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KENYA AND EAST AFRICA

SUCCESS STORY

Integrating Agribusiness and Nutrition to Boost Incomes and Health

Increasing access to irrigation and nutrition services for over 2,000 farmers in Kenya



Eric Onyego/ KIWASH

Naomi Okong'o, chairlady of Hope for Kisumu Youth Achievers Group works at the agribusiness and nutrition demonstration farm

"It's a win for us because people living with HIV including group members have access to fresh and nutritious vegetables which is very important for their health".

- Naomi Okong'o

According to the 2014 demographic health survey, only 21 percent of Kenyan children under the age of two consume a minimum acceptable diet. Addressing this challenge requires increasing household production of food with a focus on nutrient-dense and diverse foods. Unfortunately, for the majority of rural families, limited land, insecure food access, limited capital and irregular access to water conspire against efforts to address food insecurity. These challenges require customized and innovative solutions.

In November 2016, USAID's Kenya Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene project (KIWASH) in collaboration with Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital (JOTRH) set up a demonstration garden where local suppliers provide agricultural inputs to showcase production of nutrient-dense, high-value crops using efficient irrigation and agricultural water management technologies. JOTRH is a high density health facility located in Kisumu County, western Kenya.

The demonstration garden managed by a support group for people living positively with HIV has attracted visitors and smallholder farmers from the region. The farmers observe the performance of the crops under different conditions and innovations including shade net, greenhouse, drip irrigation and bucket irrigation. "The shade net technology, multi-storey garden and keyhole garden are the most popular among the visitors." Naomi Okong'o, Chairlady of the group states.

Motivated by increased produce from the farm, the group has dedicated their efforts to managing and maintaining the farm to ensure its sustainability beyond the KIWASH support. The group has started establishing a nursery that will readily supply seedlings to interested farmers, including the patients and visitors who visit the farm.

"It's a win for us because people living with HIV including group members have access to fresh and nutritious vegetables which is very important for their health and wellbeing plus we're making money from selling the vegetables,". She adds.

In scaling up this approach, KIWASH is collaborating with the private sector through a recoverable grant to increase access to irrigation and nutrition services to 1,164 farmers from 37 farmer groups in the western Kenya as well as 120 farmers in eastern Kenya. Under the agreement, the private companies will procure, distribute and install farm inputs including full irrigation kits to farmers to help increase agricultural production, improve food security and household incomes for smallholders, and enhance consumption of nutrient dense and diverse foods for better health.

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

This innovative approach also supports the Kisumu County Government, through the Ministry of Health and Department of Nutrition, which has a strategy of establishing vegetable gardens in all health facilities in the county. The county's agriculture department also has a similar strategy of establishing demonstration farms through lead farmers in all the wards.

KIWASH combines nutrition programming with improved access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and aims to enable more than one million Kenyans across nine counties to gain access to improved WASH services and increase access to irrigation and nutrition services.