Women Economic Empowerment Through Climate Smart Agriculture In Kenya

Lessons learned from Laikipia, Kitui and West Pokot Counties

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Rhoda Lukaria harvests fresh vegetables, grown using climate-smart agricultural techniques, from the family farm in Lokiriama, Turkana County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Foreword

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, (UN Women) is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

UN Women plays a crucial role in addressing the intersection of gender equality and climate change, recognizing that women and girls are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change due to existing social, economic, and cultural inequalities, yet they are often left out in climate action decisions and spaces. UN Women champions the vital role that women play as powerful agents of change in climate action.

In response, UN Women implemented the "Kenya Economic Empowerment of Women through Climate-Smart Agriculture in Arid and Semi-Arid Areas Project" (WEE-CSA), a four-year initiative which ran from 2020 to 2024. Funded by the Korean Government through the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the project was jointly implemented by UN Women and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in three Arid and Semi-arid lands (ASAL) Counties of Kitui, Laikipia and West Pokot. Its goal was to enhance the adaptive capacity of counties to climate change, promote women's participation in climate-smart agriculture and economically empower women farmers.

The primary objective of the project was to strengthen gender-responsive climate-smart policies at national and county level, promoting women's investments in climate-resilient agriculture, and increasing production, nutrition, and gender-responsive livelihoods. The project aimed to increase investments in women's capacities to ensure more equitable access to productive assets thereby, strengthening women's rights and coping potential to increased climate variability.

The WEE-CSA project has been a collaborative effort, and we are deeply grateful to all contributors. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the three County Governments of Laikipia, Kitui and West Pokot, and the various Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) for their commitment, leadership, guidance and co-ownership of this project and results. Their commitment has been instrumental in driving this project forward.

We also acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Their expertise and resources significantly enriched our efforts. We acknowledge the support and collaboration from implementing partners (Anglican Development Services Eastern, Hand in Hand Eastern Africa and Village Enterprise), all stakeholders and staff that contributed to the success of this project.

A special note of gratitude goes to the women who participated in this project and members of their households. Their courage and willingness to share their stories of impact have been truly inspiring, providing us with a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in climate-smart agriculture.

Finally, we are extremely grateful to our partners KOICA Kenya, for their financial and technical support towards gender equality, women's economic empowerment and climate action. The impact presented in this publication would not have been possible without your support.

Significant change was realized, as revealed by the change stories shared here, in the WEE-CSA Success StoryBook, which features women who benefitted from the support of the WEE-CSA project and overcame various challenges, including extreme poverty, food insecurity, lack of voice and agency, and the adverse effects of climate change and COVID-19.

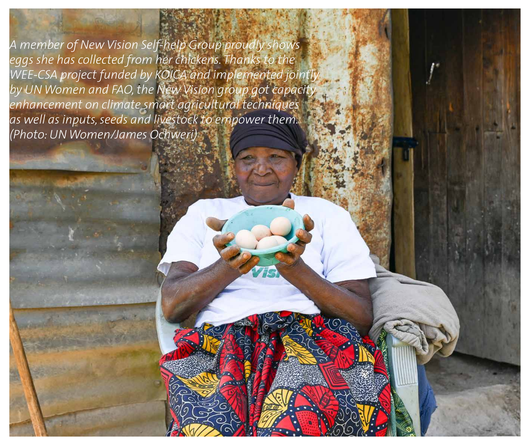
Their stories of change present powerful examples that can be scaled up in other communities to build gender responsive resilience to climate change and facilitate economic empowerment of women. By addressing barriers to women's economic empowerment and unlocking opportunities for women across various nodes in the agricultural value chains, these women are now also able to enjoy socio-economic empowerment. This empowerment has increased their individual, household and group incomes, provided employment, built more respectful relationships at home, reduced conflict at home and community level, and strengthened their participation in leadership, governance and community engagement.

The success of the WEE-CSA project underscores the importance of collaborative, inclusive and holistic approaches to driving gender equality and sustainable development. We trust that the lessons learned, and the stories shared will inspire further initiatives and partnerships aimed at empowering women and building resilient communities in climate action and ending poverty. Together, we can continue to make significant strides towards a more equitable and sustainable future for all by building on our successes. Thank you all for your dedication and contributions.

Anna Mutavati
UN Women Country Representative to Kenya

A member of Atulia self help group sells chicken feed at their store in West Pokot County. UN Women supported the Atulia self help group with a chicken feed processor through the WEE-CSA project, enabling the group to raise their incomes by selling feed in the local market. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri).

Enock holding a bunch of freshly harvested onions at his farm in West Pokot County. The WEE-CSA project trained the Empo-simat Group, that Enock is a part of, on growing hybrid onions that have greater yield than traditional onions. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)



A member of New Vision Self-help Group proudly shows eggs she has collected from her chickens. Thanks to the WEE-CSA project funded by KOICA and implemented jointly by UN Women and FAO, the New Vision group got capacity enhancement on climate smart agricultural techniques as well as inputs, seeds and livestock to empower them. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Ogilgel Self-Help Group's success and transformation with Chepkube Incubation

Before the Women Economic Empowerment Climate-Smart Agriculture (WEE-CSA) project, the Ogilgel group used to rear few chickens and brood chicks using charcoal-based heaters that were costly."After receiving vigorous training and guidance from a trainer from West Pokot, we started we started using the improved traditional brooding method, called Chepkube with approximately 20 chickens," Beatrice shared. "Unlike before, the success was evident with no operational costs for charcoal. I was excited!" she exclaimed. "I am guaranteed 100 per cent success, as it is warm, secure, and stable. I can provide for my family by selling one-month-old chicks, sustain our daily needs, and even pay for school fees."

Beatrice's success has drawn the interest of other farmers, who approach her with curiosity about the project. She enjoys training them and, if needed, charges Ksh. 5,000 for building Chepkube, which increases her income. With the growing enthusiasm for poultry and improved farming methods, Beatrice looks forward to more opportunities in this venture.

As a group, Ogilgel sources raw materials that they process using a poultry feed processing machine supplied by the project. Beatrice explains that the county being a hotspot for tourism, Laikipia has an insatiable demand for chicks amongst community members who sell them once they mature. The main clients include OL Naisho and Loldaiga Farm.

According to Beatrice, the primary benefit for group members is the streamlined procurement and easy access to feeds. The profits from the group's feed processing operations are directed towards the Village Savings and Loans Association, boosting its financial stability.

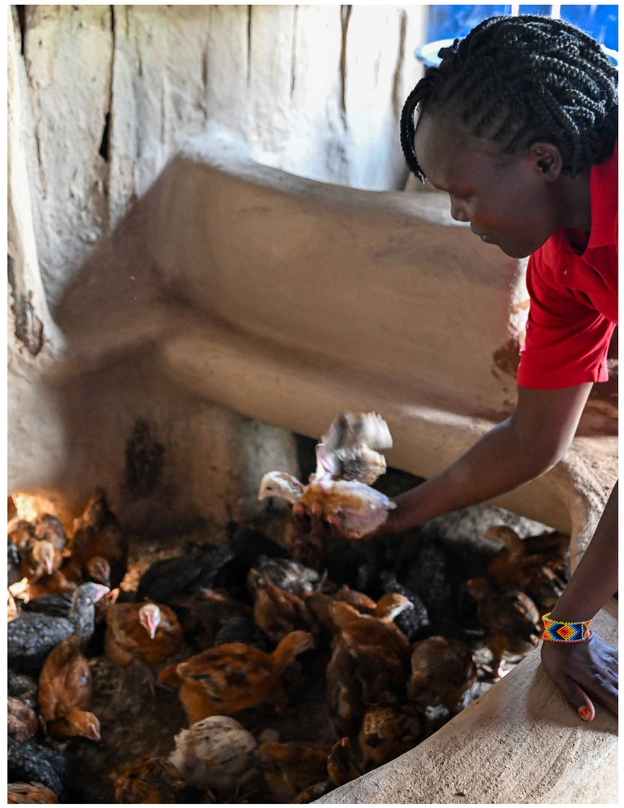
"When we started, we did not know how to manage and operate the business," Elizabeth, Ogilgel's chairperson, admitted. "We could sell a chick for Ksh. 200 or less to get rid of it, but currently, we have the experience. We now even sell online via the WEE-CSA WhatsApp group," she explains. "The training on capital investment and financial management has led to better profit margins and a more efficient digital 'farmers' business. Now, I can sell a chick for Ksh. 350."

"At the onset of this project, my husband was not interested at all, but due to my commitment and hard work, he saw the fruits of my labor," Beatrice shared. "Lately, he has supported me with capital to scale up my small business. With my profits, I am saving up so that my husband and I can purchase land and relocate from his parents' land."

Center: Kienyeji (traditional) chicks in a chepkube (traditional brooder) at Beatrice's home in Laikipia County. Beatrice and other members of the Ogilgei group are benefiting from the poultry value chain thanks to support from UN Women's WEE-CSA project, funded by Korea. The project provided support for the group members to build the brooders in their kitchens, allowing them to conserve energy by using waste heat from cooking to keep the chicks warm. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Clockwise from top left: Kienyeji (traditional) chicks in a chepkube (traditional brooder) at Beatrice's home home in Laikipia County. Beatrice and other members of the Ogilgei group are benefiting from the poultry value chain thanks to support from UN Women's WEE-CSA project, funded by Korea. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Beatrice checks on her kienyeji chicks in her chepkube (traditional brooder) at her home in Laikipia County. Beatrice and other members of the Ogilgei group are benefiting from the poultry value chain thanks to support from UN Women's WEE-CSA project, funded by Korea. The project provided the group with a chicken feed mill that they use to crush and mix feeds in different ratios for the various stages of the chickens' growth. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)
Beatrice and other members of the Ogilgei group are benefiting from the poultry value chain thanks to support from UN Women's WEE-CSA project, funded by Korea. The feed that the group produces has reduced their reliance on commercial feeds and put profits into their pockets that they are using to meet various needs. . (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)



FORMULATION FOR KIENYEJI LAYER
QUANTITY
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3

A new dawn for Mwanzo Mpya

Mwanzo Mpya, a vibrant self-help group led by the energetic Dorcas Kulia, exemplifies the transformative power of the WEE-CSA incubator program. Facing the reality of dwindling harvests due to climate change, the group, like many others in the village, felt a sense of despair. However, the introduction of advanced methodologies by WEE-CSA offered hope. As the village administrator, Kulia explains that the benefits have been undeniable.

One of the WEE-CSA initiatives is collaboration, which is embraced by Mwanzo Mpya. According to Dorcas, their initial approach to chicken rearing required each member to contribute eggs for hatching and then sharing the costs. This collective approach reduced financial burden and fostered a sense of community. The focus on 'kienyeji' chicken, a local and prized breed, allowed them to tap into a premium market for meat and eggs. Dorcas exemplifies the program's success with a tenfold increase in her flock (from 3 to 30 chickens and 15 chicks).

The WEE-CSA program recognised the importance of financial literacy and access to capital through the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA). In 2015, Mwanzo Mpya was established as a savings scheme. "We began with a small registration fee and transitioned to a merry-go-round system, which helped us understand the concept better," Dorcas explained. "The VSLA has significantly improved our financial situation; we can access loans to purchase eggs for the incubator, and I can easily repay the loan by selling a few chicks or eggs," Dorcas shared. The access to capital, coupled with the shared knowledge on chicken rearing has created a sustainable financial growth cycle for the group.

Beyond financial gains, the WEE-CSA program fostered a spirit of resilience and capacity building. Group members were trained on chicken rearing and crucial skills like mulching and soil conservation, equipping them to face future challenges. Dorcas, who was once discouraged by past failures, now embodies the program's training ideals. "I've learned so much about resilience," she explains. "In the past, I wouldn't start over after losing a few chickens. Now, I'm a knowledgeable farmer in climate-smart agriculture."

The story of Mwanzo Mpya is a shining example of the incubator program's success. Through collaboration, financial empowerment, and resilience, the program has turned a once desperate community into a thriving collective, prepared to prosper.

Facing page, clockwise from top: Kulia at her farm in Kitui County. UN Women's WEE-CSA project provided to the Mwanzo Mpya group, where Kulia serves as chairperson with an egg incubator to improve their resilience to climate change shocks. She plants maize and sunflowers to provide seeds she can mill at a neighboring group's feed mill. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Kulia with some chicks at her neighbor's farm in Kitui County. UN Women's WEE-CSA project provided to the Mwanzo Mpya group, where Kulia serves as chairperson with an egg incubator to improve their resilience to climate change shocks. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

An egg incubator that UN Women's WEE-CSA project provided to the Mwanzo Mpya group in Kitui County. The incubator will enable the women of Mwanzo Mpya to improve their incomes through value addition in hte pultry value chain. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

The solar charge controller of the solar powered egg incubator that UN Women's WEE-CSA project provided to the Mwanzo Mpya group in Kitui County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Kulia at her farm in Kitui County. She grows maize, sunflowers and other crops that she can use to make feed for her chicken. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Kulia at her farm in Kitui County. Aside from the solar powered egg incubator provided, the WEE-CSA project linked Kulia's Mwanzo Mpya group to a neighboring group's feed mill where they can process feed for their chicken from seed crop planted in their farms. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

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The Remarkable Impact of Carolyne's Vision for Empowerment

As a Community Health Champion and leader of the Voice for the Voiceless, Carolyne has always been passionate about making a positive impact. Through rearing chicken, Carolyne, who is also the Chairperson for Constituencies Development Fund at Malili Primary and Women Administrator, has found the tools and knowledge to empower herself and others.

"The WEE-CSA wasn't just about raising chickens, it was about equipping us with the skills to build a brighter future," Carolyne shared. "One of the most valuable lessons I learned was financial management. With a loan from the program, I purchased improved kienyeji (local breed) chicken eggs, which, once hatched, had the potential for higher yields and better profits. I carefully hatched them alongside my local hens, creating a mixed brood. Within a month, I sold them and paid back my loan."

Carolyne re-invested the profits into planting green gram seeds and sold a significant portion to a local school after a successful harvest, increasing her income. "I ventured into improved Gala breed goats, which are high-yielding, bigger and healthier than indigenous goats," she said. Carolyne now has the confidence and leadership skills to represent her community at public forums, advocating for their needs and ensuring their voices are heard.

According to Carolyne, the financial independence gained by women through the project and other initiatives fostered peace within the community. Women no longer have to rely solely on their husbands to meet basic needs, and this newfound independence has led to a more harmonious and hopeful environment. Carolyne has learned the value of record-keeping for all farming aspects, which enables her to examine the profitability of each venture, track progress and share best practices with others. Through the network established by the program, she proposed projects that would benefit the community, including creating a green gram aggregation center to streamline farmers' selling process and advocate for additional boreholes to address water scarcity issues.

"Technology has become a powerful tool in my journey," Carolyne shared. "Recently, I tested the waters of online sales; I took a few photos showcasing the health and quality of my Gala goats and posted them online. To my surprise, within just two days, I had a client interested in purchasing a goat! We negotiated everything online and made the payment upon delivery."

Carolyne hopes that her community can soar to even greater heights with continued support and collaboration.

Clockwise from top left: Caroline checks on her chicken at her farm in Kitui County. Caroline benefited from support to start livestock production from UN Women's WEE-CSA project. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Caroline feeds her chicken at her farm in Kitui County. From the profits she made selling the chicken, Caroline got into galla goat production (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Caroline shares a light moment with some members of her group in Kitui County (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Caroline checks on her goats at her farm in Kitui County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Caroline with some of the products of her farm that she's producing with organic fertilizers created from animal droppings. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Caroline harvests greengrams at her farm in Kitui County. Caroline also learned how to plant climate smart crops like greengrams from UN Women's WEE-CSA project. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Caroline's goats at her farm in Kitui County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

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Reinventing Retirement: How Empowerment and Poultry Farming Revitalized our Community

“In 2022, Brian, who was visiting us from the County Government of Laikipia, encouraged us to form a group and be part of the WEE-CSA empowerment initiative. Before the initiative, I was unemployed. I used to stay home and depend on my husband for various provisions. Even 65 year olds were facing similar challenges.” Explained Fancy Chenangat.

Through the WEE-CSA, UN Women gave the group 1500 chicks, which they divided amongst members for easier and more effective handling as the chicks needed intensive care.

After successful rearing of the chicks, Mercy Shakin sold fifty chickens to pay school fees. “Within three months, I had reared other chicks and looked for a market to get next semester’s fees; it’s as easy as that,” Mercy explained. “Since I do not sell all my chicks, I have hens that lay around one tray of eggs in two days, which I sell to care for my subsistence needs.”

Additionally, Mercy explained that, as a group, they often aggregate their chicken to meet the demands for bulk orders. “The profits earned are then invested in other agricultural products. In early 2024, the group bought one acre of land for cultivating maize on one acre and onions on half an acre, with plans to lease or buy more land in the future.” explained Purity

Mary Nguriakou on the other hand learned record keeping for her business. This includes from the feeds the chicken eat and any other related costs incurred to the point of sale, in order to calculate the profit margin. To minimize her expenses, Mary buys chicken feed from a nearby group called Kangota, who were appointed as the Uzima Chicken stockists for their feed. “The prices are quite affordable as the transport cost is reduced completely,” Mary explained.

“Our savings have been increasing gradually since we started the group; this is a measure of resilience, determination and hard work from our old women. Imagine a 65-year-old saving Ksh. 15,000 a month and having grandchildren running all over the compound. We have changed people’s lives thanks to WEE-CSA. Even when they borrow loans from our table banking, there are no worries or stress to pay back as there is money.” explained Fancy.

Top right: Members of Chemoiywo group with some of their chicken. The group has seen great success in the poultry value chain, thanks to the UN Women WEE-CSA project that trained them on keeping and aggregating their poultry for sale. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Top right: Members of Chemoiywo group in their kitchen garden. They recently purchased land as a group and are growing maize and bulb onions. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Bottom right: Members of Chemoiywo group in their kitchen garden. The group members have seen improved nutrition in their households as they each have a kitchen garden in their homes . (Photo: UN Women/ James Ochweri)

How WEE-CSA Transformed Atulia's Agricultural Practices through Poultry Feed Machine

Christine Kirakwang, Secretary of the Atulia Self-help Group, explains, "The impact of WEE-CSA is beyond our group, as during the long school holidays, we've hired a college student to manage feed processing and oversee sales. Additionally, we've formed partnerships with local logistics drivers to transport raw materials, as locally sourced supplies are insufficient. To maintain efficient business operations, we meticulously record and review all procurement and financial activities on a monthly basis."

At the onset of the venture, the WEE-CSA initiative donated 600-day-old chicks to kickstart the business. "These chicks were then sold to our members, raising a total of Ksh. 58,000 as capital to buy raw materials for the feed processor. We settled to place the machine in a rented area convenient to everyone," Christine shared.

The Atulia Self-Help Group has also attended farm expos for learning opportunities, including in Cheptobo and Uzima Chicken Field Day. Chepsok Lotukomun, a mother of five, celebrates that the training bridged her access to certified seeds for vegetables and cereals and supportive tutors for advice. Similarly, Lotukomun, her husband, is among the men experiencing the WEE CSA's ripple effect. With training from his wife, Lotukomun is revolutionizing his pieces of land using a solar pump acquired from poultry feed sales to grow Maize, tomato, and sorghum.
"I never considered farming a prime opportunity due to our climate here, but I am convinced things can change," Lotukomun said. "Lugging buckets of water under the scorching sun just to irrigate crops has been the norm every October. This is no longer the reality for Atulia group as they have acquired smarter and safer by buying pipes to source water from the well.

"From the profits we share from the poultry feed sales, I have been able to start new businesses. I supply utilities such as sugar, soap and vegetable oil to my neighbors, resulting in extra income for myself. We are stitching our way to better livelihood," ChepsoK explained assertively.

Lotukomun also trains his kids on basic climate-smart skills such as agroforestry, intercropping, and organic farming when schools are closed.

Left: Christine helps to feed chicken at her family home in West Pokot County. UN Women supported Christine and the Atulia self help group with a chicken feed processor through the WEE-CSA project, enabling the group to raise their incomes by selling feed in the local market. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Christine helps to feed chicken at her family home in West Pokot County. Christine's group, Atulia self help group uses the chicken feed processor they received through the WEE-CSA project to mill feed for their own production and for sale. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

An employee of Atulia self help group checks on the chicken feed at their store in West Pokot County.(Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

An employee of Atulia self help group sells chicken feed at their store in West Pokot County.(Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

A member of Atulia checks on sales records at their store in West Pokot County. The group got training on running their business, including proper record keeping, as part of the support from the WEE-CSA project. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Chicken at Christine's home in West Pokot County (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

From Feed to Fortune: How Grace and Twitungianie Group Revolutionised their Community

Grace, the secretary of the Twitungianie Self-Help Group, knows the secret to success lies in the coop and the feed. UN Women's involvement introduced a transformative project – a chicken feed processor. This seemingly simple innovation became the catalyst for a remarkable journey.
"The chicken feed processor wasn't about convenience, it was about empowering the group to raise healthier, more productive chickens," Grace explained. "By sourcing raw materials like maize, sorghum, and sunflower from Grace's farm and others, the group could produce high-quality feed at a significantly lower cost than the options available at agrovet stores. This cost-effectiveness translated into higher profits for the group members who raised chickens. The increased income fueled personal growth and attracted new members to the group."

The project aimed at equipping women with the tools to build a sustainable future. Alongside learning the intricacies of feed processing, the women received training in water-saving techniques like Zai pits and irrigation methods, which was crucial for growing the raw materials for their feed. Individual members like Grace benefited from the affordable feed and used it to raise healthy chickens and cultivate vegetables. The group then came together to aggregate their produce, creating a bigger, more marketable products and negotiating better deals with customers.
Grace's leadership blossomed under this new direction. Her success with the chicken feed processor and newfound knowledge made her an inspiration for others. Affectionately called "Mwalimu" (teacher), Grace generously shared her expertise, guiding newcomers and mentoring other groups particularly in feed formulation. Her impact transcended the group, fostering a collaborative spirit and knowledge-sharing network within the community.

The financial independence gained through the chicken feed processor project created a ripple effect throughout the community. Women like Grace can now provide for their families' basic needs, reducing dependence on their husbands and creating a more peaceful and stable household. The group members' husbands, including Grace's unemployed husband, also advocated and witnessed the positive changes fueled by the affordable feed. This shift in roles exemplified the positive changes sweeping through the community.

Furthermore, curious about the farm's success, Grace's husband's friends became regular visitors, seeking guidance and inspiration. Grace freely shared her knowledge and the positive impact. The chicken feed processor transformed the lives of Twitungianie group members, who are well-positioned to face future challenges and continue to build a brighter future, one healthy chicken and one shared success story at a time.

Grace Tom with one of her chicken at her farm in Kitui County. Through UN Women's WEE-CSA project funded by KOICA, Grace and other members of the Twitungianie Self-Help Group got training on the poultry value chain and a chicken feed mill and mixer and now they are able to process and sell chicken feed in their area. Grace grows and mills her own sunflower and maize. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Grace Tom processing chicken feed at the group's mill in Kitui County.. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Grace Tom showing chicken feed at various stages of processing at the group's mill in Kitui County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Grace Tom processing chicken feed at the group's mill in Kitui County. Through UN Women's WEE-CSA project funded by KOICA, Grace and other members of the Twitungianie Self-Help Group got training on the poultry value chain and a chicken feed mill and mixer and now they are able to process and sell chicken feed in their area. Grace grows and mills her own sunflower and maize. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Grace Tom with some finished chicken feed at the group's mill in Kitui County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Finished chicken feed ready for sale at the Twitungainie Self-Help group's feed processing mill in Kitui County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Grace Tom in her vegetable garden at her farm in Kitui County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Grace Tom's chicken feeding at her farm in Kitui County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

POULTRY
FEEDS
FORMULATION
KOICA
UN WOMEN

Milkah's Journey: Harnessing Livestock Success to Empower the Community

Milkah, the Asoyon Business Savings Group chairperson, acknowledged the life-changing impact of WEE-CSA. The group was assigned six Galla-he goats, which were used to breed hybrid species through a rational system where each member housed the stud goats for a certain period. Once every member had improved versions, Milkah bought some of the he-goats for custodian purposes.

"I have 83 acres of land for farming, 80 of which are owned by my husband and he helped me acquire an additional three acres. I efficiently utilise these farms and boast 200 Galla goats, 130 chicken, 30 dorper sheep, 22 cows, and the rest is dedicated to maize and beans production," Milkah shared.

During the festive seasons in April and December, Milkah sells her goats to raise income. "Last year, I earned Ksh. 400,000," Milkah shared. "From these sales, I've acquired several plots of land and started building a mansion for my family." With support from her husband, Milkah has also diversified her farming practices, ventured into new animal breeding, and started a posho mill to serve the community. She also attends training to boost her livestock and improve her yields.

"During the inter-county training with other groups, I learned about sheep, an animal I had no interest in. Through the interaction with others, I was convinced to try this venture. Now, I'm cruising nicely with 30 dorper sheep, thanks to my key investment in goat sales," Milkah explained.

Collaboration has also improved in the Asoyen group with members diversifying their farming practices with the profits from Galla Goats. For Milkah, her resilience is caused by the WEE-CSA effect. "During my business operations, I interact with people from different setups, and I must treat them all equally and fairly," Milkah shared. "I learned People management from the WEE-CSA workshops, which focused on zero tolerance to abuse and 100 per cent drive toward respect. For non-group members, I still touch a heart by offering my skills at no cost. The WEE-CSA never charged us, so why would I charge them?" Milkah asked.

Furthermore, as a voice of women in her area, Milkah advocates for development opportunities. "I have attended several county committee meetings, especially during financial budgeting for the economic year where I pushed for utilities," Milkah shared. "I raised an idea for the construction of better roads as most of the clients complain of poor roads when coming for our products. Additionally, I suggested increasing agribusiness tutors as the world is quickly advancing to the agritech business sphere. I also attend the monthly chief Baraza with my fellow women to keep abreast of the government's plans and raise our issues," Milkah said.

Left: Milkah and her children at her farm in West Pokot County. Milkah and other members of the Asoyen Business Savings Group benefited from support through UN Women's WEE-CSA of 6 Galla goats which have enabled them to improve their own herds. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, clockwise from left: Milkah tends to her goats at her farm in West Pokot County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Milkah with her chicken at her farm in West Pokot County. Milkah has used the proceeds from selling the Galla goats to start her own poultry production and to improve the family's livelihood. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Milkah tends to her goats at her farm in West Pokot County. She is using the skills she learned through WEE-CSA to advocate for better infrastructure and budgeting for her local area. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Overcoming Adversity: Disabled Women Cultivate a Brighter Future

“In the past, we faced many challenges and were marginalized from society’s development and daily affairs. We felt like outcasts, which led to a lack of self-belief,” Margaret shared. “As a group of differently-abled people, we occasionally met but made little progress. However, at one point, we started anew. From a few members in 2019 to over 30 in 2024, the New Vision Self-Help Group, which I chair, has grown significantly, thanks to the transformative change brought by WEE-CSA.”

Margaret shares that the UN Women taught the group that disability is not inability. “This has been proven in my work as I now have several ways to earn income and improve my living standards,” Margaret explained confidently.

John Wambua, the vice chairperson of the group, who once struggled with public communication, mentions that the group members are now equipped with skills to improve their living conditions. John adds that the group members can now successfully utilise the Zai pits method and kitchen gardening to grow their vegetables during drought and not purchase them as in the past.

“This year, I expect a bountiful harvest from my farm. I used smart technology to irrigate the farm and prevent pests. Things are changing for the better.” Margaret explained. “I also have the improved Galla goats that I care for with little or no struggle.”

In response to global climate change, Margaret initiated a project to plant and sell trees within the community and diversify her farm portfolio. She mentioned that the nursery uses chicken manure as fertilizer and refuse household water for irrigation.

Furthermore, the group strives to attend all meetings called by the County Government officials. Margaret is often informed about upcoming public participation in which they can participate and create awareness among the public. She often uses such forums to raise challenges facing the sector, leading to budget allocation in the bursary fund and better equipment such as wheelchairs and seedlings.

In the future, Margaret mentioned that the group aims to produce and supply more vegetables and cereals to the community. She adds that the challenges will not stop them as UN Women has capitalized on their resilience.

Center: Members of New Vision Self-help Group pose for a group picture outside Margaret Wangechi’s home in Lakipia County. Through the WEE-CSA project funded by KOICA and implemented jointly by UN Women and FAO, the New Vision group got capacity enhancement on climate smart agricultural techniques as well as inputs, seeds and livestock to empower them. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, clockwise from top left: A member of New Vision Self-help Group stands amidst sorghum crop in her farm in Laikipia County. She grows the sorghum as feed for the dairy goats she received from the WEE-CSA project. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Margaret Wangechi, a person living with disabilities, feeds a dairy goat at her farm in Laikipia County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

A member of New Vision Self-help Group poses for a photo at the dairy goat unit she constructed thanks to the WEE-CSA project funded by KOICA and implemented jointly by UN Women and FAO. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Margaret Wangechi, a person living with disabilities, walks throuh a crop nursery at her farm in Laikipia County. The WEE-CSA project taught Margaret’s group New Vision self help group about climate smart agricultural techniques, enabling them to improve their livelihoods from the income they raise selling the crops they produce. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

New Vision

Nurturing Legacy: How Regina turned Knowledge into Prosperity

Regina's story is a testament to the transformative power of knowledge and collaboration. Before the WEE-CSA program, farming was simply a chore. "There wasn't much reward in it," Regina admits. However, workshops conducted by Hand in Hand, Anglican Development Services Eastern (ADS), and UN Women opened her eyes to new possibilities. The Training on fiscal discipline, personal development, and climate-smart agriculture practices instilled a sense of purpose in her work.

This newfound passion is evident throughout Regina's farm. Zai pits strategically dug holes that capture rainwater and dot the landscape, a testament to her commitment to water conservation. Her kitchen garden, once a neglected space, now overflows with vibrant produce, an increase in her family's vegetable consumption. Regina leverages the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) program to grow her business and tripple her initial investment. This success story culminated in Regina opening of a much-needed agrovet shop. "Farmers used to travel long distances, even risking crocodile-infested rivers, to buy basic supplies," Reginah shared.

Drawing upon her experience with Anglican Development Services Eastern (ADS) and WEE-CSA, Regina developed a financially sound risk management plan before launching the venture. Regina trained as a Village Based Advisor with the Cereal Growers Association and can provide detailed prescriptions for chemicals, animal feed, and certified seeds. Her agrovet shop is a resource center for the community, which not only boosts her sales but also allows her to impact the success of other farmers directly. Furthermor, Regina's farm boasts over 40 chickens for sale and an additional 20 for personal consumption. She has a thriving herd of nearly 100 goats, providing a steady source of milk and additional income.

Regina's leadership extends beyond her farm. Her group, Muuo wa Katilini, focuses on cultivating green grams and raising goats, which they sell in bulk to secure better deals. These profits, Regina proudly shares, are used to make loan repayments, ensuring the sustainability of their ventures. Other than work, the training taught her how to connect with people despite their differences. This leadership was crucial when her husband passed away in 2019. "Without the skills I learned, I might have lost everything," Regina shared. "As you can see, everything is thriving; goats, chicken, and a well-managed farm. This is my legacy."

Right: Reginah on her motorcycle at her farm in Kitui County. Through the WEE-CSA project, Reginah took part in trainings and took initiative to open an agrovet shop in her local market, reducing the distance fellow farmers have to go to find necessary advice, veterinary medicine and pesticides. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Reginah at her farm in Kitui County. She is a trained village-based advisor with the Cereal Growers Association, enabling her give the right advice and necessary veterinary medicine for other farmers in her area. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Products at Reginah's agrovet shop in Kitui County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Reginah at her agrovet shop in Kitui County. Through the WEE-CSA project, Before she opened the shop in her local market, farmers had to travel for at least 2 hours on a rough road to access the advice, veterinary medicines and pesticides they needed.(Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Reginah has also diversified by opening a general shop alongside the agrovet shop in her local market.(Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

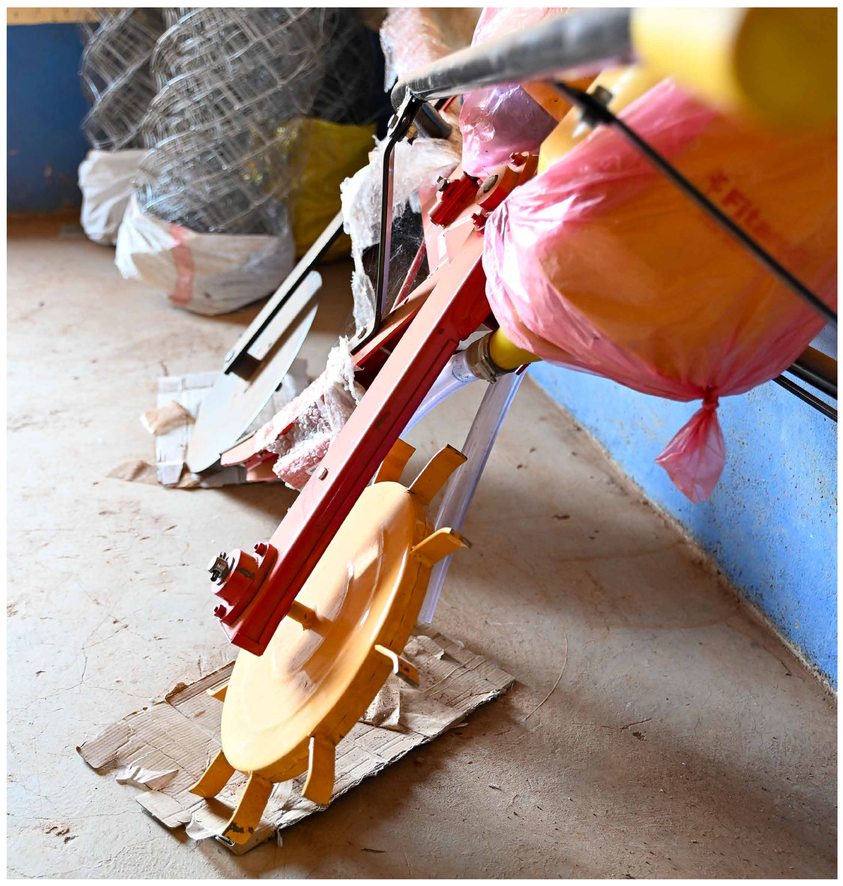
Reginah looks over some of the products in her agrovet shop in Kitui County. . (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Some of the farming implements that Reginah stocks in her agrovet shop in Kitui County.(Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, center: Some of the products that Reginah sells in her general shop that's next to the agrovet shop. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Simlaw Seeds
Tomato
Super Rio
Simlaw Seeds
Superior & Reliable
Simlaw Seeds
Tomato
Super Rio
Continental
HYBRID COLLARD
F1
PACK SIZE: 50 GRAMS
Exp. 30%
AGRIPACK SEEDS
AGRIPACK SEEDS

HOME
BANK



Khetia's
A World of Choice...

Sheep, Strength, and Self-Reliance: How WEE-CSA Revolutionized our Lives and Livelihoods

The story of the Turwol and Ateker groups, mobilised by Julius and led by the indomitable Chepsalawet, is a testament to the transformative power of the WEE-CSA intitiative, particularly its focus on Dorper sheep value addition. Before the program, these groups struggled like many others in the community. “We relied on rain-fed agriculture, planting only once a year,” Julius explained. “Droughts were devastating, forcing us to slowly sell our livestock to survive.”

Chepsalawet, a woman who embodies the program’s self-reliance spirit, emphasises the importance of Dorper sheep rearing. “We learned to have something of our own. Financial independence became a reality. Now, I can confidently buy basic needs, thanks to selling surplus sheep,” Chepsalawet shared proudly.

WEE-CSA’s Dorper sheep initiative provided a springboard for financial growth. Julius, the group’s mobiliser, explains, “The Dorper rams we received have significantly improved our local breeds; their efforts are already bearing fruit. My wife, Mary, is raising nine healthy lambs which will be sold to group members when they mature,” Julius shared. The program also addressed the challenge of year-round fodder availability through pasture management training.

Similarly, the impact of WEE-CSA extends beyond economic empowerment. Mary highlights the importance of education saying, “UN Women has opened doors for us. Our girls are now in school, not married off at a young age.” Harmful practices like FGM have also been eradicated through awareness campaigns.

The group has also expanded their income base by monetising breeding services for Dorper rams. “The groups understand that learning is a lifelong process,” Mary shared. “Every interaction, like showcasing our Dorper sheep at agricultural shows, presents an opportunity to learn.” The WEE-CSA program has equipped these groups not just to survive but to thrive, building a future brimming with self-sufficiency and prosperity.
According to Mary, the table banking system allows members to access quick loans in times of need, ensuring their children’s education is not disrupted. Members pay the loans through income from selling eggs, chicken, or sheep.

Furthermore, the WEE-CSA targeted gender inequality, which is a critical issue. “Before, we relied on our husbands for everything, often facing rejection or even abuse,” Chepsalawet shared. The program’s focus on self-reliance equipped women with the skills and confidence to break free from this cycle. “Now, the tables have turned,” Chepsalawet shared with a smile. “My husband even comes to me for money, and my children approach me for pocket money.” This newfound independence extends beyond the household as Chepsalawet’s leadership is evident and her confidence and resilience inspires others.

Center: Pastor Julius and his wife Mary. UN Women’s WEE-CSA project supported the Turwol and Ateker groups with rams of Dorper breed to start improving their own flocks.of local sheep. The groups now breed and sell Dorper lambs to their neighbors as an income generating activity. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, clockwise from top: Members of the Turwol and Ateker groups at a group meeting in West Pokot County. With support from UN Women’s WEE-CSA group and technical support from FAO, the groups have been upgrading their sheep to Dorper breed and practising good pasture management, enhancing their incomes by enabling them to breed and sell Dorper lambs. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

The secretary of the Turwol and Ateker groups at a group meeting in West Pokot County.(Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Pastor Julius looks over his family’s sheep flock, which is grazing together with the Turwol group flock. The group is seeing high demand from their neighbors for lambs of the improved Dorper breed. (Photo: UN Women/ James Ochweri)

Fields of Change: How Climate-Smart Practices and Gender Empowerment Brought Us Prosperity

“The WEE-CSA came to us with the pasture initiative, and we loved it,” Emily, Secretary of Kobuyin SHG, shared. “Our farm, located along a nearby stream, experiences lots of flooding. It taught us to utilise what is within our reach. From pasture management workshops, we learned smart agricultural ways to reduce food and gain pasture for our crop while utilising grass; Bhoma Rhodes, Singrass.”

While planting the pasture crops, the group uses the half-moon mechanism that creates a holding plate for running water, hence reducing erosion and water-soil consumption. The group plants the Singrass crop which is ideal for local consumption and sale in the form of hay.

In addition to the three acres of hybrid species, Emily plans to plant more natural grass on her 15 acres of land near the river. She also practices agroforestry on the three acres; planting oranges and mangoes as a long-term goal. “I got this idea from our intercounty field visits to Siaya County,” Emily shared.

Emily’s life also changed significantly as she can now afford basic needs for her family. “In the past, I would borrow even Ksh. 10 to buy salt, but I buy what I want nowadays. My brother often questions whether I am in a cult or asks what I did differently and every time I mention WEE-CSA,” Emily shared. She also trains locals interested in her work by taking them in groups for a tour of her farm and answers their questions. “At times, I order certified seeds and agrochemicals for them or even sell their products due to my extensive network and interaction with businesses and clients,” Emily added.

“Before WEE-CSA, we didn’t do much. Our men would go to the river, spend the whole day there, and return in the evening demanding food. If there was none, we faced severe beatings,” Emily shared. “Training on gender equality and women’s empowerment enlightened the men, helping them understand the need to be part of the change. When I had a little money for fees or food, he would forcefully take it because he didn’t have his own.”

For Stephen Kaimoi, the solar water pump he received from UN Women has changed his life. “I have tapped running water into our dam liner courtesy of WEE-CSA. When it pours, it pours into the dam. I use this water to irrigate my fruit trees, Zai pits, and kitchen garden, which is currently blooming with leaves. I also use the water for my grass when the drought is severe,” Stephen shared.

Moreover, Stephen realised that hunger and idleness result in conflict and fights. “Thanks to UN Women, we have been taught to help our wives administer smart farming and support in food provision. This has been a game-changer to a sustainable and peaceful house as I no longer drink alcohol,” Stephen shared.

A pasture grass plant at Emily’s farm in West Pokot County. Emily and her husband are part of the Kobuyin Self Help Group that got training and inputs to create pasture plantations in their farms, improve their resilience to drought conditions and increase their income from hay sales. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Emily waters her kitchen garden at the family farm in West Pokot County. Emily and her husband Stephen also recieved a dam liner and solar pump, enabling them to start irrigating their crops. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Emily and her husband Stephen standing in their pasture crop at the family farm in West Pokot County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Emily and her husband Stephen check on their kitchen garden at the family farm in West Pokot County. Emily and her husband are part of the Kobuyin Self Help Group that got training and inputs to create pasture plantations in their farms, improve their resilience to drought conditions and increase their income from hay sales. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Emily and her husband Stephen tend to one of their sheep at the family farm in West Pokot County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Emily prepares to water her kitchen garden at the family farm in West Pokot County.(Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Adapting to Thrive: Mweletu's Agricultural Transformation

The Mweletu Farmers Group, boasting over 22 members, is a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation. Led by the inspiring Priscillah, recently promoted to chief of the Mutomo location, the group has transformed its approach to agriculture.

"We realized we didn't need to buy vegetables that's why we invested in kitchen gardening," Priscillah shared. "This shift not only reduced our reliance on external sources but also provided a readily available source of nutritious food for our families." The group estimates that kitchen gardens have saved them an average of Ksh. 1,000 on their weekly vegetable budgets.

Despite the success, the arid environment presented a significant water scarcity challenge. To combat this, the group embraced water-saving techniques including minimum tillage, reaping, and mulching to maximise soil conservation. However, their most impactful weapon was the strategic use of Zai pits spearheaded by Priscillah. Her farm, with over 120 Zai pits, exemplifies the group's commitment to water conservation which has increased water retention on their farms.

Aditionally, by pooling resources from government initiatives like the Women Enterprise Fund, the Mweletu Farmers Group were able to save through their Village Savings and Loans Association project. The group used these funds to purchase certified green gram and pigeon pea seeds. The group also used water from UN Women-donated tanks for irrigation, further boosting their production.

During dry seasons, the group engages in activities like sewing bags and ropes and soap making to generate additional income. Priscillah often showcases their woven bags at meetings to expand their market reach; She recently secured a contract for over 200 bags. "We are not just farmers, we are also entrepreneurs," Priscillah said with pride.

Priscillah's husband's talented farm management is a testament to her dedication to knowledge sharing and building a strong support system. Similarly, as a certified mediator, Priscillah uses her skills to resolve conflicts within the group, ensuring a focus on collective goals. Her dedication and consistent results earned her the position of Certified Seed Producer for her county with the Kenya Agricultural & Livestock Organization. She uses her position to influence seed policies and prices, benefiting her fellow farmers. She is a voice for sustainable practices and a role model for women in agriculture.

Center: Priscillah, chief of Mutomo location in Kitui County, works on a wicker basket outside her home. Priscillah is part of the Mweletu group which recieved training on creating climate smart kitchen gardens to bolster their nutrition. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Priscillah, chief of Mutomo location in Kitui County, works on a wicker basket outside her home. Priscillat and other members of the Mweletu group weave the baskets and sell them as a means of diversifying their income. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Priscillah tends to her kitchen garden outside her home in Kitui County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Priscillah with her husband at their farm in Kitui County. Priscillah and other members of the Mweletu group recieved training on climate smart crop production, and pigeon pea seeds that they planted. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Priscillah holds some pigeon peas she harvested at her farm in Kitui County (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Invest in women: Accelerate Progress
International
Women's Day

Innovative Irrigation: The Ngenia Peace Group's Path to Year-Round Harvests

John and his wife Rhoda practised traditional farming for a long time before WEE-CSA came to train the two. After the training, John adopted smart agriculture technology implementing these techniques and innovative farming methods on his farm.

"I now grow various crops all year, including potatoes, kale, geranium, tree tomatoes, carrots, Napier grass, and beans, all from certified drought-resistant and high-yielding seeds," Rhoda, John's wife, shared. "This is possible throughout the year as I have a reliable dam liner, which I feed with a piping system from the nearby river." John also trained Rhoda in overseeing the farm activities and delegating chores to the workers. She also attends weekly group meetings to build her knowledge and skills in farming.

In 2023 , John took a loan to buy more pipes and irrigation gear, such as the sprinkler, to enhance their farming operations. "We have a big track of land that we are now fully maximising for farming," John shared. "This has seen us water various portions simultaneously and achieve more together. We procure small utilities such as herbicides, fertilizer, and other necessary farm inputs from profits generated from geranium sales. Everything is from and within the farm."

To ensure a successful endeavor, John works with his wife to oversee planting, harvesting and sale of their farm produce. "Often, I facilitate the manual work in the farming process, like irrigation and soil conservation, but once it's in the store, it's all hers to sell and pitch to various clients. I trust her, and she is very good at it," John shared. "As for her self-care activities such as nails, handbags, or a day, she can get money from the profits of the vegetables, as they are hers," John stated.

Furthermore, John strives to build his capacity in his work by attending workshops and seminars in various towns, such as Makindu in Machakos, to learn new markets, strategies, and ideas on water conservation and irrigation that he can share with the group. "It's worth mentioning that my wife is the chairperson of the group," John said. "At times, we do not agree on certain ideas, and I am fine with that as I respect her as a leader."

On her part, Rhoda is focused on training her group members and community on efficient farming practices, particularly on water conservation measures such as using tanks, dam liners, and Zai pits.

Right: Rhoda Lukaria harvests fresh vegetables, grown using climate-smart agricultural techniques, from the family farm in Laikipia County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Rhoda Lukaria proudly showing off part of their harvested potato crop which was grown using climate-smart agricultural techniques at the family farm in Laikipia County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Rhoda Lukaria harvests fresh vegetables, grown using climate-smart agricultural techniques, from the family farm in Laikipia County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Rhoda Lukaria proudly showing off part of their harvested potato crop which was grown using climate-smart agricultural techniques at the family farm in Laikipia County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

John Lukaria irrigates the family farm in Laikipia County. Because of what he's learned about gender equality through UN Women's WEE-CSA project, John is a male champion in his village, promoting the empowerment of the women through the farmer groups. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

John Lukaria and his wife Rhoda irrigate their farm in Laikipia County. The couple works together on the farm, using climate-smart agriculture techinques they learned together as part of UN Women's WEE-CSA project. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Rhoda Lukaria at a solar powered incubator at the family farm in Laikipia County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, center: John Lukaria and his wife Rhoda prepare to irrigate their farm in Laikipia County. The couple works together on the farm, using climate-smart agriculture techinques they learned together as part of UN Women's WEE-CSA project. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

SOLAR INVERT
ADVANCED
37.5
380.60

Sewing Seeds of Change: How Henrietta's Farm Flourished Amidst the Pandemic

Henrietta's life took an unexpected turn during the COVID-19 pandemic when she was forced to stop her tailoring work to explore new ventures; little did she know farming would become the catalyst for her turnaround.

Through the Women Economic Empowerment Climate-Smart Agriculture, Henrietta discovered the world of green grams where she and other participants received training on smart agricultural practices. This was a significant departure from the traditional methods passed down from their parents. Henrietta learned how to overcome the constraints of rain-dependent farming and maximise the potential of her seven-acre plot.

On a good harvest, she reaps around seven bags of green grams. However, pooling resources withther members during sales significantly increases their output and bargaining power. The group approach has also led to supplying local schools, which have become a valuable source of income. To expand their reach, the group embraced technology and took the initiative to promote

their green grams using online platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp. Their digital outreach has opened up new markets, strengthening their position as a reliable green grams supplier.

Despite this success, Henrietta wasn't content with limiting herself to a single crop. She understood the importance of diversification to protect her income and maximise her profits. From her green grams profits, she ventured into farming other crops such as pigeon peas, pawpaw, vegetables and cowpeas and rearing a herd of improved goats, currently numbering 20. Her farm has become a model of agricultural abundance. She has transformed her former tailoring shop into a vibrant green haven. The repurposed space has become a bustling market for the vegetables she produced and sourced from other farmers within the ward. Henrietta adds value by blending fruits like pawpaw and watermelons into refreshing juices, offering her customers a delightful range of farm-fresh products.

Henrietta's story highlights the importance of a strong support system. Her participation in the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) initiative provided a social safety net for herself and fellow group members. The program offered a non-repayable fund to support members during emergencies, medical needs, or unforeseen circumstances. Additionally, the group fostered a saving culture through weekly contributions from part of their green gram profits, further strengthening their collective financial security.

Thanks to training on record keeping from the Kitui County Government Officers, Henrietta documented all aspects of her farm activities and sales. The data included the birth of her goats, allowing her to track their life cycle and calculate profit margins with precision. Through her commitment to record keeping, Henrietta has become a master of her agricultural destiny, making informed decisions based on accurate data.

Facing page, left to right: Henrietta tends to her kitchen garden at her farm in Kitui County. Henrietta and other members of the Kama B self help group received training on climate smart agricultural techniques thanks to UN Women's WEE-CSA project. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Tree seedlings at Henrietta's farm in Kitui County.(Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Henrietta at the group storeroom in Kitui County. The group planted greengrams and aggregated their harvests to sell at the local market and online. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Clockwise from top left: Henrietta at the group storeroom in their local market in Kitui County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Members of Kama B self help group displaying some of the products they make and sell to diversify their incomes. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Henrietta tends to her kitchen garden at her farm in Kitui County. Henrietta and other members of the Kama B self help group received training on climate smart agricultural techniques thanks to UN Women's WEE-CSA project. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

From Seed to Shelf: Gwataniro Mumu Women's Journey to Self-Sufficiency

In 2020, the WEE-CSA was introduced to Gwataniro Mumu Women's Group where members were taught agribusiness skills and climate-smart farming by the County Agricultral officer. Members were also given tanks to store water for irrigating plants in their kitchen gardens and Zai pits.

Catherine states that they adopted organic farming by producing fertilizer and pesticides from household materials such as eggshells, soap, ashes, and sunflowers, thus reducing damage to the soil allowing the growth of vegetables resulting in large harvests. During their training, the team was advised on certified seeds that withstand unfavorable weather conditions.

The group also uses Zai pits to produce large harvests throughout the year, increasing the amount that goes to drying. With these strategies and measures, Gladys, the treasurer, confirms that they have been able to save more money due to fewer visits to the shop, as most items come from the farm. "During drying, we aggregate the produce from members, with no specified amount, and process them for the dryer parts of the year," Gladys shared.

The group also preserves dried vegetables for sale to the local community during droughts, but they cannot meet the demand. "This is an opportunity to increase production and revenue. We intend to train more youth and enhance our savings through our Village Savings and Loans Association from the sales in our profitable niches," Catherine explained.
According to Christopher Mwangi, the only man in the group, he knew women from this group progressed very well and desired to be part of them. "There are many men's groups, but this one is more focused, united and future-oriented. When women say we meet at 9.00 am, we meet without failure. The leaders are spirited, and I have seen a change in myself," Christopher shared. "I listen to and respect them, and with respect, you learn a lot. I am not scared or ashamed to learn from these wonderful women."

Beatrice, on the other hand, has learned financial discipline. "I don't bother my husband with shopping because I sell my vegetables from the farm, earn money to purchase other household necessities and even pay school fees," she shared. "This has brought a stable home as I don't quarrel with my husband. We are now cleaner thanks to our skills in making homemade soap. I now rarely depend on my husband," Beatrice stated happily.

Right: Members of Gwataniro Mumu Women group in Laikipia County collect fresh vegetables at one of the group members' farms in preperation for the drying process. UN Women's WEE-CSA project introduced the concept of vegetable drying to the women group as a climate smart agricultural technique they could use to ensure proper nutrition during the dry season and to give the group an income stream. (Photo: UN Women/ James Ochweri)

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Members of Gwataniro Mumu Women group in Laikipia County collect fresh vegetables at one of the group members' farms in preperation for the drying process. (Photo: UN Women/ James Ochweri)

Members of Gwataniro Mumu Women group in Laikipia County chop fresh vegetables at one of the group members' farms in preperation for the drying process. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Members of Gwataniro Mumu Women group in Laikipia County chop fresh vegetables at one of the group members' farms in preperation for the drying process. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Members of Gwataniro Mumu Women group in Laikipia County spread out fresh vegetables to dry at one of the group members' farms. The group sells the surplus dried vegetables within their community. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Members of Gwataniro Mumu Women group in Laikipia County spread out fresh vegetables to dry at one of the group members' farms. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Members of Gwataniro Mumu Women group in Laikipia County tend to their tree seedling nursery at one of the group members' farms. The group has diversified into selling tree seedlings. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, center: Members of Gwataniro Mumu Women group in Laikipia County pose for a group photo at their tree seedling nursery at one of the group members' farms. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Growing Prosperity: How Onion Farming Transformed Lives in Enock's Community

26-year-old Enock undertook the WEE-CSA training to learn about smart agricultural techniques to increase his yields. "The training focused on the lifecycle of onions, from the nursery bed to the consumption phase. We are no longer just ordinary farmers," Enock explained. With just 500 grams of certified onion seeds,the group started its journey toward self-reliance. In his first harvest, Enock earned a net profit of Ksh. 40,000, an increase from his indigenous species.

For Susan, the quality of the farming led to a bountiful harvest with customers booking the onions before the harvest time. "I harvested three tonnes of onions this year, the largest compared to the 1-2 tonnes in previous years," Susan said. "Customers were amazed by its quality and didn't want to risk losing it."

Thanks to the profits from onions, Enock states that members can acquire loans from institutions such as Equity Bank. From his last loan, he purchased a solar generator which he uses to provide heat and warmth for his 500 one-day-old chicks. The group also acquired Kenbro Chicks to sustain meat and egg production. Additionally, Enock's proactive nature has led him to contact Uzima Chicken on behalf of the group. "Young women and youth love interacting with me because of the exposure I have gained from various counties like Laikipia. I help them source seedlings, agrochemicals, and buyers for vegetables and onions," Enock shared.

For Joseph, an onion farmer and vegetable grower, the new venture has provided market alternatives; he supplies three local schools and uses the profits to pay his children's fees. His wife, Celestine, has a well-laid irrigation system that taps water from the windward side of the nearby escarpments for irrigation; hence she has no worries about idle fertile lands.

Enock notes that there has been a visible change and growth in the voice of women in homes, especially among his group members, as a result of UN Women stressing the value of gender equality and women empowerment. "Unlike in the past, a wife or any woman in the home can now decide where a particular crop should be planted in the farm, and that decision is upheld," Enock shared. When a woman has money, husbands can converse more closely with them without hesitation, knowing they won't be asked for pocket money."

Right: Enock and his child at their farm in West Pokot County. The WEE-CSA project trained the Empo-simat group, that Enock is a part of, on growing hybrid onions that have greater yield than traditional onions. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Enock tends to his chicken at his farm in West Pokot County. Enock, a youth member of Empo-simat group, used proceed from higher yields of hybrid onions to start his own poultry production. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Enock checks on a chicken at his farm in West Pokot County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

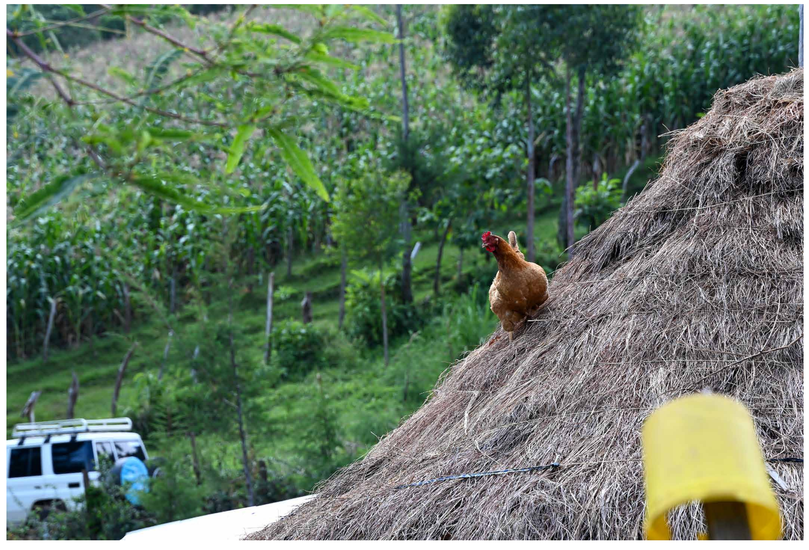
Celestine looks over her crop of onions on her farm in West Pokot. Celestine is part of the Empo-simat group and has benefited from training from UN Women's WEE-CSA on how to grow hybrid onions year round with irrigation. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Celestine displaying some of her crop of onions on her farm in West Pokot. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

A chicken at Enock's farm in West Pokot County. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Enock displays some of his onion crop at his farm in West Pokot County. He plans to continue planting the hybrid onions in bigger pieces of land to satisfy the current demand for the crop. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Facing page, center: Enock checks on the performance of the solar system at his farm in West Pokot County. Enock has invested in a solar system to light the chicken coop and keep his chicken warm.(Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)



From Geraniums to Greatness: Julia Nyambura's Entrepreneurial Journey

"I started as a tomato farmer, but this venture was not profitable due to volatile market patterns, resulting in significant losses and substantial debts," said Julia Nyambura, the Kenya Youth Federation's Youth Leader in Laikipia County. "After conducting market research, I started growing geraniums," Julia explained. Her intial encounter with geraniums left her thinking they were simple shrubs. Little did she know they would become a game changer in her farming business. "I am proud to say that these 'herbs' generate income for me," Julia explained.

Since 2022, Julia has significantly increased her geranium production, harvesting over nine times and yielding 2-3 tonnes per harvest from a quarter of an acre during rainy seasons. Julia attributes this success to her self-driven nature and the organic farming approach she has adopted, which yields great results thanks to the frequent training and seminars she attends.

Furthermore, Julia has played a key role in producing geranium and taking on leadership responsibilities. As a result, she has increased the selling price of the products from Kshs. 10 per kilo to Kshs. 15. Additionally, she has advocated for an annual bonus for the team, which they finally received after a long struggle. With online marketing and being part of the WEE-CSA WhatsApp Group, Julia is now looking to expand into the digital space to reach new and greater markets.

"Thanks to the profits from selling geranium products, I'm now expanding into poultry," Julia shared. "I have teamed up with a group of chicken farmers to purchase chicks, feed supplements, and medication, helping us save on costs. After my last harvest, I bought 350 chicks that will be ready for sale when they are a month old. Due to my expertise and reputation, I've become the key contact and liaison person for Kuku Chic Limited Company, serving areas in Laikipia County, Meru, and beyond."

After successfully increasing Geranium production on her farm, many community members have contacted Julia for support. She organises regular meetings and assists in forming groups that benefit from selling products in bulk, thus reducing the stress of finding markets and increasing profits. Being part of such groups also makes it easier for Julia to access loans, which was previously challenging.

Julia's success has opened up many opportunities for her, as she was recently appointed as a committee member of the Laikipia North NGCDF , a position that allows her to influence budget allocation, particularly in the agricultural sector. She mainly focuses on creating awareness on the value of geranium production. Julia was recognized as the highest producer in the zone by the buyer in 2021 and awarded drip kits and a dam liner. She also advocates for more mentors and tutors for the youth to improve access to education and agricultural knowledge.

Clockwise from top left: Julia Nyambura in her geranium farm during a previous harvest. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Through UN Women's WEE-CSA project, Julia was supported to grow a climate-smart crop - geranium. She has also developed the poultry value chain with other farmers in her area through a cooperative, where she serves as the focal point for a company that sells day-old chicks and poultry feed. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

Julia Nyambura advises one of her neighbors on how to tend for chicken at her farm in Laikipia County. (Photo: UN Women/Moses Gitau)

Julia Nyambura tends to her chicken at her farm in Laikipia County. (Photo: UN Women/Moses Gitau)

Empowering Murungai: Rosemary's Role in Farming and Water Access

Rosemary wears many hats. She is the chairperson for the Nyakio Daiga Women's group and Gender champion for the Hand in Hand Eastern Africa. "I do not get old," says Rosemary, laughing happily. "After serving as a church leader for over 30 years, I was recently chosen to be the Agricultural leader for the Murungai area within the Mashinani Development Committees" she adds.

Rosemary explains that the committee, which includes both women and youth, discusses a range of factors affecting the area, including the transport sector, education, and disability. Since the start of the WEE-CSA project, the community have implemented sustainable climate smart farming methods, such as using organic herbicides and mulching. With a tractor donated by KOICA, they cultivate their farms with fewer resources, as labor is scarce. Rosemary also mentions that she provides training to various farming groups in the area based on their demand for specific knowledge in farming.

The Mashinani Development committees discuss with the County Government issues affecting their community, and organize barazas (formal community meetings) where people can raise agricultural issues. They have also organized farmers into different groups based on the products they produce and trained them on value addition so that they can maximize their incomes. For instance, potato farmers are making and selling chips, goat farmers are producing yogurt, and bean growers are making powdered porridge.

The trainings that Rosemary attended through the WEE-CSA project included modules on leadership. Looking around at how the women of the area were struggling with fetching water from far away, Rosemary saw a chance to use the skills she learned in the trainings. She advocated for a disused borehole in her area to be rehabilitated by the Laikipia County government. "As the lead for agricultural development in my area, I made sure that the borehole was repaired and rehabilitated. I achieved this by monitoring the budget allocation for the farming sector and allocating some funds to this project. As a result, local residents can now access water and meet their daily needs." she says.

Rosemary's leadership has brought sustainable farming and reliable water access to Murungai. Through her efforts in training and advocacy, she has empowered local farmers and improved community livelihoods. Her story highlights the powerful impact of community leadership and the vital role women play in driving positive change.

Rosemary at a borehole that was rehabilitated at a primary school in Murungai, Laikipia County. Through her leadership, Rosemary influenced the rehabilitation of the borehole that's serving the school and the community. UN Women's WEE-CSA project empowered Rosemary and other women in Laikipia County with leadership trainings that have borne fruit for the communities they represent. (Photo: UN women/James Ochweri)

Empowering Women through Climate-Smart Agriculture: A Collaborative Effort

Here are more photos from the WEE-CSA project, taken in Laikipia, Kitui, and West Pokot Counties. These images showcase project beneficiaries with County leaders and representatives from KOICA, UN Women, and FAO, highlighting the joint efforts to promote women's empowerment in climate-smart agriculture.

This page, clockwise from top left: Laikipia County Governor Hon. Joshua Irungu flags off a tractor alongside UN Women Deputy Country Representative Dan Bazira and Women Economic Empowerment Team Leader Elizabeth Obanda, joined by other key partners of the WEE-CSA project. (Photo: UN Women)

KOICA Kenya Director and UN Women Country Representative presenting beehives to WEE-CSA beneficiaries as part of an empowerment initiative. (Photo: UN Women)

End-line Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting for the WEE-CSA in Machakos County, chaired by UN Women Deputy Country Representative Dan Bazira, and graced by His Excellency Hon. Simon Kachapin, Governor of West Pokot, alongside the KOICA Country Director.. (Photo: UN Women)

Leaders from Laikipia County receive farm equipment from UN Women Deputy Country Representative Dan Bazira and Women Economic Empowerment Team Leader Elizabeth Obanda, alongside key partners, as part of the WEE-CSA project. (Photo: UN Women)

Flagging off tanks and equipment for distribution to farmers by KOICA, UNW, FAO, and county government of Laikipia. (Photo: UN Women)

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Stephen Mbaya Kimwele, County Executive Committee Member of Kitui County, engaging with WEE-CSA beneficiaries showcasing their produce, made possible through project support. (Photo: UN Women)

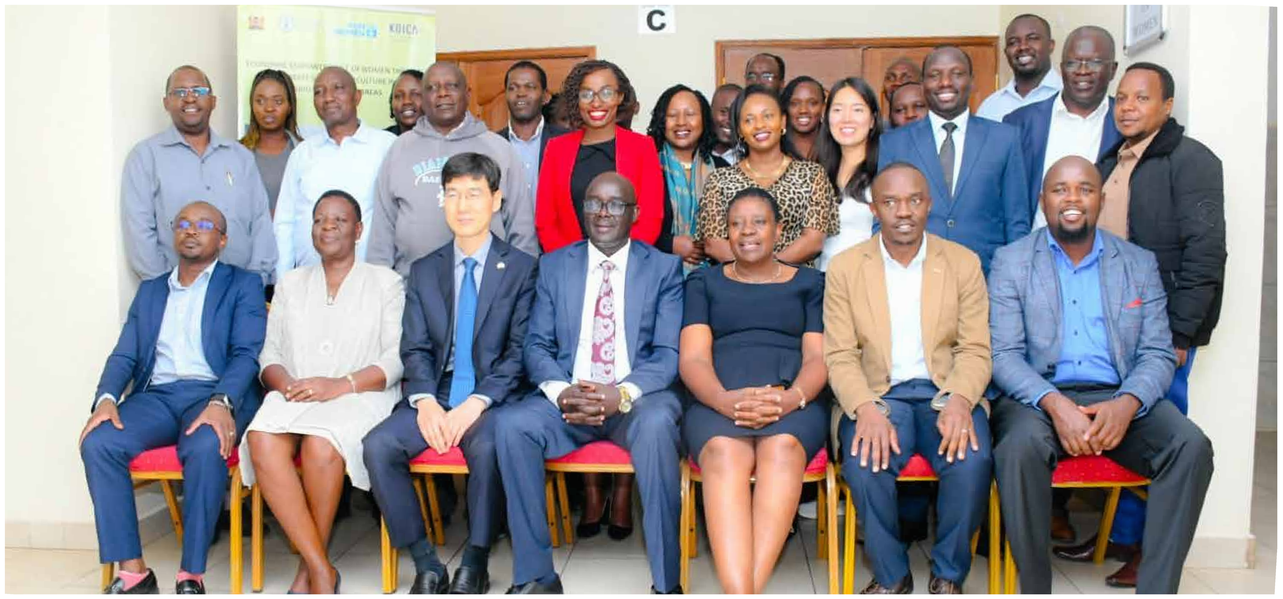
A Laikipia beneficiary operates a tractor provided to the county through the WEE-CSA project, supporting local agricultural development. (Photo: UN Women)

Country Representatives from UN Women (in purple) and FAO (in red) with WEE-CSA beneficiaries, commemorating their achievements on International Women's Day 2024. (Photo: UN Women)

Beneficiaries from West Pokot County empowered by the WEE-CSA project proudly showcasing and selling their produce. (Photo: UN Women)

Stephen Mbaya Kimwele, County Executive Committee Member, accepting 140 Galla goats on behalf of Kitui County as part of the WEE-CSA Project. (Photo: UN Women)

Laikipia Deputy Governor H.E. Reuben Kamuri joins women in the commemoration of IWD 2023, (Photo: UN Women)



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Village Enterprise

Members of New Vision Self-help Group in Laikipia County. Through the WEE-CSA project funded by KOICA and implemented jointly by UN Women and FAO, the New Vision group got capacity enhancement on climate smart agricultural techniques as well as inputs, seeds and livestock to empower them. (Photo: UN Women/James Ochweri)

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