



Drip irrigation helps Kenyans adapt to weather fluctuations

Joshua Owuor's onion harvests were inconsistent in recent years because of droughts but he quickly gained confidence after starting to use new technologies such as drip irrigation. Owuor is one of 15 farmers in the Bwogi group of Kisumu, Kenya who is benefitting from assistance through USAID's Kenya Horticultural Development Program (USAID-KHDP).

USAID-KHDP helped the group establish a demonstration farm with a water tank and drip irrigation and started training farmers in new crops and advanced farming techniques. Since then, group members have re-invested a portion of their profits back into their farms, purchasing additional drip irrigation systems, a motor, and a water filtration system.

"The money we get, we are not using it all, but re-investing it, trying to come up bit by bit," Owuor said.

The group is having significant success with this year's onion harvest. The group estimates onion yields will reach 99,000 bulbs in the next harvest worth KSh 500,000, or \$6,950. The group will harvest three times this year, collectively earning about \$21,000 from the onion crop alone. Other farmers in the area are experiencing crop losses because of the recent droughts.

"Without KHDP, I would not be in this position. Now I want to give this experience to others," Owuor said.

Owuor is also using his farm to teach other farmers in the area about adapting in times of dry seasons. The group's hope is that by transferring their technical knowledge to other farmers, they can decrease crop vulnerability to erratic weather patterns and alleviate poverty, helping others to "come up, bit-by-bit."

"KHDP has put some knowledge into our heads. Now that we know, we are pushing poverty away," Owuor said.

USAID-KHDP is working in Central, Coast, Eastern, Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western provinces to increase incomes through smallholder production and employment in the horticulture industry. The program is working with more than 15,000 members of 500 smallholder groups in conjunction with 52 private and public-sector alliance partners.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Joshua Owuor shows off his onions on his farm in Kisumu, Kenya.

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– Joshua Owuor, Bwogi Group, Kisumu