

The Impact of Marketing Support for Umwale Paddy farmers in Arumeru District ¹

By Rebeca Mongi

Arumeru Core Group's Help

In Arumeru the AMSDP core group have been helping with market training for Umwale farmers' group. Before the training the farmers were selling as individuals and getting low prices; now they sell as whole group. We have helped them to find a good market by:

- visiting market in Dar Es Salaam;
- using mobiles to get market information;
- attending Agricultural shows to advertise their products;
- and visits to other AMSDP groups to learn from their experience.

Uwamale Farmer Group now has a market research committee: In July 2005, representatives of the committee went to Dar es Salaam to look for markets. They went to Tanadali to look at beans and cereals to learn how to penetrate the market. They found the varieties they needed. In the case of beans they found out the varieties required and that it was important to keep these separate and not mixed as they have been told by the middlemen. The group found out that they could miss out the middleman and arrange for transport to Tandali market. If a group have a product to sell, they can use transport provided from the market and that cost will be subtracted from the sale. This helps the farmers as they don't have to pay the transport before the produce is sold.

Improved Paddy Prices and Storage Space

After the market research what farmers have done is to change the type of rice they grow. First they grew the IR54 variety which produced a good quantity but was difficult to market as it was not popular with consumers. Then they switched to the Wahiwahi variety which gave a lower output but was easily marketed as consumers preferred this variety. Now they are trying the SARO TXD 306 as this has a higher production than the Wahiwahi and is also popular with consumers. With the new SARO variety they will be able to produce 80 bags of 84 kilograms each year per acre. With the old variety they only produced 60-

66 bags per year. The price each year differs but if they keep it until in December they should be able to get about 35,000Tsh per bag. When they sell early in April/May the same bag is worth only 24,000 Tsh. By storing the paddy they can sell at a higher price. Sometimes there is not enough space in the houses to store and sell, so they must sell at a lower price. The Uwamale farmer group are aware that a warehouse with a receipt system would solve this problem. They have already been over to Babati to learn from their experience and have now set up a SACCOS for the group.

Impact in the Village

Evidence of improved incomes from modern marketing can be seen in the area. The incomes in the village have risen and some of this has been used for school expenses, and even for sending children to English medium schools. Nearly all households have access to a mobile phone. The village is also on the way to have clean water (this is partly paid by our local community); they have laid pipes to the start of the village and intend to connect soon. A primary school is also being constructed for the village. Now the children walk to the next village to school but they will soon have their own.



The new primary school building and Sebastian's new house

Although in Lekitatu village there is no electricity there are now thirteen homes with solar power. The biggest impact to the villagers is that they have been able to improve their homes. Sebastian Moshi built his new house in stages from each harvest (there are 2 harvests each year). First the foundations, then the brickwork and roof, then he rented some more land to expand the area that he could use for growing paddy. He will use the money from his next harvest to finish off the house.

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¹ Interviewed by Anne Dennig in August 2007