

were conducted to sensitize and educate farmers on their responsibilities in the organization and management of the irrigation and drainage systems.

*Irrigation development has been identified as an area of huge potential. However, improvement of irrigation development in the country is being hampered by among other things, poor performance of some public and smallholder schemes due to inadequate farmer participation, low financial and manpower allocations for infrastructure maintenance and expansion, weak farmers' organizations and poor communities' financial base.*

In all the schemes, farmers directly participated in the construction works as part of their education as well as their contribution to developing the infrastructure. Utilization of farmers' manpower and local resources was emphasized to increase ownership and sustainability of the infrastructure. From the Terminal Evaluation of the Project conducted in the month of July 2010, there is significant improvement in the capacity of smallholder farmers to develop and maintain the irrigation infrastructure among the participating farmers. This has effectively led to improvement in the economic and social benefits from the project. Farmers are already enjoying the benefits of accessing water for irrigation. For example, members of Kiambindu Bidii Self-Help Group, in Kiambindu Scheme of Ishiara, Mbeere district are cultivating horticulture crops like kales (sukuma wiki), onions and tomatoes, using water channeled to their farms. The group has 91 sprinklers in the area and out of these, 74 get water to operate.

### **Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion**

Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment Unit Project (SHEP UP) succeeded the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment Project (SHEP) that ended in 2009. The project began its implementation in March, 2010, aiming to cover eight provinces of the country, in phases, for five years. It is piloting the proposal system in identifying and selecting implementing districts. In this system, the District Agricultural Officers are invited to submit proposals which are subjected to assessment. Scoring takes place against a set of criteria in which a select number of districts are picked as the implementing areas.

The approach SHEP UP seeks to upscale include;

1. The FABLIST forum: The Farm Business Linkage

Stakeholder forum seeks to reinforce the contact between farmers, Frontline Extension officers (FEOs) and stakeholders. Farmers groups and FEOs would meet specific stakeholders and enter into negotiations based on the group's profile with the aim of cutting business deals. The stakeholders include input and service providers and output market providers.

2. FT-FaDDE: The Facilitators Training for Farmers Demand Driven Extension; this is training for trainers (ToT) for FEO's. The main contents of the training are based on the action plans submitted by the farmers groups. Both lectures and demonstrations are provided.
3. In-Field Trainings: Under this forum, all group members are supposed to attend. The facilitators, FEO's are the ones who were trained in FT-FaDDE.
4. The JEF2G: The Joint, Extension Staff, and Farmers Dual Gender Training, Farmers are taught about market survey, crop selection, problem/objective, maps and making of action plans.

Among the technologies that SHEP UP would give a lot of emphasis to is the Donou technology following its great success in SHEP project. This is a technology based on the use of sand bags to repair impassable sections of the rural access roads. The technology uses locally available resources. It can also be used to construct dams and small bridges. The component on rural road infrastructure has been retained to enhance its benefits which include significant reduction in post-harvest losses of horticultural produce due to untimely delivery of the produce to the market.

To ensure sustainability of these trainings, SHEP project compiled training materials to be utilized by DAOs and FEOs. The training materials, dubbed 'Kamishibai' make maximum use of photographs and diagrams. Currently available material include the following titles:-

1. A crop planting calendar
2. 'Bokashi' for improved crop production
3. Convenient weeding tools
4. General horticultural crop production and post-harvest handling techniques
5. Production of specific crops (bananas, bulb onions, cabbages, kales, etc)

SHEP UP has included one more component on Information Management. It aims to improve the management of information to enable a more effective exchange of information within the project. At the same time, to enable an efficient exchange of information with stakeholders leading to better planning, better decision-making and better results.

# Train a Woman and You'll Have Trained the Community

*'Anastasia says she will not rest until each of her group members enjoys a good standard of living by being able to earn over Sh25,000 a month from income-generating activities.'*

Subject poverty which Ms. Anastasia Wanjiku, 38, encountered when she first entered her marital home about two decades ago was to become a blessing in disguise which opened doors to prosperity.

"I saw hunger all around me with malnourished children in torn clothes hobbling about the village barefoot," recalls Anastasia sadly. "Their parents were not any different. Hunger and despair was evident on their faces and this left me very depressed. Where I was born and grew up, I had not encountered that kind of poverty."

Ms. Wanjiku was then a vivacious young girl who

had just left school and married a young man who took her to his home in Mathina village in Kenya's Nyeri district. In Gikuyu language, 'mathina' means problems. True to the name, residents in this village were very poor because the area was dry and farms on which they depended for their incomes yielded poor harvests.

As she narrates the story of her life inside a spacious iron-roofed office in the centre of the village, Ms. Wanjiku looks at her past life in this village with a mixture of sadness and happiness. Sad because the beginning was very harsh, happy because she now leads seven successful income-generating women's groups in the village which she helped



Anastasia at her group's bee keeping venture.