

# Schlussbericht

Ernährungssicherheit und Einkommenssteigerung durch die Verbesserung des Gemüseanbaus im Mtwara Distrikt in Tansania

(Interner SWISSAID-Code TA 2/15/08)



finanziert durch die Firma „Client Systems AG“



## 1. Project Title

Food security through ecological vegetable production and marketing in Mtwara rural district, Tanzania (SWISSAID-Project Code TA 2/15/08)

## 2. Introduction

The Mtwara rural district is among the poorest in Tanzania, with women being the most marginalized segment of the community. Customs and traditions often hinder women from owning properties such as land and other productive assets making them all-time dependent on men. Most women in Mtwara rural areas have limited access to education facilities due to low income and unfavourable cultural practices that favour men over women.

The main objective of this project was to improve the living standards of marginalized poor women through increased production and marketing of vegetables and empowering them in entrepreneurship to enhance their agribusiness skills.

Community-based Farmer Field Schools (FFS) are a practical and efficient tool for farmers to learn about ecological farming techniques. Activities involve simple experiments, regular field observations and group analysis. In this cyclical learning process, farmers develop the expertise that enables them to make their own crop management decisions. The learning is practical.

The final beneficiaries of this project are vegetable smallholder farmers organized in 22 producer groups from 5 villages of Kitunguli, Litembe, Mbuo, Mnyundo and Ndumbwe, making a total of 450 members (350 women and 100 men). Each group has been established as a FFS.

Contract partner of this project is the Mtwara Society Against Poverty (MSOAPO), located in Mtwara Mikindani Municipal. The project lasted one year (June 2015 - June 2016).

## 3. Achievements and constraints in terms of planned outcomes and core activities

### 3.1 Outcome 1 - Increased knowledge on agro-ecological agriculture among project beneficiaries

Around 90% of the total 450 beneficiaries apply agro-ecological techniques for vegetable production. They have improved their skills on how to cultivate, harvest and apply these techniques (bio-pesticides, organic manure, crop rotation, seed selection, post-harvest handling and storage). This has been possible through the technical support from 20 animators. In Addition, some of the farmers bought water pumps for irrigation. As a result, they have enlarged their production area.

In total, 375 farmers have increased production to 101 kg per acre. 372 (83.4%) beneficiaries' families obtain a three meals balanced diet per day.

Set of core activities:

- **Training of farmers in agro-ecological practices**

Training of farmers in agro-ecological practices through the establishment of Farmer Field Schools (FFS) was conducted by agriculture extension officers in five villages of the project. A total of 446 farmers participated in trainings which lasted 20 days. Farmers learnt how to grow crops such as carrots, tomatoes, sweet pepper, onions, amaranths, water melons and cabbage. The aim was to increase knowledge on crops and intercropping skills.

In the future, more emphasis will be put on a holistic approach; preventive measures against diseases and pests is needed to avoid relying only on bio compounds.

Farmers were also trained on issues like group management, leadership, constitution development, and registration at village and district levels. The training also included gender mainstreaming in agriculture and household activities.

- **Refresher course for animators**

In November 2015, the 20 animators received a five days long training at the MSOAPO offices on subjects such as spacing, mulching, compost manure and bio-pesticides making and application. Nevertheless, more frequent reflections are needed especially on the management of diseases and pests.

- **Purchasing and distribution of improved vegetable seeds and FFS materials**

Vegetable seeds were bought for all FFS and for all participating farmers to be planted on their own fields. The seeds included okra, eggplant, tomatoes, spinach, chinese, carrots, amaranths, onions, water melon, and green peppers.

Buckets, gumboots, water canes, bush knives, hand hoes and money maker pumps<sup>1</sup> were distributed among the FFS and the animators. The aim was to increase efficiency and to simplify the production.

- **Raising public awareness about agro-ecological products**

Radio programs on the importance of the usage of agro-ecological products were aired on Info Radio and Safari Radio stations. The aim was to increase awareness among communities on the benefits of agro-ecological farming. In addition, success stories from farmers were aired on 6 sessions during the year. This helped with the product marketing. Furthermore, materials such as t-shirts, posters and brochures were printed and distributed with the purpose of increasing awareness among the communities in general.

### 3.2 Outcome 2 – Farmers’ groups’ organizational capacity is strengthened for improved markets of ecologically produced vegetables

About 40% of the farmers sold vegetables at their farms (to middle-men from town and village buyers). They organized themselves and formed strong zone associations for collective marketing so as to fetch higher prices for their produce. Also farmers now exchange their products.

Now, around 300 (85%) of women produce vegetable with market information. 335 smallholder farmers (75%) sell their products through groups.

Set of core activities:

- **Facilitate the establishment of one strong zone marketing association**

Two zonal marketing associations were established (coastal and in-country zones), each with six leaders (chairperson, secretary and four members). They were trained on marketing and entrepreneurship skills.

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<sup>1</sup> Money Maker pumps are low-cost, high-quality irrigation technologies designed for small-scale farmers in Africa.

### 3.3 Outcome 3 - Increased knowledge on post-harvest vegetable handling and processing

Vegetable losses have been reduced by 8% due to proper handling and drying, therefore there is no significant vegetable loss during packing and transporting to town markets, especially to Dangote cement industry; five baskets (100 kg) were dried by the project beneficiaries. 80% of 446 beneficiaries have succeeded in selling their product collectively to Dangote cement industry at a good price. Exceptional was the high production of tomatoes. A lot was wasted following market congestion.

In total, current recorded post-harvest losses range between 1 – 2.3 baskets<sup>2</sup> per acre.

Set of core activities:

- **Training beneficiaries on post-harvest vegetables management**  
The farmer groups were trained on post-harvest management of vegetables that will help in reducing losses resulting from poor handling of vegetables during and after harvesting. So far the supply is not beyond the demand with the exception of tomatoes with bumper harvest during this year and there were no substantial post-harvest measures.

### 3.4 Outcome 4 - Savings and credits groups (Village Community Bank VICOBA) established and functional

All groups established VICOBA, ten groups have started saving their money and five groups opened bank accounts because they want these VICOBA to be continuously. VICOBA will help the beneficiaries to buy seeds and other materials rather than to depend on donors. For example: The Mshikamano groups have repaired their watering cans and money maker pump. More information is expected to be provided for the next project, as they will be ready for saving and sharing information.

Set of core activities:

- **Mobilize farmers to form and join VICOBA and train them on savings and micro-credits management**  
The beneficiaries were mobilized to form savings and credit groups for the purpose of enhancing their saving habits. This will enable the accumulation of capital which will be useful in diversification of investments among the project beneficiaries.  
Still, more credit/financial literacy is needed to VICOBA operators for elevated performance.

### 3.5 Outcome 5 – Increased institutional capacity of *Mtwara Society Against Poverty (MSOAPO)* in service provision to beneficiaries

All ten board members and project staff understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities in the project management, the project officer understands his role, including monitoring of activities, writing and submitting quarterly and annually reports.

The Executive committee was working hand in hand with the project officer to make sure that all planned activities were executed accordingly. However, there has been a challenge in producing timely and quality reports due to personnel restructuring.

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<sup>2</sup> 1 basket is equivalent to 20 kg vegetables.

Set of core activities:

- **Capacity building for staff and leaders on project and financial management**  
The time for the course was too short to enable effective understanding of the subject matter.
- **Monitoring and evaluation**  
The implementation of project activities was done by the project officer in close supervision of the executive committee. The project officer in collaboration with animators developed monthly and quarterly monitoring plans that were approved by the executive committee. Moreover, MSOAPO in collaboration with TOAM (Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement) conducted monitoring to check what they have been teaching the animators; if it was adopted and practiced in the field. After the field visits, the project officer and executive committee produced field reports.  
The final report was prepared, produced and submitted to SWISSAID Tanzania with a three months' delay, because of personnel restructuring.

#### 4. Implications and conclusions

The project was a success to which contributed the organization of the beneficiaries in groups and a farmer-to-farmer technical support, which increased the cohesion among the group members. At organization level, MSOAPO is well structured to ensure efficient monitoring of the project activities.

MSOAPO recognized gender as one of the most essential aspects for the success of the project. Women empowerment was the priority of this project. 79% of the direct project beneficiaries were women. This was purposefully done to provide them with an opportunity to participate in agricultural activities, which benefitted them in the increase of income.

The Farmer Field School (FFS) approach is an exceptional training method in which scholars participate effectively in all stages of crop production from planning, field preparation, planting to harvesting and marketing. The farmers manage the farm themselves through support of animators and group leaders. Ecological vegetable farming is now perceived as the best method due to health and safety of consumers as it does not use chemicals especially pesticides to treat pests.

#### Lessons learnt and implications for the next project:

- The project beneficiaries need to concentrate in collective marketing for proper participation in marketing chain. This will increase their bargaining power. They also need to collectively sell their crops to meet the quantity demanded by the market.
- Most of the farmers still lack enough skills in preparing / application of bio-pesticides, especially in ratios and timing of application at their farms.
- This year signalled the importance of diversity in production: many farmers registered big losses of tomatoes due to markets being flooded with massive production country wide.

#### 5. Budget and financing

During the period of 12 months (June 2015 until June 2016) the project was financed with the highly valuable support of the Client Systems AG with the amount of CHF 37,714.--. All activities were realized. The total project costs took finally CHF 36'464. -- . Because of currency effects the project could be managed with lower costs as initially planned and budgeted.