33 McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research*.

34 McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research*.

- **Research:** This paper is part of an effort to document the AiN by exploring what is already working, where gaps exist, and how institutions can engage with this emerging system responsibly and effectively. The AiN offers a living example of inclusive, youth-led agricultural development, one that is digital, decentralized, and already in motion. It does not need to be built from scratch, but instead understood, supported, catalyzed, and sustained.

In response to this opportunity, Caribou and the founding AiN members developed a shared learning agenda grounded in a central question:



How can agriinfluencers effectively support large numbers of smallholder farmers and other participants in agricultural value chains, particularly youth and young women, to strengthen their livelihoods?

This question reflects the practical realities agriinfluencers navigate every day: building an audience, understanding what their followers need, navigating platform algorithms, and translating online engagement into meaningful offline impact. Through ongoing discussion and shared reflection, AiN members identified several areas that required deeper understanding. These were not formal research hypotheses; they emerged through peer learning, platform practice, and shared reflection across the network. Together, they form the foundation of the learning agenda documented in this paper and point towards priorities for future study.

The network identified three core areas of inquiry, while recognizing that future studies will need to examine audience reach, impact, and content credibility.

- **How agriinfluencers create and share agricultural content:** What formats, techniques, and communication practices they use, and how these reflect their lived experience.
- **How the Agriinfluencer Network supports peer learning and skill development:** What members learned through collaboration, mentoring, and shared reflection.
- **What early signals reveal about visibility and engagement across platforms:** How followers respond to their content, and what influencers observe about reach and resonance.

Beyond research, the AiN has evolved into a professional community that is deliberately shaped through co-ownership. Members have cultivated a culture rooted in mutual respect, shared values, and ethical practice. They have agreed to collaborate, not compete, and to promote one another's work through cross-posts, shoutouts, and peer learning. Caribou's role has remained facilitative, not directive, ensuring that decision-making power rests with the network itself.

An in-person workshop set the foundation for this model, fostering mutual trust, collective purpose, and openness. This was followed by ongoing collaboration through WhatsApp groups, co-facilitated sessions, and a culture of transparency and reciprocity. As a result, the AiN has grown beyond a research initiative into movement led by young agricultural influencers building knowledge, shaping practice, and redefining what influence means in Africa's agricultural landscape.

As the participatory research unfolded, members and their communities surfaced specific, recurring priorities that cut across countries and value chains. Two needs stood out as both urgent and consistent.

First, there is a **strong demand for accessible, practical digital skills training**, particularly in areas such as video production, on-camera presentation, and visual content design. While many agriinfluencers are confident in text-based communication, few have access to the tools or training required to produce compelling multimedia content, skills that are increasingly essential for reaching and engaging online audiences.

Second, there is a clear **need for structured mentorship** for aspiring farmers and other value chain actors. Followers frequently seek personalized guidance on issues such as content creation, crop selection, marketing, financing, and digital engagement. Meeting this demand will require mentorship models that are scalable, supportive, and responsive to the diverse realities of young people working in agriculture.

These insights directly informed the evolution of AiN's objectives, activities, and outputs, ensuring that the network's growth responds to the lived experience of its members and the communities they serve.

Objectives, key activities, and outputs

While the network was co-designed with founding members, its initial objectives and structure were developed by Caribou as part of the broader research agenda, anchored in a theory of change designed to strengthen the role of agriinfluencers in Africa's food systems. These objectives were not static. They evolved through engagement with network members, whose lived experience grounds the theory in practice.

The objectives reflect both the practical needs identified through the research process, such as digital skills and mentorship, and the strategic goals of the participatory research approach. Together, they shape the network's activities, outputs, and operating model, balancing immediate peer support with long-term systems change.

OBJECTIVES	KEY ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS
Facilitate knowledge exchange and idea sharing to strengthen agriinfluencer livelihoods.	Build and maintain a vibrant, pan-African community of young agriinfluencers.
	Host regular peer learning sessions, webinars, and WhatsApp-based knowledge exchanges.
	Offer targeted upskilling opportunities based on members' needs, including storytelling, branding, and platform-specific growth strategies.
Co-create and share knowledge products that strengthen social agriculture and support farmers' and other value chain actors' livelihoods at scale.	Develop a digital curriculum that includes topics on building and maintaining a strong online presence, and monetizing digital platforms to support income generation, rooted in real-world experience.
	Capture and share insights from peer learning and upskilling sessions, mentorship activities, and platform practices in accessible and actionable formats.
	Disseminate content through digital platforms, strategic partnerships, and targeted outreach.
Build capacity through training and mentorship.	Deliver and scale a cohort-based mentorship program tailored to the needs of aspiring agriinfluencers, farmers, and other value chain actors.
	Offer one-day intensive online training, anchored in practical content and peer support.
Extend agriinfluencer reach and impact, both online and offline.	Support members to amplify their reach through content development, platform strategy, and engagement techniques.
	Partner with value chain actors to integrate agriinfluencers into farmer outreach activities.
	Explore hybrid dissemination models to engage offline farmers (e.g., community radio, print, events).
Ensure the long-term sustainability of AiN beyond an action research project.	Register the AiN as an independent, member-driven entity with clear accountability and shared leadership.
	Develop and implement governance, operational, and financial systems to support growth.
	Pilot research partnerships and income-generating models, including consultancy services, sponsored training, and ambassadorships for digital agriculture services.
Position AiN as a recognized driver of agricultural transformation in Africa.	Build partnerships with relevant stakeholder programs and initiatives focused on youth engagement in agriculture.
	Champion social agriculture as a complementary model of agriculture extension by amplifying youth-led, peer-to-peer knowledge sharing.
	Engage in strategic communications to highlight agriinfluencers' contributions to agricultural innovation, community mobilization, and inclusive knowledge exchange.

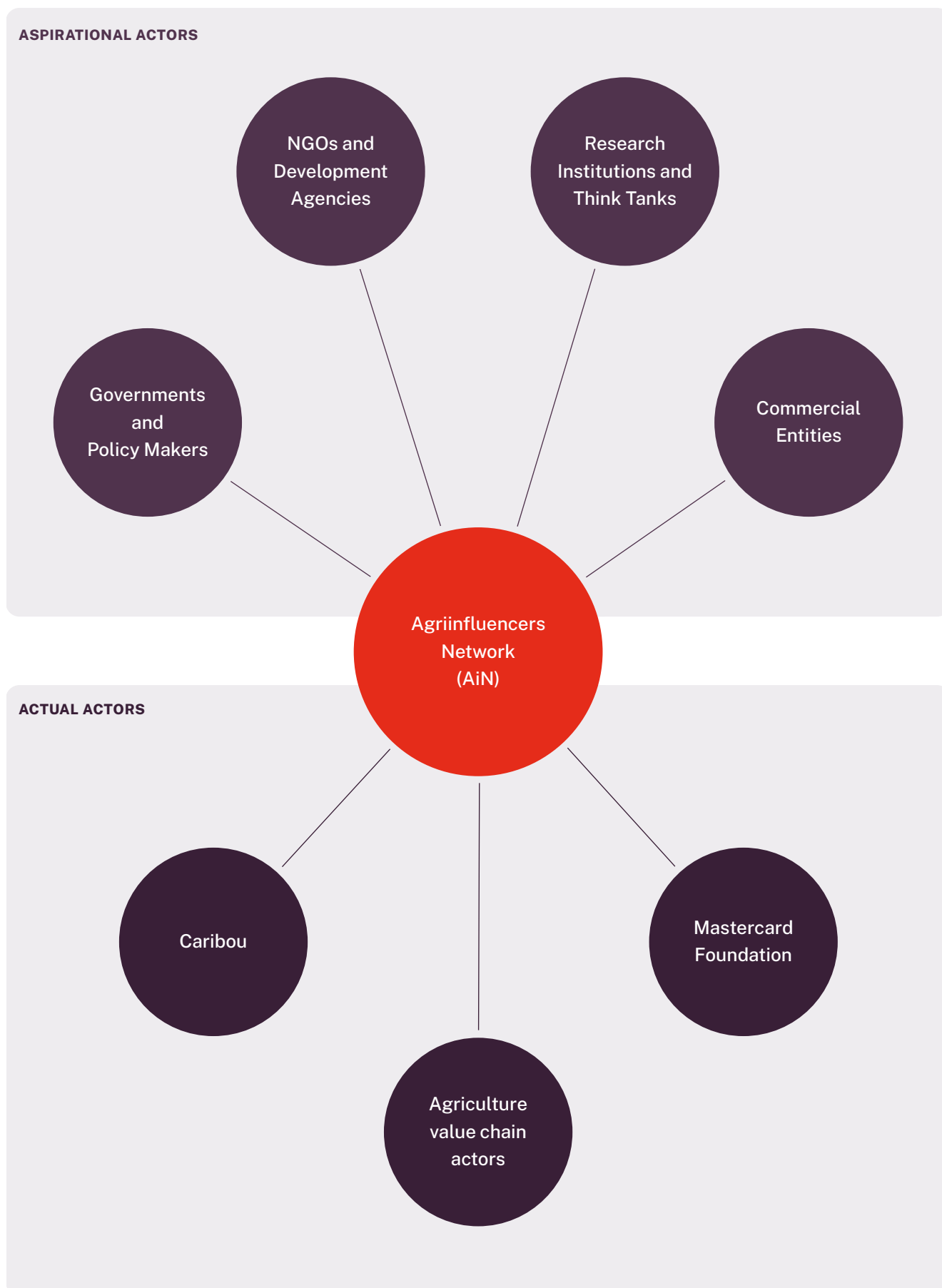
The AiN ecosystem

The AiN engages a range of actors, some active as partners in the current phase of its development, and others identified as strategic partners for future growth.

Current actors include the AiN members themselves. Their primary audience is the broader farming community, particularly farmers who engage with their content for information, inspiration, and market access. The network is supported by Caribou, which facilitates coordination, research, and learning, and by the Mastercard Foundation, which provides catalytic funding and strategic guidance.

Aspirational actors reflect the AiN's ambition to expand its influence, credibility, and long-term sustainability. These actors are essential to unlocking new capabilities, extending reach, and embedding social agriculture more deeply within national and regional systems. They include:

- **Research institutions and think tanks**, which can support the co-production of evidence and the validation of agriinfluencer-shared content.
- **NGOs and development agencies**, which can integrate agriinfluencers into ongoing programs as digital extension agents, peer mentors, or content collaborators.
- **Governments**, particularly agricultural ministries and extension services, whose engagement is crucial to institutionalizing social agriculture within public systems.
- **Commercial actors**, including digital agriculture solution providers and social media platforms who can collaborate with the AiN to pilot inclusive business models, improve access to tools and information, and test sustainable monetization pathways.





AiN members (21 of 24) from 10 African countries at the second AiN meeting. Nairobi, Kenya, May 2025.

Operationalizing the AiN

Operationalizing the AiN has meant balancing its role as a collaborative learning platform with the practical realities of running a member-driven network. This has required building clear systems for coordination, creating conditions for equitable participation, and turning research insights into concrete programs that build members' skills and expand their influence. The network is coordinated by a dedicated team, supported by AiN member coordinators and the Caribou–Mastercard Foundation Research Partnership team. This structure keeps operations closely aligned with the AiN's learning agenda and its community's priorities. These operational foundations have shaped how the network engages its members — both virtually and in person — creating spaces for peer learning, collaboration, and shared action.

Virtual engagement

Virtual interaction forms the core of the network’s collaborative approach. In Year 1, members participated in weekly video conferencing sessions focused on peer learning, strategic reflection, and collective problem-solving. In Year 2, the cadence shifted to biweekly calls, enabling deeper discussion and the integration of new members while maintaining regular touchpoints.

WhatsApp remains a key channel for real-time engagement, supporting knowledge exchange, community building, and coordination among members across multiple countries and time zones. Ongoing, informal interaction has sustained momentum and built a culture of responsiveness, trust, and mutual support.

In-person gatherings

To date, the AiN has hosted three in-person gatherings, each playing a central role in shaping the network’s identity and strategic direction.

The first convening took place in **Dakar, Senegal**, in May 2024. During this gathering of the founding cohort, members validated the initial framing of social agriculture, co-designed early versions of the digital training course and mentorship program, and proposed solutions to wider ecosystem challenges. The focus on collective ownership, trust, and shared purpose established a strong foundation for the network.

The second meeting, held in **Nairobi, Kenya**, in May 2025, marked the launch of the AiN’s second phase. It introduced new members, strengthened internal connections, and deepened engagement with external stakeholders. Discussions focused on practical priorities, including content monetization in African markets, safety in digital spaces, and emerging models of digital agriculture. A key highlight was the participation of Wode Maya, a prominent African influencer whose reflections on authenticity, consistency, and purpose-driven storytelling offered encouragement and inspiration.

A third convening was held in **Dakar, Senegal**, in September 2025, alongside the Africa Food Systems Forum. AiN members hosted the youth-led session “Leveraging Social Media to Drive Agricultural Innovation.” Members also represented youth voices, connecting with policymakers, researchers, and funders, and speaking in nearly twenty sessions across the forum. This gathering also provided a valuable opportunity for members to reconnect in person, strengthen collaboration, and reflect on how the network’s collective voice can shape the future of agriculture across Africa.

Equitable participation

To support consistent and inclusive participation, AiN members receive a monthly honorarium calculated on an hourly basis, along with a fixed data allowance. This model recognizes the time and digital costs involved in network activities, especially for young creators operating with limited resources, and reflects the AiN’s commitment to equitable engagement, ensuring that participation is not only meaningful but also accessible and fairly compensated.

In addition, to strengthen cross-regional collaboration and ensure linguistic inclusion, a simultaneous interpreter is engaged for every session to provide real-time translation. All key materials and sessions are documented bilingually, creating a space where both anglophone and francophone members can participate fully.

Turning insights into initiatives

Co-creating a digital learning course

Building on early work developed during the first AiN meeting in Dakar, between May and October 2024 Caribou and AiN members co-created the **“Introduction to Social Agriculture” training course**. Grounded in real-world experience, the course is designed to address the everyday challenges faced by young farmers and other value chain actors while aligning with broader industry and platform standards.

Launched in November 2024, the course equips learners with practical skills to enhance their agricultural livelihoods through social media and digital engagement. To ensure accessibility across devices and connectivity levels, the course is available in two formats: on the Learn.ink learning management system and as a video series on YouTube.

Introduction to Social Agriculture Course Modules

Creating Amazing Social Media Content	Staying Safe on Social Media
Leveling Up Your Business with Social Media	Monetizing Your Social Media Presence
Cultivating Your Social Media Brand and Identity	Avoiding Burnout by Tending to Personal Well-being
Keeping It Professional Online	Using Artificial Intelligence in Social Agriculture

To launch the course, AiN hosted a public webinar that attracted more than 1,700 registrants. The event brought together 386 live participants, including farmers, content creators, agricultural value chain actors, and representatives from development agencies. The webinar highlighted key insights from the training while centering the voices of AiN members, who shared their journeys and lessons learned. Feedback from attendees was strongly positive; many noted the course's relevance, practical focus, and relatability.

“ Very insightful as an upcoming development worker. This will impact my journey in agricultural and rural innovation. I am very grateful.

Course Launch Attendee

“ This was really insightful. I think it's a great step to make agriculture attractive.

Course Launch Attendee

Since its launch, the course has reached more than 1,600 learners across the continent. To date, 240 participants have completed the full curriculum and earned certification, and more than 700 learners have completed at least one module. These figures reflect growing interest in practical, self-paced training that connects digital skills with agricultural livelihoods.

Following the launch, several organizations expressed interest in making the course more widely available. The curriculum is now featured on UNICEF's Youth Agency Marketplace (YOMA), a digital ecosystem that reaches an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 young people across Africa. This partnership has created a pathway to embed social agriculture into existing digital skills frameworks and expand its visibility among young learners.

To improve accessibility, the course has also been translated into French. This effort supports more inclusive engagement by ensuring that francophone youth can access and benefit from the content without language barriers.

Building on this momentum, AiN is exploring further partnerships with digital learning providers and youth entrepreneurship programs. These collaborations aim to integrate the course into structured training pathways, meeting young people where they are and reinforcing the value of social agriculture across diverse learning journeys.

Launching the AiN mentorship program

In January 2025, AiN launched an eight-week structured **mentorship program** to support graduates of the Introduction to Social Agriculture course. The program offered mentorship focused on strengthening digital presence, personal branding, and content strategy. Caribou organized a dedicated training session for AiN members to equip mentors with practical tools and facilitation techniques to support personalized learning and ongoing peer guidance.

Of 167 applicants, 22 mentees were selected. They participated in tailored one-on-two sessions (with one agriinfluencer supporting two mentees), small group discussions, and platform-specific learning exchanges. Each engagement was designed to address individual goals, build confidence, and improve the effectiveness of social media as a tool for agricultural engagement.

The mentorship program included:

- A needs assessment to align support with mentees' objectives.
- Weekly one-hour sessions covering mindset, personal branding, audience growth, monetization, and long-term content planning.
- Hands-on activities and assignments to translate lessons into practice.

Throughout the program, mentees also engaged with the broader AiN community. Key touchpoints included:

- A kickoff call to set expectations and build community.
- A mid-program group session focused on strategies for Facebook, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, and YouTube.
- A final wrap-up discussion that expanded to include WhatsApp, Telegram, and TikTok, in response to high interest.

Participants completed the program with personalized growth roadmaps. They continue to connect through a dedicated WhatsApp peer-learning group and follow-up check-ins.

Feedback from mentees highlighted three core topics as especially valuable:

- Developing a clear and trusted social media identity through storytelling and professional online conduct.
- Growing and scaling their social media presence with intention and focus.
- Building the right mindset and well-being practices to sustain engagement and avoid burnout.

Many mentees reported improved confidence, more strategic content planning, and measurable increases in audience engagement and platform reach after completing the program.

“ I appreciate this mentorship program. It has enabled me to understand how to use social media properly and profitably.

Mentee

“ Before this mentorship, I was not active on some socials and had no followers (not that I have much now), but at least people are engaging with my posts. I didn't even know what content to create at first. Having a generous mentor like Gifty, who takes me along on farm trips and encourages me on how to manage school life, entrepreneurship, and being an agriinfluencer, I've not only been able to influence others like me into agriculture but also helped me create original content and experiences I could share.

Mentee

Building on the success of the first cohort, the second round of the AiN mentorship program is currently under development and set to commence in January 2026, expanding mentorship opportunities to a broader group of young people seeking to strengthen their skills in leveraging social media for their agricultural venture and professional growth.

Sindy Nguégim (Cameroon) and Aïcha Sawadogo (Burkina Faso) at the Africa Food Systems Forum. Dakar, Senegal, September 2025.



From influence to impact: Lessons from the AiN experience

The AiN's PAR process has generated valuable insights into how social influence shapes agriculture and broader systems of knowledge. This section distills key learnings from the network's experience, highlighting how agriinfluencers are bridging gaps in agriculture extension systems, shifting mindsets, strengthening communities, and driving youth engagement in agriculture across Africa. It also reflects on the structures needed to support youth-led ecosystems and offers lessons for sustainably scaling impact.

Agriinfluencers are essential connectors in the social agriculture ecosystem

The AiN demonstrates that agriinfluencers are not simply content creators; they are emerging as essential connectors within Africa's digital agriculture ecosystem. **By linking formal research and innovation with grassroots realities, they are reshaping how technology, knowledge, and opportunities reach farmers.** Agriinfluencers blend lived experience with digital fluency, allowing them to communicate in ways that are trusted, relevant, and actionable. They play a critical role in localizing insights, modeling new practices, and inspiring youth to see agriculture as a viable livelihood. Through this work, agriinfluencers reshape the three pillars of the social agriculture ecosystem: information exchange, networks, and market access.

ENABLING TRUSTED INFORMATION EXCHANGE	STRENGTHENING NETWORKS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL	EXPANDING ACCESS TO MARKETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Translate complex agronomic concepts into practical, relatable tips that farmers can use immediately. ▪ Move beyond one-way, top-down delivery by creating interactive spaces for dialogue and problem-solving. ▪ Foster collective learning by testing, adapting, and improving knowledge through peer exchange. ▪ Make new tools and practices more accessible, visible, and relevant, especially for young farmers and other value chain actors navigating complex agricultural environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positioned as trusted peers, offering ongoing encouragement alongside information. ▪ Share personal stories, challenges, and small wins to normalize the realities of farming in a digital era. ▪ Build digital communities grounded in trust, mutual learning, and shared values. ▪ Strengthen identity, belonging, and collaboration among youth in agriculture, countering isolation and marginalization. ▪ Connect farmers and other value chain actors across countries, languages, and value chains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate that social media is both a visibility tool and a direct entry point to informal, flexible, and inclusive marketplaces. ▪ Share firsthand experiences with product promotion, pricing strategies, branding, and customer engagement. ▪ Break down online commerce into simple, actionable steps that others can adapt to their own contexts ▪ Inspire youth and women — particularly those excluded from formal markets — to explore direct sales through platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. ▪ Build confidence to experiment, develop brands, and run more independent, connected agricultural businesses.

Agriinfluencers also strengthen local value chains by spotlighting underutilized crops, regional products, and processed goods that are often overlooked in mainstream markets. Through their content, they enable farmers and other value chain actors to see the full commercial potential of what they already produce and to align their offerings with emerging consumer demand.

By modeling pricing strategies, product positioning, and audience engagement, AiN members offer practical examples of how to compete in changing markets. Their platforms function as informal learning spaces where market insights are shared in real time and where thousands of followers gain both confidence and practical tools to pursue new income opportunities using familiar digital platforms.

Supporting agriinfluencers to drive social change

Participatory research with the AiN has shown that enabling agriinfluencers to drive meaningful change requires intentional investment in peer learning, trust-building, flexible engagement models, and long-term support systems. These reflections highlight what it takes to support influencers not only as communicators, but as co-creators and leaders within a growing, youth-led ecosystem. Four key dimensions have shaped AiN's approach to building a thriving, sustainable network: peer learning, engagement cadence, in-person connection, and adaptive design.

Peer learning takes time and space

Peer-to-peer learning sits at the heart of the AiN engagement model. While informal exchanges happened organically from the start, it soon became clear that more structured opportunities were needed for reflection, mutual learning, and shared problem-solving. Members consistently emphasized the value of learning directly from each other through practical examples, candid conversations, and the collective unpacking of challenges.

In response, the AiN began creating dedicated space for member-led sessions, discussion circles, and collaborative content development. This slow, relationship-driven approach allowed members to shape the agenda, learn at their own pace, and see their experiences reflected in the network's growth. Positioning every agriinfluencer as both a learner and a contributor has reinforced shared leadership and strengthened the network's social fabric.

Engagement cadence matters for sustainable participation

The initial engagement strategy relied on weekly virtual sessions to build momentum and cohesion. While this frequency supported early energy and trust, it became difficult to sustain for members also juggling farming, content production, and community leadership. The approach needed to evolve. The shift to a biweekly rhythm brought balance — maintaining connection without overburdening already busy schedules. This change underscored a key learning: engagement models must be designed around the real lives of the people they serve. When flexibility is paired with structure, participation becomes more meaningful, consistent, and energizing over time.



In-person engagement builds deeper connection

While virtual spaces are essential for continuity and inclusion, in-person gatherings play an irreplaceable role in deepening connection. They offer space for informal exchanges, renewed motivation, and collective celebration. For many AiN members, these moments have been transformative, reinforcing a sense of shared purpose and possibility. At the gathering in Nairobi, renowned African content creator Wode Maya joined as a guest of honor. His presence and message affirmed the value of youth creativity and digital influence in agriculture, offering both inspiration and mentorship. Moments like this are not side events; they are milestones that help anchor the network's rhythm, build confidence, and strengthen community bonds.

Content creator Wode Maya at the second AiN meeting. Nairobi, Kenya, May 2025.

Flexibility is core to responsive design

One of the AiN's greatest strengths has been its ability to adapt. Whether refining meeting structures, evolving mentorship models, or updating learning content, the network has consistently reshaped its approach in response to feedback. This flexibility has been essential to building trust and co-ownership. Rather than a compromise, it has become a strategy that keeps the network relevant, reflects its members' needs, and maintains momentum. As the AiN matures, sustaining this model will require ongoing mechanisms for feedback, open dialogue, and iteration, ensuring the network continues to reflect the voices and realities of the young agriinfluencers it was built to serve.

Laying the groundwork for scalable impact

The AiN began as an experimental, youth-led learning community. Today, it has become an influential and growing platform shaping how agriculture is practiced, promoted, and perceived across Africa. Through almost two years of participatory action research, the AiN has shown that agriinfluencers are emerging as a powerful new layer of peer-led, participatory agricultural extension powered by social media.

The experience of building the network has offered clear lessons for what it will take to move from promising pilot to long-term impact at scale. This next phase of growth focuses on formalization, professionalization, strategic investment, and stronger ecosystem alignment. To strengthen the evidence base, Caribou will also conduct dedicated research to understand the AiN's impact on farmers and other value chain actors, as well as the credibility of the content the AiN members produce.

Measuring impact and credibility

To inform the next phase of growth, Caribou, together with the AiN, plan to undertake two dedicated studies — one on the impact of the AiN on farmers and other value chain actors and one on the credibility of content shared by the agriinfluencers — currently planned for publication in 2026. Together they will explore how agriinfluencers shape access to information, income, productivity, and opportunities for growth, and evaluate the credibility and trustworthiness of the agricultural content they share, as perceived by audiences and as assessed against established scientific evidence.

While the scope of these studies may be refined as planning progresses, both are designed to generate robust evidence to guide investment, strengthen content quality, and better understand the role youth-led, digitally enabled agricultural communication can play within Africa's food systems.

Building for sustainability

Internal strengthening and institutional independence are now critical to sustaining and scaling the work of agriinfluencers. Creating an independent entity will enable the AiN to access both grant and commercial funding, positioning it to collaborate with NGOs, research institutions, development agencies, and governments on initiatives to reengage youth in agriculture, strengthen the quality and credibility of agricultural knowledge shared online, and bridge the extension gap. It

will also allow the AiN to work with commercial partners to accelerate the trust and adoption of digital agriculture solutions. Institutionalizing the AiN will therefore provide the structural and financial autonomy needed to sustain its mission and expand its impact.

This dual focus on structure and sustainability ensures the AiN can continue to grow as a youth-led engine of transformation in African agriculture.

Fostering strategic partnerships for scale

Strategic partnerships with research institutions, governments, development partners, and commercial actors can help move the AiN from promise to a recognized driver of system-level change. Across the continent, diverse actors are working to strengthen farmer advisory systems, expand youth employment and entrepreneurship, accelerate agri-innovation, and increase market access for smallholder farmers. By partnering with them, the AiN can bridge silos, amplify impact, and ensure that youth-led communication becomes a recognized pillar of agricultural transformation. The AiN brings something distinct and catalytic to these efforts: a community of trusted, digitally fluent youth leaders who understand their audiences deeply and are already shaping agricultural narratives, behaviors, and opportunities. These partnerships will also be critical to strengthen Africa's wider digital agriculture ecosystem — connecting innovators, communicators, and farmers to accelerate the trust and adoption of digital tools and services.

Strengthening the digital agriculture ecosystem

Agriinfluencers are uniquely positioned to strengthen Africa's digital agriculture ecosystem by making digital tools more visible, trusted, and relevant to local realities.

From step-by-step tutorials on accessing climate services to firsthand accounts of using tractor-sharing platforms, this kind of translation — across language, literacy, and location — is essential to turning availability into actual uptake. For example, AiN members can demonstrate how to use mobile payments or farm recordkeeping apps. In doing so, they close the gap between innovation and adoption with peer learning, contextual knowledge, and sustained engagement.

To deepen this impact, the AiN can strengthen its support for agriinfluencers as digital guides, equipping them with up-to-date tools, practical content formats, and access to trusted data sources. It can also broker partnerships that connect agriinfluencers with innovators, enabling two-way feedback loops that improve both the tools and how they are shared. By investing in this approach, the network is not just promoting tool adoption. It is helping build a more inclusive, responsive, and resilient digital agriculture ecosystem — one where technology adoption is driven by trust, relevance, and community connection.

Making learning visible

AiN members already generate a steady stream of insights: practical lessons, creative strategies, and everyday experiences shaped by their participation in peer learning and upskilling activities. These contributions are valuable not only within the network but for the broader agricultural ecosystem. As the network evolves, the AiN is working to **ensure that this learning is consistently captured, curated and shared with wider audiences**. To achieve this, the AiN is strengthening its communications infrastructure to amplify member voices and present a cohesive, influential digital presence. Planned activities include:

- A shared content platform to streamline storytelling and unify the network's digital presence.
- Regular video and audio updates spotlighting peer learning, mentorship, and innovation.
- Live sessions for real-time exchange with broader communities.
- Thematic campaigns aligned with global and regional moments such as Year of the Woman Farmer, Africa Day, and World Food Day.

Shaping policy from the ground up

Agriinfluencers are already contributing to policy conversations. From participating in national youth consultations to speaking at continental forums, AiN members are emerging as influential advocates for more inclusive, youth-centered food systems. Their real-world insights grounded in practice and rooted in community, can bridge the gap between policy intent and farmers' reality.

What is missing is a structure to connect these contributions, elevate them, and turn them into a sustained force for change. As a network, the AiN has the visibility, reach, and practical experience to inform and influence agricultural policy from the ground up.

AiN's next phase will focus on policy engagement:

- **Coordinating member advocacy:** Creating mechanisms for members already engaged in policy spaces to share learning, align messages, and collaborate on shared goals.
- **Co-developing a youth-led advocacy agenda:** Grounded in insights from peer learning and platform practice, this agenda will reflect the needs and priorities of youth shaping agriculture in real time.
- **Building institutional relationships:** Engaging with ministries, regional bodies, and extension services to ensure policies reflect how youth actually farm, learn, and connect today.
- **Equipping members for influence:** Offering training and peer mentorship will support effective, sustained engagement across different policy platforms.

Recommendations for ecosystem actors

Agriinfluencers are already playing a pivotal role in Africa's agricultural transformation. Just as digital influencers have become woven into the fabric of how people discover, learn, and engage in daily life, agriinfluencers have become part of how farmers exchange knowledge, adopt innovations, and find new opportunities. With a reach of over five million farmers — and growing rapidly — they demonstrate the power of peer-to-peer communication in driving awareness, trust, and behavior change at scale.

Yet their contributions remain informal and under-recognized, limiting the support, visibility, and partnerships that could amplify their impact. To sustain and expand this momentum, ecosystem actors — from governments and research institutions to development partners and the private sector — must act intentionally to strengthen, connect, and invest in this emerging layer of agricultural extension.

The following recommendations outline how each actor can help scale the benefits of social agriculture so that the impact reaches more smallholder farmers, especially youth and women across Africa.

For development partners

- **Partner on training and outreach.** Collaborate with the AiN to deliver tailored social agriculture and digital skills training and mentorship programs for farmers and other value chain actors, drawing on their digital fluency, content creation skills, and practical experience using social media for knowledge sharing, marketing, and community engagement.
- **Enable collaboration and ecosystem alignment.** Facilitate engagement between agriinfluencers, policymakers, researchers, and agtech innovators to ensure grassroots insights inform program design and system-level strategies.
- **Strengthen learning and accountability.** Support robust monitoring systems that measure behavior change, adoption, and livelihood impact, and share findings to guide future investment and advocacy.

For research institutions and think tanks

- **Translate technical agricultural knowledge into shareable information.** Collaborate with agriinfluencers to package research into accessible, multimedia formats — such as short videos, text-based posts, carousels or live sessions — that reach farmers where they are.
- **Create certification pathways for agriinfluencers.** Develop mechanisms to certify agriinfluencers as credible interpreters of agricultural research, supporting training, validation, collaboration, and responsible knowledge sharing.
- **Expand and deepen the evidence base.** Conduct research on how agriinfluencers build trust, influence behavior, complement extension systems, and shape adoption, economic opportunities, gender inclusion, and content credibility across different contexts.

From left to right: Erotisse Allabi (Benin) and Tanon Alex Michael (Cameroon), supported by AiN translator Papa Abdoulaye Mbow at the second AiN meeting, Nairobi, Kenya, May 2025.



For governments and policymakers

- **Recognize social media and agriinfluencers in the extension ecosystem.** Develop policies that formally acknowledge agriinfluencers as complementary extension actors and social media as a legitimate channel for delivering agricultural information.
- **Build frameworks for certification and integration.** Develop mechanisms to certify, support, and integrate credible agriinfluencers into public extension systems, working with research institutions to ground these frameworks in validated agricultural research and evidence-based practices, ensuring agriinfluencers are recognized, trusted, and aligned with national agricultural priorities.
- **Promote equitable digital access.** Incentivize telecom providers to offer affordable data bundles and expand rural connectivity, and collaborate with partners on low-affordable device-financing schemes such as pay-as-you-go or refurbished smartphones. And use fiscal incentives, including reduced import duties, lower VAT on entry-level smartphones, and Universal Service Funds to extend access to rural youth and women.
- **Institutionalize youth voices.** Involve agriinfluencers in national and regional policy consultations to ensure youth perspectives shape implementation, not just dialogue.

For commercial actors

- **Collaborate for reach and relevance.** Partner with agriinfluencers across a range of activities — including marketing, product testing, demonstrations and testimonials, brand ambassadorships, and onboarding farming communities. Draw on their contextual knowledge, trusted relationships, and ability to translate product value into clear, practical, farmer-friendly content.
- **Ensure fair and professional compensation.** Provide transparent, equitable contracts that recognize agriinfluencers' professional expertise, time, and contributions across all areas of collaboration.
- **Champion diversity.** Engage agriinfluencers who reflect different genders, languages, abilities, and regions to ensure products and messages reach — and resonate with — a wider and more diverse range of farmers.

An open invitation: Growing together for greater impact

As the Agriinfluencer Network enters its next phase, the focus is on consolidating what has been learned and expanding its reach, evidence base, and partnerships to sustain and scale its impact. The network's experience has shown that when young voices are trusted and supported, they can transform how agricultural knowledge, innovation, and opportunity flow through communities.

The priorities are clear. Caribou is taking steps to:

- **Formalize** the structures that govern and sustain the network.
- **Expand** its reach, deepen partnerships, and increase its visibility across the continent.
- **Transform** how extension, skilling, and market engagement are facilitated in agriculture.
- **Replicate and adapt** the model in new sectors where social influence can drive inclusive change.
- **Strengthen** the evidence base that shapes practice and policy.

Achieving meaningful scale will require shared investment and shared leadership. Caribou is building the foundation, and we invite development partners, policymakers, investors, researchers, and changemakers to join us in strengthening this foundation. Together, we can co-invest, co-learn, and co-create the future of agriculture in Africa — one that is digitally enabled, community-led, and shaped by the very youth who are living that future today.

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