

TANZANIA — CASSAVA



In Tanzania, cassava is a common crop grown by farmers due to its ability to survive harsh conditions such as flooding and droughts. But many farmers are struggling to overcome outbreaks of disease that have threatened their crops and the seeds they purchase

Through MEDA's Cassava Seed Champion project, farmers will be able to connect to local suppliers of affordable disease-free and disease-resistant cassava seed, improving their ability to feed their family and earn an income from the crops they sell.



Creating business solutions to poverty

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QUICKFACTS

- Population 48 million
- 73% live in rural areas
- 1 in 3 below poverty line
- 10% unemployed
- 80% of labor force in agriculture
- Majority are subsistence farmers
- 28% of GDP from agriculture
- Life expectancy 61 years

Background

Tanzania's economy depends on agriculture, which accounts for over one-quarter of gross domestic product (GDP), provides 85% of exports and employs 80% of the work force. Flooding during the rainy season followed by recent droughts has reduced harvests of items such as corn, wheat, fruits and vegetables in rural areas.

Cassava, a crop able to grow in drought conditions, is a source of income and food security for millions of small farming

families in marginalized areas. Tanzania, the fourth largest producer of cassava in Africa, produces seven million tons annually, with the vast majority used for human consumption.

Recently, large outbreaks of disease have infested, decreased and even destroyed cassava crops over large areas. Farmers often get replacement seeds, but those, too, may be infected, which only spreads the problem.

Unfortunately, farmers have no access to a sustainable, commercial large-scale delivery of certified cassava seed. For a country dependent on the agricultural industry to keep its economy alive and feed its people, farmers need a reliable way to acquire good seed and grow cassava.

MEDA's Assessment

MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) is helping to develop disease-resistant and disease-free cassava seed varieties, and more sustainable seed systems to deliver them.

The 'Mihogo Mbegu Bingwa' pilot project –Swahili for Cassava Seed Champion – designs, tests and promotes two commercially

sustainable cassava seed supply chain models in three regions of Tanzania: Mtwara, Dodoma and Tanga. This is helping MEDA bridge the gap between research laboratories developing new varieties and farmers looking for affordable high-quality seed.

Working with national seed certification authorities, we are

building the capacity of seed entrepreneurs to produce disease-resistant and disease-free cassava seeds that can be affordably sold to small farmers. By making market-based methods of acquiring cassava seeds more acceptable, a consistent supply of preferred varieties of certified cassava seed will be available.

Outcome | 4 Year Project Budget

- 62,000 small farmers buying certified seeds
- Enable small farmers to access a consistent supply of disease-resistant, disease-free seed by advancing the current acceptance and use of market-based methods
- Encourage farmers to continue buying certified, affordable, readily available seeds, creating competition among suppliers over the long-term

