



ONE ACRE FUND

2023 People  
& DEI Report

**Greetings from One Acre Fund.** Since 2020, we have reported annually on our progress in advancing our People and DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) priorities. In this third report, we continue to share our progress and future direction of this important work that will allow us to build the best team to help farmers thrive.

In 2021-2022, we laid out our vision for change and made important progress on equity in pay and benefits structures. In 2023, we built from that foundation and focused on consistent and objective performance management. We also invested in areas where we had made less progress since 2021, such as gender representation and farmer-facing team inclusion.

One Acre Fund has always cared deeply about developing staff careers. Our performance management work is grounded in the belief that every member of our team deserves the support and feedback to build their careers and do their best work for farmers. Through the efforts of multiple dedicated team members, we have improved staff clarity around job expectations, ensured regular and on-time performance reviews, and increased equity through calibrating performance reviews. I am grateful for, and humbled by, the commitment shown by everyone who is working hard to build a culture that consistently identifies, encourages, and rewards high performance—thank you!

In 2023, we also expanded our focus to include gender representation and continued to improve African national representation in senior roles, specifically in the job level 9-14 cohort, where roles are open to staff of all nationalities. Since 2018, the proportion of African nationals at job levels 9-10 has grown from 37% to 92%, 12% to 59% for job levels 11-12, and 5% to 35% for staff at job levels 13-14.

Even as we celebrate progress, we are committed to continuous growth and improvement in our People and DEI work—both for equity reasons, and to constantly improve organization performance. Given the complexity of this work, we are taking the time needed to learn how to do better, including identifying which levers to pull. We have identified some key areas to prioritize for continued improvement in 2024:

- 1. Diversity.** We will **continue to prioritize achieving more balanced gender representation in leadership groups**, and in particular, by increasing outreach to female candidates at job levels where we see fewer female applicants (women make stronger progression than men through interviews once hired, but we see fewer applicants overall). We will continue to invest in recruitment pushes focused on women to increase women applicants and hires, in addition to work on retention and targeted growth plans. Further, we will **continue to develop African leadership at all levels, particularly at job levels 13-14 and among Country Directors and their deputies** where we have the lowest levels of representation – through targeted development and succession plans.
- 2. Equity.** Building on foundational performance management improvements in 2023, we will focus on **improving manager quality** through improved training. We will also invest in **performance management improvements for farmer-facing teams** by first investigating where inequities or inconsistencies exist.
- 3. Inclusion.** Finally, we will **invest in improvements in farmer-facing team inclusion** by clarifying the organizational decision-making structures and processes at all levels and what input in these decisions practically looks like. For example, each country has an inclusive decision-making framework in place that details how and when farmer-facing staff are engaged in relevant decisions. We will account for nuances across locations to land at the right solutions.

We look forward to sharing more updates in future reports. Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Together in Service,

**Andrew Youn, CEO**



## OUR PRIORITIES

*We are deeply committed to building a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. In 2023-24, we are continuing to invest in these areas that are most important to our team.*



### Diverse Leadership

Diversify our senior management teams, with a focus on balanced gender representation in leadership groups and national representation at the most senior levels.



### Equity in Performance Management

Build on foundational performance management improvements from 2023 by improving manager quality, and investing in performance management improvements for farmer-facing team



### Inclusion of Farmer-Facing Team

Clarify decision-making structures and processes at all levels and what input in these decisions practically looks like in different locations.

## OUR WORKFORCE

We celebrate the diversity of our staff and value their proximity to the rural communities in which we work.

As of September 2023, we have **8,115\*** full-time staff, of whom **99.5%** are based in the nine countries where we operate in Sub-Saharan Africa.

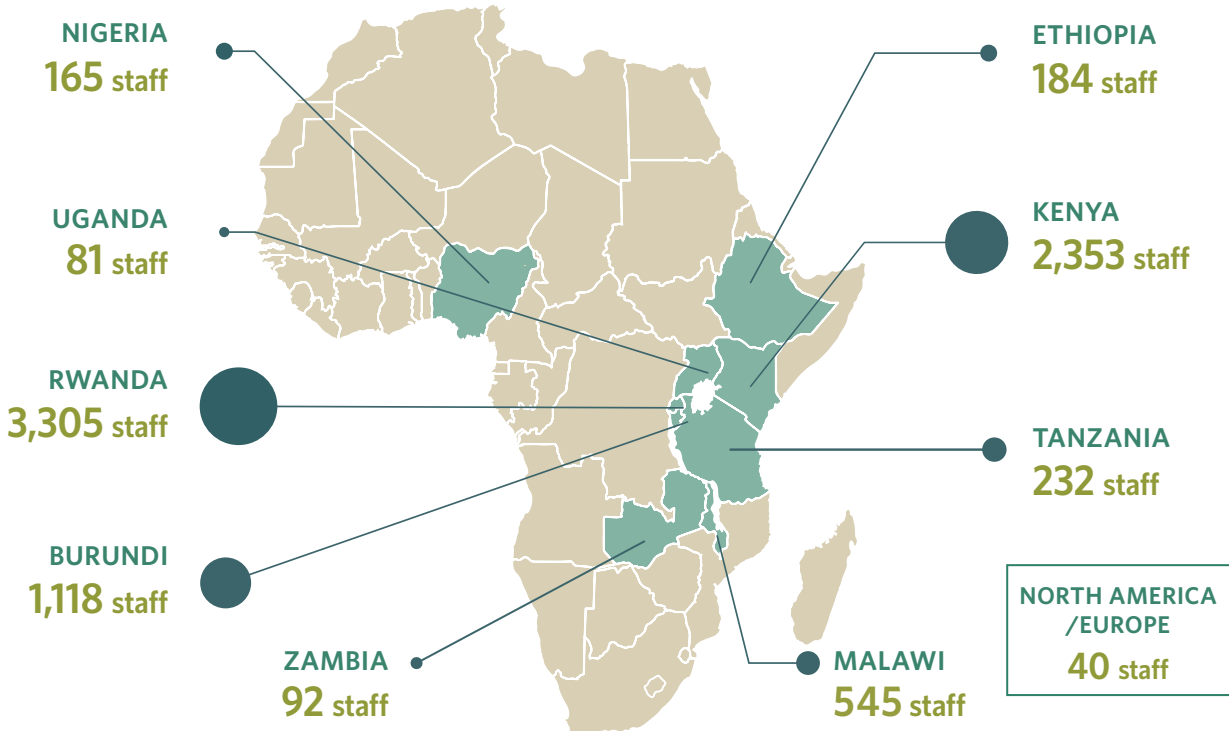
Our farmer-facing staff, historically referred to as “field staff,” continue to make up the bulk of our team (74%) and are supported by office-based staff, many of whom are assigned to our rural headquarters office locations. In 2022, we introduced our simplified pay scales spanning 14 “job levels” of seniority. This year, we will assess our key staff data following the same broad groupings from 2022, based on seniority:

- **Farmer-facing Staff (job levels 1-6):** Referred to as “Field staff” in previous reports, these roles (74% of all positions) provide direct customer service to farmers. Sample responsibilities include selling quality farm products and training farmers on best farming practices.
- **Office Staff - Execution Support (job levels 1-6):** These roles (about 18% of all positions) typically provide execution support for field operations. Sample responsibilities include managing shops or collecting data on field trials.

- **Office Staff - Middle Management (job levels 7-10):** These roles (6% of all positions) typically manage complex workstrands or small departments. Sample responsibilities include managing our farmer call center or coordinating product distribution for 100,000 farmers.
- **Office Staff - Senior Management (job levels 11-14):** These roles (2% of all positions) typically manage large departments or an entire country program. Sample responsibilities include serving as country director and managing budgets over \$1 million. At the middle manager level (starting at job level 9) and above, many roles are open to staff of all nationalities. Only about 111 positions—or 1.4% of all full-time roles—are now held by staff who are not nationals of African countries. Where applicable in this report, we directly compare the experience of African and non-African staff.

**Collectively, we are a proudly multicultural team: we represent 33 countries, and almost 99% of us are nationals of African countries.**

### ONE ACRE FUND STAFF IN 2023 BY LOCATION



Staff based in Sub-Saharan Africa

**99%**

Staff who are African nationals

**99%**

Senior management staff who are African nationals

**74%**

\*This is lower than our 2022 numbers due to restructures in [Kenya](#) and Tanzania in 2023.

## DIVERSITY

*Diversity strengthens business decisions. One Acre Fund is committed to creating a workforce that represents the diversity of the countries and communities where we work.*



Diversity (especially in leadership) strengthens our decisions, fosters innovation, and deepens our impact – diversity is an important component of organization performance. One Acre Fund is committed to creating a workforce that is representative of the countries and communities where we work. In 2023, we continued to prioritize diversity in gender and nationality.

**National representation** remains a priority at our most senior levels.

- **Middle management roles:** 92% of these roles open to all nationalities (job levels 9 and 10) are now held by nationals of African countries.
- **Senior management roles:** 59% of positions at job levels 11-12 are now held by nationals of African countries. In our most senior positions (job levels 13-14), progress has been slower. Currently, only 35% of those positions are held by nationals of African countries; while this is an improvement from 18% at the close of 2022, our goal is at least 50% representation through targeted development and succession plans, or hiring where necessary.
- **Country directors and deputy directors:** 36% of roles are held by nationals of African countries. This is also an area where we are aiming for at least 50% representation. We are slower than anticipated in achieving diversification goals at this level, but we are taking appropriate steps to accelerate progress.

**Gender** was among our priority areas for 2023. We've made modest progress in the proportion of women in the organization, with 50% representation in senior management and 44% in global leadership. At the same time, we recorded a slight decline among our middle managers and country leadership. Overall, we're seeing slower progress than we'd like and, based on learnings around the nationality goals, we know it will take significant investment over a sustained period of time to see meaningful change.

Women actually outperform men in One Acre Fund’s interview process, and make equivalent-to-better progression once hired—yet, especially at certain job levels, the number of women applicants is low.

Our target in 2023 was for women to represent 35% of all applicants. If we improve both women-focused talent sourcing and their candidate experience, we expect to record an increase in women hires as they tend to outperform men in the actual interview process. Hiring is one key lever, but we have the opportunity to increase representation by actively boosting retention within the organization, improving manager quality so that the women we hire are consistently set up for success, and having clear, targeted growth plans in how individuals can grow into key roles and job levels. Accordingly, we made the following investments in 2023:

- **Talent sourcing:** Our Recruitment team invested in prospecting and resurfacing of women candidates, incentivising women referrals, and working with strong women ambassadors to attract more women candidates.
- **Candidate experience:** To ensure a continued positive candidate experience for women applicants and drive improvement, the Recruitment team focused on building gender champions out of Hiring Managers, and requiring diverse interview panels, including training them on unbiased hiring.

Gender will remain a key 2024 priority. We are continuing to invest in recruitment pushes focused on women, and we expect that an upward trend in women applicants and hires will translate into improved numbers of women staffers in the future.

In 2023, in our annual Culture & Inclusion survey, which was completed by 68% of staff at all levels, staff reported overall agreement that One Acre Fund both values diversity and builds diverse teams. Specifically, 85% of respondents agreed with the statement, “One Acre Fund builds teams that are diverse.” We will continue to invest in improving our scores yearly.



I am very appreciative of the consistent dedication from the organization to center DEI efforts, especially gender diversity. The organization’s leadership continues to make significant efforts to address gender-specific challenges faced by women in order to foster a better culture as well as improve our efforts in bringing in more women to help serve our mission.

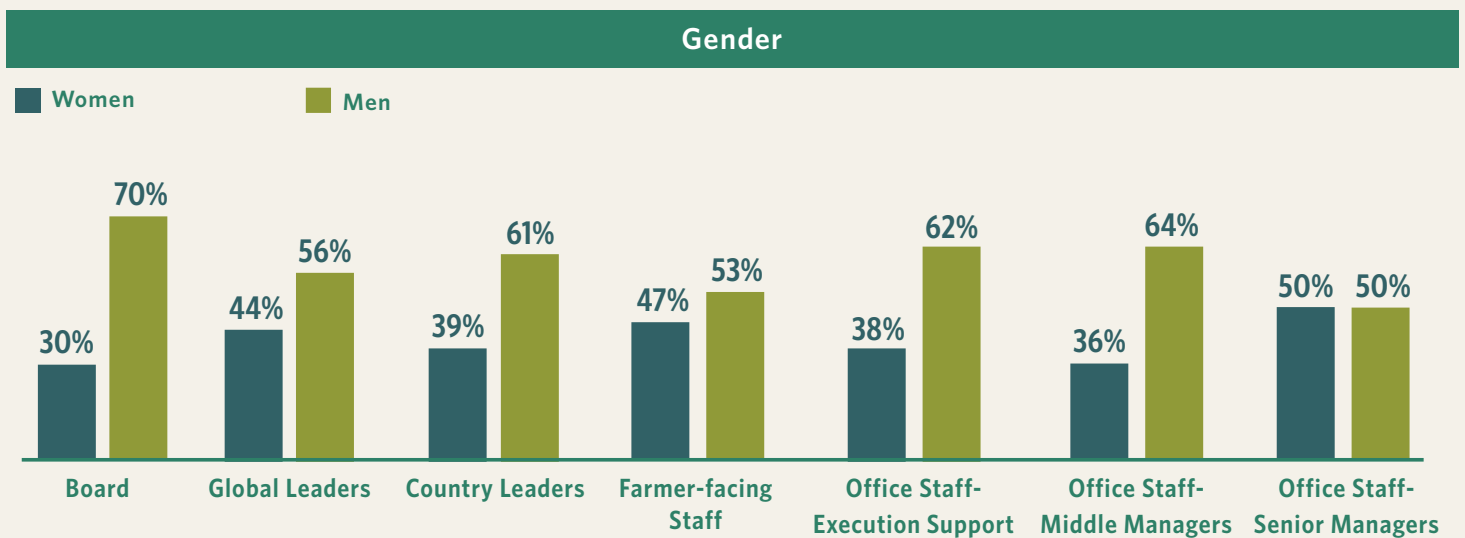
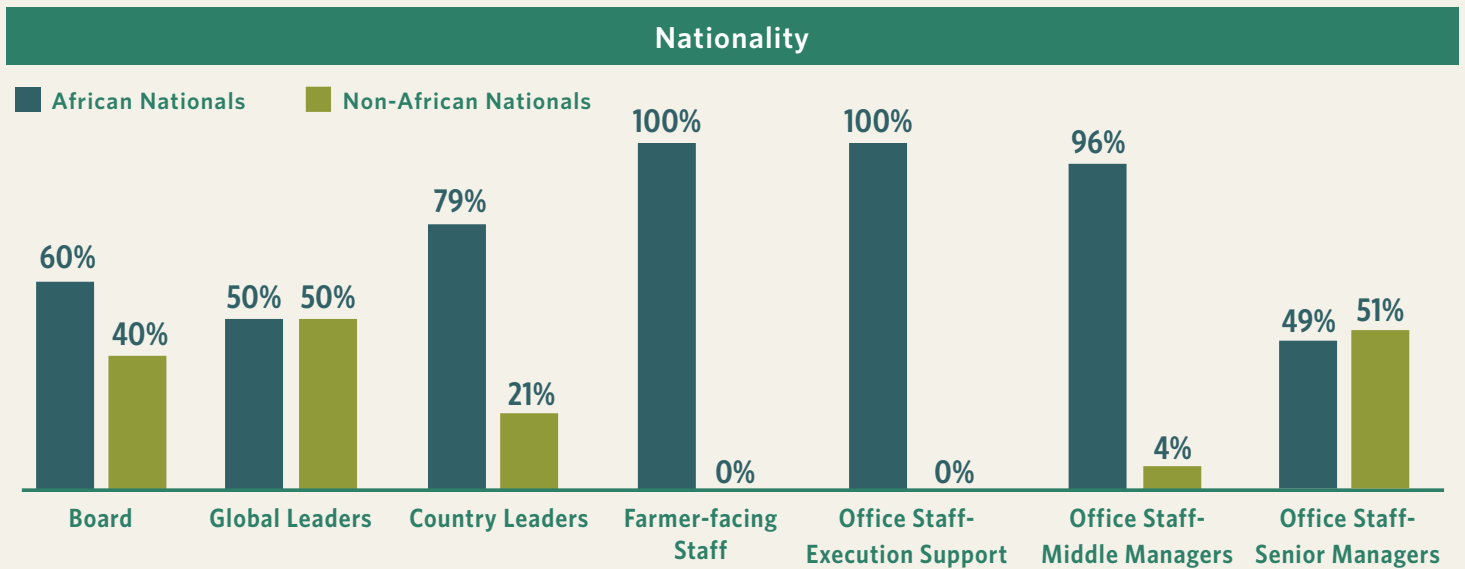
**Nicolle Ndamu K.— Global Recruitment, Kenya**



In Rwanda, we have continued to invest in efforts to increase gender diversity across all levels through hiring - women currently make up 48% of the team. On International Women’s Day this year, we launched a Women in Leadership Employee Resource Group to foster a supportive and collaborative environment for rising women leaders to learn and share best practices to advance into their next level of growth.

**Raissa Muhaturukundo—Chief of Staff, Rwanda**

# LEADERSHIP



- Board:** Our 10-person Governing Board had one addition in the past year. We aim to increase the number of women over time.
- Global Leaders:** Our Leadership Council aligns on strategic goals for our organization. Half of the seats are held by nationals of African countries.
- Country Leaders:** Steering Committees, averaging 10 leaders per country, guide our country operations. We aim to increase the number of women across the group over time.
- Farmer-facing Staff:** This group of roles (job levels 1-6), open only to nationals of African countries, typically works directly with farmers.
- Office Staff - Execution Support:** This group of roles (job levels 1-6), open only to nationals of African countries, typically supports field operations. We aim to increase the number of women in these roles.
- Office Staff - Middle Managers:** This group of roles (job levels 7-10), open to all nationalities at levels 9 and 10, typically manages teams or projects. We aim to increase the number of women in these roles.
- Office Staff - Senior Managers:** This group of roles (job levels 11-14), open to all nationalities, typically lead large divisions. We aim to increase the number of African nationals in the most senior roles.

## HIRING

Every year we hire new team members across both our farmer-facing and office-based roles. Because this is a key determinant of our future team structure, we closely monitor the impacts of hiring decisions at all levels on our diversification goals, specifically on the proportion of African nationals and women hired.

Select middle management and senior management roles (at job levels 9-14) are open to staff of all nationalities. In these roles, nationals of African countries make up the majority of our new hires; in 2022 and 2023 so far (through September), nearly 7 in 10 new hires were African nationals.

As of September 2023, the two-year average proportion of women hired externally for all office-based roles is 45% for 2022/2023, and the proportion of women who apply for these jobs remains low at only 29% for the same time frame.

**Women are applying at lower rates than men but faring better in the hiring process than men. Our goal is for more women to apply and ultimately increase the proportion of women at all levels across the organization.**

Percentage of hires in job levels  
9-14 who are African nationals

**74%**

2022 - 2023

Percentage of hires in  
office-based roles who are women

**45%**

2022 - 2023

## RETENTION

At One Acre Fund, we believe that attracting, retaining, and developing strong team members is the single-most important long-run driver of success for the farmers we serve, and the organization.

In 2023, 3,175 staff (39%) have been with the organization for more than 5 years, and 863 staff (11%) boast more than 10 years of tenure!

Overall, for the 2019-2022 period, we have retained 86% of all our staff.

### Average Annual Staff Retention, 2019-2022

**85%**

Farmer-facing Staff  
(Job Levels 1-6)

**89%**

Office Staff  
(Job Levels 1-6)

**85%**

Middle Management  
(Job Levels 7-10)

**79%**

Senior Management  
(Job Levels 11-14)



# EQUITY

We are **equitable** in how we define strong performance, support career growth, and reward good work.

We work to provide equitable opportunities for pay and career development to all staff. Regardless of role, background, seniority, or any other factor; we want to ensure that we have a clear standard for how we define strong performance, support career growth, and reward good work across all staff members. We believe that our pay and benefits structures and policies should be results-oriented, fair, and financially sustainable.

In 2022, we made important progress on equity in pay and benefits, which was reflected in that year's survey of staff perceptions. In 2023, we prioritized core improvements to how we assess staff—for example, in moving all office-based staff to a unified performance management platform. While we have made good foundational progress on performance management, we will continue to invest in this area, particularly in (a) improving manager quality across the organization and (b) more robust support for farmer-facing teams.

Our Culture and Inclusion survey scores on equity dropped this year. Overall, fewer staff agreed with statements on fairness of compensation, opportunities to succeed, and fairness in evaluating job performance in 2023 than in 2022. Qualitative analysis indicates that the decline may have been driven at least in part by the higher levels of inflation and currency devaluations in some locations.

## Staff Perceptions on Equity in 2023

Staff Agreement with Statement	2021	2022	2023
<i>"I believe that my total compensation is fair, relative to similar roles at One Acre Fund"</i>	42%	59%	45%
<i>"I believe my total compensation (base salary + any bonuses + benefits) is fair, relative to similar roles at other companies"</i>	36%	54%	39%
<i>"People from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to succeed at One Acre Fund"</i>	65%	75%	70%
<i>"My job performance is evaluated fairly"</i>	73%	81%	75%

## COMPENSATION STRUCTURES

In 2022, we expanded four core benefits—health, housing, child, and retirement—to staff at all job levels (only health and housing were previously available to all staff). In particular, we expanded access to child and retirement benefits to support all staff to care for their families and save for the future.

We also simplified and expanded our pay ranges—the minimum and maximum salaries available at each job level—which ensures that we reward similar roles in similar ways. Most staff now have slightly more room for performance-based raises before hitting the maximum pay for their current job level.

Our strong progress in 2022 was undercut in 2023 by difficult economic conditions resulting from higher cost of living/inflation and currency depreciations in some of our locations.

## PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

At One Acre Fund, we have historically had a strong culture of giving feedback, and conducting performance reviews. However, there was variation in the timeliness of reviews, as well as the quality and consistency of goals and reviews, which would affect staff career growth.

We believe that all staff deserve clear role expectations, continuous feedback, equitable rewards, and career growth guidance. As we had already made significant progress on equitable rewards in 2022, this year, we focused on improving the other two core areas.

- **Job expectations:** Improved clarity on what is expected from each staffer in their role through a detailed internal job description, and for a specific time period via 6-month goals.
- **Continuous feedback:** Worked to deliver on our commitment to staff that they receive high-quality feedback via regular performance reviews, and managers are trained on providing accurate performance assessments.

While we are confident we have the right foundations in place, performance management is dependent on the behavior and actions of hundreds of managers to see sustained improvements. Long-term change in quality and on-time performance reviews, which are reviewed for equity, clear role expectations, etc., will require ongoing commitment and investment from hundreds of managers at the organization.

**In 2024, our focus will be on continuously improving manager quality, including through more targeted training.** This way we can ensure that managers are leveraging all available resources including our improved tools, systems and processes, to deliver exceptional performance management to their direct reports.



Over the last two years, I have been impressed to see our continued commitment to creating an environment where talent flourishes. The impactful improvements we have made on performance management through building equitable performance reward systems, contribute to overall employee satisfaction and put the organization on the right path to achieving our 2030 vision.

***Dennis Mwechumu - Human Resources Lead, Malawi***

## INCLUSION

We work to build an **inclusive culture** that brings out the best in our talented, multicultural team, where all staff feel valued and encouraged to contribute, regardless of their identity or seniority.

Our 2023 staff survey indicated shared pride in our work and the difference we make for the farmers we serve. This was consistent for all staff of all backgrounds and in all roles.

This year we made progress on our inclusion commitments. Specifically:

- **Farmer-facing Team Inclusion:** We prioritized increased understanding and access to HR policies for our farmer-facing staff. Key policy documents are now available on tablets and printed handouts for these team members, and through country People HR Help desks. We also improved access to leave management resources via improved tools and policies, and manager training.
- **Strengthening Inclusion:** We held quarterly informal conversations on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) topics, such as the next phase of DEI at One Acre Fund and staff trainings, to underscore the importance of inclusion across the organization.
- **Reporting channels:** Launched a *People Help Desk* site, accompanied by a user-friendly *"Make a Report"* page. This centralized platform now provides our staff with all the reporting options they need in one place, streamlining the reporting process and reducing barriers for victims.
  - In addition to centralized reporting, we understand the importance of connecting with in-country reporting options, especially for farmer-facing team members. We therefore established Country HR Help Desks, which play a pivotal role in linking our staff with local HR teams.

While we celebrate our achievements, we also acknowledge that we fell short on delivering on some commitments, including improved farmer-facing team participation in decision-making and an ongoing, regular DEI training curriculum. About 38% of farmer-facing staff (compared to 55% across all staff) agreed with the statement "Perspectives like mine are included in decision-making at One Acre Fund."

Moving forward, we will invest in improving farmer-facing team participation in decision-making by clarifying the organizational decision-making structures and what input in these decisions practically looks like. For example, each country has an inclusive decision-making framework in place that details how and when farmer-facing staff are engaged in relevant decisions. We will account for nuances across locations to land at the right solutions.

### 2023 Culture & Inclusion Survey

91%

*"I am proud to work at One Acre Fund"*

93%

*"The work we do at One Acre Fund is important and allows us to make a positive difference"*

97%

*"I understand how my work contributes to One Acre Fund's mission"*

38%

*"Perspectives like mine are included in decision making at One Acre Fund."\*\**

\*\*Agreement score for customer-facing staff only



At the beginning of my career at One Acre Fund, my colleagues and I in the farmer-facing team had limited access to program documents that affect us, such as HR policies. Since the HR help desk was launched and added to our tablets at the beginning of this year, our lives have become easier. I can now read things in my own time and report any grievances or ask questions to the HR team directly. This has given me more confidence to seek support and engage. As a Tupande Agent who is always on the move, I am happy that I can now apply for benefits such as the cash loan and the child support very easily without searching too long for information or sending many emails.

**Ben Masafu - Tupande Agent, Kenya**

## CONCLUSION

We hope that this People and DEI Report provides important transparency on our journey to build a workplace we can all be proud of at One Acre Fund.

2023 has been a difficult year – we had to say goodbye to friends and colleagues in Kenya and Tanzania due to major program changes. Despite this, overall staff sentiment on key elements of our diversity, equity and inclusion work remains positive.

We are committed to making One Acre Fund a more equitable and inclusive place. In 2024, we will double our efforts in the areas where we have made limited progress such as improving gender balance across all job levels, investing in manager quality improvements to ensure equitable performance management across the team, and improving farmer-facing staff participation in decision-making.

We remain steadfast in the belief that this work is critical to the work we do. Successfully meeting our People and DEI priorities better positions us to deliver on our promise to meaningfully improve the lives of the farmers we work with and allow them to thrive. This is the reason we exist and we cannot do it without a strong workforce.

For annual updates on our People and DEI work, you can find each year's report [here](#). Thank you for joining us on this journey.