



Learning exchange: fueling small investments for big impact

Poultry farming forms a great opportunity for economic empowerment of rural women in Kenya, as it is considered a women's activity and small investments can lead to big impact. Under the 'Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises' (EOWE) programme, SNV is promoting the start-up and development of poultry enterprises among rural women. In May 2018, SNV and EOWE partners, BISEP in Makueni and Caritas Maralal in Samburu, organised a networking and learning exchange event between women poultry groups from Makueni and Samburu County to learn how to establish and run a successful chicken enterprise.

With the support from the Makueni County Government, BISEP and Caritas Maralal, organised a variety of activities for the exchange event. During the different sessions the participating women learned how to formulate feed based on locally available resources to ensure healthy and fast-growing chicken, vaccinate chicken, build henhouses, slaughter chicken and package different parts of the chicken for a market-ready product.

Beatrice, a female entrepreneur from Makueni County, who is receiving support under the EOWE programme, was proud to share her story with other women chicken farmers to inspire and empower them during the event. "I used to hold only five chicken and my community would look at chicken rearing as a household chore, not as an enterprise", explains Beatrice. "Thanks to the support of SNV and BISEP I am now rearing 83 chicken and I have full control over the enterprise. I am now able to provide for my family solely without having to bother my husband to give me money every day."

With my newly gained knowledge and skills in chicken rearing I am now able to provide for my family

From a household chore to an enterprise

Beatrice explains how she turned poultry farming into a good business within three years. When Beatrice decided to turn chicken rearing into a business, she bought twenty-five 2-weeks old chicks with an investment of 5,000 Kenyan shilling (approximately 50 US Dollar). As Beatrice was linked to an available market that was willing to buy her indigenous chicken, she could start selling her products with a good margin and re-invest her profit in her enterprise. Beatrice was also able to save money as she learned how to make her own chicken feed based on locally available inputs instead of buying expensive feed on the market. Learning how to vaccinate her own chicken directly when needed also provided major cost savings for Beatrice and increased her independency as she now doesn't have to wait and pay for a veterinary doctor anymore.



 Makueni County Director for Livestock and Veterinary Services welcoming Samburu Chicken farmers.

The EOWE programme is supporting women chicken farmers, most of whom have little or no education, in the process of turning chicken rearing from a household chore into an enterprise through trainings on poultry husbandry and management related to breeding, making your own chicken feed based on locally available inputs, housing, disease control, slaughtering and packaging chicken meat and market access. The acquired knowledge and skills increased the income women earn from chicken rearing and gave women the opportunity to bolster their confidence.

Makueni County Government is supporting the initiatives as they are seeing how the programme's interventions have improved the economic well-being of women in the community. "Women are now able to cater for household needs such as paying school fees, buying food, making savings and thereby enhancing their position in decision making within their households, while at the same time alleviating poverty levels in the County", says Mr. David Musyoki, Director for Livestock & Veterinary Services of Makueni County Government. The income generated by the households from the sale of indigenous chicken and eggs is approximately 10,000 Kenyan shillings (approximately 100 US Dollar) in a week.



 Women chicken farmers learning how to clean chicken.

The networking and learning exchange event inspired many participating women to start their own chicken rearing business. "Before I had only thought of rearing a few chicken and I had no intention of increasing numbers, because I knew they would die from diseases", explains Magdalene, one of the women from Samburu that participated in the event. "I am now planning to add over 50 chicken and with the acquired knowledge and techniques on disease control, vaccination, feeding and housing I am confident that it will be successful."

The networking and learning exchange event was organised as part of SNV's ['Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises' \(EOWE\) programme](#) in Kenya, which is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands under the ['Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women' \(FLOW\) framework](#).