

## **TRAININGS AND FARMERS EXCHANGE VISITS MADE ME A BETTER MAN**

Morris mwiti- a youthful farmer ,an inspiration to his village men, `a hero in his own respect` - has managed to rise from an ordinary youth to a role-model in agri-business, motivational speaker, a better husband and father. Whilst other youth in his village ignore farming, he has flourished as he made a bold decision to venture into farming; which has turned out to be an impressive business, which has now made his home popular with visit of popular individuals and groups to capture his success story.

Morris is a member of **Jikaze youth group**, in kambandi area; Chuka ;in Tharaka-Nithi county. The youth group is a beneficiary of GRADIF-K agriculture, NRM, Climate change Initiatives funded by the Government of Sweden, DFID through Act!-Kenya within the CRM facility (Changiemi Rasli-mali).

Morris is a proof that trainings and farmers learning visits can add magic for agri-business farmers. The said trainings and visits we organized and implemented by organization with an aim of training small-scale farmers on such areas as sustainable agriculture, marketing and value addition.



During an interview with **Morris**

Team leader: *tell us about your self-help group and your relationship with gradif and detra*

Morris: I am a member of jikaze youth group; which was founded in the year 2006 .It has 10 members' 6 of whom are women and 4 men. It's registered as a self-help group and now the plans are to convert it to a community based organization.

I met detra/gradif around 2-3 years ago. I have attended training and farmers exchange/learning visits organized by them.

Team leader: *how have you benefited from them?*

First, through interaction with a very successful couple in farming during one of the exchange visit; I learnt that women need to be educationally empowered; this made me change my attitude towards women and started seeing them as very resourceful. I then made a decision to take my wife to college.

I started appreciating rabbit keeping as an economic activity which I had earlier perceived as a leisure activity for small boys

I learnt that farming was not for aged people but also for the youth.' In fact I am now advocating for farming by youths in churches, group meetings and during any forum whenever I get an opportunity.

*Morris proudly shows –off one of rabbits*

Team leader: *what are some of the farming activities you have replicated so far?*

Morris: sustainable coffee farming with a target of 2000 trees which I estimate to earn approx. 1million per year in the next 2 years

Goat rearing-which is not only useful for milk production but also producing manure for my coffee farm

Grafted passion fruits-'I had never thought that these fruits can grow in this hot climate till I learnt during the trainings that if grafted they can withstand and even produce more in quantity and quality

There many more that I learnt which are also good like canola farming, fish farming, poultry among others but I had to set priorities.

Training others and networking-I have managed to train convince members of my group to start rabbit rearing which has a ready market, many have started though in small scale. Our group is doing table banking to enable members' access small loans to buy rabbits, seeds and other farm inputs. We are also a member of farmer network covering two division

#### *Challenges I have encountered*

Lack of sufficient capital

Poor access to relevant trainings to upgrade my knowledge