

MoreMilk

Inspiring stories of transformation in
Kenya's informal dairy sector



▼ INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to **MoreMilk**, a pioneering project led by the International Research Institute and its partners. Our project has been dedicated to transforming the informal milk sector, empowering vendors and nurturing the health of communities that depend on accessible and affordable fresh milk.

In the following pages, you will meet some of the remarkable vendors we have collaborated with. Their stories showcase the transformative impact of the training and monitoring they received as part of the project. Not only have they experienced increased incomes, they have also made significant strides in improving the safety of the milk they provide to their communities.

By actively engaging with suppliers and customers, these vendors have built loyal followings and established trust in the quality of their products.

Our comprehensive training program equipped vendors with essential skills in milk handling, quality assurance, safety practices and effective business strategies. Additionally, our dedicated team of enumerators played a vital role in monitoring and tracking the performance of vendors following their training. This ongoing support and guidance fostered a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring that vendors could consistently enhance their practices. As a result, vendors now offer safer milk to their customers, promoting the overall well-being of the communities they serve.



► Milk poured into a clean container for testing. Vendors in Kenya's informal dairy sector can adopt simple, accessible measures to keep milk fresh and safe.

STORIES ►



Winnie Cheronno Bano

‘Mama Chumba’

Racecourse, Eldoret

Winnie, fondly known as ‘Mama Chumba’ in her community, is a shop owner whose income helps her provide for her family. Unable to attend the MoreMilk training during a pregnancy, Winnie’s spouse attended in her place and shared those lessons with her afterward.

Winnie’s newfound understanding of how to handle and sell milk professionally means she is now able to successfully negotiate good quality milk and better prices with her suppliers.

She also has the tools to handle her customers’ requests more professionally. After implementing the learnings from the training, she now regularly receives good quality milk, replacing the substandard milk she struggled with previously.

The milk scarcity currently affecting in the region, however, is a continuing challenge. On a good day, Winnie can sell up to 30 liters of milk. On other days, she may only have 15 liters of milk to sell to her customers. Her goal is to grow her business into a resilient enterprise that can help her mitigate the struggles that dairy vendors like her experienced during the dry seasons.

Winnie is an inspiration in her community. She encourages and advises women who are considering entering the dairy business, helping expand the benefits of her participation in the MoreMilk project to others in her community.





► Winnie Cherono in her shop where she sells fresh milk and other household supplies. She is a business owner, a mother of four and an inspiration in her community.

Kevin Kibet

Turbo, Eldoret

On any given day at Kevin Kibet's shop there's a regular flow of customers dropping in to buy milk for their home, or to enjoy a cup of milk, *mala* (buttermilk) or *mursik* (fermented cow's milk drink). Kevin provides clean cups and an array of pastries like mandazi, ngumu and bread for his customers to enjoy alongside his milk and milk products.

Kevin was once a middleman who collected milk from farms and distributed it to retail shops. Since owning his own shop in 2016, he hasn't looked back.

The MoreMilk training program has helped Kevin sharpen his business skills and make the most of his shop.

On a good day Kevin can sell up to 90 liters of milk, though when the milk supply is low, he sells an average of 60 liters of milk daily. He diligently cleans his milk equipment, and when he receives his daily milk supply, he tests the milk using simple and affordable techniques he learned during the training before boiling it for his customers.

► *Left photo:* A regular customer visits Kevin Kibet's shop to pick up his daily supply of milk.

Right photo: Kevin uses a lactometer to test the density of freshly delivered milk, to check whether the milk has been watered down.





► Loice Jemutai pours milk into a smaller container to test it for freshness.

Loice Jemutai

Kapseret, Eldoret

Loice Jemutai is a dedicated shop owner who has been running her business for five years. She sells general household goods, but her specialty is fresh milk.

For a long while, however, she faced a puzzling problem – the milk she received from suppliers would often spoil quickly. Loice was therefore motivated to participate in the MoreMilk training program to understand why. She wanted to uncover the secrets behind keeping milk fresh and how to ensure her customers received the highest quality product.

The training has had a profound impact on Loice's business and she now takes matters into her own hands. Through implementing the lessons she learned, Loice discovered quickly that the milk she was receiving from suppliers was often watered down.

She found new suppliers and inspects their farms, ensuring proper hygiene practices are in place. She speaks to her customers about milk hygiene, so that they now bring clean containers for their milk.

Today, complaints of spoiled milk are a thing of the past.

On good days, Loice can sell up to 20 liters of milk. She learned the art of value addition, such as producing *mala* (buttermilk) or *mursik* (fermented milk drink) that help increase her profits. Although implementing certain changes like record-keeping proved challenging due to the fluctuating milk supply, Loice remains resourceful and has adapted accordingly.

Loice has valuable advice for female vendors entering the dairy business. She acknowledges the business's potential for profitability, but also stresses the importance of commitment and resourcefulness.

Balancing family responsibilities alongside the demands of the business requires effective time management.

Her friendly relationships with suppliers and farmers in the region ensure a steady supply of milk, setting her apart from other vendors. Loice's dedication, knowledge and commitment are enabling her business to flourish, serving as an inspiration to others in the region.



► *Top photo:* Loice performs the 'clot-on-boiling test' holding a spoonful of milk over a candle flame to check if the milk is sour or abnormal (i.e. mastitis milk or colostrum).

Middle photo: Loice walks from her shop to a nearby farm to replenish her daily milk supply.

Photo below: Loice standing in front of her shop.





► Tabitha Chemutai in her dairy shop where she has posted milk-related educational materials on the wall for her customers to see.



Newly delivered milk is tested for freshness then boiled in clean steel containers before it is sold to customers.

Tabitha Chemutai

Turbo, Eldoret

After completing her training with MoreMilk, Tabitha found a job working at a prominent dairy shop. Each day she receives and processes an impressive 130 to 150 liters of milk from a single farm that she distributes to other dairy vendors and households in the area.

Tabitha has an established loyal clientele who depend on her for their daily fresh milk supply.

Customers return each day, bringing containers that Tabitha uses to pour in their desired amount of milk. Some collect their milk in the morning, while others come throughout the day or on their way home from work. Knowing their schedules gives Tabitha flexibility in her day to conduct other activities.

Tabitha continues to build on the good hygiene practices she acquired from the MoreMilk training and has taken it upon herself to display educational hygiene materials in the shop for the benefit of her customers. She understands the importance of maintaining the milk's freshness and safety – her shop is one of the few in the area equipped with a freezer where she keeps milk cold and fresh.

Her commitment to selling safe, fresh milk has been key in building customer satisfaction and loyalty. She rarely has unsold milk available for walk-in customers. Eager to expand on the lessons she learned under the MoreMilk project, Tabitha looks forward to any future MoreMilk activities in the region.

Nicole Mutai

Ainabkoi sub-county, Eldoret

Nicole Mutai used to struggle to maintain the freshness and quality of the milk she sold in her shop.

A lot changed after she participated in the MoreMilk training program. Following on the recommendations from her trainer, she now regularly visits the farms from where she sources milk to inspect their practices. She advises farmers on how to safely store and transport milk. In her shop, she tests her milk using organoleptic tests – which requires the use of her senses of taste, smell and sight – to help her guarantee the milk's safety for her customers.

Nicole has also picked up bookkeeping skills from the training that help her track her profits and decide how to use and invest her earnings.

Nicole's customers approve of these changes, which are helping her business flourish and attract more customers. She now has five loyal customers who purchase two liters of milk from her daily, ensuring a reliable income.

As is the case for all the vendors in the area, her ongoing challenge is the low availability of milk. Whereas previously she could buy and sell 30 liters of milk over the weekend, she now mostly sells between 20 to 25 liters. She knows there is little she can do to address this challenge and is confident that she now runs a healthy business and she is equipped with skills to go through this difficult times.



► *First and second photo from top:* Nicole Mutai pours milk into a container to prep it for testing.

Bottom photo: Nicole on her sofa with her daughter. Her shop is adjacent to her home so she can easily spend time with her family when the shop isn't busy.

Daniel & Coletta Kemboi

Kamagut, Eldoret

Daniel and Coletta Kemboi have built a life around their love for animals and their dairy farm.

Starting with just two cows, they steadily expanded their herd to seven milking cows that produce about 70 liters of milk daily. Daniel also sources milk from his mother's and brothers' farms. He sells on average about 100 liters of milk each day in his dairy shop.

In 2021, Coletta was invited to participate in the MoreMilk training. Although hesitant to join at first due to the disruption it would cause to their routine, after attending the first session, she quickly understood how beneficial it would be for their family business.

Coletta and Daniel have adopted many of the food safety practices taught during the training, such as using proper milk containers and educating customers on their usage.



► Daniel Kemboi in his shop. He and his wife, Coletta, share the management of their shop and dairy farm.

Maintaining those standards of hygiene, however, can be an ongoing challenge. Daniel regularly reminds his customers to use appropriate containers and will refuse to sell milk to anyone who brings dirty ones.

When a customer complains of spoiled milk, Daniel meticulously investigates the entire process—from purchase to consumption—searching for any lapses in hygiene.

The couple's commitment to maintaining hygiene standards has greatly benefited both their farm and shop. They have built a loyal customer base who appreciate the freshness and quality of their milk. Trustful of the quality of the milk Daniel and Coletta sell, customers leave containers at the shop to ensure they can claim their share of fresh milk as soon as the milk arrives at their shop.

Inspired by the learnings in the MoreMilk project, Coletta advises other women in the dairy industry, encouraging them to collaborate and seek collective development to benefit not just themselves but the whole sector.



► **Top photo:** Peter Kalale, a farm hand at Daniel and Coletta's farm, cleans the udder of a dairy cow before milking.

Middle photo: Peter carries a container of freshly harvested milk for transport to the dairy shop in Kamagut.

Bottom photo: An employee in Daniel and Coletta's shop pours milk into containers left by customers who have pre-paid their milk orders.



► Farm hand, Peter Kalale, pours freshly harvested milk into a milk container for transport.



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GATES foundation



ILRI and the MoreMilk research team thank its partners and collaborations for their support and the dedicated team of enumerators and vendors who made this project a success.

The MoreMilk project is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UK Aid from the UK government, and the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health, which is supported by contributions to the CGIAR Trust Fund. cgiar.org/funders

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Photos by ILRI/Kabir Dhanji
Layout design by Mireille Ferrari

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