



The solution to the perennial food and income insecurity in Africa lies in a hitherto neglected crop – the humble cassava. Scores of farmers in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are already benefitting from an ambitious scale-up program being promoted by the Cassava Village Processing Programme.

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Turning the Tables on Food & Income Insecurity in Africa

The Cassava Village Processing Programme (CVPP) is supported by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and implemented by Farm Concern International (FCI) in Eastern Africa. The programme is designed to turnaround the cassava socio-economic landscape based on Cassava Commercialization through Village Value Addition for Food Security and Graduation into Industrial Use. The programme has 54,075 smallholder farmers participating from 214 Commercial Villages in Eastern Africa.

Cassava, demonstrates good potential as an excellent substitute to maize and wheat whose production in Africa has

been on the decline. Cassava comprises of approximately 80% carbohydrates making it a utilizable source for substitution of maize in the animal feed industry for instance.

Women in Makueni share steaming plates of Ugali made from a blend of Cassava and Maize flours.

The aim of CVPP is to enhance food security at the household level and further graduate cassava into commercialization for partial substitution as a source of carbohydrates in the animal feeds industry. In Kenya, CVPP sites are located in Makueni and Busia; In Uganda, the project is being implemented

in Jinja and Buyende; while in Tanzania, the project site is located in Arusha.

Although the initial target of the CVPP was the mobilisation of at least 30,000 small scale farmers across the region, by year two up to 54,075 farmers are fully participating in the programme and this is already causing a revolution of sorts in the cassava value chain. For instance in Busia, Western Kenya farmers are meeting the market demands through scheduled production and creating consistency in the supply of cassava and its products.

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backyard subsistence crop into a reputable commercialised commodity now highly valued by farmers.

Thanks to streamlined marketing systems, favourable market prices, the crop is gradually becoming the preferred cash crop for smallholder farmers and a bankable source of income especially for women and young people.

Arising from business forums conducted in all the CVPP sites, viable business partnerships were established between the commercial villages and industrial buyers. Farm Concern International has established informal business partnerships with six traders in Busia, five in Jinja/ Buyende and 30 in Arusha. Through business review forums, FCI is working with the informal business players in addressing training

needs in business planning, financial management and conventional marketing skills.

The cumulative value of the private sector business partnerships as well as business conducted at the local markets across the sites in Makueni, Busia, Arusha and Jinja amounted to USD 3,794,415.5 this far. Commercial villages were linked to various markets mainly the industrial food processing companies, animal feed companies, fresh cassava root traders and local cassava chunks buyers worth USD 76,815.

During the intervention, the participating farmers were beneficiaries of various market linkages facilitated by FCI leading to sale of cassava and cassava products to various market segments, including the traditional markets. A total of 10,642 metric tonnes of cassava was processed into chips and chunks for both local and industrial markets.

For instance 23,400 metric tonnes were sold to the fresh market, with 45,806 metric tonnes utilised for food security. It is worth noting that fresh markets have previously been dominated by brokers who offer low prices but the visibility and scope of the programme was such that it was not long before the commercial

villages were attracting and retaining the attention of large-scale wholesalers in the traditional markets resulting in value chain efficiency. Currently 40 ongoing informal partnerships have been established with traditional markets.

Fresh Cassava Roots

The cassava fresh root market has been one of the major destinations for cassava produced by small scale farmers. Cassava is a key component in most of the African food markets contributing to the income of the small scale farmers. In 2011, approximately 23,400 metric tonnes of fresh cassava roots were sold with a value of USD 3,720,600. Traders mainly from the urban markets buy cassava from the commercial villages and deliver to various food markets in the cities and major towns namely; Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Jinja, Kampala, Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. The fresh cassava roots are then retailed by traders located within these urban markets. The traditional markets tend to prefer the bigger dried cassava chunks which is further processed into blended flour for human consumption. In Jinja, Uganda the ratio is 1kg of cassava blended with 3kg of maize and 3kg of cassava to 1kg of millet/sorghum. In Busia, Kenya the ratio

of cassava to sorghum/millet is 4kg cassava to 1kg sorghum/millet and 2kg cassava mixed with 1kg of maize.

Another important impact realised as the smallholder farmers increase cassava production through commercialisation is in the adoption and multiplication of improved cassava varieties. The reality of inadequate quantities of clean and improved planting materials was apparent at the onset of the programme across all the sites, presenting a paradoxical challenge for both farmers as well as FCI and collaborating research institutions. The challenge was to establish sustainable seed systems to meet the sudden demand.

Currently 221 farmers have been successfully trained as Commercial Village Seed Multipliers and they complement the ongoing partnerships with the national and regional research institutions.



A little boy enjoys a meal of Cassava Ugali and vegetables.

They include Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) in Uganda and Horticultural Research Institute (HORTI-Tengeru), Tanzania. Over 16 million cassava cuttings were distributed and planted for both traditional and improved varieties with 36 commercial villages adopting the high yielding new varieties. As a result, a total of 16,108,900 cuttings were planted by the participating Commercial Villages.





Seed multipliers sold cuttings worth USD 14,668.75.

For the first time, farmers in villages are meeting the stringent standards for quality planting materials as a result of the partnership between FCI and various research stations. These high level scientific approaches have been unpacked and simplified for adoption at village level and demonstrating how possible it is to make research relevant to local needs.

Farmers have also made tangible impact through their collective



savings amounting to USD 21,378.4 with 43 Commercial Village Savings Schemes established that are pioneering FCI's model for the promotion and use of own-savings for internal lending, individual and group investments through the Commercial Village Savings and Investment schemes. Farmers within the commercial villages are trained on financial management, loan management and investment opportunities.

Cassava commercialisation creates opportunities for value addition and Village Based Processing Units (VBPU). At least 70 villages are participating in processing technologies using traditional and mechanised methods in each of the sites. Traditional wholesalers however tend to be more keen on buying cassava chunks that have been chipped using traditional methods which consumers prefer for milling and blending with millet and maize

flours respectively.

A farmer feeds the motorized mobile chipper with freshly peeled cassava roots. The chipper, a shared resource in the village, has the capacity to chip up to 10 metric tonnes of cassava per day and is responsible for renewed prosperity being experienced by farmers in Busia.

Traditional processing practices have been modified to meet modern production and quality standards. These interventions have attracted the attention and support of other partners including the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Ministry of Agriculture, NARO in the form of provision of equipment including posho/hammer mills, cassava graters and pressing machines for starch production.

FCI has ensured that farmers are exposed to organized trainings on alternative utilization of cassava products. These trainings have equipped farmers with

the knowledge on best uses of cassava for food security. Farmers have also been trained on the use of cassava leaves as vegetables and Gari processing. A total of 12 business forums have been conducted across the region.

The CVPP project has been a great empowerment tool for women and youth who not only learn crucial skills and knowledge but also earn a living from their labour.

Women take a break from peeling the Cassava roots. This is a labour intensive activity that is mainly handled by women and youths. However the mechanised and manual Village Based Processing Units introduced into the Commercial Villages have greatly reduced the time required to grate or chip cassava roots, and the same time increased the volumes being processed at household level effectively freeing women's time to engage in other activities.

For instance, there was a 43% increase in casual employment between 2010 and 2011 in Busia while in other sites; family labour utilised more by the individual farmers. Overall, Farmers preferred women employees, who did a range of chores including planting, weeding, harvesting, peeling and washing.