

### Kenyan Blog; March 2014

By Anne Dennig

It is great to be back in Kenya! We are really pleased that William Hoyle has been able to join us to visit the networks and see what is happening in the field. We are also lucky to have Declan, our film-maker, with us. We've spent a very interesting first week visiting the networks in Kenya and seeing lots of opportunities and development in the Kenyan networks.

#### Films and Video Diaries



Declan is making a film to show the TSS business in action, and this time he is also training some of the

managers to film their own video diaries. They will do this using a small tablet, which will allow them to film the stages of their deals. These film clips can then be uploaded to Youtube so that we can: share learning between networks; show key stakeholders in each deal how TSS works; and illustrate the TSS model in practice to potential new networks. The video diaries are an exciting innovation for capturing the deal process and William has suggested a competition for the best video diary, not the Oscars - the COBSTers!

#### The New TSS App



Cherryl and Lydia have been busy working with Salesforce on the development of a TSS form that the managers can enter from their smart

phones, thus making communication with the platform in the field much easier. Cherryl has been training the Kenyan network managers to use the TSS App and their reaction has been positive, and although Moses claims to be 'analogue' we really don't believe him!

#### Developments for the ALGEI Network

Our first field visit was to Kiserian to talk



to Wilson and a committee from the Keekonyokie abattoir. We discussed their ideas to develop a market for

'Conservation Meat'. The abattoir is now equipped with a cold room and machines to cut and package meat, which could then be sold under a conservation brand. Plans were made for a pilot test using the TSS model, with Monica Muthemba from Keekonyokie abattoir acting as Wilson's TSS agent to sell this meat to hotels. The aim is to return better prices to the pastoralists through value addition.

#### Ruralnet's work in Embu and Meru



In Embu, we visited one of the mango groups that James K has trained on TSS for SHOMAP. We met his TSS agent Wilson Njiru who represents the Karurumo Farmers' Group. Here many of

the mangoes grown are wasted due to poor marketing links. James, having learned from a difficult first deal, is doing a repeat next week, taking 10 tons of mangoes to Kampala to sell to Britannia. The farmers were extremely happy with this marketing help and we have a car full of mangoes to prove it!

Another opportunity to improve marketing is the new horticultural market in Karurumo that is being built by SHOMAP. It will be

used as a collection centre for the many mango growers to sell for export and to local markets in Kenya. The market includes



rooms for value addition and cold storage, which will open up new opportunities for processing businesses.

We also explored mango-processing possibilities with Samuel Njue, a BDS provider in Embu, who has worked with some farmer groups to acquire pulping equipment. A visit to Siakago to see a small mango-processing unit demonstrated the need to coordinate links in the mango value chain more effectively. Samuel explained that there are some processing machines already available that could be put to more efficient use and perhaps the Karurumo market would be a place to see a processing business develop.



James K is also working with SHOMAP groups in Meru to market bananas through TSS. In Nakuru, we met up with Moses and together we visited the banana ripening sheds

where James explained the TSS model to some of the ladies who run these businesses. The ladies travel each week to Meru to collect the bananas that they then ripen and sell from their huts. One lady, clearly exhausted from travelling back from Meru the night before, explained that she spends three days each week away from her business and her family, in order to source her bananas. James will run a TSS pilot to see if he can organize his SHOMAP groups to supply bananas directly to the ladies in the ripening sheds at the Nakuru market.

### Bonde Soko; Cassava and Potatoes

For Bonde Soko, Peter Mwangi of Kemwa



Food Products has been an important buyer. Moses sources 40 tons of cassava from Soroti, Uganda

for Kemwa each month. Peter mixes this with sorghum and millet to produce his 'Jari' flour. Peter is happy with the TSS model. He has more demand for his flour than he can supply and wants to expand his business using Bonde Soko to supply more cassava. We are looking forward to travelling to Soroti with Moses, so that he can show us the farmers' end of the chain and we can meet with his agent Engineer Opio.

Moses has also been training some SHOMAP groups on TSS. In view to improving the marketing of potatoes,



Moses convened a meeting between the Upendo farmers near Tumaini and a wholesale buyer Simon Kagiri. The farmers explained their challenges and the buyer explained his. A major problem seems

to be that the brokers are exploiting both sides. The farmers feel that they have no choice but to sell to the brokers, who are so well organised that they communicate to fix prices and threaten not to buy at all if the farmers try to organise themselves against them. As one lady explained, "We don't sell, they buy". The farmers are keen to work with Moses and Simon and to try a TSS deal where all the middle costs and commissions will be transparent.

### Fair Trade Enterprises



James W is preparing his new farmer groups in Kabaa to grow French beans for the export market. He is renting space in HDCA packhouse, where the beans

will be packed and sent off to the European market. A major challenge with the export market is ensuring that the minimum residue levels are not exceeded, so he is employing a technical assistant to make sure that the correct chemicals are used and applied at the right times. This agronomist will act as James' TSS agent on the farmers' side. Traceability back to individual farmers is an important issue and this will be safeguarded through coding on the crates, which will then be inspected and packed separately.

James has also been exploring ideas for potato marketing. He plans to supply a small scale Nairobi chip processor with large potatoes, which will then be chipped and sold to the Nairobi hotels. He is now trying to find a market for the small potatoes.

### **And Finally...**



Cherryl, Declan, Clive and I are off tomorrow to Tanzania to see Bahati's network in the Southern

Highlands. Many thanks to all the Kenyan Managers for arranging meetings and showing us the developments in their networks. Good luck with your video diaries and please make sure that you contact Declan if you have any questions ([declan@floodedcellar.com](mailto:declan@floodedcellar.com)).

Finally, is anyone interested in walking up Mount Kenya in 2015? Clive, William, James K and Moses are keen. Is anyone else interested in a TSS summit?