

Commercial Transformation of the Broiler Value Chain

KAMCAP Self Help Group Recounts Benefits



Poultry farming is an important economic activity in Kenya. It supports the livelihood of many rural and urban households as a source of income and food and nutrition security. Poultry mostly provides eggs and meat, among other by-products. Several farmers find raising poultry specifically for meat (broiler farming) an attractive venture. Broiler chicken generally grow fast (4-6 weeks) and provide a quick return on investment and opportunities for food security. It is one of the most vibrant livestock production value chains in Nairobi City, where the farmers are predominantly women.

Kamulu Capital Hill Self Help Group (KAMCAP) is one of the notable broiler value chain organisations in the city, and mainly active in the production node. Founded in 2015 by a group of nine women and one man, the self-help group's objective is to enable its members to grow in the broiler business for economic and social benefits. The formation of the group was inspired by activities of the Agricultural Sector Development Support Programme (ASDSP), which, at the time, had rolled out various interventions aimed at transforming the livestock, crop and fishery production into commercially oriented enterprises for improved income and food security.

Joseph Minai, the only male co-founder of KAMCAP, was the first among the group members to come into contact with the ASDSP. This happened in 2015, during a sensitisation meeting organised by the programme for broiler farmers in the wider Embakasi Sub-county. By mentioning at the meeting, the number of poultry birds he was rearing, the ASDSP I team took interest and paid him a visit at his farm a few days later. By then he had a total of 2,000 broiler chicken. During the visit, the team tasked him to reach out to other broiler farmers within the locality for a discussion on how they could work together with the programme to improve broiler production. A subsequent meeting between the ASDSP I team and the farmers resulted in the formation of KAMCAP.

Since then, the programme has maintained a close working relationship with the self-help group, which is one of its key stakeholders in the broiler value chain. The programme trained the members on group dynamics in 2016, as part of the efforts to support establishment of effective structures for stakeholder consultation, coordination and involvement in the development of the value chain. As the programme transitioned to the more commercially oriented second phase (ASDSP II), KAMCAP members benefited from a series of capacity development interventions. The interventions aimed at increasing productivity, improving entrepreneurship skills, increasing market access, and strengthening consultation, collaboration and coordination among different stakeholders in the broiler value chain.

The CBO is among the broiler value organisations capacitated by the ASDSP II through a series of trainings and delivery of innovations geared towards unlocking commercial potential of the broiler business.



Feed milling machine and digital weighing scale provided to KAMCAP CBO by the ASDSP II

In March 2023, KAMCAP members were among the selected broiler value chain actors who participated in the ASDSP II -supported field training on broiler management. This was conducted at the Kenya Agricultural Research and Livestock Organisation field station in Naivasha. Among the areas covered were issues of feeding and feed formulation (e.g., integration of broiler crumbs and mash), disease and pest control, brooding and general poultry management. From September 2022 to July 2023, the group underwent various entrepreneurship skills trainings which included business planning, access to market and maintenance of business records. The value chain actors were also guided on existing local financing opportunities to help increase access to liquidity for development of the broiler enterprise.

Moreover, the ASDSP II has facilitated the group with various innovations for increasing productivity at the production and processing levels. They include: a digital weighing scale, feed mill, feed mixer and feed pelletizer for preparation of poultry feeds; an electric defeathering machine for dressing chicken; a portable electric bag closer for packaging purposes; and a commercial chiller for safe storage/preservation of broiler meat.

To enable the farmers to make effective use of the innovations and productively apply the knowledge acquired from the various trainings, the ASDSP II has appointed public and private service providers through whom it has continued to facilitate extension services. It has also exposed the farmers to various cost-saving and environmentally sustainable interventions such as use of biogas and briquettes as

green energy sources. Looking back to where the group started with the ASDSP II, the members are united in recounting the benefits of the collaboration and support.

‘Personally, I have experienced a significant reduction in chicken mortality in my farm, from about 5% to less than 2%, through improved poultry management practices including biosecurity measures enforced through back-to-back extension support’, observes Minai, the group’s chairman.

‘We thank ASDSP for bringing us together through this group (KAMCAP). We have learnt a lot together, and continue to share information, knowledge and experiences. For example, with the help of our chairman, all of us have been able to install the gender-friendly automated drinkers, an innovation he came up with from a benchmarking visit. We also support each other financially through table banking services’, says Naomi, the group’s secretary.

‘To me, the defeathering machine is such an exciting experience. The machine comfortably defeathers 100 birds in a matter of minutes and the output is so neat. Before, it would take two casual labourers almost three hours to dress 100 birds. The device has helped to save a lot of time and reduce dressing costs from Ksh.15 to Ksh.10 per bird’, says Faith, a member. Minai, the group’s chairman, adds that the improved efficiency from the feathering machine enabled him, for the first time, to deliver his birds at the Nairobi City Market by 4:30 a.m. and become the earliest farmer to deliver his produce.

Over the period of the collaboration with the ASDSP, several members have significantly increased their production capacity. For instance, Naomi’s production capacity has increased from 300 birds in 2015 to 2,000 birds in 2023, and that of Minai from 2,000 birds to 5,000 birds in the same period. He says at any given point in time, he has at least 1,000 birds in his farm. His overall income has since increased by 15% from the expanded production capacity. Moreover, his family produces plenty of biogas from chicken droppings, which has replaced liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) as a key source of fuel, and translated into a saving of between Ksh.7,500 and Ksh.9,000 monthly.

The expanded production capacity has also led to creation of direct jobs. In Minai’s case, he has four people (3 family members and 1 fulltime employee) routinely involved in farm activities. He periodically



Automated drinkers fabricated by Joseph Minai in use at his broiler farm

engages 8 off-farm workers, all youth, in dressing of mature birds and transportation of the meat to the market. Additionally, Naomi mentions that before ASDSP II, she didn’t view her broiler business as a viable job for her children. However, after realising actual growth and potential of the business, she now embraces her teenage son’s interest in the venture, and hopes he’ll take over as she ages. More members are bringing on board their children, an indicator of future sustainability in the management of their businesses.

In terms of market access, KAMCAP members always help each other to find a market by sharing market information. From the trainings, members have also been able to access credit facilities. For instance, Joseph Minai has been able to come up with a convincing business plan which he has used to secure a loan from Equity Bank. Moreover, through ASDSP II forums, he learnt about the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) Bank, which he describes as a farmer-friendly bank. He has since approached the bank for a loan facility to invest in his business.

Members of the group mostly use proceeds from the business to fend for their families. In the case of Minai, he has also managed to educate his children and build a magnificent family house using proceeds from the commercial production of broilers. He is a vivid example that with the right approach, appropriate production techniques and correct management practices, the broiler business pays.

Story by Philip K’omolo, Photos by Edwin Osuma, November 2023

For more information contact:

Agricultural Sector Development Support Program (ASDSP II)
The Nairobi City County Government, P.O. Box 30075-00100, Nairobi.
Email: Nccasdspii@gmail.com

