



■ Support for SMEs in Kenya **Ways out of the poverty trap**

A bad harvest or the death of a cow is enough to send an African family into a spiral of poverty. The only way out is to have ready cash. Medicine, food or seeds are therefore unattainable for many people in Africa. In Kenya, BioVision is finding ways out of this vicious circle by supporting local small and middle-sized enterprises (SME). Here is one example:

Amina is an alert, forthright and enterprising woman. Difficult conditions in Kilifi, a farming community near Mombassa, have taught her to take things into her own hands. Eighty per cent of the people in the area have no work. Farm labourers just manage to keep their heads above water with a small income from agriculture or occasional work.

Amina's husband is unemployed and can contribute little. Nonetheless their children need to eat and be clothed and ought to attend school. All this costs money. Seeing all these difficulties encouraged Amina to start a small business called the Akili Ni Mali Women's Group. Twice a year for several weeks all the women in the Akili Ni Mali Group go to the woods to collect the fruit of the wild neem tree. The fruit looks somewhat like an olive. Neem originally came from India and it has been known for hundreds of years as the 'miracle tree', because of its anti-inflammatory and antibacterial qualities. Neem trees are now found in avenues, woods and school gardens in many parts of Africa. In each of the last few years, the women from the *Akili Ni Mali Group* have gathered and dried two to five tons of the fruit. The Kenyan firm Biop collects the fruit and pays them 0,30 US\$ a kilo.



Natural insect repellent – the leaves of the neem tree

Several flies at a stroke

Biop Ltd was founded two years ago and is situated near the International Research Institute (ICR) in Nairobi. BioVision provided the management know-how and gave financial assistance to set up the company. Researchers at ICR have for some time been very aware of the potential of neem for fighting pests or skin diseases. Last year scientists at the ICR made great strides using neem powder against the larvae of mosquitoes carrying highland malaria (see Newsletter no. 3/2003). BioVision helped to set up Biop, transferring management know-how and covering the initial investment costs. By helping to set up this small enterprise, BioVision has achieved several aims at the same time: assisting with self-help projects for poor farming people, implementing the results of research into environmentally safe measures against pests, supporting the production and sale of natural products for the local market, and improving the health of local people and their animals.

Cosmetics and insect repellent

Biop Ltd has now grown to a middle sized company, employing over 30 people. They organize the purchase, transport and processing of the neem fruit, as well as the production, packaging and marketing of several products containing neem. In a small workshop, the neem fruit is peeled and dried and the oil is pressed out. The pulverized remains and the neem leaves are made into highly effective and environmentally friendly bio-pesticides. Thus Biop produces pesticides with no chemicals, in easy to use powder or liquid form. The oil of the neem tree is a valuable addition to soaps, skin creams and shampoos for which there is a big demand in supermarkets and drug stores. Kenyans value the combined action of the

Editorial



BioVision is not simply concerned with spreading environmentally friendly methods of pest control. Part of its strategy also includes the commercial production of natural insecticides and mosquito deterrents extracted from local plants. This type of development cooperation is based on sound economics. It aims to create employment opportunities in Africa, preserving traditional know-how and linking it to new technology. And what is particularly important is that this enables a relatively poor community to create new income possibilities. Income generation is the catchphrase in the fight against poverty. Even in Africa it is now essential to have money. The poorest people are often unable to pay for medicine, food, clothes and school fees. And people with no money are stuck in the poverty trap.

As far as income generation goes, protecting the local environment while generating income is one of BioVision's major concerns. We focus on the knowledge gained at the International Centre of Insect Ecology ICIPE. This gives us not only products that fight insect pests, but also products obtained from beneficial insects, such as honey and silk. If we've got our sums right, we can catch several flies in one web with our commercial strategy!

*Hans Rudolf Herren
President BioVision*

Continued from side 1

neem products as both health-giving skin creams and natural barriers against the mosquito.

Producing for the local market

Edi Theiler from Zürich, economist and manager of the Neem-Biop project has no doubt that there is a local market for neem products. 'The demand is high. People want neem products.' Edi is convinced that BioVision can help ensure that the basic necessities of the people are met by encouraging local initiatives. He hopes that Biop Ltd will soon become self-reliant. He adds: 'As soon as we have passed the first hurdle, Biop will move on to new targets. Better quality con-

trol, production and sales will enable us to employ more people.' Amina and her friends in Kilifi are delighted to hear this. They earn 500-1500 US\$ a year from collecting the fruit. With this they can make ends meet for their families. It gives them a little room for maneuver in their hard daily struggle, and leaves them room to try something new.

Clever Amina already has another plan. She says: 'Our group house stands on the main road to Mombassa. It would be an ideal place for a hotel.' The women plan to invest their savings doing up the house. 'That way we can create new employment possibilities', says this utterly committed woman.

BioVision Project no. 5403



Processing the neem fruit

Success in homegardens Ample self-sufficiency

Promoting ecological methods of growing both old and new varieties of vegetables in the district of Suba has proved very worthwhile. The five women groups who took part in the project managed to keep their income stable and to feed their families regularly with health-giving vegetables. In addition they sold the surplus, for an average of 40 Kenyan Shillings per day. Their success has encouraged others in Suba

District. Matilda Auma Ouma, our eco-trainer at Mbita Point, has already trained six more groups in organic farming. Even the National Agricultural and Livestock Extension Programme (NALEP) in Suba is interested in spreading the knowledge of vegetables growing à la BioVision to their own counselors.

BioVision Project no. 5207



■ A day in the life of **Ngari Ileri, tailor in Makima**

I get up the moment the sun rises. My son Mnanike and I have a tailor's shop on the main road in Makima, a village close to the Mwea National Park in Kenya. There are no supermarkets in this area and for most people it is too expensive to travel to a bigger town. I have three sewing machines and we live fairly comfortably from sewing all kinds of clothing. A good made-to-measure jacket costs 1200 Kenyan Shillings, (about 16 US\$), and a dress about 550 Shillings (about 7 US\$). A complete school uniform also costs about 50 Shillings.

I learnt my trade as a young man by watching an expert tailor. Later I was able to work with him. Now I am 50 years old and this trade has fed me and my family for the last 30 years. It is a good trade and I have taught it to my three sons. Last August some people from BioVision came to show me a tsetse fly trap. They gave me a large order. I am not the only tailor in the village, but I have a good reputation as a conscientious worker. This is why the community recommended me. Each trap consists of three parts: a big piece of blue material which attracts the flies. A black part with an opening, because flies like to land in dark areas, and a white sort of netting which sits like a hat on top of it all. First I made an exact pattern, then I started.

We've made 500 traps for BioVision so far. It took me two hours to make one to start with, but now I can make six a day. They put out the traps near the park land, because the dangerous tsetse flies come from the nature reserve. Many farmers say that the national park brings only trouble, because the flies make our cattle sick. But they have agreed to cooperate with the park rangers to put the traps



out and to control them regularly. Many of them were sceptical, but it works. We now have far fewer tsetse flies. Before it used to happen that I would be stung by tsetse flies here in my shop. It's different now. I haven't seen any tsetse flies in the village for many months.'

'The material for the traps costs 650 Shillings (8.5 US\$), and the cutting and sewing costs 250 Shillings. Unfortunately the material is not very strong and ants and birds can cause a lot of damage. Also the monkeys get at them, probably out of curiosity. As a result we seem always to have work with the traps. People have asked me if I should change the name of our shop to Makima Trap Makers, but I like our name better. We are and will remain Makima School Uniform Makers.'

Recorded by Andreas Schriber.

■ Larger Grain Borer **Measures against insect pests**

Farmers in Kenya's semi-arid Eastern Province have a hard time with the uncertain local weather conditions. They can never be sure that there will be enough rain to give a good harvest. And then, even if the harvest is good, a lot is destroyed by the Larger Grain Borer. Up to 40 per cent of maize crop can be lost this way, which in turn leads to drastic instability in people's food situation in the region.

Farmers in the Mwingi District, where the maize pest has spread over the last few years, sent a cry for help to ICIPE. With the help of the BioVision's Programme for Technology Transfer and the cooperation of ICIPE, as well as of the district officers, a two-week workshop was set up for twelve

farmers and five Government Agricultural Consultants. The trainers used experience gained in Tanzania, where this problem has been known for some years and where integrated methods of combating the Larger Grain Borer have been developed. The participants learnt about sustainable methods of controlling these maize pest. They in turn will pass their knowledge on to a further 150 farmers in the region.

BioVision Project no. 5203





■ Auction for Africa A birthday gift to BioVision

Brigitte von Wild, who lives in Zürich, asked the guests to her birthday party to bring something beautiful, exotic or ridiculous instead of normal birthday presents. These would be auctioned at the party and the proceeds given to BioVision. A friend of hers who has a gift for acting offered to be the auctioneer. With a great sense of humour and to the delight of the guests he drove the prices up to outrageous levels. The auction raised 1,400 Franks for BioVision. 'I am very interested in BioVision's work - not only because of my African roots,' says Brigitte von Wild. 'I am convinced by the way they have chosen to work, because it very cleverly combines economic, agricultural and environmental issues.'

day presents. These would be auctioned at the party and the proceeds given to BioVision. A friend of hers who has a gift for acting offered to be the auctioneer. With a great sense of humour and to the delight of the guests he drove the prices up to outrageous levels. The auction raised 1,400 Franks for BioVision. 'I am very interested in BioVision's work - not only because of my African roots,' says Brigitte von Wild. 'I am convinced by the way they have chosen to work, because it very cleverly combines economic, agricultural and environmental issues.'



■ From massai herdsman to professor Honour for Onesmo ole-Moiyoi

'I was not a particularly talented herdsman, which is why my father sent me to school...', was Professor Onesmo ole-Moiyoi's laconic comment after he had received the prestigious Kilby award in London at the end of last year. The prize is named after Nobel prize winner Jack St Clair Kilby, inventor of the first microchip. It is given to someone who has served society by outstanding achievements in science, technology, innovation, invention and education. Dr ole-Moiyoi, who is a molecular and cell biologist, gained the valuable award for his key role in the battle against human, animal and plant diseases.

'I grew up at the end of the world in the Massai land between Kenya and Tanzania,' said the newly designated prizewinner. 'As a boy I spent days walking with my herd along the Serengeti. Apparently I lost concentration very easily on the vast plains. When I went to look for my animals again, they had gone.' Onesmo followed his father's advice and began his school career in the village school in Loltondo. When he was 20, a bursary from the Aga Khan Foundation took him to the famous Harvard University in the USA, where he specialized in immunology and molecular biology. Eighteen years later he returned to Africa as Professor Onesmo ole-Moiyoi. Today he is the director of the Research Department at ICIPE in Nairobi. With his boss, the 1995 winner of the Kilby prize Dr Hans Rudolf Herren, he is working to implement the results of research to benefit ordinary people. For Onesmo ole-Moiyoi, cooperation with BioVision is most important. 'This help with towards self-help supports people so that they can escape from the poverty trap.'

Thank you for your help! PC-Account 87-408333-2

BioVision assists self-help in East Africa in two ways:

- Protecting the people from insect pests
- Supporting income generation for rural communities

Many thanks if you can support us in this!

Dr Hans Rudolf Herren



BIOVISION

Am Wasser 55, CH-8049 Zürich
PC-Account 87-408333-2
Tel. +41 1 341 97 18
info@biovision.ch
www.biovision.ch

