



SUCCESS STORY

Pest problems prompt growers to learn new technology

For many years, pest control was a major problem for the 20 members of the Karawa Women's Group in Homa Bay, Kenya. Each time members planted a crop, they were anxious that there would be no returns for their hard work and investment. The Kenya Horticultural Development Program (USAID-KHDP) started working with them and helped them build a demonstration greenhouse to show how this low-cost technology could avert pest disasters. Since seeing the success of this first greenhouse, farmers in the group invested more than \$7,000 in eight greenhouses. These greenhouses have significantly decreased crop losses, improved family nutrition, and increased incomes.

When USAID-KHDP first started showing the group greenhouse production and other new technologies including raised beds, drip irrigation and integrated pest management, many in the group, including Penina Omollo, were skeptical.

"Initially, I didn't think horticulture could work for me, but then because of the trainings and the estimates they gave us, I decided to try," Omollo said. "Now the trainings have made me a promoter of horticulture."

Omollo's family previously subsided on corn and millet and had no income, but her greenhouse changed all that. Her first greenhouse harvest in 2008 yielded \$625.

"The nutrition of my family has really changed. Now I can buy what I couldn't before," Omollo said. "I'm very happy with the greenhouse and with KHDP."

She has since harvested three times and has earned enough to buy bricks for a new home. Because of the pest protection offered by her greenhouse, she is confident that her next harvest will produce enough to pay for other materials to build her home.

"By next year I know I'll build my house," Omollo said.

All other Karawa members are saving to build greenhouses. Joseph Ouma has already seen the success first hand and is eagerly awaiting the chance to start. He currently receives technical assistance from USAID-KHDP for open-field production of watermelons, where he has already seen improved yields. Next year, while Omollo is building her new home, Joseph hopes he is building a greenhouse with his profits.

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.



Penina Omollo shows off her greenhouse in Homa Bay. She used profits from the greenhouse to buy bricks, left, to build her home.

Photos by Fintrac Inc.

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– Penina Omollo, farmer and secretary of the Karawa Women's Group