



CAST-Appropriate Technology Development Centre— is an international Non-Governmental Organisation founded in Italy in 1980. Since 2007, CAST is present in Kilifi County implementing rural development projects targeting drought preparedness, food sovereignty, inclusion of smallholders in value chains, natural resources management, appropriate technologies and women promotion. As per today, the rural smallholders benefiting directly from CAST activities have been 1,200 smallholder farmers from 67 groups in the cassava value chain and 700 members from 8 Beach Management Units in the fisheries sector.

A word from the Project Manager

Message from Our Partner - NDMA



It has been two years since CAST started activities of Mihogo Project in Kilifi County.

At the Project's mid-way point, the moment has arrived to recognise the efforts of all partners, by affirming the progresses made towards achieving its objective to improve living standards, health conditions and self-reliance of

Kilifi County's rural communities.

This newsletter will be the occasion of sharing with all development actors achievements and challenges faced during the fieldwork, adding elements to the debate on how cassava and, in general, all traditional high value crops can represent a valid alternative to food insecurity for Kilifi County.

My special thanks to all staff of the National Drought Management Authority-NDMA Kilifi, whose precious support has gone beyond the role of contracting authority and to the whole CAST staff, whose daily efforts made possible all the good that you will find in this newsletter. My first thoughts to all Kilifi farmers: I believe that your work will soon enable Kilifi County to be self-sufficient for its food needs.

I also want to take this opportunity to invite our readers to take a tour of the CAST Kenya brand-new website and learn more about our past and present interventions and future plans in Kilifi County.

Filippo De Monte
Project Manager
CAST



Kenya has identified food security and poverty reduction as key issues that need to be addressed under the auspices of ending drought emergencies in order to achieve the vision 2030.

The two are key to unlocking the country's foundations for development and sustain an economic growth that matches the current annual population growth of 2.8%.

It is important for Kilifi County to improve marketing strategies for food crops that are drought tolerant and well-adapted to different local ecologies and well-placed to address food deficits during drought periods, beyond the farm level.

The Mihogo project funded by EU through National Drought Management Authority seeks to scale up cassava production, establish a sustained cassava production system, empower women farmer to produce quality cassava seed and operate sustained cassava business, promote cassava utilization, integrate legumes into cassava cropping systems and create an innovative value addition for utilization of.

Stephen Musimba M.A., B.Sc., DTE, RGE
County Drought Response Officer
National Drought Management Authority

Mihogo Project



Mihogo Project “Re-introduction and Commercialization of Cassava for Improved Livelihoods through Whole Value Chain Model”, aims to support local communities to cope with drought, promoting livelihood diversification by fostering cassava value chain.

The project is implemented by CAST and funded by the European Union through the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) within the Kenya Rural Development Programme (KRDP).

Activities started early 2013 targeting 470 smallholder farmers in Ganze Sub-County. From 2015 CAST is reaching more than 1,000 farmers in the whole Kilifi County, thanks to the co-funding of the Agricultural Sector Development Support Programme (ASDSP).

Associates in implementation are Department of Agriculture of Kilifi County (extension services and technical steering) and Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO, trainings and improved varieties of high value traditional crops). Collaborations have been developed with Kenya National Farmers’ Federation (KENAFF, trainings and value chain studies), Pwani University (trainings), Green Water (rainwater harvesting), Ministry of Education (school activities with 4K clubs), Department of Health of Kilifi County (trainings on nutritional aspects of high value traditional crops) and Kenya Forest Service (agroforestry).

The main target are smallholder farmers organised in self-help groups. Accent is on technical aspects (environmentally sustainable production, processing and value addition through blending of cassava flour), but also on the economic sustainability of the enterprise as main motivation in cultivating cassava.

CAST and Project partners also promote safe consumption of cassava products (mainly cassava flour blends) at household and primary schools level.

Filippo De Monte
Project Manager
CAST

Widows with a Purpose

Nothing feels better than the sweet satisfaction derived from self-accomplishment. Indeed, this couldn’t have been said any better for Amani Wajane self-help group composed of widows in a laid back village of Madamani, Vitengeni Division.

The vigour and relentless hard work of these rare women is astounding. Without proper education or vocational skills but endowed with vast pieces of land, the group resorted to farming. When the CAST *mihogo* project came knocking with the *Shibe* and *Tajirika* varieties of cassava, they embraced it with open arms.

Having gone through a series of trainings ranging from dry land farming, cassava seed selection and production, cassava pests and diseases, cassava value addition and business planning and management all facilitated by CAST, the

group did not leave the trainings to that: mere training. Instead, they took a bold step of putting to use that which they had learnt from the trainings.

Mastering the art of cassava value addition, the group took the plunge and started making cassava chips, flour and selling cassava crisps and fried chips.

The group’s will to succeed made them overcome the myriad of challenges they faced key among them being toxicity fears resulting to obstruction from selling cassava products in schools and in the neighbourhood. Their admirable tenacity of purpose made the group members organise sensitisation meetings and public barazas in a bid to build confidence in their products. Being the champions of change, every group member started integrating cassava

especially cassava flour in their daily meals at household level and inviting community members to share in the meal.

Today, the group boasts of selling cassava products worth over 20,000 Kshs from the 4,300 cuttings planted. “We are very pleased with the project.

We now do not lack food in our households. Our children are able to comfortably eat three meals a day complete with nutritious cassava flour porridge and our group will soon buy plastic chairs for hire as soon as we get enough savings...” says the secretary, Margret with a confident smile.

Susan Juma
Monitoring & Evaluation officer
CAST

Mbeyu ii ni Mbeyu - The Productive Seed

Indeed the harvests are here with us! After days of preparing cassava cuttings and making deliveries late into the night, long hours of planting, months of weeding under the scorching sun and the hard labor of protecting our crops from livestock, finally the harvests are here!

The *Tajirika* and *Shibe* varieties from the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) and advocated for by CAST are high yielding, a fact that can be attested to by majority farmers who have harvested tubers weighing up to 14kgs per plant! This is a far cry from the local *Kabandameno* variety that yields a kilo per plant at best. What is even better is that the crop is ready for harvest 8 -12 months after planting.

Cassava has a short shelf life (1-2 days); to avoid post harvest loses , process the tubers into chips or flour. After harvesting, ensure you preserve your cuttings well. This can be done by harvesting piece-meal as the cutting remain in the farm; or preserve the cuttings in a hole under a shade and water regularly. This will guarantee you seeds for the next season.

Here is data on some cassava grower groups in Ganze Sub county :

	GROUP	DIVISION	YIELDS PER ACRE
1	Saidia	Vitengeni	18.3 tons
2	Amani Wajane	Vitengeni	17.8 tons
3	Ushirika	Vitengeni	13 tons
4	Funajeza	Vitengeni	14 tons
5	Sokoke	Vitengeni	10.8 tons
6	Mazingira	Bamba	9.6 tons
7	Jipe Moyo	Bamba	9.2 tons
8	Malomani	Ganze	8.3 tons

Elizabeth Koech
Field Agronomist
CAST

Cassava Commercialisation: Case Study Nakuru



Cassava is one of the neglected crops in the recent past in the Coastal region owing to the poor returns obtained from the local varieties and the negative connotation, that it is a poor man's food, attributed to it. The introduction of KALRO's improved varieties such as *Tajirika* and *Shibe* has turned cassava commercialisation into a totally new ball game. With a potential to yield 15 – 40 tons/acre of tubers, the production costs run as low as 2 Kshs/kg for raw tubers, 18 Kshs/kg for cassava chips (makopa) and 20 Kshs/kg of cassava

flour in Ganze Sub-County. The ability of the flour to perfectly blend with different flours for a range of recipes is also something to go by.

During a recent visit to Nakuru I met Mr. Gichuru, a successful businessman in Nakuru, who put these views into perspective. At a glance, Mr Gichuru looks like any other businessman. However, what people do not know and what sets him apart from the rest is his boldness for venturing into a field many consider doomed without a second thought: the cassava business!

Mr Gichuru supplies cassava flour to companies in Nairobi and Nakuru. I visited Kemwa Food Products, in Nakuru, which blends cassava flour with other cereals (sorghum, finger millet, groundnuts) and nutritional additives to make a very nutritious porridge flour which fetches competitive prices in the regional market.

He narrated to me his journey to success in these few words, "I was ridiculed and side-lined by family and friends for coming up with such an absurd idea. However, after conducting a thorough cost-benefit and marketing analysis on cassava and believing in myself, I have been able to move from supplying 5 tons of cassava flour that I started with to the huge sums I now supply and earn a modest living." Indeed, supplying 45 tons of cassava flour every two months is nothing to sneeze about.

If Mr Gichuru's experience teaches us anything, it is that cassava is a high income earner crop with the potential to enrich the lives of farmers.

Invest for the future, invest for sustainable income, invest in cassava.

Levis Mwalimu
Marketing Expert
CAST

Launch of New Dawn for Schools



They say a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. This, I guess, was the case as CAST launched the Resilient Schools Programme for 10 schools in Ganze Sub-County at Makuti Villas Kilifi on 12th February 2015. The event was attended by the Schools' head teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) chairpersons, 4K club patrons and representatives from the Forestry, Nutrition, Agriculture and Education departments. CAST staff took the opportunity to enlighten those present about the work done by the organization and the new methodology designed for schools: The Resilient Schools Guide. The guide is a pedagogical approach aimed at educating pupils on various agronomical and nutritional issues on cassava through encouraging learning by doing and also inspiring pupils to put into practise what they learn not only in school but especially at home thus uplifting

the communities.

The programme has already started in Vitengeni, Mpirani , Dida, Sokoke and Kahingoni Primary in Vitengeni Division, Mwaeba, Kimbule, Dungicha and Petanguo Primary in Ganze Division and Muyuni Primary in Bamba Division. With the participation of parents, SMCs, 4K Club members and the school administration in the learning sessions, the programme promises to be a success as it shapes the pupils into more responsible and healthy citizens conscious of their environment through practising conservative agriculture and preparing balanced meals for their wellbeing. Be sure to check out the progress and get more information on this programme from our website and subsequent newsletters!

Halima Shaaban
Behaviour Change Specialist
CAST

Upcoming Events

We are looking forward to the planting season in the community and schools, hosting field days, trainings on business plans, construction of rain water harvesting facilities and a monitoring mission from the donors. We also welcome CAST's new project in Kilifi, 'Mama Karanga', targeting women in small scale fisheries for food sovereignty. Be sure to check these out, and more, in the upcoming newsletter!

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Re-introduction and Commercialization of Cassava for Improved Livelihoods through Whole Value Chain Model

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