



## SUCCESS STORY

### Technology boosts group's earnings, improves stability

Good Neighbors' Community Network is a smallholder farmer group in Bungoma, Western Province comprising 12 men and 18 women. Prior to January 2006, members of the group were primarily subsistence farmers growing maize and beans for household consumption. The growers could not diversify into horticultural crops because they lacked technical know-how on soil fertility, water management, pest and disease management, crop varieties and marketing.

In 2006, USAID-KHDP introduced the farmers to new technologies for horticultural production. The farmers started growing new crops including indigenous vegetables, carrots, tomatoes and cabbages. They received training in integrated pest management (IPM) to control pests and diseases with less agrochemicals. Demonstrations were established to train members in seedling nurseries, transplanting, raised beds, fertilization and drip irrigation. To prepare for commercial business, the group was also trained in institutional management and marketing. USAID-KHDP brought buyers to these training sessions so that growers could develop sustainable marketing relationships.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Evans Libeya proudly shows off his passion fruit nursery. Libeya is part of the Good Neighbors' Community Network in Bungoma, which supplies high quality passion fruit to hotels and seedlings to growers.

**“USAID-KHDP has completely transformed my family. Not only has income increased because of the consultations I offer, but people in the community look up to me and I am very happy.”**

— Evans Libeya, Member, Good Neighbors Community Network

In 2007 the group increased gross income to KSh 1,568,000 per year. Evans Libeya, a member of the group, is one of the farmers benefiting from the assistance. He now grows indigenous vegetables, cabbages, tomatoes, carrots and passion fruit. After USAID-KHDP showed him how to diversify and use the new technologies, his annual income increased from KSh 24,000 (\$380) to KSh 154,000 (\$2,400). Evans acquired skills in recordkeeping, seedling grafting, installation of drip irrigation and cooperative marketing.

Now the group enjoys improved food security, better housing, and improved education standards for their children. In addition, some members have increased their investment by buying drip irrigation kits and water pumps for their farms. The group has become a major supplier of vegetables and passion fruit for hotels in Kitale. They have solid market linkages and are all self-employed.

Other farmers in the area come to see crops being grown by Evans Libeya and ask him to visit their farms as a consultant.

“USAID-KHDP has completely transformed my family. Not only has income increased because of the consultations I offer, but people in the community look up to me and I am very happy,” Libeya said.