

The contribution of ocimum kilimandscharicum Project to livelihoods of communities living Adjacent to kakamega forest

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Abstract:

A study was conducted to establish the contribution of the commercial cultivation of *Ocimum kilimandscharicum* on the livelihoods and conservation practices among the community living adjacent to Kakamega forest. Specifically, the study was to find out the current level of production of *O. kilimandscharicum* by the participating farmers; to establish the income earned from *O. kilimandscharicum* by the participating community members; and to assess effect of the *O. kilimandscharicum* project on the community's livelihoods, perceptions and practices towards forest conservation. It was designed in form of a comparative study among adopter and non-adopter households, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Results from the study indicated that *Ocimum kilimandscharicum* project has had a significant contribution to the households around the Kakamega forest. For the participation households, it provided a boost in income, which was used for major projects at the household level. It also provided opportunities for exposure to some of the community members by way of trainings and participating members are in leadership position at the local group level and regional forums. It contributed to community development through the factory that has been constructed in the area. It has also increased awareness in environmental issues, increased community participating in environmental conservation activities and willingness by community members to reduce their reliance on forest resources. For increased impact of the Project in the area, the study recommended that the facilities used by the project, such as the distillation and drying facilities be expanded to accommodate the growing number of participating community members. It is also recommended that business information and consultation be provided to enable the farmers to invest their income from the crop wisely. Continuous training is necessary for the management of the crop for maximum benefits.