



SUCCESS STORY

Greenhouse gives farmer consistent yields and higher income

The Kenya Horticultural Development Program (USAID-KHDP) started working with the Kibwarem Growers Youth Group of Kisumu, Western Kenya after election violence in 2007 to provide new and improved ways to generate income and promote food security.

Group member Joseph Ombugua typically grew tomatoes in open fields and was constantly plagued by pests and disease.

USAID-KHDP introduced Ombugua to greenhouse production through the group's demonstration site. Instantly seeing the benefits of greenhouse production, Ombugua built one on his farm and followed the instructions of a USAID-KHDP agronomist who visited his farm regularly.

The program agronomist taught Ombugua new technologies and practices including drip irrigation, integrated pest management and modern pruning and cultivation techniques.

With the assistance of USAID-KHDP, Ombugua planted a high-yielding, disease-resistant tomato variety that is in demand at the market. Ombugua recently harvested half of his expected crop and earned \$570, putting him on track to more than double profits from the year before.

Now Ombugua does not fear losing his crops to insects.

"In our new greenhouse we are guaranteed to get a good harvest," Ombugua said. "In the field the chances were only 50-50."

Ombugua's greenhouse also allows him to plant more times per year, which further increases production, and he is quickly gaining confidence in his operation.

"We are so happy," Joseph Ombugua said. "We are in fact even proud. This is why you see me so happy and so welcoming."

USAID-KHDP is also helping Ombugua and other members of his group diversify into other high value crops that promote food security and stop growing crops with low success rates. For example, the program is teaching the group to grow a strong and consistent variety of sweet potatoes instead of Irish potatoes, which were highly vulnerable to mite damage in the region.

USAID-KHDP is working in Central, Coast, Eastern, Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western provinces to increase incomes and promote food security through smallholder production and employment in the horticulture industry.



Joseph Ombugua, above, inspects his tomatoes at his greenhouse on his farm in Kisumu. At left, a woman from the Kibwarem grower group harvests a sweet potato variety that is improving food security and increasing incomes for growers in the group.

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—Joseph "Jumbo" Ombugua