



Republic of Kenya



Poverty Reduction Through Sustainable NRM



Investing in rural people

MINISTRY OF WATER AND IRRIGATION

UPPER TANA NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (UTaNRMP)

GENDER ACTION LEARNING SYSTEM

POVERTY REDUCTION
THROUGH SUSTAINABLE
NATURAL RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT





TRANSFORMING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH HOUSEHOLD GENDER DIALOGUE

Background Information of GALS implementation

Gender equality dimensions in development programmes and projects are a global concern. There are international instruments and protocols that advocate for gender equality for men, women and youth in order to address the gender disparities. Kenya has aligned its policies with the relevant international, regional, and national instruments on gender equality among them: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal No. 5 on Gender Equality, Government of Kenya's Gender Equality and Development Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2006, Kenya National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGD) 2000, Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the Vision 2030.

Kenya in its development agenda anticipates bridging the gender disparity among communities with support from development partners promoting similar gender policies and frameworks such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025 prescribes to promoting development with inclusivity for transforming the rural communities for sustainable development. IFAD supports development projects in Kenya and the Upper Tana Natural Resources Management Project (UTaNRMP) is implementing community projects through such support.

Upper Tana Natural Resources Management Project is an eight year project (2012-2020) funded by the Government of Kenya, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Spanish Trust Fund, and the local community. The objectives of the project are to promote: (i) Increased sustainable food production and incomes for poor rural households living in the project area; and (ii) Sustainable management of natural resources for provision of environmental services. The project aims at reaching 1,025,000 beneficiaries within Embu, Kirinyaga, Meru, Murang'a, Nyeri and Tharaka Nithi counties.

UTaNRMP mainstreams gender issues during the entire project cycle through participatory rural appraisal (PRA) that encourages community participation to discuss gender issues on roles of men, women and youth with a focus on responsibilities, access and control of resources as well as decision making.

To enhance inclusivity, equity and bridging of the gender disparity, UTaNRMP in 2016 introduced the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) within select irrigation projects as a way of mainstreaming gender issues at the household level. GALS is a household methodology that provides a platform for the beneficiary households to do self-evaluation and action planning based on the principles of social and gender justice, inclusion and mutual respect.

The project has trained 66 (29 female, 29 37male) community GALS champions who have reported a remarkable transformation in their households on gender-related issues. They have testified that the GALS tools break the gender cultural barriers due to their participatory and interactive process. This translates to men, women and youth discussing issues of how to share the household resources to improve their livelihoods.

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Upper Tana Natural Resources Management Project is an eight year project (2012-2020) funded by the **Government of Kenya, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Spanish Trust Fund, and the local community.**

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Ms Muthoni Livingstone, UTaNRMP Coordinator.

PREFACE

Gender inequalities are a key cause of social-economic inequalities that entrap men, women as well as children in poverty within the upper Tana catchment. To some great extent, this poverty is anchored on existing gender norms and cultural stereotypes that limit the opportunities for both women and men to attain their potential.

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From a gender baseline study undertaken by UTaNRMP in 2014, it emerged that on land ownership, 85.8% of the family land was registered under the man of the household and 7.4% under women. On gender workload analysis, the study established that in sections of the project area, women work an average of 15-17 hours per day against 6-10 hours worked by men. On the other hand, men would get up to seven hours of rest in a day while women would rest for one hour or less in a day. It also emerged that men dominated decision making on what harvested produce would be sold, when it would be sold and for how much while women were left to make decisions on food crops and what the family would eat. These findings from the study pointed at a state of gender inequality within the project area that UTaNRMP sought to address.

The UTaNRMP Gender Action Learning System journey started in 2016 with training of the first batch of GALS champions. The rationale for introducing the Gender Action methodology was the fact that it positions the household members to be drivers of their own development without antagonising their cultural beliefs.

From the case studies documented in July 2019, it is evident that households are now realising their dreams faster courtesy of GALS. By realising their dreams, they are indeed helping UTaNRMP to achieve its project goal and objectives.



Mr Luka Chacha

Mr Luka Chacha, Programme Manager for The Empower @Scale Project, which seeks to scale up the use of GALS in Kenya, says that unlike other approaches that have seen the gender debates take centre stage at national and international levels, Hivos' approach is to take the debate to the household. According to him, spouses and their children are having discussions that are creating impact in terms of improved livelihoods.

This documentation captures the changing trends in the family social roles, shared decision making, access and control of resources, harmony in the family among other qualitative information that cannot be quantified in monetary terms.



Mary Muthoni, a member of Mbeti Muchui Irrigatin Project in Meru county with her Husband James Kinoti arranging building materials at their home

MS MARY MUTHONI (ADOPTER OF GALS): MERU COUNTY

Ms Mary Muthoni, 32, is a mother of two girls, one in standard one and the older one is in class five. She is a member of Mbeti Muchui Irrigation Project in Meru County. The industrious mother and wife is a farmer who plants sweet potatoes, bananas and pawpaws **courtesy of the irrigation project that has been supported by the Upper Tana Natural Resources Management Project.**

Currently, the potato crop covers 1.5 acres. It is only recently that Mary has had access to the family land. “Traditionally, Meru women do not have a say on land matters. But things have drastically changed in my family since I was sensitised on the Gender Action Learning System by Mrs Mary Kendi,” Mary says.

Before being sensitised on GALS, Mary used to follow a regimented routine that had been culturally designed. She cooked, washed clothes and cultivated small portions of land. “I had to seek permission from my husband before selling chicken or goats.” She had access to some of the family resources but no control.

“After embracing GALS, I approached my husband because I was eager to share the methodology with him so that we could work together and uplift our family’s economic status,” Mary says. The GALS methodology educates one on the tactics to use in approaching a spouse. Mary employed these to convince her husband to embrace GALS. “One of the existing gender stereotypes Meru men have on women is that they cannot seek or take advice from a woman. I however approached my husband in a respectful manner and he gave me audience to sensitise him about GALS. After running him through the GALS methodology and emphasising that unity is strength, I told him that there is what you know that I do not know and there is what I know that you do not

know. We should put our heads together and improve our economic status.” Her husband listened and agreed that the approach would help them achieve their development goals. The couple has embraced dialogue since then and they plan jointly in a bid to realise their family aspirations.

The family has two cows, two calves, five acres of land, water and chicken. “Whenever I want to do farming, we discuss with my spouse and agree on where and the acreage I require. Unlike before, we now also budget for our money together after selling milk, bananas, sweet potatoes, chicken and pawpaws. We are also saving jointly for our children’s secondary education. We make key family decisions jointly.” Their main source of income is selling of sweet potatoes. Grade 1 of the sweet potatoes fetches Ksh. 45 per kilo. It is mainly sold in Nairobi. Grade 2 is sold at Ksh. 25 and grade 3 at Ksh. 15. They practice irrigated agriculture.

Their vision is to build a three-bedroom house. This is a two-year vision that was set in 2018. The couple has already bought some of the building materials including stones, hardcore and gravel. They hope to buy iron sheets, cement and sand after selling the current crop of potatoes and be able to complete the new house and move from the old one they describe as small, old and not-so-beautiful.

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GALS has brought about harmony in his family. After my wife sensitised me on the GALS methodology, we have adopted a new approach to life.

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The success factor

According to Mary, the GALS training was a game-changer. “The training changed my husband and I.” She says that GALS has educated her on how to save and minimise expenditure. “For example, I do not have to buy a dress time and again or go for expensive hair-styles. These savings help me to educate my children and do other important things for my family.”

Mary’s husband, Mr James Kinoti, 42, says GALS has brought about harmony in his family. “After my wife sensitised me on the GALS methodology, we have adopted a new approach to life. She suggested that we venture into potato farming insisting it is profitable and would help us to educate our children. Indeed it is,” James says. They have since transferred their two children from a public school to a private academy because of improved household income. “I would like her to continue with the GALS training because it is beneficial.”

Although Mary is an adopter, she is already sensitising her neighbours on the GALS methodology so that they can also reap its benefits.



Mary and James on their potato farm.



MS MARY KENDI: MERU COUNTY

Mary Kendi at the their banana plantation

Ms Mary Kendi's name was mentioned even before we met her. A GALS adopter had praised her as the person who introduced GALS in her life. She referred to her as her teacher

Mary is aged 27 and is a mother of a daughter who is in class one. She says culture is difficult to change and so it is to change a man steeped in a conservative culture. A GALS champion, Mary set out to sensitise her husband, Mr Ayub Mukuria, about the benefits of the methodology. But the husband teacher needed more than one lesson to lend an ear.

"I did not give up. I raised the issue several times until he paid attention." Ayub, aged 30, says it is difficult in his culture to be advised by a wife. "It was not easy to be convinced to embrace GALS. But I have come to realise that we have achieved great things since we embraced it." He says there are many changes in his marriage, thanks to GALS. "We are now pooling resources and planning together as a couple. My wife and I came up with two visions: buying a quarter acre of land (first vision 2017) which we accomplished and the second one of buying a motorcycle, which we also accomplished in 2018." He would

like his wife to continue with the GALS training. He would also like her to join college and have a profession. His parting shot: "I recommend that efforts be made to sensitise all Meru men on GALS."



Mary showcases her vision.



Mission accomplished. The family has bought a piece of land and a motorcycle.

Mary says the GALS training was a shot in the arm. “The training enabled me and my husband, for the first time, to perceive our family resources as ours and not his alone. We then sat and defined where we want to be in terms of socio-economic development. GALS has transformed my husband and I. We have now discarded cultural beliefs that perpetuated male dominance and we have both become role models in our community,” Mary says.

They were able to realise their two visions through farming. They also sold

goats, chicken, bananas, sweet potatoes and borrowed from a self-help group and put together the money with the husband’s salary to buy the piece of land and the motorcycle.

Mary and Ayub are hard at work tilling their land and keeping goats and chicken to realise their third vision which is to buy more land.

They practice irrigation farming on one acre farm. Half of it is under banana plantation. This is made possible by Mbeti Muchui Irrigation Project.

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My wife and I came up with two visions: **BUYING A QUARTER ACRE OF LAND (FIRST VISION 2017)** which we accomplished and the second one of **BUYING A MOTORCYCLE**, which we also accomplished in 2018.

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Mary the influencer

“It is not good for me to develop alone. It sounds better to pull others along,” she says in regards to her efforts to educate her neighbours about GALS. She has educated many people on the GALS methodology. Some have adopted it while others have given it a wide berth. Two of those who have adopted it have come up with their visions. One aspires to build a house while the other’s vision is to educate her child up to university.

Her aim is to get as many people as possible to embrace GALS so that they also realise the changes that she has made in her life. “I will be gratified to see as many people as possible embrace GALS and start taking small steps which will eventually transform our community for the better.”



Albert feeds one of his cows.

MR ALBERT THIRIKA: THARAKA NITHI

Mr Albert Thirika is the vice chairman of Mugiririwa Irrigation Project. The 67-year-old retired secondary school principal is a father of four children. He hails from Iruma Kirege sub-location of Mugwe location in Tharaka Nithi County.

His 400 member -strong group is in the forefront of conserving Mt Kenya Forest through support from Upper Tana Natural Resource Management Project. The UTaNRMP supported them to construct a water intake at Kamiri to supply them with water from Mt Kenya forest to facilitate irrigation farming.

Mr Thirika is practising intensive farming on his 2.1 acre farm. The farm is dotted with coffee, bananas, kales, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, Napier grass and tea. He also keeps poultry and four dairy cows. The cows yield each 10 to 12 litres a day.

The Gender Action Learning System has enabled Albert to sharpen his planning skills besides sensitising him on the importance of including his family members in decision-making. “When I came back from the training, I sensitised my wife on the

importance of the GALS methodology and the importance of having a vision to guide our family development projects,” he says. His wife, Ms Evelyn Mwembe Thirika, a retired nurse, embraced the concept.

The family has since been deliberating on key decisions. Such key decisions include giving land to all their four children—two daughters and two sons. The children were given the opportunity to decide which of the several pieces of family land they desired to inherit. The family has a shop with 16 units —both commercial and residential at Kirege market. Although the title is in Albert’s name, it is his wife who collects the rent and decides on how to appropriate it. Evelyn also runs a shop at the premises. Albert and Evelyn operate a joint bank account. Also tea, coffee and milk accounts are held jointly.

“We have always embraced dialogue since Albert undertook the GALS training. It was his suggestion that I take control of the family business premises. I collect the money and use it to meet my needs including contributing to merry-go-rounds, funerals and other expenses,” Evelyn says. She adds that Albert is different, because unlike a majority of Chuka men, he has allowed his daughters to inherit the family land.

“Before the training, I used to think as an individual. But today, I think as a family member,” Albert says. Some of the achievements he has realised as a result of having visions and working towards their fulfillment include buying a dairy cow, expanding the banana plantation, increasing tea stems to 1,200 and having sweet potatoes throughout the year for sale and domestic consumption.



Evelyn is busy at home.

As a champion, Albert has the responsibility of sensitising people in his community about GALS. He has taken this responsibility seriously. He has already sensitised his church about the GALS methodology. He is a Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) elder. “My next stop will be

schools to create awareness about GALS to teachers, students and members of boards of management (BOM)”. He says GALS can help a form one student who obtained grade D in KCPE to have a vision of attaining A in KCSE and work towards fulfilling this vision.



MS PURITY KANINI, THARAKA NITHI

Ms Purity Kanini admits that she had all along been a problem in terms of being secretive about her individual income.

The mother of three and a resident of Mugarani in Meru South Sub-county, Purity says she did not make any meaningful contribution when the family house was built because “it is a man’s job.”

Purity, 43, is the manager of Mugirirwa Water Project. She has had to reproach herself and change after being trained on GALS. “My husband was supportive when I went for the GALS training. He was keen to know the content of the training. It was easy for him to embrace the GALS methodology,” Purity says. She also sensitised her father-in-law about GALS.

As a result, the couple and their children currently dialogue on all important family matters. The couple has a joint bank account. Purity has also enlightened Furaha Sisters Group, to which she is a member, on GALS. The group has come up with a vision and bought a half-acre piece of land.

The family’s vision is to own a dairy cow. It has already been bought but it is yet to be delivered. Purity says GALS can help many idle male youths who have resorted to alcohol abuse to be engaged meaningfully.



Purity prepares to receive the dairy cow.

MS FLORA WANJIRU NYAGAH: EMBU COUNTY

A widow and a resident of Mutonga-Thuci basin area, Flora has been through a lot of trials and tribulations related to her family land since the demise of her husband in 2009. She has had to juggle this with raising four children. The genesis of her tribulations is the six-acre family land.



Flora reviews her vision journey.

The GALS training has been a boon to Flora who is a member of the Kangai Sky Limit Group that is supported by UTaNRMP. GALS has strengthened her resolve to wrestle with the forces out to disinherit her children. Although her husband had a title deed for the six-acre family land, he had kept it a secret even unto death. Flora only discovered this much later from her father-in-law. This ignorance was exploited by his scheming brothers-in-law who were against Flora having custody of the title deed.

The family has a business premise at Kiambere which has 12 rooms. This is run by Flora's brother-in-law who only sends Flora Ksh. 600 per month. The widow hopes to have control of the premises, or at least her children, one day.

"When my husband died, my children were too young and so the land could not be transferred to their names. My brothers-in-law were convinced that my fight to have the title was to enable me to sell the land and leave the family," she says.

With the support of her father-in-law, Flora has been able to get the land sub-divided into four pieces so that each of her children (three sons and a daughter) has a piece of land. This support is attributed to the fact that Flora has trained her father-in-law in GALS. The father-in-law was therefore able to understand the importance of his son's widow to have access and control of her late husband's land.

Flora's vision has always been to educate her children up to university. The oldest is in college while the youngest is in primary school. "I have been sitting with my children to discuss the need for each one of them to attain college education or a university degree. The first one is setting an example for the rest." He first went for a teacher training college certificate but now is interested in undertaking a diploma in education. "He will eventually earn his degree," says the 44-year-old Flora. Each child has a vision on how they will attain a university degree.

As a GALS champion, Flora has been sensitising members of her church on the power of the GALS methodology. She has also been reaching out to couples in her area to sensitise them on the importance of embracing GALS. The fruits of the methodology are evident in households that have already embraced it and this in turn is making other couples to invite Flora into their homes to enlighten them on GALS.

MR MOSES NJIRU: EMBU COUNTY

The 43-year-old Moses Njeru, a member of Kangai Sky Limit group, attests outright to the benefits of GALS. "I used to make decisions without involving my wife. She did not even know when I had money. I could sleep with clothes on to conceal the money I had," Moses says as he relaxes in his home in the outskirts of Ishiara municipality in Embu County.



Moses Njeru at his home in Ishiara.

The GALS training made Moses to take a hard look at his life. He had even bought half an acre of land from his brother but had not disclosed it to his wife. "During the training, I asked myself what would have happened to the land had I died without disclosing it to my wife." Moses says the training transformed him to the level that his wife thought his mind was no longer sound.

After the training, Moses disclosed the land to his wife. He also disclosed to her that he had another half-acre piece of ancestral land in Tharaka Nithi County. He has since also declared to his wife that he is a member of three self-help groups. "The steps I have taken are important. My wife will not go through the trials widows go through, including being disinherited of their husbands' land."



My desire is to **get the principals talking to their students about having a vision.**

To remove any lingering doubts about his transformation, Moses went on a safari. While away, he told his wife that there was an emergency and instructed her to sell a family cow and thereafter he would instruct her on what to do with the money. This had never happened before. The wife thought he was out of his mind and confirmed with him several times that he indeed wanted her to sell the cow. “She sold the cow and later called asking me to instruct her on how to use the money. I told her there was no emergency. I wanted to demonstrate that she could sell the cow in my absence and use the money on family matters.”

Moses’s wife is a teacher. After the training, he sensitised her on GALS. Since then, the two have been working on joint visions. The first joint vision was buying a plot in Ishiara municipality worth Ksh. 1.4 million. It took the savings of Moses, who is a farmer and also sells livestock and his wife to raise the money. They have acquired the plot and moved

on to another vision which is to build a new home. According to the couple’s plan, all building materials should be on site by March 2020 in readiness for the construction of the three-bedroomed house to commence.

As a GALS champion, Moses has sensitised members of his Kangai Sky Limit group on visioning. As a result of this influence, the group has a vision of acquiring a plot worth Ksh. 840,000. He has also reached out to principals of schools to sensitise them on the GALS methodology. “My desire is to get the principals talking to their students about having a vision.” He adds that if teachers sensitise students on GALS, the students will in turn spread the same to their parents and this will uplift communities.

Moses appreciates the efforts made by the UTaNRMP to uplift the standards of living of the people targeted in the six counties. “I am what I am today because of Upper Tana Natural Resource Management Project.”

MS JANET MUTHONI: KIRINYAGA

Aged, 45, the widow is a member of Wiukirie Self- Help Group. Janet is the chairlady of the group and is a mother of three.



Time for Janet to feed her cow.

Her vision was to buy a cow and see her child through university education. She bought the cow in May this year. The owner of a quarter an acre of land says the cow gives her seven litres of milk per day. A litre is sold for Ksh 40. Her daughter is at Kabarak University. “I have sensitised my son and daughter on GALS. He came up with a vision to build a house. He is in the process of building the house,” Janet says.

“My daughter in-law has told me that my son has changed. She says that when she comes back late from her salon, she finds her husband having cooked dinner. He did not do this before being sensitised on GALS.”

Janet’s second vision is to keep poultry. She has already bought 100 chicks. She intends to sell them after six months and buy others. “I plan to have 200 chickens by the end of this year and also build their house. My vision is to have 2,000 chickens in the next two years. GALS has taught me the importance of working with family members to realise visions faster,” she says. She adds that planning, financial management including saving are critical skills she learned from GALS. She says they are very essential in realising one’s vision.

“I save Ksh. 5,000 per month in my self-help group. I normally have yearly visions. As a champion, I have enlightened four people who have adopted GALS and are doing well.”



Samuel's vision is to build a permanent house.

MR SAMUEL MUNENE MWANGI: KIRINYAGA COUNTY

Mr Samuel Munene Mwangi, 46, is enjoying the fruits of GALS after being sensitised on the methodology by a champion, Ruth. Both Ruth and Samuel are members of Rumikia Miria and Kiangomo Group.

This father of two practices mixed farming. He produces tomatoes, cabbages and sweet potatoes. Currently, he has planted sweet potatoes on a quarter acre of land. "I expect to fetch about Ksh. 65,000 when I sell the potatoes in the next one month," he says.

"The most important thing I learnt from Ruth is coming up with a vision and implementing it. My first vision is building a house. I was living in a wooden-wall house. I sat down with my wife and came up with this vision in 2017. We have been growing and selling green maize, tomatoes and potatoes to save and build our house," he says. The house is close to completion and Samuel says he will sit down with his wife and come up with the next vision.

"My wife has been supportive after I sensitised her on GALS. She has been using part of her salary to help us invest in farming."

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MR JACOB MWANGI MAINA: NYERI COUNTY

Jacob with the family cows.

Mr Jacob Mwangi Maina has a passion for keeping high-milk yielding dairy cows. For years, the chairperson of Wangi-Kanununa Irrigation Project has been making good profits from dairy and tea farming. Yet for years, his wife, Ms Jane Nyambura, had no idea how much money his husband made from these ventures. “I used to work on the tea farm but I did not realise any fruits of my labour. I had to pick tea for other farmers to feed my children. We struggled to pay fees for our children,” Jane says.

The climax of the simmering feud between husband and wife hit the peak when Jacob harvested the almost-mature maize crop to feed his dairy cows without consulting his wife. “I caused a scene and neighbours came in and castigated my husband. They wondered whether he was out of his mind to take such an act that would leave his family starving.” Jane had not been involved in the dairy farming activity.

Fast-forward to 2017. Jacob has been sensitised on GALS. “Before GALS changed my life, I used to be wasteful. I drank a lot and it is only me who knew the money I was making.” After attending the GALS training, Jacob sat with his wife and sensitised her on the tool. He told her that he had changed.

To demonstrate this, he showed the wife the milk and tea cards. He says from then on, he has been transparent with his wife and came to his senses and educated his children.

Today, Jane is involved in preparing silage, does the milking as well as taking the milk to the dairy unit. They have a joint bank account. She is free to use the benefits

from the sale of milk. “We almost separated because of the problems we faced before he changed. Today, we are happy because there is transparency in the use of family resources. I no longer harvest tea for people to take care of my children,” she says.

As a champion, Jacob has sensitised three adopters. To lead by example, Jacob is a champion dairy farmer. He has a chaff cutter and a silage store. The chaff cutter makes the fodder production process easier.

“The best outreach is just being a good role model. Do your best and people will take after you,” he says. The champion, whose next vision is to set up a biogas system, adds that GALS is a very powerful development planning tool.



Jane milking
one of their
dairy cows.



Alice points at her house which she is transforming into a permanent one.

Ms Alice Wangari Mwangi is a widow aged 59 and a member of Njuki Mutige Irrigation Water Project. The project, which has 450 members, draws its water from Kiringa River in the Thiba basin. Project members are farmers who mainly produce tomatoes, cabbages and kales. They also engage in dairy farming and poultry keeping.

MS ALICE WANGARI MWANGI; NYERI COUNTY

Alice admits that before being sensitised on GALS, she spent her money recklessly. After the training, she took a bit of time to implement what she had been educated on. “I later took a deep reflection and decided that the GALS sensitisation should have an impact on my life,” she says.

She had been living in a wooden house but whose floor was permanent. Her first step towards putting GALS lessons into effect was to come up with a vision. Her vision is to

transform her house into a permanent one. With frugal use of her money which she gets from coffee and tea farming, Alice has transformed her house. She intends to completely turn it into a full permanent house in the next two years.

She has educated her children on the GALS methodology. “I want my children to be better planners and be transparent,” she says. As a champion, Alice has been sensitising others to adopt GALS. “I advise them on how they can save money to educate their children.”

MS LUCY WANJIKU NJOROGE: MURANG'A COUNTY

“I learnt a lot in Meru during the GALS training. There and then, I shed the sins of my family,” says Ms Lucy Wanjiku Njoroge, a member of the 20-member strong Kamugoya PWD Group. Lucy lives with a disability she sustained in a road accident.

“I asked myself during the training, what if I had died in the accident? My husband and children could not have accessed my assets which could have been lost.” The mother of three decided to change after the training. She declared what was on her bank account and requested her husband to do the same. They later opened a joint bank account.

Lucy is a farmer. She cites her family sources of income as goats, 20 avocado trees, bananas and her membership to table banking. Their vision is to buy a pickup truck to be mainly ferrying avocados to the market. This is a joint vision that includes the parents and their three children. The family has opened a fixed bank account where all the five deposit money that will eventually enable them to buy the car.



Lucy, the champion, sensitises her village-mates on GALS.

After embracing GALS and especially putting the gender balance tree into action, Lucy decided to make some changes. They include managing her time well, doing away with a Ksh 2,000 expenditure on her hair monthly, eschewing expensive dresses and meals and giving holidays a wide berth.

As a champion, Lucy has reached out to 36 adopters who are taking after her in embracing GALS and reorganising their families to improve their livelihoods.

MS DEBORAH MUTHONI: MURANG'A COUNTY

Ms Deborah Muthoni is a protégé of Lucy Wanjiku. She is also following in the footsteps of her mentor. The 48-year-old mother of three has already reached out to nine adopters. "The GALS training helped me a lot. We had not been pooling resources before. Today, we sit as a family and have a vision of what we want to accomplish."

Deborah keeps a dairy cow, chicken and a few pigs. The family also has a banana plantation and avocado trees. Their vision is to build rental houses in the next two years. Her husband, Mr Michael Njoroge Mwangi, said of his wife: "My wife has changed a lot since she was sensitised on GALS. She has become more resourceful to the family."



Deborah feeds her cow.



MR AMOS GITAU: MURANG'A COUNTY

If it were not for GALS, Margaret Njeri, 50, would still be sulking and disgusted by the roof of her house.

Before her husband, Amos Gitau, was trained in GALS, he always used to have his way. Then, he was deep into drinking alcohol and never declared his income to his wife. "I used to run my businesses and my wife did not even know some of them," says Amos who has since abandoned drinking.

“I later realised that the luxurious life I was leading was expensive and time wasting. When you drink, you will not have enough time to attend to your farm and you can also not fulfill the demands of those you are supplying,” says Amos. Amos supplies macadamia and avocado seedlings.

Actually, Amos admitted that he was planning to paint the roof and not replace the ageing iron-sheets. But then GALS came along. Amos was trained in 2018. From then on, he learnt to involve his wife in all family decisions. He sensitised her on GALS. “We then sat together and shared our visions. We adjusted some things and settled on joint projects.” Margaret was specific about how she wanted her roof to look like. She wanted decra which are expensive. She and her husband pooled resources to actualise her dream. The roof now has decra. “I actually wanted to buy a pick-up truck but I had to defer it to repair the roof of our house,” Amos says. Now the pickup is the next vision for this household.

Margaret says his husband has changed a lot. “He has declared all his businesses and he no longer drinks. I am glad that we are planning our family activities together. I am happy with the roof of our house which looks new.”

Their son, Eric Njuguna, is deeply involved in the family’s income-generating activities. When we visited the family, Eric was busy feeding the dairy cows. “I will be joining college soon. I have to be productive in the meantime. My parents give me pocket money and besides, this activity engages me. I urge fellow young people to support their parents’ farming initiatives.”

The family sources of income include dairy cows; macadamia; avocados; sweet potatoes and coffee. They also sell macadamia and avocado seedlings. Recently, they sold 5,000 seedlings of avocado to the county government of Kirinyaga. They sold each for Ksh. 150 whereas a macadamia seedling is sold at Ksh. 350. They had four macadamia trees but have now increased them to 45. On the other hand, they now have 40 avocado trees. Their farming is undertaken on the family’s 2.5 acres of land and another parcel they have leased.

As a champion, Amos has sensitised the committee of the water project to which he is secretary. He has reached out to other four adopters who are also in turn sensitising others on the GALS methodology. He is also working with four young people. Amos believes young people should be sensitised on GALS so that they can come up with visions that will transform them from idlers to productive citizens.

Amos welcomes the UTaNRMP Project Coordinator, Ms Muthoni Livingstone, to his tree nursery at Makuyu, Murang’a County.







Poverty Reduction Through Sustainable NRM



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