

Introduction to the SHEP Approach



What is the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP) Approach and what has it been achieving? Here's JICA's explanation of the SHEP Approach - its concepts, originality, success factors and the way forward.

Snapshot of SHEP

The Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP) Approach is an innovative development modality developed by the joint efforts of the Kenyan and Japanese governments. The approach has been effective in raising smallholder farmer incomes from horticulture as it develops both the technical and managerial capacity of farmers to practice market-oriented horticultural farming. Some of the unique characteristics of the approach include conducting market surveys by farmers themselves, establishing business linkages between farmers and business service providers, and promoting gender equality with a clear purpose of strengthening farming couples' relationships as "partners for farm management". As the result of the approach, the farmers' income from horticulture has grown significantly and their livelihoods have improved not only during the intervention period, but also for years after the intervention. The farmer groups are now self-reliant and creative in expanding their horticultural farming businesses. JICA is now applying this SHEP Approach to other African countries so that the lives of small-scale farmers will be uplifted through market-oriented farming.

1. What is SHEP?

In Kenya, smallholder farmers, whose agricultural land¹ is less than two hectares, produce around 80 percent of the vegetables and fruits traded in the market². While small-scale farmers play a critical role in the value chain of horticulture, their incomes remain nominal due to various adverse conditions such as insufficient production and quality management skills, limited market access, high fluctuation of farmgate prices, and poor transportation networks. For these reasons, the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP) Approach has been developed and implemented in Kenya since 2006 with a clear purpose of improving the livelihoods of small-scale farmers through increasing their incomes. It is a well-rounded development approach which specifically targets those smallholder farmers who try to expand cultivating horticultural crops for income generation.

The invention of the approach is credited to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MOALF), the Horticulture Crops Development Authority (HCDA) in Kenya and also the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which has given continuous technical support to MOALF and HCDA for developing the capacity of the government staff and farmers to facilitate market-oriented farming. Owing to the joint efforts of these three key institutions collaborating closely, the SHEP Approach has succeeded in making a real impact on the ground, i.e. changing farmers' livelihoods for the better.




¹ "Agricultural land" here includes those parcels of land used for cultivating non-horticultural crops.

² AfDB (2007) "Republic of Kenya Small-Scale Horticulture Development Project: Appraisal Report" and Kenya Development Learning Centre (2010) "Smallholder Farmers' Involvement in Commercial Horticulture: Kenya's perspective" Video conference on high value horticulture for Eastern & Southern Africa. 2nd November

2. What did SHEP achieve?

The SHEP Approach achieved tangible outputs in a short-term period: substantial increases in farmer incomes from horticulture. During the first phase of implementation, i.e. pilot-based activities implemented under a project entitled “the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment Project (SHEP Phase 1)” (2006-2009), the farmers increased their incomes around twofold³ (Table 1). The number of beneficiary farmers was about 2,500 during SHEP Phase 1. Under the current nation-wide project, “The Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion Unit Project (SHEP UP)” (2010-2015), the corresponding figure increased to 13,000. The SHEP intervention not only brought about increased income but also made an impact on the lives of the farmers. With the extra income they made, the farmers started sending their children to school, repaired their houses, began off-farm income generation activities, bought livestock, and purchased motorcycles and pick-up trucks for transporting their produce to the market. Many scaled up their agricultural activities by expanding their horticultural fields and invested more in agricultural inputs. There are also less tangible benefits to the farmers. Such benefits include strengthened solidarity and cohesion of the farmer groups to which SHEP intervened, improved gender relations between husbands and wives, and encouraged young generations to become more interested in staying in villages and engaging in agriculture. Because of these positive changes, farmers’ communities are rejuvenated and the effects of SHEP are spreading out to neighboring farming communities.

Two-year Change in Farmer Incomes from Horticultural Farming during SHEP Phase 1 (per farming season)	
Baseline Survey (May- June 2007)	22,794 Kenyan Shillings
Twofold Increase 	
Endline Survey (October 2009)	47,131 Kenyan Shillings

1 Kenyan Shilling= approx. 0.012 US Dollars (as of December 2013)
The amounts above are nominal incomes.

Table 1 Change in farmer incomes from horticultural farming during SHEP Phase 1

3. What is the SHEP concept?

Concept of SHEP

The SHEP Approach offers farmers a series of trainings and a range of activities with a clear focus on market-oriented farming. The SHEP activities are systematic and closely linked with one another in order to achieve the goal of farmers’ improved livelihoods. This capacity development package ensures that the farmers keep motivated and acquire agricultural and managerial skills that are necessary to gain access to, and succeed in the competitive market. The farmers’ awareness and behavior transform as a result of this package offered and they start commercial farming, as opposed to subsistence farming, to meet the market demand.

Originality of SHEP

The originality of SHEP is twofold: (1) promoting “Farming as a Business” and (2) motivating and cultivating people by effective activity designs and “tips” (Figure 1). SHEP adheres to both elements throughout its activity implementation so that the farmers will become self-reliant in terms of knowledge and capacity to succeed in farming businesses.

³ The figure is based on the amount of nominal income.

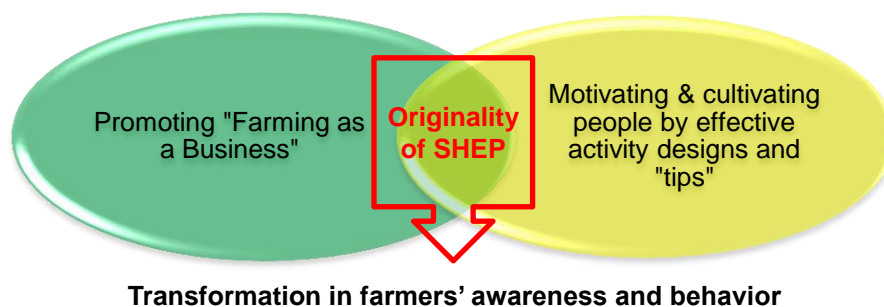


Figure 1 Originality of SHEP

1. Promoting “Farming as a Business” ~ Starting with the Market and Ending with the Market ~

SHEP supports smallholder farmers to conduct market surveys, select crops and prepare action plans on their own. These activities help farmers to overcome the asymmetric information, or the information gap, which stands as an obstacle between farmers and market actors such as middlemen, traders and exporters. SHEP also enhances farmers' capacity for market access by teaching a low-cost and easy-to-implement technology called *do-nou* (a technology to repair rural roads using gunny sacks) as well as by imparting high-quality crop production and post-harvest handling skills. SHEP activities on the whole help the farmers actively engage in “Farming as a Business”.

2. Motivating and Cultivating People by Effective Activity Designs and Tips

SHEP activities are designed to improve the levels of motivation and skills of farmers as the training course progresses. In order to achieve the goal of farmers' livelihood improvement as quickly as possible, efficient and effective activity details are invented. Furthermore, based on the self-determination theory* proposed by Edward Deci, a variety of “tips” to prompt voluntary actions by project implementers and beneficiaries are carefully crafted and used throughout the process of the project.

*The theory recognizes three psychological needs of an individual: (1) Autonomy – to inform people of the significance of an activity for them to perform willingly. (2) Competence – To give people a sense of achievement (3) Relatedness – To enable people to strengthen their relationships with others.



4. How is SHEP's vision translated into action?

SHEP translates its vision of “farmers increasing income from horticultural farming” into action by offering a well-rounded capacity development package to the smallholder farmers. One of SHEP's unique strengths is the fact that the order and timing of the activities are decided carefully, taking into consideration interlinking dynamics of each step of the activities. SHEP regards raising farmers' motivation and enhancing their self-determination as one of the most critical factors in their acquisition of new skills and knowledge.

For example, the farmers' motivation needs to be raised before being given opportunities for learning new knowledge so that they are ready and willing to absorb the knowledge given. In the same breath, if knowledge and skill development opportunities are not given in a timely manner, their raised motivation and morale may lapse. . Therefore, SHEP does not just provide necessary training to farmers but does so in an optimal sequence and with optimal timing. Figure 2 depicts the interlink between a farmer's motivation and skill levels during various SHEP activities.

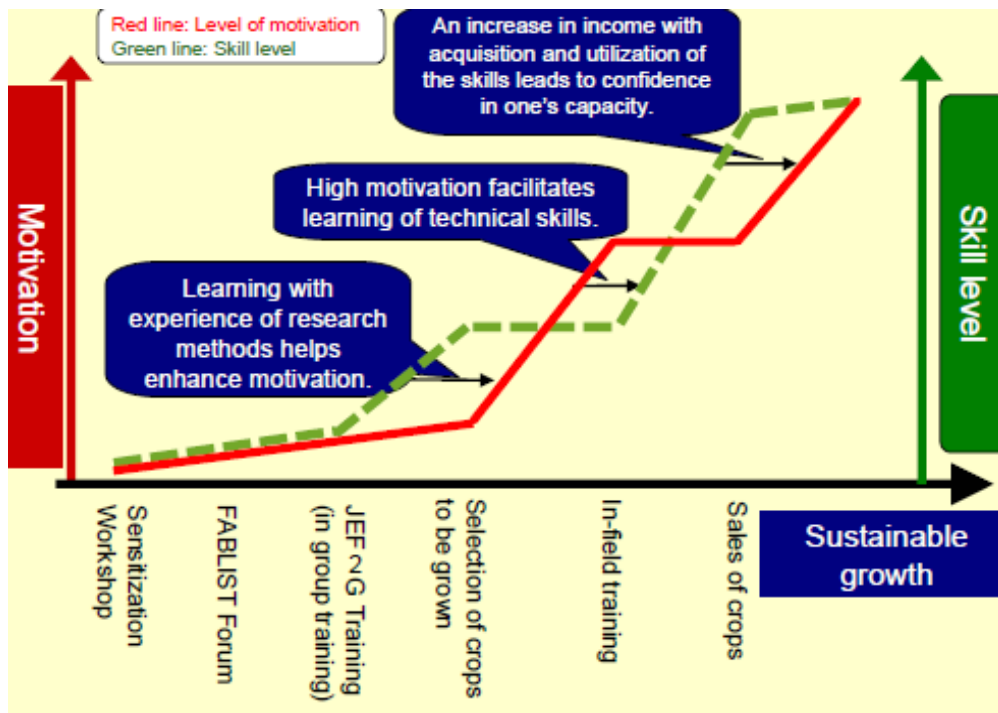


Figure 2 Interlink between farmer motivation and skill level during activities

Below are the actual steps SHEP implements at the target areas within the time period of one and a half years. By implementing all these steps in the right order and timing, SHEP ensures that farmer motivation will be gradually raised and their ‘absorption capacity’ for new knowledge and skills will be maximized accordingly.

[Step 1] Sensitization Workshop

When project activities are started, SHEP holds a sensitization workshop to promote understanding of the project activities and clearly explain the roles and responsibilities expected of each concerned party.

[Step 2] Selection of Target Sub-Counties

Sub-counties for participating SHEP activities are selected through the proposal method. The selection committee ranks the proposals and selects Sub-Counties where activities are carried out.

Key Points: SHEP informs all concerned parties of the selection criteria and process in order to ensure transparency. This eliminates the risks that target Sub-Counties are selected for political or personal reasons.

[Step 3] SHEP Organizers’ Training

After the selection of target Sub-Counties, SHEP organizes the Sub-County Management Teams (consisting of the three members of Sub-County Agricultural Officer, Sub-County Horticultural Crops/Crops Development Officer and a regional manager of HCDA) and conducts five-day organizers’ training on the concepts of SHEP, methods of model farmer groups selection, activity planning and implementation methods, work plans for the activities, budget formulation methods, etc. The team also learns how to conduct a baseline survey and visit exemplary farm groups that have succeeded in income increase with support from SHEP to learn the experience of the farmers.

[Step 4] Baseline Survey

In the baseline survey, model farmer groups conduct a survey about the situation of the group and member farmers using a prescribed survey sheet with guidance from extension officers. Specifically, they record cultivation area, yield, unit selling price, inputs, gross income, profit, cultivation techniques, status of use of techniques, etc. for each of the horticultural crops planted in the last cropping season. Using Group Empowerment Indicators (GEIs), the farmer group checks the status of their own organization together with an extension officer to measure improvements in leadership, cooperative relationships and gender-related matters of the group.

Key Points: The baseline survey helps farmers know their own farm management status, identify more profitable and less profitable crops, and understand the importance of keeping records.

[Step 5] Farm Business Linkage Stakeholder (FABLIS) Forum

The purpose of the FABLIS forum is for farmer groups and market players in the small-scale horticulture industry to meet, exchange information and expand networks. The participants are representatives of farmer groups (both male and female), extension officers, market players such as agricultural inputs (seed, fertilizer and agrochemical) companies, agricultural machinery companies, agricultural product processors, agricultural research institutes, microfinance institutions, buyers of agricultural products, government organizations, NGO, etc. Each participant has a booth with products and presentation documents. Through the business meetings the participants have in the forum, the farmer groups understand the potential and prospects of their horticultural businesses, which in turn raises their motivation for commercial farming.

Key Points: By limiting participants, the forum becomes a place for realistic and practical meetings. Profiles of the farmer groups are given to the market players beforehand so that the participants can start exchanging information instantly at the forum.



[Step 6] Joint Extension Staff & Farmers' Dual Gender (JEF2G) Training

A series of trainings is provided to the representatives of farmer groups and extension officers about market surveys, crop selection, problems analysis, objectives analysis, action plan formulation, and gender-related matters. In the training about market surveys, representatives of farmer groups and extension officers conduct a survey simulation in a nearby market with a format prepared by SHEP concerning marketable crops, seasonal price changes, required quality and quantity, etc.

Key Points: Not only farmers but also extension officers and the related staff of agricultural offices, such as a Sub-County Gender Officer, participate in the trainings. Mutual understanding and trust among them are enhanced since the training mitigates information asymmetry among the participants from different social groups. Gender balance of farmers' representatives is strictly kept 50:50 for equal male/female participation.

[Step 7] Group Exercises: Market Survey and Formulation of Action Plan

The techniques learned in the JEF2G Training should be shared in each farmer group. With support from extension officers, male and female representatives of farmer groups who attended the training conduct market surveys with other members. Then, all members of the farmer group discuss the results, select crops for the group and formulate an action plan.

Key Points: The farmers understand the market needs through conducting market surveys by themselves. They also maintain motivation through the selection of target crops and action plan formulation.

[Step 8] Facilitators' Training for Farmers' Demand Driven Extension (FT-FaDDE)

Based on the action plans created by farmer groups, FT-FaDDE is conducted, where extension officers learn knowledge and techniques required when supporting farmer groups. The extension officers learn basic horticultural crop production knowledge and techniques as well as specific knowledge and techniques for cultivation of the selected crops. This will enable extension officers to conduct in-field training tailored to farmer needs. On the last day of the training, extension materials in the form of an educational flip chart, or *kamishibai*, are given to the extension officers.

Key Points: The extension officers feel confident enough to provide training to farmers, using the visually-attractive, easy-to-understand extension materials.



[Step 9] In-Field Training by Extension Officers

After the FT-FaDDE, each trained extension officer disseminates techniques in line with the action plan to the farmer groups s/he is in charge of. In the in-field training, which is conducted several times each cropping season,

extension officers teach in a practical manner knowledge and techniques necessary for the production of the crops selected by the farmer group.

Key Points: Contents of the training are determined according to the action plan created by each farmer group.

[Step 10] Sale of Crops

After using the learned techniques in their fields, farmer groups or individual farmers sell crops through the sales channel they developed on their own.

5. How is SHEP different from other approaches?



Development projects to promote market-oriented farming are an international trend of agricultural strategies and are carried out by various development partners. SHEP, although working in the same area, has a different approach from such projects. SHEP employs various devices and techniques that are different from those of existing projects. The guiding principle of SHEP is to motivate and cultivate the project stakeholders throughout the activity implementation, as explained in the “SHEP’s originality”. Therefore, SHEP always focuses on the capacity development aspect of the intervention with the utmost attention paid to making an impact on the ground. Here are some concrete examples of how SHEP carries out some key activities.

Baseline Survey

Other projects	SHEP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External experts such as consultants and researchers conduct the surveys. External experts conduct detailed survey on the status of production, farm management, value chain, etc., using a complex questionnaire. There are few opportunities for farmers to participate in the survey or analysis or give opinions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension officers and farmers conduct surveys together. Items on the questionnaire are so easy that extension officers and farmers can understand. The contents include 1) outline of farm management (production scale, income and expenditure, etc.), 2) techniques for horticultural crop cultivation (status of use of techniques), and 3) organization management capabilities.

Farm Business Linkage Stakeholder (FABLIS) Forum

Other projects	SHEP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The stakeholder forum regularly held by the Ministry tends to be an agricultural exhibition (trade show). Participants are not specified. It is difficult for farmer groups to have business talks as they do not know who participates in the exhibition. As it is an exhibition, there is no space for business talks in the venue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are limited to the SHEP target farmer groups and market players in the small-scale horticulture industry (e.g. traders, seed companies, and NGOs). As participants are horticultural traders who farmers can actually have business with, farmer groups can think in advance about who they want to have business with. Information about the farmer groups is shared beforehand with horticultural traders. The venue provides space for business talks between horticultural industry players and farmer groups.

Market Survey

Other projects	SHEP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government officials or external experts such as consultants or researchers conduct detailed market surveys. Farmer groups do not participate in the survey. Extension officers are almost never involved. Survey results are analyzed by external 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers visit nearby markets and see how crops are sold. Extension officers accompany farmers and get to know the market. Farmers directly feel the market environment and get information. They also get to know market players. They understand market needs

experts and in many cases a large amount of market information is distributed to extension officers and farmer groups through media such as mobile network or radio.

- Oftentimes such information is not specific to the local area and farmers do not fully use the information.

such as marketable crops, and required quality and quantity.

- The same number of male and female representatives from farmer groups participate in the survey.



FABLIST Forum



Gender Awareness Training

Gender

Other projects

- Gender experts give lectures on general gender issues without clear goals.
- Training tends to be one-sided lectures with little guidance on how to practically identify and solve various gender issues.
- In many cases a single training session is conducted when a project is initiated.
- Both men and women are encouraged to participate, but participation is not mandatory.



SHEP

- With a clear goal of income increase at the household level, gender equality is considered as part of a solution. The goal is to make people learn the new attitude, "A couple is a team for farm management".
- With a combination of lectures and practical training such as workshops, the training is participatory and hands-on.
- More than one session is conducted in intervals to increase awareness and practice.
- Each activity requires participation of a couple of farmer group members.

Training of Extension Officers and Farmer Group Representatives

Other projects

- Target participants are often limited to the higher levels of government staff.
- Extension officers and farmers hardly attend training together.
- Contents of technical training are determined by the project.
- Training includes many lectures and is conducted in a classroom style.
- Participants are mostly men.



SHEP

- Extension officers and representatives of farmer groups have joint training.
- The contents of the training are in line with the action plans/requests forms of the farmer groups and practical so as to meet their needs.
- Representatives of farmer groups have been selected within a group in a democratic manner. The number of male and female representatives who attend the training is the same.

6. What changes happen on the ground?

With all the activities above, the SHEP Approach succeeded in bringing about notable changes on the ground; both at the extension officers' level and farmers' level. These changes, which are more appropriately called "breakthroughs" since the participants have overcome many challenges, are recognized as direct factors in achieving farmers' increased income.

Breakthroughs at Extension Officers' Level

At the extension officers' level, providing extension services to farmers has shifted from supply-driven to demand-driven service deliveries. The focus of the extension services has also changed from production-oriented to market-oriented farming. Figure 3 illustrates how SHEP's extension service is different from conventional extension services that the Kenyan government has been providing to farmers.

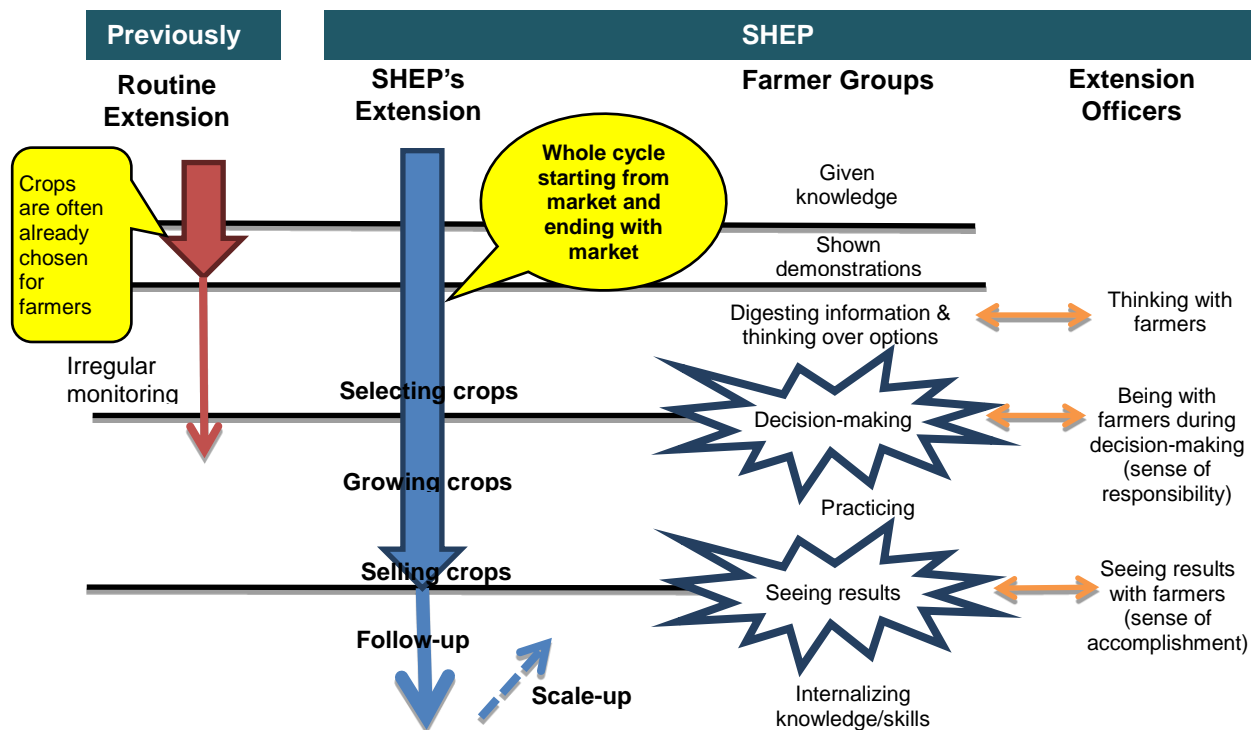


Figure 3 Change in extension services

Before SHEP, extension services provided knowledge on crop production to farmers without paying much attention to where to sell the produce, what the market wants, and how to meet the market demand. The services included not only teaching new knowledge to the farmers but also showing technical skills by conducting various demonstration sessions. However, the services were given often one-sidedly and crops were chosen by the government in accordance with its policy priorities. As such, farmers, after producing the prescribed crops, came back to the extension officers to ask, “Where can we sell our produce? Where is the market?” Oftentimes, it was difficult for the farmers to find the market which would buy their produce at the price they wanted. Some incurred a loss without being able to find a market or having to sell their produce at a low price.

The SHEP Approach, on the other hand, promotes market-oriented farming rather than production-oriented farming. The extension officers take the farmers to the market to collect information on the commodity prices and seasonal fluctuations, preferred quality, traded quantities, etc. and encourage them to produce crops to meet the market demand. It is up to the farmers to select what crops to grow at what timing and in what quantity while the farmers are supported by the extension officers in formulating an action plan of their farming business. The extension officers, together with the farmers, see the results of the market-oriented farming practice at the time of harvesting. The extension officers get to see the whole cycle which starts with the market and ends with the market as shown in Figure 4.

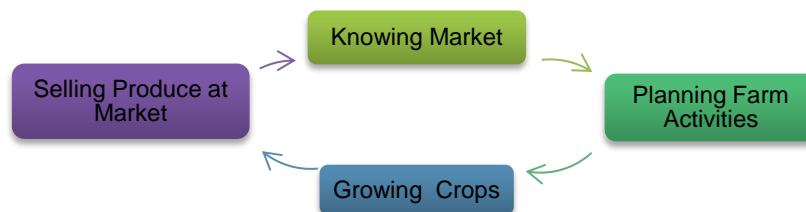


Figure 4 Market-oriented farming: “Starting with the market and ending with the market”

The impact of this change in agricultural extension services is significant in that the extension officers transformed their awareness and attitude towards serving farmers in actualizing income increase through market-oriented farming. One of the extension officers commented on her experience as follows:

My way of providing extension services has changed since my participation in SHEP. I used to give knowledge and show skills on crop production to the farmers. My work finished right there before. I didn't know if farmers were actually using what I taught. I didn't even know how farmers were selling their produce. But during SHEP, I was with the farmers when they conducted market surveys, made decisions on what crops they would grow, grew the vegetables and finally sold their produce at the market. I was with them for the whole time, seeing the whole cycle. I saw how farmers moved from point A to point B. Now I can confidently show the path to farmer groups. I apply the knowledge I learnt from SHEP to my daily extension services.

It is evident that the experience she had with SHEP changed her way of providing extension services. She, as well as other extension officers, experienced the process of thinking with the farmers (rather than merely giving instructions to the farmers), helping them make decisions, and confirming the results of the extension services she had given to the farmers. All of these experiences led to the enhancement of a sense of responsibility and accomplishment in their extension duties as shown in the right column in Figure 3. The extension officers are now more confident than ever in delivering the services the farmers truly need.

It has been proved that SHEP's extension approach, which involves working with the farmers throughout the whole cycle of "starting with the market and ending with the market", brings positive effects both to the extension officers themselves and to the results of their work.

Breakthroughs at the Farmers' Level

It is not only at the extension officers' level that SHEP brings about changes. The beneficiaries of the intervention, the smallholder farmers, also go through transformation both in their awareness and action. As a result of the innovative extension services they receive from SHEP, the mindset of the farmer changes in the direction of market-oriented farming. The farmers, particularly through their eye-opening experiences such as the Farm Business Linkage Stakeholder (FABLIS) Forum and market surveys, begin to understand what actions they should take to fill the gap of the market demand.

A female farmer recalled her experience at the FABLIS Forum and explained what made her realize the importance of knowing the market.

SHEP provided us with a chance to build linkages with the stakeholders through the FABLIS Forum where I met someone from a community-based agribusiness organization. He said, "You can be a millionaire practicing farming. What you lack is time planning rather than the agricultural techniques". At the time, we were still not sure about our future outputs, but decided to take a step forward. I had never questioned the conventional way of farming, i.e. production-oriented farming, until then. But after SHEP, we started planting kales not only in the rainy season but even in the dry season so that we could harvest them in the peak demand month, which should be considered as market-oriented farming. At first, our neighbors saw us and said, "You are mad!". Now they have stopped laughing at us and want to join our group instead.

After the FABLIS Forum the farmer group she belonged to conducted market surveys, formulated an action plan, and followed the crop planting calendar they made. In that year, the farmers had success in getting a high return on cowpeas and leafy vegetables since they were able to sell them at good prices.

This is just one of the examples of the typical cases where the farmer groups are most likely to experience during the implementation of SHEP activities. Apart from this case of "success of timely planting", there are also other cases in which the farmers met the market demand through changing farming practices as shown in Table 2.

Before SHEP	After SHEP
Planted seeds when other farmers were planting	Calculate the best planting timing to meet the high-peak demand months
Used the cheapest seeds available in the market	Use certified seeds (more expensive) for better yields
Used the traditional local banana varieties that were inherited from the farmers' ancestors	Use the banana tissue culture technology recommended by a research institute (met at FABLIS Forum) - higher yielding and quick maturing varieties
Sold the produce without weighing or by bags	Sell the produce by weight (using a scale) after grading by size and/or quality
Grew a sweet and soft variety of cabbage which the local people liked	Grow a hard variety of cabbage which is not popular with the local people, but traded at a high price for selling in arid and semi-arid zones. This variety has a long shelf-life and can be transported for a long

	distance. As a result, the profits from cabbage sales rose substantially.
Bought pesticides and fertilizers individually. Sold produce to middlemen at a farmgate price.	Selected target crops to grow as a group. The group started group purchasing of pesticides and fertilizers. They also sell their produce as a group by transporting the produce at a market where they can get a good price.

Table 2 Examples of changes in farming practices

As is already explained in “2. What did SHEP achieve?”, the farmers who participated in SHEP Phase 1 were able to increase their income to a great extent in a short space of time because of these changes in their farming practices.

Apart from changing farming practices, there is also an element which has contributed to their increased income. SHEP’s Gender Awareness Training has a clear focus on strengthening the relationship between the husband and wife as equal partners in managing their farming business. The participants of the training understand through participatory workshops the importance of the couple working together to achieve the common goal of income increase. The couples started planning the household budget and sharing roles both in the agricultural field and in the household for the purpose of efficient management of the farming business. As a result, they not only achieved efficiency in their business but also enhanced mutual understanding and respect of each other, which has a long-term impact on family relationships.



A farmer couple working together on family budgeting

A male farmer explains how his relationship with his wife and children has changed after participating in SHEP.

Before SHEP I was a terrible husband. I used to be brutal and take control of every household issue and denied my wife a chance to contribute to decision making. I used to ask my wife to do all farm work but I used to take all the money and drink it off or use it for leisure. My wife used to be very sad. There was a lot of silence in the family and there was no conversation. My children were all afraid of our conflicts and kept off the house. But things started to improve when I received the SHEP Gender Awareness Training. I apologized to my wife for all the wrong things I had done because of my ignorance. We started to share responsibilities and made equal decisions on how to use money. My wife now manages money in the house. We share responsibilities on the farm. I stopped drinking alcohol. We are now very happy and there is a lot of love. The children are beaming with happiness and there are a lot of jokes and discussions in the family. My wife has gained confidence and she now educates other women in the community about proper household relationships.

The farmer is now working together with his wife in managing a family budget and sharing household and agricultural work on a daily basis. This change in family relations is contributing to expanding their horticultural farming business because they are now able to make better decisions through a joint effort. Many of the SHEP farmers have experienced similar transformations in their gender relations and women now actively participate in decision-making and share their roles in household work with their husbands.

7. How is sustainability ensured?

The farmers who participated in the SHEP activities perform better than before not only during the project period but also years after SHEP. Those farmer groups who attended the training during SHEP Phase 1 are now scaling up their horticultural businesses on their own initiative and making even more profits from horticulture.

SHEP, apart from giving farmers the systematic capacity development package of training and various activities for about a year and a half, continues following up on those farmers for another year in their efforts to put their newly-acquired skills and knowledge into practice. During this time of follow-up, the farmer groups are closely

monitored by their extension officers and other project implementers in their farming practice and business performance. Any problems and challenges that the groups face are rectified or addressed through one-on-one advice and mentoring. By that way, those farmer groups which had difficulty understanding and digesting the knowledge they were given during the first year of SHEP engagement are enabled to embark upon active horticultural businesses. After the two-and-a-half-year intervention from SHEP, the farmer groups can “take-off” and continue their farming business on their own (Figure 5). It can be said that the follow-up activity in the second year works as an exit strategy for farmer groups and the groups can attain sustainable development in their horticultural businesses thereafter. When any further advice is needed after their take-off, the farmer groups can rely on their extension officers for their expert knowledge in agriculture.

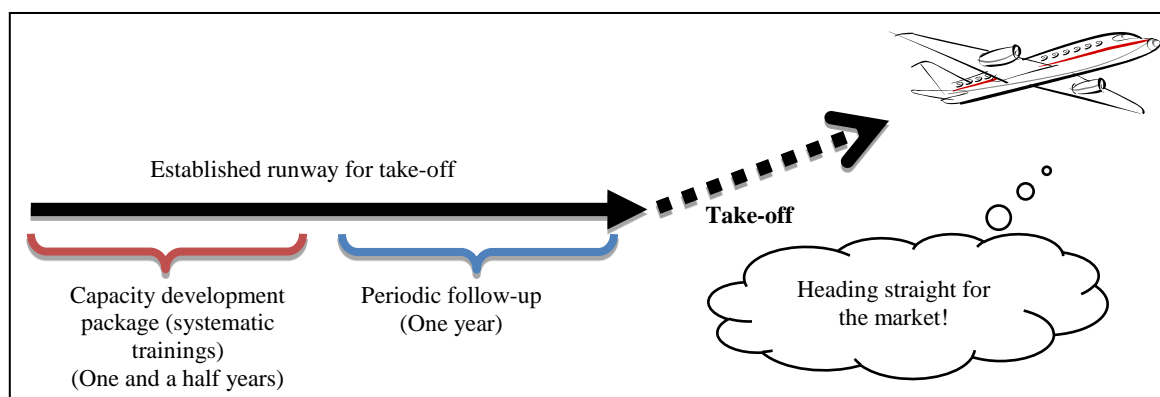


Figure 5 Ensuring sustainability of SHEP farmer groups

One of the extension officers who guided several farmer groups comments on the prospect of sustainability of SHEP effects as follows:

While production techniques promoted by various other projects phased out within one or two years, the SHEP Approach has continued to be implemented by farmers themselves. You see that farmers find it hard to abandon the approach because it helps promote entrepreneurship and increase the prospects of the farmers' getting better returns.

Other extension officers also agree with this comment and stress the fact that most of the farmers who went through the SHEP training continue applying some major managerial and agricultural skills, such as market surveys, crop planning calendars, *bokashi* (low-cost fertilizer) making and *do-nou* technologies they learned in SHEP. The adoption rate of the new technologies SHEP introduced is high and the practice of the market-oriented farming is now deeply rooted among the training participants.

8. What is SHEP's implementation mechanism and structure?

As explained thus far, SHEP has succeeded in putting its vision in practice. The success in promoting market-oriented farming is leading to sustainable growth of smallholder farmers' horticultural businesses. It can be said that such a success is mainly attributable to the optimal implementation mechanism SHEP has developed over the years. SHEP's strength lies in its thoroughness in designing and executing finely detailed activities step by step, which aims at unlocking farmers' potential and hidden knowledge for improving their agriculture practices and livelihood conditions.

The diagram below depicts how SHEP's vision is reflected in the activities, or the services offered to the beneficiary farmers. This process of putting its vision into practice is very much similar to Japanese manufacturers' *kaizen* process, or a process of total quality management, where all workers share their ideas and knowledge for continuous improvements of the companies' products with the aim of satisfying their customers. SHEP is careful in formulating the most effective “story” to achieve its goal. The story is strategically crafted to flow, starting from the SHEP vision reflecting the management mechanism, accumulation of know-how and then finally to the delivery of services (Figure 6). SHEP's attention to detail is characteristic of the Japanese culture of cooperation for development, in which JICA has a comparative advantage.

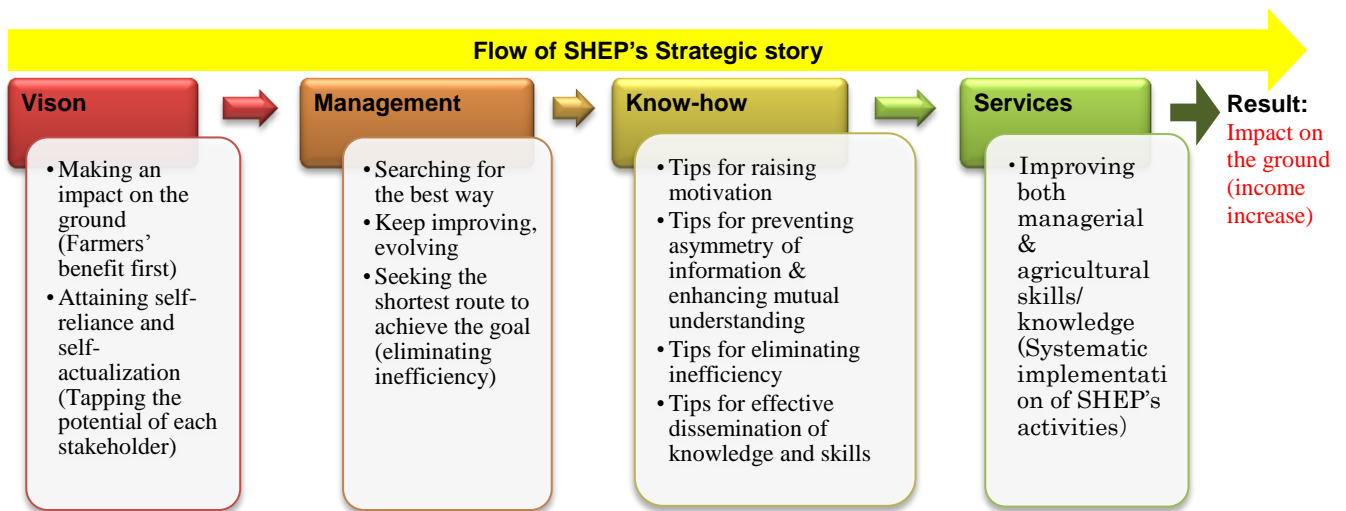


Figure 6 SHEP's strategic story to achieve its vision

This flow of the story is a dynamic process. SHEP makes sure that the story is continuously improved and updated so that the implementation mechanism always works best in changing situations (Figure 7). Some of the specific examples of SHEP's continuous improvements include taking action based on feedback from local implementers during periodical meetings and workshops, revising training curriculums and materials each time after a training course, and conducting regular monitoring and evaluation of farmers' activities on the ground, to name a few. SHEP accumulates the most relevant and current information and creates new knowledge based on the experiences in the field.

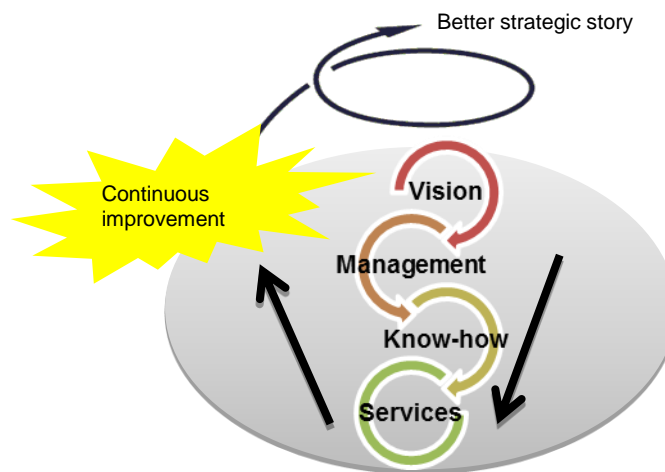


Figure 7 Continuous improvement of the strategic story

Furthermore, one of the important reasons why the strategic story is flowing as planned is that SHEP activities are conducted under the appropriate implementation structure. Needless to say, the commitment of the top management of the implementing agencies is the prerequisite for a success. On top of that, SHEP project headquarters are fueled by strategic thinkers who have the passion and ability to operationalize the strategy. Then, the local-level implementers take collective action after receiving the instructions from the project headquarters (Figure 8). This distributed leadership is the key to having a tangible impact on the ground.



Figure 8 Implementation structure

In establishing and operating the implementation structure and mechanism, SHEP also pays attention to building trust among different levels of implementers and beneficiaries by ensuring information sharing/ exchange and enhancing mutual understanding among stakeholders. Each stakeholder is bonded with other stakeholders with a sense of trust through means such as participating in training with different strata of participants (government officials, extension officers, farmers, and so forth), following clear and transparent criteria for target areas/ group selection to avoid arbitrary selection based on personal or political preferences, having frequent communication among different stakeholders via phone and e-mail. In other words, SHEP’s implementation mechanism is not just about carrying out prescribed activities but also about building social and human capital among stakeholders for establishing stronger social infrastructure for sustained project effects.

9. Where will SHEP go from here?

Recognizing the successes in Kenya, the Government of Japan proclaimed the efficacy of the SHEP Approach in the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) held in Yokohama, Japan in June 2013. Japan’s Prime Minister announced, in the Yokohama Action Plan, the promotion of the SHEP Approach in at least ten African countries between 2013 and 2017. Japan considers the SHEP Approach as one of the most powerful instruments to promote Africa’s agricultural sector. JICA is responsible for pushing ahead with the government’s promise of SHEP expansion by implementing activities listed in the Yokohama Action Plan (Table 3).

Focus Area of TICAD V	Activity	Expected duration of activity
Promote market-based agriculture for smallholders, especially women, by moving from subsistence to commercial agriculture and “farming as a business” approach, including purchasing from within Africa.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion of SHEP (Small-holder Horticulture Empowerment Promotion) Approach (10 countries) 2. Training of technical staff in implementation agencies to promote SHEP Approach (1,000 people) 3. Training of small-scale farmer groups to practice SHEP (50,000 people) 4. Dispatching of experts, supplying of agricultural mechanization, technology training of agricultural production, processing and sales 	2013-2017

Table 3 An Excerpt from the Yokohama Action Plan 2013-2017 Implementation Matrix

Through JICA’s experience of SHEP, it has been made clear that JICA’s comparative advantage in supporting the agricultural sector in Africa lies in its expertise in building the capacity of both project implementers and beneficiaries in attaining sustainable socio-economic growth from farming. JICA is committed to applying its experience to other African countries by using the expertise and knowledge it gained from SHEP. JICA will continue to motivate and cultivate people through its SHEP Approach.



For more information on SHEP, contact the JICA Office in your country or Arid and Semi-Arid Farming Area Division 1, Rural Development Department, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
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