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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

KENYA

SUCCESS STORY

Empowering Female Entrepreneurs

USAID Helps to Change the Lives of Rural Women in Kenya



Photo by: Winrock

Eunice Makai expresses gratitude for all that she has learned from PSPK

Eunice Makai recently signed a contract to supply chicken to Nguku Product Centre to supply 200 chickens every month, earning nearly \$900. Other women poultry producers are following in her footsteps and emerging as entrepreneurs and successful business women

In Kisau, a remote hamlet in Mbooni District in Eastern Kenya, rains are scarce and hope is historically scarcer. Families struggle to survive, with limited resources and few opportunities to find employment and earn an income.

But in the midst of this challenging environment, Eunice Mukai is smiling.

After receiving training from Winrock's USAID-funded Partnership for Safe Poultry in Kenya (PSPK) program, Eunice oozes with optimism, thanks to new opportunities for poultry rearing and trading, which, she says, has come at a time when she and other women needed it most.

In October 2009, Eunice attended PSPK's biosecurity awareness training and learned about chicken handling and vaccination. After realizing the great economic potential in chicken, she soon after ventured into chicken rearing herself. Eunice constructed housing units for the chickens just like she had been instructed in the PSPK training, and since March 2010, she has been taking at least fifty chickens to sell in Nairobi every month. Since then, "I have sold over 500 chickens," she says. —This totals over \$3,100 in sales and nearly \$1,300 in profit.

Her success has not stopped there.

Eunice noticed that many other farmers had chickens which were frequently dying from diseases, so she decided to try to help with vaccinations for her neighboring farmers. At first, she faced the challenge of storing the vaccines, since there were no cold storage mechanisms due to lack of electricity. She explains, "I realized there was great untapped business potential for me in this area, and therefore I approached the Ministry of Livestock to help with storage, and they accepted. Every week, I buy and use 2,400 doses of vaccine. Currently, it appears like the whole district depends on me for vaccination. Government officers always refer farmers to me. Before PSPK, I was not keeping chicken and I purely depended on medicine sales for income, but now I have about 100 chickens.

After the training from PSPK, many women have come to Eunice for consultations. She has managed to mobilize 12 farmer groups, comprising 450 farmers (400 of whom are women) who are engaged in the best practices for chicken production. Eunice notes that many of the women were enthusiastic to join the farmer groups, as they had nothing else to do to support their families or improve their living conditions. “This is some sort of employment, which has even motivated some men to join the groups,” she asserts. She also indicates that a growing percentage of farmers in the group are youth. “Youths are also engaging in the business,” she says, adding that, “many of those came back from places like Nairobi, where they had gone to look for jobs, to start rearing chicken after hearing good stories from my groups.”

With PSPK support, Eunice recently signed a contract to supply chicken to Nguku Product Centre. She will supply 200 chickens every month, earning nearly \$900. Within two years, she hopes to grow her own business by helping each farmer in the twelve groups to rear 1,000 indigenous chickens every four months.

Other women poultry producers are following in her footsteps and emerging as entrepreneurs and successful business women. PSPK has trained over 1,700 people (including more than 1,000 women) along the value chain since its inception in May 2009, empowering and enabling many others like Eunice to drastically improve their lives.