

## COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

Commercial Agriculture in Zanzibar is still at its infancy stages and has a lot of potentials to surpass its 2015 production forecast despite the fact that there is still lot of challenges faced by farmers, which has resulted in several failed progresses. It is potential awakening sleeping giant which could significantly stimulate and increase growth of Zanzibar's economic channels attributed from the Agriculture sector. Just to name few, The ZEST project has in the past few years made significant contribution within the Agriculture sector in Zanzibar, towards the following areas:

- Good Agricultural Practices Technical Training
- Input/Raw Materials
- Network Linkage
- Market Linkage
- Financial Support
- Project Exposure to other International Donors and or Organizations

The ZEST PROJECT's second phase began its Commercial Agriculture Project activities on July 23, 2012 with UWZ, and ended in August 12, 2012, covering four groups totaling 60 men, women boys and girls, of whom 40 % are male and 60% female. ***(THE PHOTOS BELOW ARE FROM UWZ'S PROJECT SITES)***



A needs assessment and feasibility studies was conducted at the early stages of the development of training program course materials, which gave UWZ an advantage of having the following in place:

- What groups will be committed to the project
- Their level on commitment and motivation based on their current involvement in Agriculture
- How accessible the water source is, from the potential site for the demonstration plots
- What tools & materials, raw materials and etc. will be required for each group to successfully complete the training without any obstacles
- Identifying and creating an accessible comfortable learning environment to allow the beneficiaries to focus
- Being able to spend more time with each group and delivered thorough training sessions which was quickly adapted by the trainees

***(THE PHOTOS BELOW ARE FROM UWZ'S COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE PROJECT SITES)***



Identified below are the covered **UWZ** groups and the tools/materials, type of inputs, training and technical services provided to each group:

**1. CHUTAMA and KIVUNGE :**

- Agronomy Field Crops and Entrepreneurship classroom training
- Cucumber , Onion, Watermelon and Sweet Pepper seeds
- Pineapple suckers
- One sprayer
- One Sterilizer tank
- Onion marker
- Fungicides
- Insecticides
- Poly-Feed
- Three types of Fertilizer
- Bags of cement to repair water reserve tanks

**2. MCHANGANI and TUNDUNI:**

- Sweet Pepper and Watermelon seeds
- One sprayer
- One sterilizer tank
- Onion marker
- Fungicides and Insecticides
- Poly-Feeds
- PVC water pipes
- Three types of Fertilizer
- Bags of cement to repair water reserve tanks

Uwamwima was second to start the Commercial Agriculture Project activities on August 20, 2012 and ending September 22, 2012, covering 10 groups totaling 196 men, women, boys and girls, of whom 15% are male and 85 female. Uwamwima did not have or made time to make any feasibility and or needs assessment study with the Commercial Agriculture Groups they have identified. I am sure what method or system was used to identify the participants. As a result, most of the groups were not ready and or understood what the project was all about. Some of them have changed their initial demonstration plots more than once, because of one problem or another.

Due the lack of preparation at the early stages of the project implementation phase, the following obstacles were identified:

- Water source too far from demonstration plots
- Not having access to proper inputs (hybrid seeds)
- Some of the tools the farmers used are too old and have the tendency of not to function well
- Watering can needs not identified until the very last minute
- Community involvement/motivation lacking (laziness)
- Lack of proper training facilities like sheds and or community centers and halls
- Actual delivery of the training not aligned with the original timetable
- Some of the groups still have not done any practical training due to the lack of plot and water
- Some of the groups still using local pales (containers) to fetch water from the water source

***(THE PHOTOS BELOW ARE FROM UWAMWIMA's COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE PROJECT SITES)***



Identified below are the covered groups and the tools/materials, types of inputs, training and technical services provide to each group: In addition to the items provided below, all groups have been provided with AGRONOMY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING.

1. **CHECHELE** : Amaranthus Seeds
2. **CHUINI** : Amaranthus Seeds
3. **KIBOJE** : Eggplant and Chinese Cabbage Seeds
4. **MAHONDA** : Amaranthus Seeds
5. **MBUZINI** : Tomato Seeds
6. **MCHANGANI** : Cucumber Seeds
7. **MFENESINI** : Tomato Seeds

8. **MUNDULI** : Eggplant Seeds
9. **NYAMANZI** : Tomato Seeds
10. **PALE** : Eggplant Seeds

**(THE PHOTOS BELOW ARE FROM UWAMWIMA'S COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE PROJECT SITES)**



### CONCLUSION

Observations based on my last follow-up and information gathered today from the Agronomist and Field Support staff suggests that the Uwamwima Commercial Agriculture Group Project participants still lacks the following:

- Repairing or construction of Water Reservoirs
- Pumps, Pipes, PVC Pipes and Joins
- Watering Cans
- Training Sheds
- Cleaning of wells to have access to water or digging of wells
- Sprinkler system
- Djembes and Garden Tools
- Pesticides and Fungicides
- Seeds
- Manure
- Inadequate allowance for transportation and lunch for the participants which minimizes interest levels of participants
- Lack of consistent follow-up with the groups
- Lack of communication, transparency and synergy between the Commercial Agriculture project implementers and Uwamwima management
- Motivation

UWZ's Agronomy training materials was prepared by and presented by Omar Abubucarr, while the Entrepreneurship training materials was prepared and presented by Eliud Katayi.

Uwamwima's Agronomy training materials was prepared by Fatima Hamza presented by Omar Abdallah and Fatima Hamza, while the Entrepreneurship training materials was prepared by Brian M Touray and presented by Heshbon Kimotho.

The groups were taken to various existing ZEST project or ZEST influenced project sites that are successful and doing well. They have learned a lot from the host farmers and are impressed by what the achievements by other farmer groups. Most importantly, both the host and visiting groups spent lot of time asking questions and engaging in discussions relevant to their success and the project as a whole. They have agreed that Commercial Agriculture is actually very possible in Zanzibar and that all it takes is motivation, commitment and ready to learn.

Since June of 2011, I have documented and catalogued about 4,000 photos and 15 video footages of the ZEST PROJECT or ZEST related projects and activities, which most of the photos and video reflects success stories is given by and features the beneficiaries themselves. Periodically, when I show some of this pictures and videos to the featured beneficiaries, they acknowledge sense of moral support, recognition, motivation and appreciation from ZEST.

However, considering the fact that the items/materials/equipment and encouragement are the most important part of the project's developmental stages, unless the list mentioned above is provided, I don't see the Uwamwima Commercial Agriculture Project getting off the ground. I therefore suggest that VSO comes up with another methodology of tackling this issue. If not, I conclude that fifty million shillings (TSH. 50, 000000) already invested in this project will just become a \*a non-starter white elephant project\*.

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