

These African Farmers Carved an Important Message to The World – Into the Soil

Source: inhabitat.com

Published: July 20, 2017

by [Amanda Froelich](#)

Most people in Western countries reflect on [Africa](#) as a continent in which poverty is rife and economic opportunities are lacking. While this may be true in some cases, it's a fixable problem. This is the message a group of [farmers](#) and villagers in Zambia seeks to share with the world – in the most unusual way. They spent 5 days last December carving data into a field to demonstrate that African farmers can enjoy independence too.



The series of graphs in the soil, called the Field Report, outlined key data revealing why investment in [agriculture](#) is essential. At present, an increasing amount of young people are moving away from rural communities to urban locations in the prospect of a job. This is a problem, as Africa presently has a quarter of the world's arable land yet only produces 10 percent of the world's food. If action is not taken, a food shortage beyond what we've already witnessed is imminent. The farmers drew attention to this fact with a giant "11", pointing out that agriculture is 11 times more effective at reducing extreme [poverty](#) than other sectors.

Gilbert Houngbo, president of IFAD, which has support from the UN, said: “The Field Report makes the case for investment in agricultural development in the very land that needs it the most. We were inspired by the sheer power and potential land holds to reduce poverty and hunger, contribute to vibrant, [self-sustaining](#) communities and dramatically increase agricultural outputs capable of feeding a growing population.” As [FastCompany](#) reports, four-fifths of the world’s poorest people live in [rural](#) locations and depend on agriculture for their livelihood. If the initiative is taken to improve production and access to markets, families can increase their incomes while at the same time offering more food to society.



[Africa](#) spends \$35 billion importing food rather than growing all its population needs; with the right tools, its economy could be transformed. “Rising prices and demand hold tremendous promise for the people who work the world’s 500 million small farms to grow and sell more food, lifting themselves out of poverty and [food insecurity](#),” said Houngbo. “When connected to markets, smallholder farmers can generate an income and create a multiplier effect—sending their children to school and stimulating the [economy](#) in order to help lift their community out of poverty for the long term.”

IFAD’s main argument is that investment is needed to improve productivity in rural locations and to connect young farmers with technologies that can “connect them with experts and the information needed to best grow food.” Reportedly, what young African need most is access to [finance](#). Once this is accomplished, a new generation of “agripreneurs” can be fostered.

Later this week, the Field Report will be presented at a [sustainable](#) development forum in New York City.
