

A Trade Agent's Eye View

By Bahati Tweve¹

The Role of a Market Agent



Bahati Tweve at the new market centre in Makungu

My name is Bahati Tweve. I am from the Murumase MAC in Mafindi. My role in the MAC is as a market investigator. I search for information from different markets and link my clients who are small farmers to small businessmen through deals.

I bring to this work my experiences as a member of the AMSDP Mufindi district core group. I was the core group's 'shushushu' (market spy) and helped farmers sell well, both to the markets in Dar es Salaam and in the local market in Mafinga. I also had contract from AMSDP to train the 'shushushu' in groups in Ludewa. After my training they succeeded in finding better prices for farmers.

Communication Links

For a trade agent good communication is essential. I use the telephone and SMS but before this I identify the buyers face to face. The area that I am covering is very big, it is the whole district of Mufindi and the neighbouring districts of Njombe, Makambako, Kiroro and Iringa rural district. To get to some places there is public transport; but for others I need to use a bike, take a lift from a truck or walk. We as a MAC are still searching for good information technology to connect us to our clients. We would like to see if TradeNet, the internet and SMS trading platform, could provide us with this service.



Ueli with Bahati on a visit to the Makambako market

Organising deals in the Timber Business

Murumase MAC has made 6 deals since we have started in the timber business. We identified the circular saw mills where they cut timber into planks. Then we identified the plank buyers and they told us that they needed timber. We explained to them about our business; that for each delivery we would take 2,000/= Tshs commission, and they agreed. So we connected them to the circular saw people and we succeeded for these six deliveries and earned 12,000/= Tshs in commission.



Bahati with Anne at a saw mill near Magunguli

New Deals

We are also going to link the farmers with buyers of beans. I have already worked with fifty farmers' groups with AMSDP to identify buyers. We will now continue this work with Murumase. As we find the buyers we will get a commission from the buyers according to the tonnage they want (we charge a commission per kilo). We will collect the beans from the farmers' groups and get them to the buyers from the local and district markets and to Dar es Salaam, Dodoma and Arusha.

Contact:

Bahati Tweve

Email: nyanzalitz@yahoo.co.uk

Mobile: +255 787 382662, +255 754 82 9751

¹ Interviewed by Anne Dennig in April 2008