



TEAMS

MURIMI

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Transfer Efficient Agricultural Technologies through Market Systems (TEAMS)

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TEAMS Overview

The Transfer Efficient Agricultural Technologies through Market Systems (TEAMS) program is pleased to present MURIMI, a quarterly newsletter. Funded by the Swedish Embassy, TEAMS is the continuation of the Food Security through Climate Adaptation and Resilience (FAR-Mozambique) project. In partnership with the Mozambican government, the program is now implemented by a consortium of four organizations: International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), which is the managing organization; African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership (AFAP); United Purpose; and Associação Kwaedza Simukai Manica (AKSM).

The two-year TEAMS program started in January 2021 and will run through December 2022. The consortium operates through a lean and efficient management structure that enables the implementing organizations to continue the inclusive markets approach, reaching farmers in Sofala and Manica provinces. TEAMS will also strengthen the outcomes achieved from November 2017 to December 2020 during the first phase of the FAR-Mozambique project to improve food availability, food access, and knowledge of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) solutions.

TEAMS is organized under three results areas for strategic interventions: Scaling Improved Smallholder Productivity, Scaling Agro-Dealer Networks for Input/Output Mar-

ket Development, and Scaling Proven Technologies. TEAMS uses an inclusive markets approach to engage in facilitative partnerships with market actors that enhance smallholder linkages with input and output markets, improve access to services and information that can improve farm productivity, and increase access to diversified sources of income and nutritious foods. The TEAMS program is adapted for the climate- and weather-related risks and the COVID-19 pandemic, as these crises will have potentially long-lasting and adverse effects on the agriculture sector and household food security, particularly for women farmers.

TEAMS expands program-supported linkages between farmers and agribusiness supply for essential cost-effective inputs and extension services, ultimately scaling the adoption of productivity-enhancing technologies and practices by farmers through on-farm technology transfer units organized under public and private sector partnerships.

TEAMS also conducts activities for integrating innovative and appropriate solutions utilizing Information and Communications Technologies for Agriculture (ICT4Ag) in agribusiness and extension services that will make interventions more adaptive within the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The MURIMI quarterly newsletter narrates the progress through the voices of the target community beneficiaries of the TEAMS program, mainly smallholder farmers, and demonstrates how the project is changing their lives.

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Hybrid varieties boost rice production in Buzi.



Women processing rice into flour for sell at local markets in Buzi.

The sight of women with large woven baskets selling rice greets visitors to Buzi in the Sofala Province of Mozambique. This scene represents an even more extensive and complex process that starts in the rice fields a few kilometers outside the small town.

An elderly woman rushes to receive me with an ever-welcoming smile as I get off the bus. Her name is Ana Maposa, and she is one of the prominent rice farmers in Buzi who, on this particular day, will take me on a tour of how this essential cereal, the staple food of Mozambique, gets to our dining tables. Then, we set off on a footpath leading to the Buzi River to board a canoe to take us to the other side of town, where Ana resides with her granddaughter. She starts discussing how the production season has been progressing and is already lamenting the unpredictable weather patterns.

Ana has witnessed first-hand how the rapid climate change has negatively affected rice production in Buzi. The cyclonic activity observed in the past few years fostered much flooding, threatening the livelihoods of many rural farmers in this region. Rice farmers have suffered huge losses due to the increasing number of tropical storms and cyclones.

Ana has been producing rice all her life, and a good harvest guarantees her survival. However, Ana's life was turned upside down in 2019 when Cyclone Idai devastated her homestead and

rice fields, leaving her with nothing to depend on. The heavy rains and strong winds instigated flooding, causing the deaths of thousands of people and the destroying property and crops in Sofala and Manica provinces.

The extreme climate change continues to threaten farmers living here, provoking perennial malnutrition and even deaths. But like many farmers in the area, Ana was not applying climate-smart agriculture practices, thereby escalating her crop losses. "Every year at harvest, we just kept a portion of the rice for replanting when the rains came. Our parents had done it, and their parents too, so it is something that we grew up seeing. We realized, though, that there had been a steady decline in the yields that were getting yearly, but somehow, we remained content with what we were getting, even though it was not sufficient," grieved Ana.

In January 2020, Cyclone Eloise made landfall, bringing winds of 140 kilometers per hour (km/h), with gusts of over 160 km/h and extreme, widespread rainfall in districts in Sofala and southern Manica, further aggravating the already desperate circumstances for rice farmers in Buzi. Ana once again found herself in a battle against nature. Fortunately, she had started using climate-smart agricultural practices introduced by IFDC through the FAR project in 2020.

"My neighbor, who was not using hybrid seeds, lost all her



crops to Cyclone Eloise. I have managed to help her transplant hybrid seedlings from my field. This new rice variety is very resistant to floods and produces high yields per hectare,” said Ana.

Rice farmers like Ana, who participated in the TEAMS program, quickly realized a transformation in their production. The rice varieties, Macassane and Simão, as well as other agricultural inputs introduced by IFDC, are readily available through a network of agro-dealers operating in the district.

These innovations and the use of fertilizers and herbicides have ultimately led to an increase in yields per season. “Through using hybrid seeds and other CSA practices, I am managing to pay for my daughter’s education. I can now produce enough rice to sell as grain and process it into other rice recipes, such as cakes, biscuits, and sweets. I am happy with the rice processing training I participated in, initiated by IFDC, because I can now make more money and eat a healthier diet,” explained Ana.

“ My neighbour who was not using hybrid seeds lost all their crops to Cyclone Eloise. I have managed to help her transplant hybrid seedlings from my field. ”



Women processing rice into cakes, sweets, cookies, porridge and other recipies.

In 2021, IFDC trained a group of women to process rice into a variety of products, adding value and opening more market opportunities for rice production and commercialization in Buzi.

As the sun sets, we head-

ed back to the river after an insightful day in the life of a rice farmer. The challenges of climate change continue to threaten smallholder farmers, and as in the case of Ana, the only remedy is to adopt climate-smart agricultural prac-

tices. Her success story and the assistance she gave to her neighbors after Cyclone Eloise will go a long way in proving the efficiency of CSA practices and hopefully transforming the life of every farmer.

Ex-combatants embracing agriculture as a means of living.



AFAP field technician providing field support to ex-combatants.

Despite being advanced in age, Fernando Mapinde walks with his shoulders high, as he shows off his maize field to a group of field officers. The field is a flourishing green, with maize crops towering over everyone. The cobs are well above those that the average farmer gets, and it is evident that good agricultural practices have reigned supreme. The well-manicured maize field is a successful project executed by a formerly unemployed and broken-down ex-combatant, who is now back on his feet, fighting against poverty through commercial production of maize.

A civil war ravaged many rural communities in Mozambique from 1977 to 1992, ending with the signing of the general peace accord. War, by its nature, disturbs livelihoods and brings about starvation and loss of lives. When the war ended, many former fighters could not fully reintegrate into society and ended up living on the periphery with no formal employment opportunities.

“I fought for all my life since the civil war started, and when the war ended, I found myself old and unemployed and with no means of survival,” said Mapinde.

Mapinde is one of the 590 ex-combatants, 62 of whom are women, who formed farmer groups, assisted by the TEAMS program, and developed skills in agricultural activities.

Mapinde produces maize on a large scale and distributes it to vendors in Chiluva and Tica, Nhamatanda District, Sofala Province. Mapinde benefits from an inclusive market approach strategy developed by the TEAMS project, where market actors enhance capacity through linkages with input and output markets. “Through TEAMS, we have an agro-dealer here. She sells us all the inputs we need; seeds, and fertilizer. I’m pleased, because we are producing large quantities due to the hybrid seeds. After



A smallholder inspecting her maize crops for pests.

harvesting, I distribute to vendors from Tica to as far as Inshope and still have enough left over for household consumption,” said Mapinde. These established linkages between farmers and local agro-dealers to output markets are setting a fast pace for a growing agricultural value chain in this province.

The progress can easily be seen and felt by the improved household nutrition through increased food availability and dietary diversity from different crop varieties being produced and sold at the local markets and roadside stands. One traveling from Beira to Manica cannot miss the thriving fields of maize and swarms of women selling cereals, vegetables, and legumes to travelers, indicating the efforts these ex-combatants have made in a new community.

Women's savings groups promoting access to inputs.



A group of women making their periodic contributions.

Maria unwraps some money from her pouch while chanting a few words in Shona before throwing the sum into a small basket in the middle of a group of women. They take turns throwing in their contributions, ceremonially accompanied by joyful applause and ululation. This is a weekly ritual for a group of women in Manica who have come together to save money for acquiring inputs before the onset of each agricultural season.

Many smallholder farmers, especially women, face the challenge of mobilizing inputs in each agricultural season. The plight of rural women in Africa is characterized by low income and gender inequality, leaving women and children vulnerable to malnutrition and poverty. Women also carry the burden of providing for their children on limited revenue. Inadequate resources lead to poor agricultural practices and, consequently, low yields. Many smallholder farmers in Manica Province cannot afford to buy fertilizers, certified seeds, or the other agricultural inputs necessary to produce enough for their subsistence and extra for the market.

The initiative taken by the women in Manica to create savings groups represents a huge step toward women's empowerment and the fight against poverty. The village savings and loan association (VSLA) seeks to harness resources within the community for productivity-enhancing climate-adapted crop technologies and for mitigating cash flow and household economic constraints. It is also an important intervention toward the financial inclusion of women.

In 2021, Saruzai Inácio and her friends managed to save enough money to buy fertilizer for bean production. Saruzai said, "We realized that we should continue saving to buy fertilizer for

improved production. Everything went well, and we managed to purchase inputs for bean production. Each member received their own bag of fertilizer." Fertilizer application increased productivity, resulting in bumper harvests and further motivating women to continue their savings strategy.

Contributions range from 300 metric tons (mt) to 500 mt per month. The more participants per group, the greater the income rose. For safekeeping and transparency, the contributions are registered and deposited into a bank account managed by the TEAMS implementing organization in Manica, AKSM. Periodic reports are available to the group members for planning and accounting purposes. In 2021, the group managed to save 1,498,338 mt and mobilize a significant number of resources for the group's expansion and sustainability.

As the following agricultural season approaches, each member will take out a loan from this fund, geared specifically toward agricultural inputs. Usually, a group member receives the loan along with information for producing a selected crop, payable at the end of the season through her sales of harvested products.

The TEAMS project, through their demonstration plots, has trained more than 60,000 women in Manica and Sofala provinces on how to produce a wide variety of vegetables, legumes, and cereals using climate-smart agricultural practices. The opportunity to produce a wide range of crops means a healthier diet for women and children. "We are content because our children are now eating a healthy diet, and we are also making some profits from sales. Our levels of financial literacy are also improving. Some of us had poor financial discipline, but as a result of the



Small-holder purchasing maize seeds from local agro-dealer.

savings group, I can now transfer the lessons in managing money at the household level,” said Saruzai with a broad smile. The VSLA training also encompassed recordkeeping and practical engagement so that all group members have a financial management mindset, which is essential for commercial production.

Women get together regularly to plan and share ideas about the production of beans, tomatoes, maize, and other cash crops. Besides individual investments, the group engages in joint venture projects, where they buy a piece of land and work together to produce vegetables for the market. The proceeds from these joint ventures are reinvested into the savings group, generating a larger capital income base. In addition, extra income for women means they can set up other small businesses and own property, thus diversifying their revenue streams.

Determining adequate input needs is very important,

as each agricultural season is characterized by differing rainfall patterns due to climate change.

The VSLA program introduced the agricultural fund to savings groups and linked them with local agro-dealers for the timely provision of inputs. These synergies guarantee the availability of inputs at reasonable prices, enabling women to make a significant profit. In addition, shortening the distance between agricultural input suppliers and smallholders drastically reduces the cost of production. The wide network of agro-dealers, mainly women, in these rural communities is going a long way in supporting their peers in the agricultural value chain.

Planned educational events by the TEAMS project have enabled more than 2,000 women in Manica Province to protect their income, use it effectively to buy inputs for production, and profit for reinvestment. The progress made by the saving groups has also attracted the participation and support of men, further increasing the diversity and capacity of smallholder farmers.







TEAMS



The International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) is a non-profit Public International Organization (PIO) with over 45 years of experience designing and implementing projects that improve sustainable productivity in agriculture and agribusiness. Since 1974, IFDC has worked through private sector approaches to strengthen agriculture value chains to improve soil health and livelihoods for smallholder farmers throughout the world.



The African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership (AFAP) is a Non-Profit Organization (NPO) with headquarters in South Africa. AFAP was established under the African Union and NEPAD objective to promote a Green Revolution in Africa through increased use of productivity enhancing inputs by smallholder farmers. AFAP has been supporting smallholder farmers and pastoralists to access improved inputs and technologies (seeds, fertilizer, crop protection products and animal health products) for increased agricultural and livestock production through improved access to markets.



United Purpose (UP, previously known as Concern Universal) is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) that strives to end poverty and inequality across the globe. UP is a leader in community-led development and grassroots innovation with more than 40 years of experience working with community organizations and local partners through community-based engagement in pro-poor programming that identifies sustainable solutions facing marginalized communities that advance Beyond Aid.



Associação Kwaedza Simukai Manica (AKSM) is a national NGO based in Mozambique dedicated to improving the lives, livelihoods, and economic conditions of smallholder farmers. AKSM provides services in training for the introduction of new cropping technologies and improved small-scale irrigations systems, contributing to community development in rural areas of Mozambique. AKSM was founded in the year 2000, with its primary offices in Manica District, and field offices in Machaze, Sussundega and Vanduzi districts as well.

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