

to start and which have savings worth more than Ksh. Sh 5 million and still growing. The groups have a membership of about 200 women.

With profits from these investments, mainly earned from a revolving cash fund, members are not only able to feed and cloth themselves, but also to take their children to school. Most members get incomes of up to Sh. 15,000 every month which is a reasonable income in a country where half of its 38 million population live on less than one dollar (Sh.78) a day.

***But how did Ms. Wanjiku manage to uplift her life along with those of other women around her?***

“Much of it had to do with a rural women training program which I attended at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) in 2002 having been selected by a government representative in our area who had become interested in what I was doing for the community,” she reveals. The program, called Strengthening the Capacity of Rural Women for Socio-economic Development, was sponsored by JICA as part of its In-country Training Program for Kenya.

One main success that Ms. Wanjiku is proud of after her training in JKUAT is that she has been able to train more than 1,400 groups with a total membership of over 42,000 women in Nyeri district, particularly in value addition of their products, environmental conservation, farming and group management. This has made her popular throughout the district. It has also increased the incomes of their families and improved their lives.

Ms. Wanjiku 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. “Only then shall I erase the sad images of poverty which I witnessed as a newly-married woman when I first became part of the Mathina community,” she says.

In February 2010, Ms. Wanjiku, together with four other women attended another modified training of trainers course at JKUAT which was sponsored by JICA. This has enabled her to learn more about value addition of farm products and business development and how to transfer the knowledge gained to other fellow women.

“This has empowered me to train more group members in my village in bee-keeping, cake and soap making and has improved the management of our revolving fund from which members get loans at affordable interest rates,” she says.

## **Empowering Kenya Women for Socio-economic Development.**

Since 2000, under JICA In-country Training Program, JICA Kenya Office, in collaboration with JKUAT and the Ministry responsible for women affairs, has been capacity building grassroots women group leaders for enhanced productivity in their groups and family economic activities in view of improving quality of life at the local/grassroots level. Between 2000 and 2008, 50 women group leaders each year were recruited from all the districts as classified along the five Kenyan ecological zones. The training curriculum for each training cohort has been need-based. To meet the training program demand and increase the coverage, the extended program (JFY 2009-2011) was re-designed and decentralized in consultation with the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) Secretariat.

The consultation and collaboration with WEF was considered necessary so as to include in the training curriculum, topics that would make program participants qualify and benefit from WEF. During 2009, 50 women leaders drawn from high potential economic zones were trained at JKUAT. Four women were selected as trainers and these were used to successfully train 100 women with the support of district social development officers (DSDO) from the same ecological zones, 50 at Kiambu and 50 at Nakuru. Following 2009 training and impact realized and recorded. Due to demand for the training, in JFY 2010, 50 women were trained at JKUAT and regional training activities were conducted for 200 women leaders at Kisii (50), Kakamega (50), Machakos (50) and Nyeri (50).

It is reported that ex-participants, as individuals and groups are engaged in income generating activities, training their group members on lessons learnt during the training at JKUAT or at the regional centres. This is clearly illustrated by Ms. Wanjiku's story.

### **Improving Quality of Education Through In-service Education and Training (INSET) of Teachers in Kenya and Africa**

In 1998, JICA-MOE launched the “Strengthening Mathematics and Science in Secondary Education (SMASSE) as a pilot project in 9 Kenyan districts. After evaluation of the pilot phase in 2003, the project was expanded to cover the whole country besides other Sub-Saharan African countries during 2004-2008. Due to the successful implementation