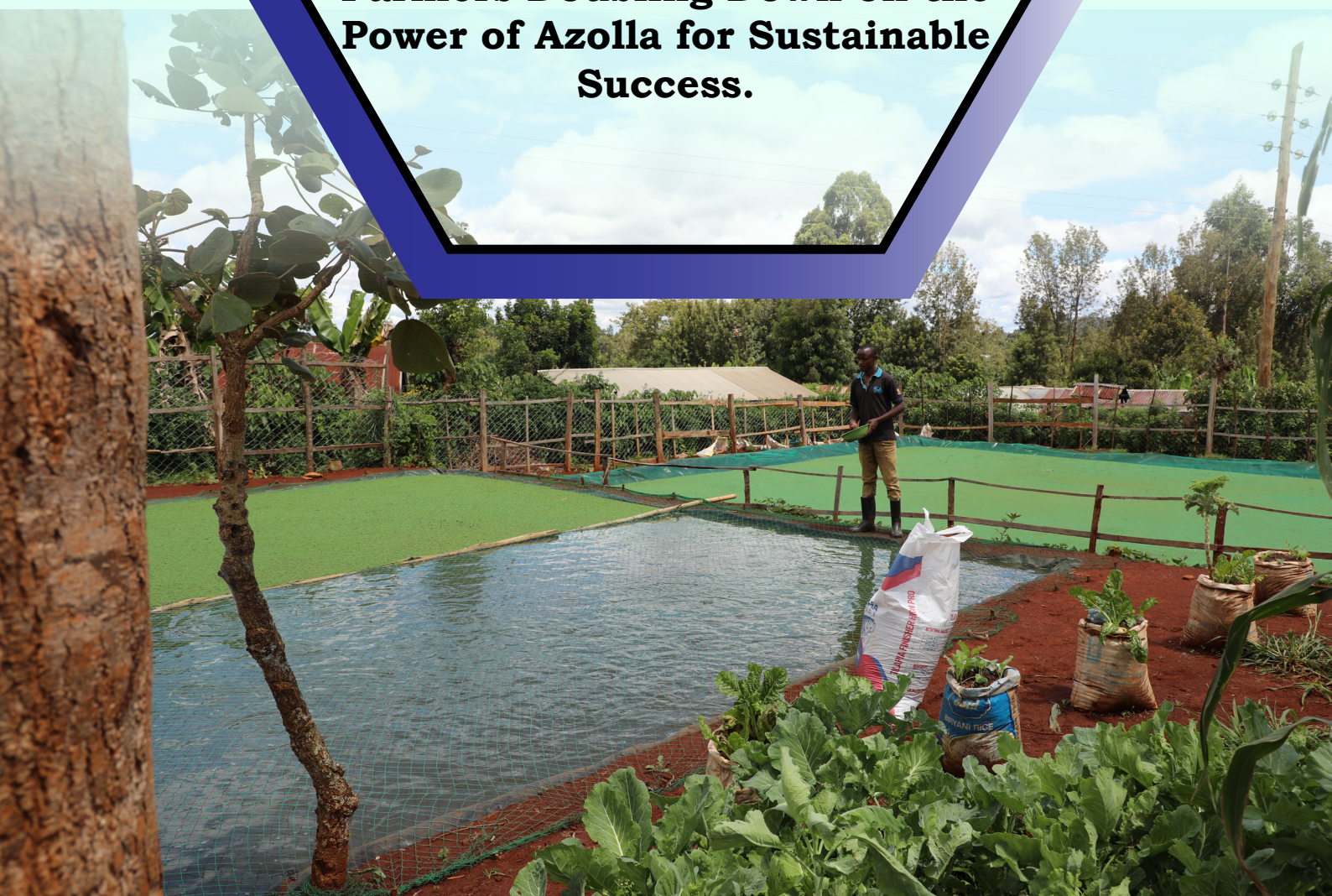




## *Best Practices*

**Growing Green: Mathira West  
Constituency's Twin Fish  
Farmers Doubling Down on the  
Power of Azolla for Sustainable  
Success.**



Investing in rural people



# Growing Green: Mathira West Constituency's Twin Fish Farmers Doubling Down on the Power of Azolla for Sustainable Success.

Jesse Mbare and Dennis Maina are twin fish farmers in a rural village in Mathira West Constituency that have found double the success in their farming business, and it is not just because there are two of them. Having enrolled as beneficiaries to the programme in early 2021 at a youthful age of 23, the brothers continue to pursue their aquaculture venture with as much gusto as they did in the onset. The dynamic duo has stepped up their fish farming practices with a creative green approach proving that environmental consciousness is not only sustainable, but also be lucrative. "This technique has seen our feeding cost reduced by close to 70%," Dennis says enthusiastically. Their secret? Azolla. This fast-growing aquatic plant, also referred to as "water fern," has become the foundation upon which their farming practices are based for all the right reasons.



Walking into their joint fish farm venture, one's eyes are immediately drawn to the green matter prominently floating on the water surfaces of both ponds. They estimate that prior to azolla placement, they would use 2 kg of fish food per day in each pond. Post-azolla, they use only three-quarters a kilo of fish feed per day in each pond. Dennis and Jesse have used azolla for three months now and thus far, they report no regrets. They often reiterate that the fast-growing aquatic plant is the secret ingredient in their success formula. It has enabled them to rear healthy and wholesome fish in their ponds. "Going by the size of the fish's mouth, azolla is doing well for us," says Dennis.

When asked by one of our officer, on what is done with excess azolla as the plant is known to multiply in a period between 24-48hrs, the brothers reply that they sell them to nearby livestock farmers. Livestock farmers especially take a liking to azolla as feed for their animals



because it is affordable and has a high protein content in its biomass. They additionally that they sell the azolla to fellow fish farmers encouraging them to take up the practice as well. The twins sell them at a price of 20Ksh per kg thereby serving as an extra source of income all thanks to azolla.

The successful story of Jesse and Dennis is a testament to the effectiveness the ADBP provides in the lives of farmers in rural Kenya, more so among the youth. The programme provides small holder farmers with the resources, training and support needed for prosperity. The adoption of inventive agricultural techniques, such as the usage of Azolla, has not only transformed their own aquacultural business, but also aided in the community's economic growth and encouraged other farmers to adopt environmentally conscious farming techniques.

