

## **FIELD REPORT ON PARTICIPATORY COWPEA SEED BULKING WITH WOMEN FARMERS**

### **Date and time:**

Tue, 2014-09-09 12:18

### **Location / Venue:**

Kilifi County

Although African Leafy Vegetables have been recognized as contributing to food and nutrition security among rural poor, availability of seed continues to be a challenge. The University of Nairobi, in collaboration with KARI Mtwapa is conducting a participatory seed bulking of select superior local accessions of cowpea among women farmers in Kilifi County.



*Prof. Hutchinson with farmers at Kilifi County*

The project is being conducted under the KAPAP Project “*Enhancing Production, Value Addition and Marketing of Indigenous Vegetables (cowpea, spider plant, nightshades, amaranth, pumpkin), French Beans and Mushroom Products among Smallholder Farmers in Kenya*” for a 3 year period from 2011-2014 by the University of Nairobi and other partners. The

University of Nairobi is focusing on the cowpea value chain under the leadership of Prof. Agnes Wakesho Mwang'ombe and coordination of Prof. Margaret Jesang Hutchinson.

The farmers' capacity is being built as they participate in good agricultural practices of raising quality seed.

Two women farmer groups (Bodoi Women Group and Chidongo Farmer Group) in Mtwapa, Kilifi County, were visited by Prof. Hutchinson, between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> September to monitor the performance of the crop and to train farmers on seed health and handling. The KARI Mtwapa team of scientists are also conducting a parallel seed bulking exercise on-station for comparison with the farmers' fields.

Initial observations indicate that while the crop is good, the farmers indicated their reluctance to thin and prune the crop as this was perceived to be wasting the crop. The farmers will be taken through the process with lessons learnt and a further practical training is planned when the seed is ready for harvest. The project is also benefiting from Agricultural Extension officers deployed to work with the women farmers on the ground and it is hoped these farmers will be crucial catalysts for seed production transformation that will translate to increased yields and income from this popular local African leafy vegetable.

**Expiry Date:**

Wed, 2015-09-30 12:18

**Contact Person:**

Prof Hutchinson