

 Experience by GROOTS Kenya
In Nyandarua & Nakuru, Kenya

Background: Since 2012 GROOTS Kenya has supported women potato farmers to increase production and access markets. In 2014, the farmers began complaining about losses due to low prices negotiated by brokers. Thus GROOTS Kenya together with the potato farmers piloted a dialogue initiative on a policy to minimize losses through low prices.

The solution was

1. Networking with other key stakeholders like the National potato council that was at the center of formulating the regulation;
2. Building a movement of women farmers with the ability to articulate their challenges and demands to authorities;
3. Supporting grassroots women for public participation

Experience description

The women organized themselves and lobbied the county government of Nakuru to regulate the potato pricing, but Kenya's first potato-packaging bill failed to pass as key players including the brokers were not involved. Furthermore, the brokers threatened to stop buying potatoes from Nakuru and move to other potato producing counties like Nyandarua. Against this background, GROOTS Kenya pushed the dialogue to the national level and brought in potato farmers from other counties like Nyandarua.



Other characteristics



IMPACTS

- The regulation was passed including many of the farmers' suggestions
- Higher self-esteem and empowerment for participating women
- Involvement of women in development of county budgets



CHALLENGES

- Financial constraints made viewing growing areas difficult
- New county government officials were not as supportive as previous ones.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Collaboration with relevant government entities is crucial
- Unions work better than individual groups -> women of the two counties Nyandarua and Nakuru joined up.