

SUCCESS STORIES IDENTIFIED AFTER SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT

STORY 1:

HAPPY FARMER AFTER EXPERIMENTING WITH MINIMAL WATER ARROWROOT FARMING IN THARAKA NITHI COUNTY.

After holding a farmers exchange visit in Tharaka Nithi County on 20th September 2013, the farmers were able to learn various best practices that they could apply in their small pieces of land for maximum production. During this day, farmers were overwhelmed to learn how they can grow arrow roots in their small parcels of land and with little amount of water. Traditionally, arrow roots are normally grown along rivers where there is continuous flow of water throughout. But this was not the case after we visited one of the small scale farmers in Tharaka Nithi. Here, the farmers were trained on how they can grow arrow roots with very little amount of water, by digging trenches and putting a polythene paper to avoid percolation of water to the underground.



Demonstrations on how to grow arrowroots in places with limited water supply during a farmers exchange visit in Mr Kamundi's farm in Kirege; Tharaka Nithi County facilitated by Detra Africa in September 2013.

This became a turning point for a small scale farmer in the dry parts of Tharaka Nithi County where rainfall is scanty, unreliable and unpredictable.

Through a local water project, he got piped water for irrigation but the water again couldn't be enough to irrigate all the crops in the farm. *"I have been trying to cope with these challenges till Detra-Africa and GRANDF-K facilitated me to a training and subsequent farmers exchange visits where I learnt about modern methods of farming.*

Out of those, I learnt and tried many like horticulture, pawpaw, improved coffee farming among others but the most amazing one was arrow root farming which I earlier on believed can do well in wet lands".

"From Mr. Kamundi's farm in Chuka, I learnt about using a plastic paper lines to grow arrow roots. It only requires me to water them once in a week. This was a great idea and when i went home i replicated the same".

The 2 picture below shows Muketha's farm where arrow roots have been grown. In the first picture, the technology of using a polythene paper on a trench has not been applied while in the second

picture, the technology has been applied. The difference in quality and size of arrow roots can be judged from the pictures



Left: Mr Muketha touring his arrow roots farm in Tharaka Nithi County; Right; Part of arrow roots grown on a trench with a polythene bags. The 2 pictures compared shows that arrow roots grown on a polythene bag grows faster and healthier.

"I now have 800 plants from which I am expecting to earn an income of at least 8000ksh within the next two months. I also have seedlings that I sell to other farmers".

"Am planning to practice this on a large scale after the first harvest" however to mitigate marketing challenges am planning to train on value –addition and bring as many farmers on board as possible; and hopefully form a cooperative union".

"Am also aware that a market research is very important, however I know that as per now there is ready market in our open air market and individuals".

STORY 2:

YOUTHFUL COUPLE REARS A DIARY COW AND PRACTICES COFFEE FARMING ON A QUARTER HECTARE PIECE OF LAND.

A farmer's exchange visit was facilitated by DETRA-AFRICA and GRADIF K on 15th November 2012 where participants from Nyeri, Meru and Tharaka Nithi Counties benefitted. One of the places they visited was Murungaru dairy farm, where farmers were taught on various modalities of farming dairy cows ranging from housing, feeding, and types of breeds, curing diseases and marketing procedures.



Above: Farmers from Tharaka Nithi, Nyeri and Meru Counties being demonstrated on modern ways of keeping dairy cattle at Murungaru Fairm in Nyeri County.

This exchange visit became a turning point for Dickson Mutwiri who is a beneficiary of the above Detra Africa and GRADIF-K Training and farmers exchange visit. Dickson starts by showing us the cow shed which he had previously, poorly built and full of watery stuff and says:

"I wish I had a photo of emaciated and poor yielding cow I had before. But when I visited Mweshimiwa Murugaru's farm in Nyeri County, I vowed to myself that I will improve. I started constructing a zero-grazing cowshed and later bought this "grade dairy cow "you can see. This was propelled by the fact that I was taught how best to feed the cow which made me realize that dairy cows don't eat too much if you feed them on dry matter. I now know how to make quality and less expensive feed for my cow.

However, my wife having not attended the training sometimes differs with me over the practice. I would therefore suggest that next time Detra and GRADIF-K considers empowering us as couples in order to effectively use the knowledge acquired".



Above pictures: A cow in a well-built shed to protect the cows from diseases. On right is a calf which is as a result of artificial insemination right from when the farmer attended the exchange visit in Nyeri. The cow can now produce more milk than before.

STORY 3

A YOUTHFUL FARMER BENEFITS FROM DETRA-AFRICA AND GRADIF-K FARMER EXCHANGE VISIT AND VENTURES IN COFFEE FARMING

Meru farmer's exchange visit which was held on 12TH APRIL 2013 became a turning point for a small scale farmer in Tharaka Nithi County Mr. Morris Mwiti who hails from Nkuthika Village in Chuka. He says that "the visits and training served as an eye opener to me. For example I had lost hope in coffee farming. But after visiting Mwalimu's coffee farm in Meru County, I started viewing coffee farming from a profitable perspective. I have now planted 300 coffee trees and my target for 2014 is 2000 tree. I have already bought a piece of land and drilled a borehole in order to ensure that this dream becomes a reality" he added.

"I just decided to give it a trial, and now that it has worked for me, it is easy to convince my community members that it can work for them too. Am planning to mobilize other farmers replicate this agri-business venture and especially the younger generation although i know many of them just like me face financial constraints, but i believe through the support from DETRA-AFRICA and GRADIF-K and other well-wishers we shall overcome and be successful coffee farmers".

Mr. Morris Mwiti took us to the farm where he is growing Coffee. He says that the training that was conducted in Meru County on efficient coffee farming became a turning point for him, and enlightened his mind on how he can produce better coffee. He started narrating that the previous year, he had harvested only approximately 1,500 Kgs of Coffee which he took to the factory. But this year, he can attest that though the harvesting season is not yet, there are changes on his coffee in terms of the produce compared to last year. He has been able to apply proper herbicides, humus and fertilizer, and correct measurements and intended timing. He has also started adopting better varieties of Coffee for better production in Future. Mr. Mutwiri from assessing and comparing production for last season and this season, he projects to make over 2,500 Kgs of coffee which will be an improvement of 1,000 Kgs for a period of 1 year



Above photos: Left: Morris Mwiti in her coffee farm explaining his achievements to Detra Africa project officer Flora Kaari and one of the program beneficiaries Ms. Margaret Munene. Right: a photo of a very healthy coffee plant in Mr. Mwiti's Farm.

STORY 4:

A CBO IN CHUKA SET TO EXPLOIT A POUTLY FARMING ENTERPRICE

Mugwe CBO is one of the grass root partner to GRADIF K and DETRA AFRICA in kiereni area in Chuka, Tharaka Nithi County. Through Training and exchange visits facilitated by GRADIF K and DETRA AFRICA which the CBO secretary Mr. Alex was able to attend, knowledge has been transferred to other members and now they have identified poultry keeping as one of their enterprise.

Talking to farmers groups during the farmers exchange in Tharaka Nithi county, Alex said *"we are grateful to GRADIF-K and DETRA-AFRICA giving us an opportunity to link up with other farmers, organizations and individuals who are now of great help to us"*. After teaching our members about what we have learnt in the field through you, they have decided to visit brade-gate farm in nyeri on Wednesday 23:01:2014 to learn more about poultry, we are planning to replicate it as soon as we are back.



Above pictures: Mugwe CBO, a group of farmers network who benefitted from program takes all its group members to Brade Gate poultry farm in Nyeri to learn on best practices to rear chicken.

The CBO is using canola oil as a fundraiser. After linking up with Mr Kimondo during the first exchange visit in Nyeri in 2012. *“After linking up with Mr. Kimondo of canola oil industries during the farmers exchange visit, we now receive 8 cartons of canola oil which we sell and use the money to supplement donor funding”*. Kimondo is a farmer in Kieni west-Nyeri County who invented the high nutritious and healthy benefit canola oil.

STORY 5:

A FARMER WON 1ST PRIZE DURING MERU SHOW AFTER REPLICATING BEST PRACTICES

Mr. and Mrs Magaju have practiced mixed farming over years, but when they attended farmers exchange visit facilitated by GRADIF-K and DETRA AFRICA. They contend that their farming methods have improved drastically.

Janet had this to share with farmers *“I have been a farmer of banana, coffee and other crops for many years. However, i have never received good returns from bananas, arrowroots, and sugarcane after the farmers the farmers learning visit I assessed the economic benefits of bananas, arrowroots and rabbit and decided to try out the venture”* She said.

“The results are amazing and I wish I had a photo to show you the kind of bananas I had in my farm before so that you can compare with what is here now. In fact the bananas got the winning prize during the Meru Agricultural show. My arrowroots are doing well and am anticipating an income of at least 8,000ksh per month for a start. Bananas give me around 12,000ksh per harvest which is after 2-3weeks. I have started rearing rabbit a small scale but wish to expand with times the major challenge i have is capital, otherwise I would also want to rear chicken from brad gate farm in nyeri.” She added.



In the pictures above: Left; Mr. Magaju and Mrs. Janet Magaju displays a bunch of bananas outside their home in Meru County.
Right: A bunches of banana in Magaju's farm.

Janet has mobilized a 20 people member group for tree planting and arrowroots. *"We are at the initial stages, meeting once per week to raise funds to establish tree-nurseries and arrowroots seedlings. If we get support from well-wishes this will enable us move at a faster speed because environmental issues need to be addressed without further delay"* she says

STORY 6

A FARMER IN MERU COUNTY VENTURES INTO POULTRY FARMING MAKES HUGE PROFITS AND INSPIRES OTHER FARMERS TO JOIN POULTRY REARING VENTURE

Mrs Margaret Munene from Equator area in Meru County is on record of rearing local breeds of chicken. But according to her, they take long time to mature, they consume a lot and it's difficult to find market. Therefore, by the time they reach the marketing stage, the profit is very little or in most cases she makes losses. This has for a long time discouraged her. According to her, she got an inspiration as a result of attending numerous trainings and farmers exchanged visits to Nyeri and Tharaka Nithi Counties. The activities were facilitated and organized by DETRA- Africa and GRADIF-K. During these visits individuals learnt best practices from each other and from organizations. Visiting poultry rearing farm in Brade Gate in Nyeri became her turning point.



Photo showing farmers participating in demonstrations on how to rear chicken in Nyeri-brade gate poultry farmers. The visit that was facilitated by Gradik Kenya and Detra Africa 15th November 2012.

"I have been rearing the "Kienjeji" (Indigenous) type of chicken for years which took long time for them to mature; but after visiting Brade Gate farm in Nyeri; I learnt about chicks that grow and mature in 48days and have a ready market and other benefits like being provided with feeds and free veterinary services; DETRA Africa Linked us with Brade gate chicken farmers who supplied me and other farmers with 1 day old chicken. As a result I reared chicks worth 45,000 including feeds and free feeding instructions and transport services. After 48 days gate came to pick them and was paid 75,000. I therefore earned a profit of KES 35,000 within 48 days. I then decided to invest the capital and profit earned to double the number of chicks which will be bought anytime from now." She said. When Detra Africa team visited her, the Brade gate had already picked the chicken and then preparing to deliver more chicks to the farmer.



Above photos: Mrs Munene and her husband Mr Munene demonstrating how they feed their chicken before they sold them to bradegate in Nyeri.

Being a board member of Ruiga girls high school, she introduced the idea to them and Brade Gate supplied 2000 chicks and have so far sold chicken worth 317,000 to Brade Gate for a start and are now planning to increase the number to 3000 chicks this time round; The project will be used as an initiative to educate needy children in the school.

"I discovered that I needed to transform my community to bring about change by demonstrating that there are options other than the traditional way of farming which brings low returns", she shared.

However am disappointed that though I make a lot of effort to provide for my community with information voluntarily as Detra and GRADIF did to us, many are willing but they lack capital to start this profitable venture. I would wish that Detra-AFRICA and GRADIF-K finds a way to support them to replicate this venture in their homes she said.