

Monthly Update – February 2012

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

OVERVIEW

USAID-TAPP is increasing incomes for smallholder farmers, improving nutrition, and expanding markets through agricultural innovation and commercialization.

The program is part of Feed the Future, the US government's global hunger and food security initiative to break the cycle of hunger and poverty in the developing world. Feed the Future is focusing on the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT), a region the Tanzanian government has identified as the most conducive for agricultural growth. Working with our partners and the Government of Tanzania, USAID-TAPP is concentrating our efforts on selected crops and regions, especially SAGCOT, to help transform the country's food security.

HORTICULTURE IMPROVES NUTRITION FOR YOUTH IN TULEANE

The Tuleane Most Vulnerable Children (MVC) Club includes nineteen youth, 8 female and eleven male, from Mlumbiro village, Mvomero district in Morogoro region. USAID-TAPP partner Huruma AIDS Concern and Care (HACOCA) supports the youth group by teaching them horticulture skills. The support has enabled the club to grow nutritious crops and sell the surplus to increase their income, which they use to purchase necessary items. According to USAID-TAPP agronomist, Geoffrey Bakari, when the group started, they concentrated in growing amaranths for consumption only in order to improve their nutrition status.

"Today we are healthier and are able to sell some surplus vegetables and obtain enough income to purchase school materials," said Richard Bahati, a group leader.

Since 2011, USAID-TAPP has provided the HACOCA MVC group with training on vegetable production, health and nutrition, and HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness. The group has been growing amaranths to supplement their diet. But recently the group added another crop – onion – to increase their nutritional diversity.

"Being a member of the group has protected me from joining bad group gangs who are involved in drugs and thief; I'm happy to be with Tuleane Group because I've improved my nutritional status."

-- Emmanuel Anold, a member of the group.

DRIP IRRIGATION TECHNOLOGY IN DROUGHT AREA CHANGES LIVES

Despite long seasons of drought which affect agriculture activities in Gairo village, Kilosa district in Morogoro region, a USAID-TAPP farmer proves that pressurized drip irrigation is one successful method to overcome the lack of rains challenging his village and his livelihood.

John Mkeni, 50, started growing sweet peppers in 1994 by renting small plots of about half an acre using inefficient farming methods like hiring labor to assist him with hand irrigation. "The harvest was very poor and the sweet peppers I harvested were of very poor quality due to poor irrigation, lack of monitoring, and diseases," admits John.

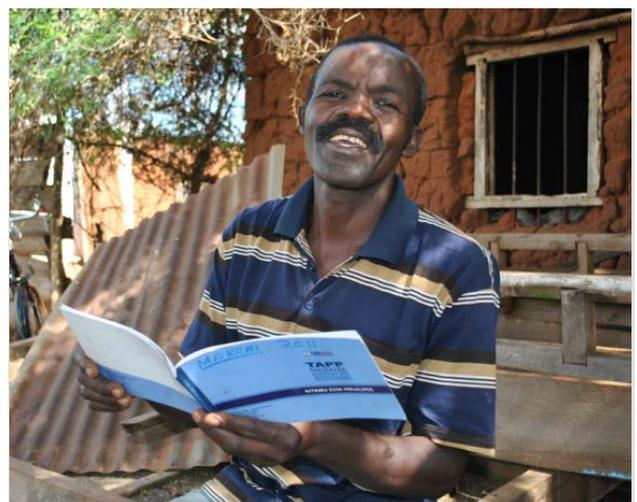


Photo by Fintrac Inc.

John Mkeni goes through his record book which he uses to record his sweet pepper harvest and sales. John said that the USAID-TAPP training on record keeping has helped him to easily track his income earning and spending.

In June 2010, John was among the farmers approached by USAID-TAPP and advised to form groups to receive training and technical support on good agricultural practices. The groups were trained on integrated pest management, drip irrigation, raised beds, record keeping, proper spacing and how to protect crops from pests and diseases owing live barriers.

After the trainings, with the support from USAID-TAPP, John installed pressurized drip irrigation on just 15 raised beds each 40 meters long.

“I’m surprised how I’ve increased my income from this small plot of just 15 raised beds that produces more than double the amount I used to harvest from my half an acre plot,” said John.

Between the short period of February 24 to March 19 this year, John harvested a total of 260 kilograms of hybrid sweet peppers worth Tshs. 2,340,000 – his first harvest after installing drip system. With a high demand market in Zanzibar and Morogoro town, he sold one kilogram for Tshs. 9,000. From the same sweet pepper plot, John will be harvesting for the next four months to come. He harvests sweet peppers after every seven to nine days.

“My challenge now is how I can add more drip system on my 2 acre plot so that I can improve my nutrition and income,” said John, adding that his future plan is to grow other crops such as onions and carrots to improve his income and nutrition for his family.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

John Mkeni's grandchildren Latifah (10) *right* and Lilian *left* (6) holding sweet peppers presented to them by their grandfather. Latifah said sweet pepper is good for their health.

MEET OUR PARTNER: EVERGREEN COMMODITIES

USAID-TAPP is working with local agribusinesses to increase impact. We will feature our new partners in upcoming bulletins. This month, we are highlighting Evergreen Commodities and Inputs Distribution Chain Company, a local and privately owned company based in Dar es Salaam.

Beginning operations in 2010, Evergreen assists smallholder farmers by making market linkages throughout the country. The company purchases fruits, vegetables, and dry commodities such as rice and beans from smallholder farmers from Mang'ola in Arusha and from Ruaha area in Iringa. Evergreen distributes fruits and vegetables to hotels, local markets, and supermarkets in Dar es Salaam and exports red onions to international markets, including 60 tons per week to Dubai, 5 tons per week to Rwanda, and 10 tons per week to Kenya.

USAID-TAPP will work with Evergreen to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers by expanding market linkages, stimulating farmers' investment, and increasing crop production. The new partnership will allow the project to reach more smallholder farmers in Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Iringa, Mbeya, Arusha and Kilimanjaro by focusing on high demand crops like tomatoes, onions, flowers, and fruits. The new partnership also aims to reach up to 300 small scale producers and to improve the client network in Tanzania.

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

“Increased food security through enhanced productivity”

USAID-TAPP is a five-year program implemented by Fintrac Inc. in conjunction with TAHA, the Tanzania Horticultural Association. It is designed to increase smallholder farmer incomes through enhanced productivity, crop diversification and improved market access.

Visit www.Tanzania-Agric.org for more information on upcoming activities and to read more monthly bulletins and success stories.

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