

Influence of a shared learning platform on participation on potato multiplication among small scale farmers in Kamara Ward

***¹Bundi, D. N., ²Nkurumwah, A. O. and ²Munyua, C. N.**

¹Department of Agriculture Education Extension,
Egerton University Kenya

²Department of Agriculture and Human Ecology,
Egerton University Kenya

Corresponding Author: dorcasnyabeta@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Food security remains a challenge in Sub Saharan Africa and has been attributed to several factors among them, low productivity of agricultural resources. Investments in agricultural research and technology are required to bring about change in productivity for food security. Innovation platforms have been used as vehicles in agricultural research for development. Potato (*solanum tuberosum*) is a staple food second after maize in Nakuru County. Although potato is predominantly grown by small scale farmers, they have limited access to quality seed potato. They are not participating in seed potato multiplication due to limited knowledge and skills and their farms are below the minimum requirement of 5 acres by KEPHIS. The research was designed as a descriptive survey using participatory action research methodologies in which baseline data was collected and analyzed. The action plan as the intervention which was the Shared Learning Platform (SLP) was done. The end line data was collected and analyzed again to establish the change. The target population consisted of all small - scale potato farmers and key informants in the seed potato value chain in Nakuru County The accessible population was potato small scale farmers from Kamara Ward Kuresoi North Sub County Kenya. The Key Informants (KI) were from Kuresoi North and Molo Sub Counties of Kenya. Random sampling was used to select 120 small scale potato farmers from Kamara Ward, 10 key informants for the baseline survey. Forty small scale farmers were purposively selected from those who participated in the baseline survey for the action plan (SLP). Data was collected on the farmer's knowledge and skills on seed potato multiplication before, during and after the intervention. Statistics Data Analysis (STATA) version 13 was used to analyze descriptive data. Thematic content analysis was used to analyze themes from FGDs, T-test, Chi square, ANOVA analysis and a regression were run to test the relationship between the outcomes and the intervention. From the baseline it was found that that

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SSFs experience complex problems that required all stakeholders in SPM and that the solution was the SLP. The SSFs who participated in the SLP gained from group formation and 10 SSFs each 1acre for seed potato multiplication. This acreage enabled them to participate in SPM as they donated more than 10 acres. There was increased knowledge and skills gained in SPM from the SLP which led to improved participation, establishing networks in the SLP were ADC Molo agreed to provide farm inputs and market for seed potatoes for the SSFs. This could enhance increased availability and accessibility of seed potato and increased incomes. This could also enhance dissemination of knowledge and skills on seed potato multiplication among SSFs and use of shared learning platform by small scale seed potato farmers.

Keywords: Knowledge, participation, platform, shared learning, small scale farmers