

HOW ICT IS TRANSFORMING LIVELIHOOD IN THE REMOTE REGIONS OF THARAKA NITHI COUNTY

BY CAROLINE WAMBUI

In the modern world ICT is indispensable as it plays a crucial role in bringing out efficiency and effectiveness in work places and especially in service delivery. GRADIF-K a community development foundation that seeks to improve the lives of the vulnerable community groups through capacity empowerment advocacy, networking, collaboration, partnerships, strengthening of local philanthropy, and asset building has realized this and that's why it has equipped some of its groups with the latest computers.

Some of the groups that stand as beneficiaries include Gakiuma Community Based Organizations in Tunyai, Igambang'ombe Multipurpose Co-op Society Ltd (IMCOS) and Kamukanya group in Tunyai.



An installed computer being used by Kamukanya group

The use of computers in the groups vary depending on their location as most of the areas in the county where these farmers are based are marginalized. Though even with the challenges, the

farmers have not allowed the obstacles to outweigh them but instead, they have devised strategies to mitigate them and move forward like anyone else in the county and country.

Gakiuma Community Based Organization in the remotest part of Tunyai, is one good example as for one, the region not only lacks many basic necessities but it is also inaccessible as the roads are not tarmacked. Access to clean water, power among other amenities is great issue.

Though surrounded by these challenging issues, the groups have vowed to focus on the positives and work with the negatives to produce niceties saying that when life presents lemon to them they should make lemonade.

At Gakiuma the computer is in the custodian of the secretary who devised the use of solar power “We use the strong solar energy as a blessing not as a curse. We tap the strong solar energy to generate power which is in turn used in lighting and more so in this computer where,” Daniel Kinyua the secretary of the group says as he points to the already stored information in the computer.

“ICT is playing a crucial role in effective management of the group as since acquiring the computer in 2016 we have managed to sort most of the group issues as figures don’t lie. Initially farmers used to have doubt on whether what is recorded on the book is actually what they either contributed or is actually their loan balance, but today such issues are issues of the past as farmers can easily access any kind of information in a timely manner,” Kinyua ascertains.

The group stores every single information pertaining the group right from any meeting held to the amount of money contributed in a group meeting to any money lent to what member in the group and the repayment period. Records pertaining the sale of their produce like sorghum and

green grams are also reflected.



Some members of Kamukanya group after receiving a computer

Kamukanya group in Gakurungu also attests of similar benefits as the group attests of meaningful progress in group management as complex tasks in the group like computing figures and quick analysis of data is easily done.

At Igambang'ombe Multipurpose Co-op Society Ltd (IMCOS), ICT has proved invaluable due to the large volumes of data they handle. To them ICT is indispensable as they are now able to process the data which is assisting them in making proper managerial decisions. “ICT management is a necessity in administration as it is vital in evaluation, logistics and planning,” attests Patrick Kirema.

Kirema says that it is through ICT, that they have been in a position to manage large groups of people. “ICT has also helped increase productivity in the groups and in the co-operative in general as farmers have developed a sense of confidence in the system as there is no deceit,” he adds.

With this GRADIF-K has thus helped bring about both economic and social development as the different communities work together. For future plans, the organization plans to ensure that farmers are connected to the internet to explore market for their produce, and also link with new partners and be in a position to trade globally.



Some individuals accessing data from Gakiuma group