



A member of Irbei Self-help-group on his farm.

neighbouring division, to learn from their experience.

“During this production phase, the group leaders kept on encouraging other members by delegating important roles to each of them. They made sure that record-keeping especially during marketing was improved and transparent.” said Joseph who is also one of the group’s elected officials. He says that all the group members participated in the work required for production. “Whenever members can not join the group work, their family members take over to make sure that the work gets done.” he adds.

With all these preparation and team work, coupled with the favourable rainfall, the Irbei farmers had a very different harvest this time around. They harvested 550kg of Sunflower seed from 3/4 acres and 2,500kg of tomato from 1/4 acres. The net profit was Ksh.90,000 this time as compared to no profit at all for the previous two years.

The group got no profit from watermelon. This time around, however, they did not simply repeat planting the crop for three seasons. They realised that they did not have sufficient experience growing watermelon. Through their own initiative, the group visited the Perkerra Irrigation Scheme in the neighbouring district to learn effective furrow irrigation.

The Irbei Self-Help Group now has many plans to expand their enterprise. For now, they appear promising to do better each time, learning from their experience and picking up new technology tips along the way.

Community Agricultural Development in Semi-Arid Lands (CADSAL) Project

CADSAL (2005-2010) worked in the Kerio Valley to increase agricultural production of the area in a sustainable manner. CADSAL tried to achieve this through capacity building in various areas.

First, the project assisted the community to build their own capacity to plan and implement agricultural enterprises. The 108 groups including the Irbei Self-Help Group (SHG) were given guidance and information to do so through their own initiative.

The project also worked to enhance the pluralistic or multi-stakeholder driven extension approach which promotes the coordinated service provision on all available extension service providers through extension action plans. Another area of intervention was introduction of new technologies to the Kerio Valley. CADSAL field-tested 20 new technologies recommended for semi-arid lands. Finally, the project formulated guidelines based on the experiences gained in implementing these approaches.

JICA's Interventions in Agriculture and Rural Development, 2010

The year 2010 saw a recovery of the Agriculture Sector from the period of slow growth experienced in the preceding two years. The 5% growth rate of the national economy in the year 2010 (World Bank estimates) is partly attributed to the recovery of the, Agriculture Sector.

Kenya has identified agriculture as one of the economic pillars in the Vision 2030, the nation's blueprint for national development.

On the regional note, Comprehensive African Agriculture Program (CAADP), which is a regional initiative to boost the agricultural sector, and initiated by NEPAD, has been invigorated in the past few years in a number of countries including Kenya. The programme encourages each country to have multi-stakeholder commitment to the sector's development and facilitates the realisation of the commitments through tools such as Medium Term Investment Plan (MTIP)

Based on these developments, the Government and other stakeholders in Kenya's Agriculture sector revised its Strategy for Revitalising Agriculture (2003-2008) to Agriculture Sector Development Strategy (ASDS 2010-2020). As at the end of 2010, Kenya's first MTIP was being prepared through the facilitation of Agricultural Sector Coordination Unit (ASCU).

For Japan's ODA, Agriculture development remains one of priority areas both at the country and regional levels. The tone for this agenda was set in May 2008 in the Fourth Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD IV) in Tokyo, Japan, where special attention was given to the need to achieve food security and alleviate poverty to pave the way to economic growth in Africa.

In Kenya, JICA works along with Agriculture sector ministries to achieve goals set out in the ASDS and Kenya's MTIP. In doing so, JICA's interventions especially emphasize the capacity building of

various stakeholders and institutions to enable the smallholder farmers to improve their livelihood through agricultural production. In addition to CADSAL, (see Irbei farmers' story on p. 14), JICA has implemented SIDEMAN, a smallholder irrigation development and management project and SHEP UP, a horticulture oriented farmer empowerment project.

Promoting Sustainable Smallholder Irrigation

Technical Cooperation to support smallholder irrigation under the project for Sustainable Smallholder Irrigation Development and Management in Central and Southern Rift Valley provinces was completed in December 2010 after five years of implementation.

This project contributed to the government's efforts to address the above mentioned challenges in the sector by providing training to farmers and the staff of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation on Sustainable Smallholder Irrigation.

The project also aimed to empower farmers to participate in the development of the irrigation infrastructure. This included the construction of water canals, intake weirs, footbridges and installation of pipes.

Through this project, smallholder farmers were encouraged to take responsibility of the operation and maintenance of irrigation infrastructure. This was made possible through the formation and management of Irrigation Water Users Association, (IWUAs). A number of trainings



Members of Kiarukungu community in Kirinyaga participate in building their irrigation canal under the JICA Supported SIDEMAN project.