Pack 99, Item 4

Type: Script

September 2014

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**It’s better to sell together: The benefits of collective marketing**

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### Notes to broadcaster

Cassava has become a delicacy and a lucrative business opportunity in Dar es Salaam lately. Women petty traders sell raw cassava to motorists in highway traffic jams. The number of consumers buying cassava flour in urban shops and supermarkets is increasing.

In the past, cassava was eaten by Muslims and by coastal cultures mainly during Ramadan as a main dish called *futari* by mixing it with beans and coconut milk, and eating it with spiced porridge. Further inland, cassava was eaten as a breakfast snack and the leaves were eaten as a vegetable.

But now, cassava has graduated from simply being food for particular cultures to a national food and a snack eaten raw, boiled or fried as a crisp. It is now popular, accepted and eaten by people from all walks of life.

This script looks at the cassava value chain, the challenges of positioning cassava in the marketplace, and how collective marketing is helping both cassava producers and cassava processors.   
  
You might choose to present this drama as part of your regular farming program, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the original people involved in the interviews.

You could also use this script as research material or as inspiration for creating your own programming on cassava marketing and the cassava value chain in your country.

Talk to cassava farmers, processors and experts. You might ask them:

* What are the business opportunities for producing and processing cassava in your community, region or country?
* Have farmers formed groups to collectively market their cassava or cassava flour? Have these groups been successful?
* What are the challenges to doing collective marketing, and what solutions have groups come up with?

Estimated running time, including intro and outro music, is about 20 minutes.

Signature tune fades in and out

**HOST:** Hello and welcome to this special program on cassava. (PAUSE) Have you noticed? Lately, cassava has become a much more common food on the street. Anyone can buy a piece of raw cassava or a fried cassava crisp for as little as one hundred Tanzanian shillings. You can find them on roadsides, in traffic jams – everywhere!

Cassava flour has become popular too. You can find it in many shops, and not just during Ramadan. Why has cassava become so popular and so common?

Join me as we explore the cassava value chain and talk to cassava farmers, cassava processors, and a cassava scientist. You will hear a lot about farmers who are joining together to collectively market their cassava. You will see for yourself how cassava farmers and cassava processors are making a good living.

**SFX:** SOUND OF NATURAL FOREST, WIND AND, BIRDS, THEN SOUNDS OF CAR DRIVING OFF

**HOST:** To understand how the cassava value chain works and about collective or group marketing, I visited Ukaya Farm in Mukuranga District, just south of the city of Dar es Salaam. There was a lot to learn from Matanga Joseph, a cassava grower and processor who is now profiting from his cassava business. We will hear later from three small-scale cassava farmers – Salum Nakubabi and Fabiola Mkhorekha ─ and from John Msemo, a cassava scientist and expert.

Signature tune fades in and out

**MATANGA:** Welcome to Ukaya farm. My name is Matanga Joseph and I am a farmer and cassava processor.

**HOST:** Can you tell us how you started growing and processing cassava?

**MATANGA:** I started growing cassava in 2011 because it was a good business. On twenty hectares of cassava, I harvested forty lorries which I sold at 400,000 Tanzanian shillings per lorry.

But over time, the price of raw cassava dropped drastically to 80,000 shillings per lorry, so I decided to abandon the crop and look for an alternative business. Growing cassava was no longer profitable because of the high costs of production compared to the selling price.

But then I heard about a Flash Air Drier machine which had been requested by fellow cassava growers. Nobody wanted it because of its high running costs, so I asked if I could keep it.

The machine can process sixteen thousand kilos of fresh cassava into four tonnes of cassava twice per week. Each tonne makes one thousand one kilo bags of cassava flour.

**HOST:** How did you add value to your cassava?

**MATUNGA:** Instead of selling raw cassava, I added value by processing it into flour. Then I could keep it and sell it whenever I wanted, when the price was good. This was better than selling raw cassava, which has to be sold immediately after harvest, and cannot be kept in the ground for more than nine months.

My cost of production for one kilo of high quality cassava flour was 1,516 shillings, and I sold the flour for 1,800 a kilo wholesale and 2,000 retail. This gave me a profit margin of between 200 and 484 shillings per kilo bag.

**HOST:** How was your cassava flour accepted in the market?

**MATANGA:** People loved it because it was clean and good quality.

Contrary to my expectations, there was a big demand from supermarket chains. I was able to sell it for the price I wanted. I even had to look for extra raw cassava from outgrowers to meet the demand for cassava flour.

I bought cassava from associations and open markets. I paid small-scale farmers a better price than middlemen, who select cassava tubers by the sizes they wanted. They just took the –medium-sized roots and left the rest.

**HOST:** Do you buy from farmers who do collective marketing?

**MATANGA:** Yes, in fact collective marketing has made my life and my business easy because it has created a ready-made market for raw cassava of all sizes. I can buy a large amount from the group, rather than dealing with individual farmers. And, unlike middlemen who buy cassava of particular sizes, we buy all cassava, regardless of size.

We buy directly from farms and save farmers their transport costs to the market. We also go to open markets where farmers have combined their cassava to sell in bulk. This saves us the time of visiting individual farmers; it saves them and us time and money.

**HOST:** How else have you benefited from collective marketing?

**MATANGA:** Collective marketing has helped farmers unite and collaborate to create a market for their cassava. We just arrange when and where to collect the cassava and pay the wholesale price instead of bargaining with individual farmers.

We also buy overgrown cassava roots which are between one to two years old, and which other buyers and markets don’t touch, just processors. We pay between 100 and 600 Tanzanian shillings per kilo for big roots which would otherwise go to waste. In this way, farmers have the advantage of selling their cassava throughout the year.

**HOST:** What challenges do you face with collective marketing?

**MATUNGWA:** The biggest challenge is that, despite our large capacity to buy cassava in bulk, farmers do not understand that we cannot always buy from them when they want us to. We have production quotas and market demands to meet. We cannot process cassava when there is no demand from customers. We have to wait for the right time and enough customers.

**HOST:** What is your advice to cassava farmers?

**MATUNGWA:** They should not give up on cassava or underestimate it. Most people see cassava as a crop for hunger relief. That’s why it was not grown commercially. Instead, it was planted sparingly, and growers didn’t expect to receive much when they sold it.

**HOST:** What about consumers?

**MATUNGWA:** My advice to consumers is to take it seriously. Cassava processing is more expensive than processing maize and that’s why cassava flour is expensive. They should also consider the value added to it through processing and accept the prices like they do for any other grain.

**HOST:** Thank you, Matanga

Signature tune/bridge

**HOST:** After listening to Matanga Joseph on cassava processing, adding value and collective marketing, let’s talk to Salum Nakubabi. Mr. Nakubabi is the Secretary of Jitegemee Cassava Growers in Mtwara, in southern Tanzania. He talks about collective marketing and how it changed his life.

**SALUM:** I am a small-scale farmer and I started planting cassava on my small farm in 1983. But I did not receive much from the crop; it was only for eating and getting a little extra cash.

In 2006, me and some other farmers were introduced to groups by government extension officers. They recommended that we form groups so they could more easily help us instead of trying to help every individual.

We started with a half-hectare of cassava. But then the district administration saw our efforts and gave us twelve hectares. We used ten hectares to plant cassava commercially and a half-hectare for a model farm.

**HOST:** What difference did joining the group and working collectively make for you?

**SALUM:** So much benefit ... In the past, growing cassava took all my time. There was no rest and all I got was from hand to mouth. Collective working gave me time to rest and learn more professional cassava cultivation.

We learnt to grow our own seedlings which we planted in our farm and sold to other farmers for extra cash. We received more attention and training from farm extension workers from Mtwara Municipality. They taught us how to grow quality disease-resistant cassava that produced high yields.

**HOST:** What about collective marketing? Did this make any difference?

**SALUM:** In the past, I struggled to find buyers in the market for my low-quality cassava. But now, the municipality brings us big buyers and processors from Mtwara and outside. Even the entrepreneurs know us and come to buy from us for the price we want, because of our high quality cassava.

We have become known to non-governmental organizations and connected to outside markets, and we have received professional help to boost our cassava business. Joining groups has saved my life and improved my income.

Signature tune/bridge

**HOST:** Now let us listen to a woman’s perspective on cassava business and the benefits of collective marketing.

Welcome, Fabiola Mkorekha. Can you please tell us how you have benefited from collective marketing?

**FABIOLA:** Being uneducated, married, and a mother of five children, cassava growing was the only business I knew ─ it was done by everyone for food and money. I used to plant on my small farm, eat with my family, and sell the remainder at the market to pay for extra expenses and get a little money.

**HOST:** How did you get into collective marketing?

**FABIOLA:** After working independently for some time and not earning much, I heard from other farmers in a neighboring village. They talked about how their lives had improved through forming groups and working collectively, and how this had attracted support for their groups from government and non-government organizations.

**HOST:** How did you go about collective marketing and how did you benefit?

**FABIOLA:** It was not easy convincing other farmers to unite and work collectively. But eventually we all agreed and formed a Jipe Moyo Group ─ this means “encouragement” ─ in 2013 with eighteen members. We started with one hectare which we were given by the village, and we have now expanded to a three and a half hectare farm.

**SFX:** VILLAGE SOUNDS

**HOST:** What was the result of your efforts?

**FABIOLA:** Not only did our group unite us, but it also created socialization and friendship and empowered us socially and economically.

I received the combined benefits of income from selling our cassava and professional knowledge on cassava production. I also learned to add value to cassava by making cakes and buns. In the past, my knowledge of cassava flour was limited to cooking *ugali* only (*Editor’s note: stiff porridge*).

The money we received as a group was divided among ourselves, and we saved some to be used in a savings and loan scheme. I borrowed 120,000 Tanzanian shillings to supplement my farming by creating a business buying and reselling women’s wrappers.

**HOST:** Wow, that’s very enterprising!

**FABIOLA:** (LAUGHTER)… You know I never used to have my own money. I used to admire things but I did not have money. But after starting my women’s vitenge *(Editor’s note: “Vitenge” is Swahili for “wrappers”)* business, I have become more independent and don’t depend on my husband for money anymore.

I have used the profits to take my children to school, and bought myself a converted dressing table, wardrobe, bed and mattress! These were only dreams! But now they have become a reality and I am a very happy and contented woman, thanks to collective marketing!

I have surpassed my expectations. I borrowed 120,000 shillings and 150,000 shillings! I have finished repaying the loan, returned my capital, and made a profit of 30,000 shillings.

**HOST:** Thank you, Fabiola; that is very impressive. Congratulations.

**FABIOLA:** Thank you very much for the opportunity.

Signature tune

**HOST:** Thank you Matanga, Salum and Fabiola for sharing your experiences about the cassava value chain and the benefits of collective marketing.

After talking to small-scale farmers about collective marketing, we shall now hear from a government cassava expert on his experience of collective marketing.

Welcome, John Msemo, Senior Agricultural Researcher from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and Cooperatives and expert on post-harvest cassava.

**MSEMO:** Thank you. To me, cassava is a good business and can be done by anyone. Market demand is bigger than supply for both raw tubers and processed cassava flour. We encourage small-scale farmers to form groups and co-operatives so that they have more power to produce, process, bargain and grow profitably.

**HOST:** Why should they form groups if they can do these things individually and get the same benefits?

**MSEMO:** One of the challenges is that there are poor links between different actors in the value chain, for example between millers and farmers. The millers might demand more cassava than an individual farmer can supply. But if you work in a group, you can supply those millers.

Also, if farmers are in a group, it is easier to give them government assistance on improved planting materials, adding value and processing technology. This saves energy and resources instead of dividing it between individual farmers.

**HOST:** What about financing?

**MSEMO:** It is easy for the government and other stakeholders to support groups to add value to their cassava. Also, it’s easier for groups to access loans because the groups act as collateral for the loans; it’s not easy for individuals to have collateral to access loans.

Cassava equipment is very expensive; not many can afford the machines and don’t know where to get capital to buy them. You also need a building to house the equipment and to dry and store your cassava. It is easier to access a building through a local government when farmers work in groups.

If farmers form groups, banks have more confidence to give farmers loans. This can boost their productivity, add value to their production and give them purchasing power to dictate the selling prices for raw and processed cassava.

**HOST:** Thank you, Msemo, for your valuable contribution on the need and importance of collective marketing.

**MSEMO:** Thank you; you are welcome.

**HOST:** That was John Msemo, a cassava expert and government official, giving his view on the Tanzanian government’s efforts to promote cassava farming, processing and collective marketing, the challenges faced by small-scale growers, and the opportunities for cassava in the marketplace.

We also heard from Matanga Joseph, Salum Nakubabi and Fabiola Mkorekha, farmers and cassava processors who have given us insight into the cassava value chain and the benefits of collective marketing.

Collective marketing has the additional benefit of helping small-scale farmers compete more effectively with large-scale cassava producers, processors and middlemen who sometimes take advantage of farmers, reduce their bargaining power and limit their market and income.

Thank you for tuning in to (name of program). Till next time, it’s been me your host, (host’s name) Stay tuned!

Signature tune

## Acknowledgements

Contributed by: Raziah Mwawanga

Reviewed by: John Msemo, Kibaha Research Center, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, Tanzania

**Information sources**

Interviews:

John Msemo, July 2014

Matanga Joseph, August 2014

Salum Nakubabi, August 2014

Fabiola Mkorekha, August 2014

Project undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD)