

# Entrepreneurship Key to Economic Growth

*'The trout project of the Jitunze Environmental Self-help Group is an example of what young people in the rural areas can do to create employment for themselves'*

It's drizzling and the visitors are getting a little wet. But none of them wants to leave the banks of the fish pond as they enjoy watching the fish swimming by and occasionally making a sudden swirl before disappearing deep into the water. The mountain air here is crisp and the dense tropical forest all around awesome. It's chilling cold even though the host insists that today is a little warmer than most of the days.

Mr. Wanjohi Wambugu, 31, is the host and says it is not just the beauty of the trout swimming in the cold, crystal clear mountain water that fills him with joy but the fulfilment of a dream to start a trout rearing project some years ago. Indeed, he says,

the dream has taken him and the 20-odd members of his Jitunze Environmental Self-help Group on the slopes of Mt. Kenya in Kieni East, Nyeri, many sleepless nights and a lot of hard work to succeed.

"The beginning was tough and frustrating," Mr. Wambugu confides, as he throws a handful of fish feed into the fish pond. But as they say, every cloud has a silver lining. We may not have attained fully what we want to just yet, but at least we are a step closer and we are confident and determined to do so. Every long journey begins with one step," he says.

The trout project of the Jitunze Group is today an example of what young people in the rural areas



Members of Jitunze Self-help Group at one of the trout breeding ponds. Inset: Mr. Wanjohi Wambugu, tests the water temperature in one of the breeding troughs.

*The concept of OVOP originated from Oita Prefecture in Japan in 1979 and has since been introduced to many other parts of the world. It is designed to revitalise local communities through business activities involving identifying local products which they are best at and adding value to raise the value of those products so that they can exploit the market potential possibly beyond the country.*

*In Kenya, the One-Village-One-Product (OVOP) program is managed through an institutional framework, starting from the Central Government, cascading down to the district and community levels. Its Secretariat which is within the Ministry of Industrialisation works closely with a JICA Expert, Ms. Kyoko Harada, who has been instrumental in identifying, promoting and facilitating implementation of projects once approved.*

can do to create employment for themselves. But exploiting these resources requires hard work and for those willing to soil their hands, there is no regret," says Mr. Samuel Muriuki, a member of the group.

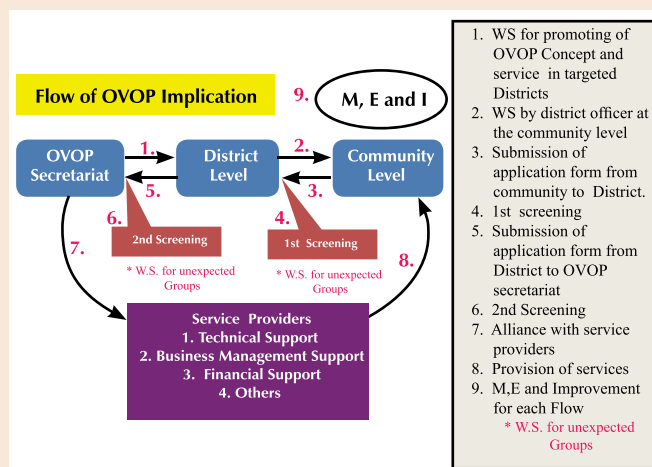
Because of the area's potential for trout fish farming, the group has established links with JICA, which supports the One Village One Product (OVOP) concept in Kenya, through the Ministry of Industrialization. It hopes to get technical as well as marketing assistance from the OVOP program because members are upbeat that their village can become one of the leading inland fish production centres in Kenya for both local and export markets.

Today the group concentrates on breeding fingerlings, which they sell to other local fish farmers and also to NGOs. It hopes to breed 'table' fish as soon as they can expand their breeding tanks which they can sell to hotels and restaurants.

As the visitors huddle together under a makeshift shed to keep off the drizzle and enjoy a succulent trout from the ponds fried by one of the group members, Mr. Wambugu says emphatically that they soon shall be among the leading commercial suppliers of trout in Kenya. With the enthusiasm that Jitunze group does their business, there is no doubt that this dream shall be realised sooner than later.

## Up - scaling of the One Village One Product (OVOP) in Kenya

One Village One Product (OVOP) remains a distinctive approach to rural community development in which latent local community creativity and potential is triggered through effective local leadership and human resources development and directed at community revitalization through development of unique products that have strong market appeal. During the year 2010, the implementation of OVOP in Kenya extended to cover additional districts apart from the three districts identified during the pilot phase.



It is good to note that already structures exist to screen project proposals submitted by various groups to be considered for different types of support under the OVOP framework. The project proposals once received by the District Industrial Development Officer (DIDO) are usually subjected to screening by the OVOP District Committees (ODC) and then by the OVOP National Secretariat after which they are graded based on the suitability as per the eligibility criteria. A notable advantage of this program is that after the screening, every group is usually recommended to the various service providers for different types of support which mostly falls in the main categories of financial, technical and managerial.

During the year, a number of micro-finance institutions and agencies were incorporated into the various sensitization workshops that took place in various parts of the country. Some of these are Faulu Limited, K-Rep Limited, Equity Bank and the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank. Lack of finances which remains a main challenge that continues to inhibit the momentum required to drive the OVOP movement can only be addressed if the financial institutions partner with the Ministry of Industrialization. This would enable the groups to prepare competitive business plans that would stand high chances of being considered favorably by the potential financiers.