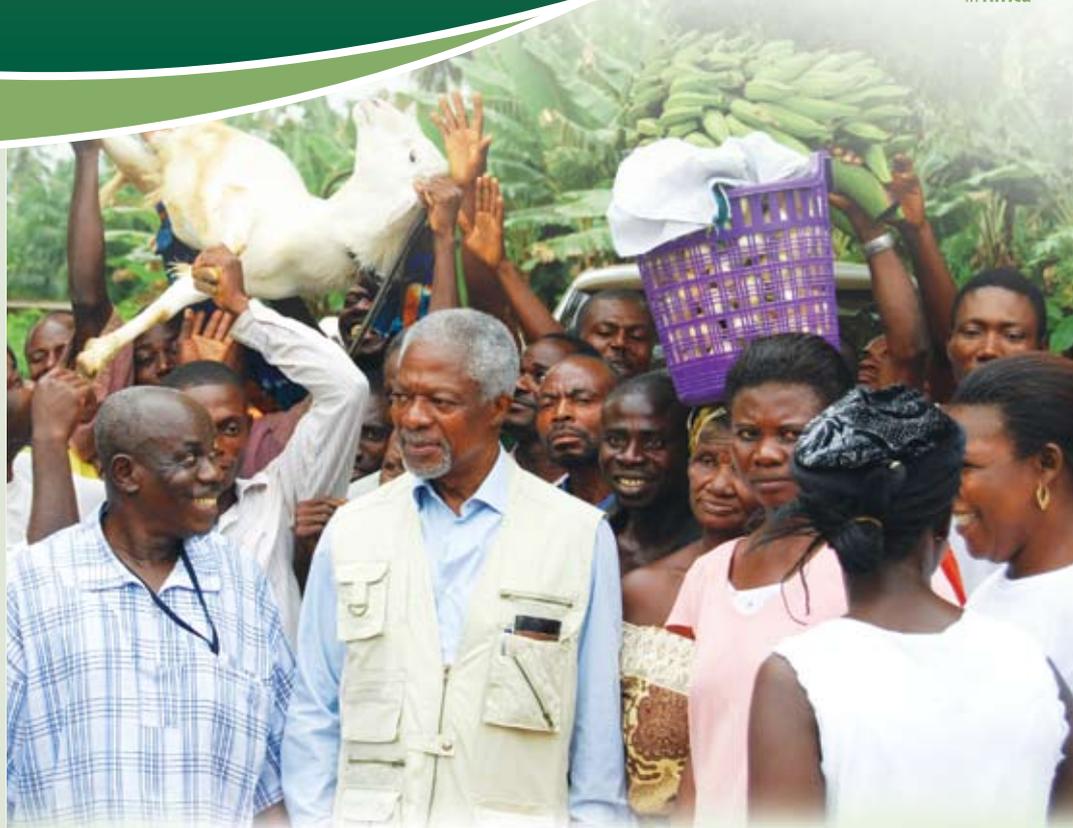


AGRA UPDATE

Food secure and prosperous Africa through promotion of rapid, sustainable agricultural growth based on small holder farmers

Alliance
for a Green Revolution
in Africa

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Africa's Breadbaskets Key to Food Security

Mr Kofi A. Annan

Chairman of the Board, AGRA

From a speech to the World Economic Forum, Cape Town, June 2009

Global production of major cereal crops set a world record last year. The harvest was large enough not just to meet world demand for food and feed but also to rebuild global grain reserves that had dropped in recent years.

Yet, despite this good news, the food crisis in Africa continues unabated. Hunger in Africa has never been worse, with some 300 million Africans lacking enough food each day. Food prices across most of the continent are higher than a year ago. It is clear that global plenty is not enough to combat this crisis. To feed its growing population of 900 million people, Africa needs its own food security.

This can only be achieved through a uniquely African Green Revolution, one that recognizes smallholder farmers as the key to increasing production, promotes change across the entire agricultural system, and puts fairness and the environment at its heart.

Given the scale of the food crisis we face and the human misery it causes, change must come quickly. This is why AGRA's strategy is focusing resources and partnerships where they will make the biggest difference – in Africa's high-potential breadbasket areas. These are large areas of land with relatively good soil, reliable rainfall, a basic infrastructure already in place, and active smallholder farmers. They are also in countries with a strong commitment to agricultural development.

Cont. on page 3

AGRA's Vision:

A food secure and prosperous Africa achieved through rapid, sustainable agricultural growth based on small holder farmers who produce staple food crops

AGRA's Mission:

To trigger a uniquely African Green Revolution that transforms agriculture into a highly productive, efficient, competitive and sustainable system that assures food security and lifts millions out of poverty.





“Thanks to AGRA’s work and integrated approach in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania, 700,000 smallholder farmers there have produced 5 million tons of maize. This has been a major contribution to food security in a drought year in Tanzania.”

Steven Wasira

Tanzania Minister of Agriculture

Turning Tanzania into a Breadbasket

About 80 percent of the population works in the farm sector and agriculture accounts for 45 percent of GDP. But, until recently, agricultural growth has been slow. Many of Tanzania’s farmers struggle to obtain improved seed and fertilizers, and national seed production capacity is low. Farmers lack access to markets and finance. Per capita annual income in Tanzania is US\$400—less than half the average for sub-Saharan Africa—and 44 percent of Tanzanians are undernourished.

Clearly a transformation in food production cannot come too soon. Accordingly, the goal of AGRA and its partners in Tanzania is ambitious: transform Tanzania’s subsistence farming into small-scale, sustainable commercial activity in five to ten years. Such progress would ensure food security as well as help transform Tanzania into a net food exporter.

Maize is the major staple food for Tanzania’s 38 million people. Improving smallholder maize production, especially in high-potential areas, is therefore top of the agenda, and AGRA is working closely with government and other partners to boost its production in breadbasket areas.

But AGRA’s efforts are not limited to maize. Together with its partners, AGRA is putting in place an integrated set of programs to help transform Tanzania’s agriculture.

These programs include:

- Supporting the Ministry of Agriculture’s breeding of disease-resistant varieties of maize, beans and cassava; developing seed businesses; and selling surplus cassava harvests in new growth markets.
- Building Tanzania’s fledgling private seed sector through grants to three private seed companies. The companies produce and distribute improved varieties of maize, rice, banana, beans, pigeon pea, finger millet and sorghum.
- Strengthening a nationwide network of agro-dealers to supply smallholder farmers with affordable farm materials, provide training in how to use them, and help link farmers to markets.
- Working with the government to develop a “smart subsidy” program that provides cash-strapped farmers with vouchers to buy farm inputs. Smart subsidies are now reaching farmers in 52 districts.
- Partnering with Tanzania’s National Microfinance Bank, the Financial Sector Deepening Trust, and Africa’s Standard Bank in two separate loan programs that will together offer US \$35 million in affordable loans to farmers and small- to medium-sized agro-entrepreneurs.
- Funding development of a modern African Soil Information System to provide data needed to revitalize soils and sustainably manage land and water resources. Tanzania’s Selian Agricultural Research Institute is an important partner in this effort.
- Strengthening agricultural education by establishing an MSc program in plant breeding at Tanzania’s Sokoine University of Agriculture, and supporting six Tanzanian PhD students in plant breeding at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa.
- Working with the government to reform seed and fertilizer policies to increase agricultural production. ■

Cont. from page 1

Africa's Breadbaskets Key to Food Security

Hunger in Africa has never been worse, with some 300 million Africans lacking enough food each day.

Developing Africa's breadbaskets requires a comprehensive and integrated approach to improve the productivity, profitability and sustainability of smallholder farmers. This army of small farmers, who are largely women, grow most of the continent's food. They do so with limited government support, minimal resources, poor quality seeds, lack of fertilizer to improve the quality of their soils and poor crop management practices. They also now have to cope with the increasing impact of climate change.

Given such obstacles, it is no surprise that African yields are just one-quarter of the global average. Through improving the quality of seeds used by smallholder farmers and encouraging better soil and water management, we can help them to dramatically improve their productivity.

Achieving an African Green Revolution will also require good governance, policy action on fair trade rules, and stronger, more comprehensive support to farmers. Increased government investment in roads and infrastructure is also critical. And national financing and affordable lending by Africa's commercial banks must be complemented with substantial international financial flows.

Africa's governments have united behind the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), which commits them to allocating 10 percent of their national budgets to agriculture, with the goal of achieving six percent average annual agricultural growth rate.

AGRA aligns its work closely with CAADP, and in our first two-and-a-half years, we have forged essential and groundbreaking partnerships with a number of African and global institutions. We are working with these partners to bring about a uniquely African Green Revolution and unleash Africa's agricultural potential. Our momentum is growing quickly, and we welcome other key stakeholders, large and small, to join us in creating a more prosperous and food-secure Africa. ■

NEWS NEWS>>

Grantees Assemble in Bamako, Mali

Over 300 delegates from across Africa converged in the Malian capital city of Bamako on the Monday morning of 5th October 2009, to attend a four-day meeting of Grantees of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, Program for Africa Seed Systems (PASS).

PASS grantees are building a competitive and innovative seed industry for staple crops in Africa, which is a key catalyst in achieving food security and reducing poverty. A competitive seed industry will ensure farmers get high quality seeds which produce bountiful harvests - enough for farmers to sell and store for food.

Grantees at the Bamako meeting mostly work in the areas of crop breeding, seed production and seed supply and are key players in the seed value chain. Most of them have been able to expand and improve their work through AGRA grants.

Grantees made presentations at the conference on the progress of their work. By bringing representatives of these important investments together under one roof for several days, it was hoped that progress would be accelerated. They exchanged new ideas about how to reach farmers throughout Africa with the benefits of improved seed and crop management practices.

The meeting was officially opened by Mr. Moussa Leo Sidibe, Permanent Secretary of the Malian Ministry of Agriculture, on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture. He



Grantees exchange ideas during a field visit.



Participants at the PASS meeting in Bamako.

urged participants to work together, and with policy makers particularly Heads of States.

Present during the opening ceremony at the International Conference Centre in Bamako, Mali, were: AGRA's President, Dr. Namanga Ngong; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation representative, Yilma Kebede; The Rockefeller Foundation representative, Gary Toenniessen; and a farmers' representative, Togola Bakari.



Editorial

Good Governance Means Genuine Support for Africa's Smallholder Farmers

Dr Namanga Ngongi, President, AGRA

In his groundbreaking speech in Ghana, US President Barack Obama highlighted the importance of agricultural development to trigger economic growth. His words ring true across the continent, where the agricultural sector has languished for decades, despite its critical role in food security and the economy.

Africa is fed largely by women smallholders, laboring to produce the continent's food with outdated methods and equipment, and little support. While it employs seven out of ten Africans, agriculture receives on average just four to five percent of national budgets. With the scant resources they have, it's no surprise that our smallholder farmers produce yields about one-quarter of the global average.

"AGRA's partnerships integrate programs in seeds, soils, market access, policy and innovative finance to make African agriculture efficient and competitive. Many of our programs also strengthen agricultural education and extension, and involve and train youth. We work to reward innovation and spread success, and minimize disparities in development wherever possible. Across the board, we spur the public and private sectors to work together with full transparency."

How can this be, with all the technology and know-how of the twenty-first century?

The main problem is that for decades, national governments have underinvested in basic programs that could turn

smallholder farming into a viable economic enterprise.

Such programs include: building grain storage and roads; improving extension services to train farmers; supporting agricultural research; helping farmers access basic inputs like good seeds and fertilizers; and creating the conditions for new agricultural businesses to grow and trade to flourish. Why has all this not been done before?

One reason is we have not been able to communicate well enough with

policy makers, or to hold them to the consequences of their decisions or inaction. However, now there is momentum to do

both in Africa, with support from our global partners. Recent successes illustrate just how potent policy changes can be.

Consider Malawi: the nation doubled its spending on agriculture, and within years transformed itself from a net food importer to a net food exporter. Government programs which spurred this change included “smart subsidies” targeted at the poorest farmers, plus investments in roads, grain storage, and irrigation. The agriculture boom helped fuel a seven percent annual economic growth rate.

Then there is Tanzania. The Minister of Agriculture, Steven Wasira, recently reported that smallholder farmers in the Southern Highlands harvested a record maize crop in 2008-09, helping ensure food security in a year when much of the country experienced drought. The Minister attributed this success in part to partnership with AGRA. This partnership has helped increase the availability of good seeds and fertilizers, unlocked affordable credit for farming, and opened new markets for smallholder farmers.

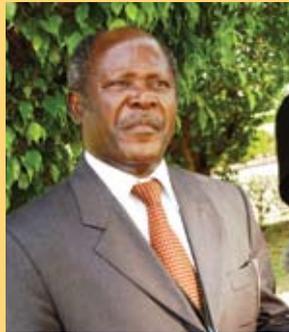
Other African countries are following suit, guided by Africa’s ambitious Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP).

But while political will by Africa’s leaders must be at the heart of our continent’s agricultural transformation, Africa cannot, and need not, go it alone. African farmers now have friends.

At the recent G8 summit in Italy, the world’s wealthiest countries committed to mobilize at least US \$20 billion over the next three years for sustainable agricultural development. The Obama Administration, propelling the initiative, committed US \$3 to 4 billion over several years.

Toward this end, the G8 expressed their support for CAADP and acknowledged the importance of public-private partnerships, particularly AGRA. It encouraged countries and private actors “to join in the common effort towards global food security through a coherent approach.” AGRA exemplifies this coherent approach to overcome the inertia of decades in Africa. ■

AGRA’s New Strategy for Smallholders



Dr. Namanga Ngongi

AGRA has crafted a strategy for success: invest first in places that have the best immediate prospects – the “breadbasket” regions of Africa.

AGRA is bringing to these breadbasket areas a critical mass of resources

to catalyze change across the agricultural system; boost farmer incomes; build the capacity of farmers’ organizations to work on behalf of their members; and develop high quality, competitive goods.

AGRA concentrates on investing here since success is most likely – these breadbasket areas have relatively good rains, soils and infrastructure, and many smallholder farmers. With smart planning carried out in close coordination with African governments, these areas could move from chronic food insecurity to become food baskets full of Africa’s staple crops. The first four “breadbasket” countries are Ghana, Mali, Mozambique and Tanzania.

For instance, consider northern Ghana. This region could become a major producer of high quality rice – in contrast to current production of so-called “stone rice,” full of pebbles. But to move from being a net importer to net exporter of rice, Ghana’s farmers need better crop varieties; land and water management; processing and marketing; and better access to credit. Such assistance will aid not only rice farmers, but farmers growing many crops, from cassava to cowpea, often on the same small farms. In sum, smallholder farmers may be small-scale, but they are in fact Africa’s greatest asset. Their farming businesses can become high-yield, profitable and sustainable.

Now is the time to invest in these farmers with a range of support so that they can double or quadruple their yields. Only then will a real African Green Revolution take hold. ■

AGRA Launches New Partnerships

AGRA and NEPAD Launch Historic Partnership to Rapidly Increase Food Production and Achieve Food Security in Africa

Abuja, Nigeria, 9th November 2009

AGRA and the African Union’s New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) entered a groundbreaking partnership that will link African government commitments to agricultural advances in seeds, soil health, policy and markets.

The new partners will direct investments towards policies and programs that strengthen smallholder farmers’ access to better soil management techniques and improved seeds and fertilizers, increase their access to markets, and build the capacity of African institutions to advance agricultural research and to develop home-grown, evidence-based agricultural policies.

Commenting on this new partnership, Mr Kofi Annan, the Chairman of AGRA, said it will enable African countries to close the gap between intention and action on behalf of smallholder farmers.

NEPAD works closely with African governments to implement the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), a framework to accelerate economic growth and boost food security through greater investments in agriculture. Endorsed by African leaders, CAADP calls on African governments to allocate 10 percent of their national budgets to agriculture, in order to achieve 6 percent annual agricultural growth. ■

“An African Green Revolution that increases the productivity of smallholder farmers is crucial if NEPAD is to reach it’s goal of 6 percent annual agricultural growth. Indeed, NEPAD’s vision and AGRA’s integrated investment programs are complementary. Together we will speed the attainment of African food security and prosperity.”

Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of NEPAD.



Dr Akin Adesina, VP Policy & Partnerships of AGRA shakes hands with Pär Gransdéd, Secretary General of AWEPA in Capetown.

New African-European Partnership Launched to Strengthen Parliamentary Action in Support of African Agricultural Development

Cape Town
(2 October 2009)

AGRA and the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA) entered a new partnership to support African parliamentarians as they promote policies to help

smallholder farmers make the transition from subsistence to market-oriented agriculture, a change that will require a comprehensive transformation of Africa’s agricultural system.

In Africa, the AWEPA-AGRA partnership will help strengthen parliamentary committees overseeing agriculture and trade. It will foster greater debate on agriculture as an engine of pro-poor growth and support the capacity of parliamentary committees to engage on evidence-based policy dialogues, on how African countries can cope with major challenges.

Building Rural Markets, Raising Productivity and Incomes of Smallholder Farmers in Northern Mozambique

Maputo, Mozambique (17 August 2009)

AGRA joined forces with the Government of Mozambique and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in support of PROMER, the Rural Markets Promotions Program. PROMER is a long-term initiative committed to helping small farming households make the transition from subsistence to market-oriented agriculture. PROMER seeks bigger harvests and higher incomes for hundreds of thousands of poor rural farmers in Mozambique’s northern region, a fertile area with strong agricultural potential.

Partnership for Production of Seed

Breathing New Life into West Africa's Commercial Seed Sector, Bamako, Mali

(5 October 2009)

In its latest efforts to synergize efforts between organisations in the seed industry to ensure farmers get the best seeds, AGRA signed an agreement to support the West Africa Seed Alliance (WASA) during the sidelines of the Program for Africa Seed Systems grantees' conference at the International Conference Centre in Bamako, Mali.

Other partners include: the African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The partnerships greatly reinforce the West Africa Seed Alliance (WASA). WASA is implemented by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), the Seed Science Center at Iowa State University (SSC-ISU), and CNFA Inc.

The African Seed Investment Fund: To Grow the Seed, Companies

To advance the Green Revolution, AGRA partnered with African Agricultural Capital (AAC) to launch the African Seed Investment Fund (ASIF). ASIF aims to get high quality seeds into the hands of smallholder farmers by investing in small- and medium-size seed companies in Southern and Eastern Africa.

ASIF is providing long-term loans at below-market rates to at least 20 seed companies. African-owned, ASIF is the first fund of its kind, and will fill a critical funding gap in African agricultural development—financing for the seriously underdeveloped and undercapitalized seed sector.

Only about 50 small- and medium-sized African seed companies operate across Southern and Eastern Africa, compared to hundreds that operate in Europe or the United States.

To nurture such companies, ASIF will operate in eight countries—Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia. ■

Since its inception, AGRA has forged a series of groundbreaking partnerships with African governments, NEPAD and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the science community, farmers' organizations, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), the private sector, and multilateral and bilateral organizations.

Other partners—such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs—have collaborated to launch sister initiatives, including the the African Enterprise Challenge Fund and the Coalition for African Rice Development.



Fostering Private Sector Investment in Agriculture

Vital inputs like high quality seeds and fertilizer still lie beyond the reach of most smallholder farmers. Many African banks, which could provide desperately needed credit, have typically favored other sectors, such as communications, energy and real estate.

Against this backdrop, AGRA's Innovative Financing Initiative is working with partners to provide smallholder farmers the funds they need. AGRA aims ultimately to help leverage \$4 billion in low-interest loans.

Standard Bank: Releasing \$100 million in loans for small farms and agri-businesses

In March this year, AGRA entered into a partnership with Africa's largest bank, Standard Bank, to disburse up to \$100 million to various agricultural players in Tanzania, Mozambique, Ghana and Uganda. AGRA and other partners have offered a \$10 million loan guarantee, which lowered risk for the bank, enabling it to offer lower-interest loans.

The program's goal is to reach 750,000 small farmers and agribusinesses over the next three years. Customers are to include:

- Input dealers, including local seed companies, small-scale fertilizer importers and producers, agro-dealers
- Smallholder farmers to speed adoption of new technologies and high quality inputs

- Post-harvest processors and traders, to fund value-added processing, storage facilities, transportation and trade. Emphasis will be given to staples including maize, rice, sorghum, millet, cassava and legumes. But consideration will also be given to cash crops, especially vegetables and fruits and, in some regions, cotton.

In Kenya, AGRA and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) together provided \$5 million in loan guarantee funds to leverage \$50 million in small loans from Equity Bank. Equity will lend to 2.5 million farmers and 15,000 agribusinesses.

A similar partnership with National Microfinance Bank in Tanzania and the Financial Sector Deepening Trust will disburse US \$10 million in agricultural loans

IFC Joins the Cause

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, joined forces with AGRA to unlock credit and financing for small-scale farmers and agribusinesses across sub-Saharan Africa.

The organizations signed an MOU to work together in a number of ways to scale up AGRA's partnerships with investors and national commercial banks. The goals: make loans available to farmers and agribusinesses like smaller seed companies; expand and finance networks of farm-supply dealers in rural areas; and make fertilizer more widely available and affordable.



Sustaining the Sumptuous Lunch

Stella Kihara, Communications Consultant, AGRA

It is lunchtime in the household of Bassidou Samake, a farmer in Sanankoroba village in Mali. I count 16 men dipping their fingers into the large bowls of rice and peanut sauce. I feel privileged though uneasy to be in this circle of men. But shortly I experience the Malian warmth and hospitality, putting me at ease, as I am offered a small dish.

The other diners are members of Samake's family of 42: wives, nephews, nieces, brothers and children. Upon his father's demise, Samake assumed leadership of the family, a responsibility left to the most educated male family member. Samake had reached the 6th grade.

Leading the family also means feeding it. In the past, the sons and nephews working on the farms used sorghum, cowpea and millet seeds from previous harvests, resulting in low yields. Traditionally women are not food producers here.

As a result, Samake was forced to purchase food for this huge family—a huge challenge for someone without a formal source of income. So when he heard an advertisement on the radio for improved seed varieties, he decided to try them.

Today Samake has three deals with the local seed company, Faso Kaba. He is one of 50 local farmers who produce seed for the company. He started a small supply shop and sells improved seeds to neighboring farmers. And he contracts part of his farm to Faso Kaba who, with researchers from Institut d'Economie Rurale du Mali and government extension workers, provide farmer training on the new inputs.

Listening to our conversation about seed production while he shares the meal is Drissa Fofana, a neighbor. On his lap sits a packet of maize seed, just purchased at Samake's input shop—a tiny, dark room that holds one shelf of seeds and other inputs and a small table where a scale and other tools are placed.

Fofana vouches for the virtues of the shop: Before it existed, he had to travel 50 kilometers to Bamako to purchase inputs.

For AGRA, it is demonstration and marketing by public and private-sector seed companies like Faso Kaba--and providers of other low-cost, adapted technologies—that will transform the life of Samake's smallholder peers in Africa.

Says Samake of his own farm businesses, "It is useless to own a bull or car if you cannot provide peanut sauce and rice for your family. I am glad I can offer a meal to my big family and take my daughter to university." He smiles as he adds, "Thanks to the new way of doing things, I have also become famous in the village since everyone comes to my farm to learn new approaches and buy inputs." ■

Got Lime?

Farming communities in Western Kenya organize to overcome acidic soils

Bee Wuethrich, Burness Communications

Mildred M'mbasu, her head wrapped in a blue and white polka-dot bandana, her face bright and round, stands proudly in front of her maize. The plants reach above our heads, and bow in the breeze. a testament to a new farming practice in Majemo Village: the use of soil lime to counteract the region's acidic soils.

The Luhya farmers here in Western Kenya call the soil "chumvi" – salty. The name comes from a bitter fact of local farming: nutrients have been leached from the soil, whose high acidity now limits crop yields by up to 30 percent. As a result, farmers' maize yields provide enough food for only three months for a family or household of up to seven people. Food must be purchased the other nine months, which stretch into a long season of hunger.

The high soil acidity is due to the constant leaching of nutrients by the abundant rains in these ancient and highly weathered soils. While overuse of fertilizer contributes to acidic soils in many other parts of the world, this is not the case in Western Kenya, where farmers use less than 10 kg of fertilizer per hectare, one-tenth the global average.

The known cure for acidic soil is lime - a calcium-rich material that can be produced as a waste product of cement manufacture. Mildred's farm is one of a handful in the village which piloted its use, increasing yield from one bag per hectare to six. The successful field research, organized by the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) and Moi University demonstrated impact of liming on yields and created demand for lime among neighboring farmers. One hundred farmers put aside money to purchase the lime—but could not find an affordable source nearby.

Now, however, a new partnership funded by AGRA, which brings together farmers, researchers, banks, agro-dealers, fertilizer companies, government agencies and civil society organizations is creating a system to get farmers lime, other fertilizers to restore the soil's nutrient balance and structure, and knowledge about how to use conservation agriculture techniques to sustainably increase their yields.

On 8 July 2009, some 30 people came together at KARI-Kakamega to tackle the problem. The institute is coordinating the project which aims to initially get lime to 5,000 farmers in the Kakamega North and Siaya districts and then expand to reach 50,000 farmers.

In addition to improving food security, AGRA expects that the program will relieve pressure on the environment, especially on the nearby Kakamega Forest. It is the only remnant of a rainforest that once carpeted the area, but has been steadily replaced by farmland as small-scale farmer struggle to grow enough food.

Dr Bashir Jama, the director of AGRA's soil health program, summarized the connections being made through the project: "When extension workers train farmers in the use of lime, and banks can finance agro-dealers to stock it, and farmers can access low-interest loans to purchase it – then we can begin to see dramatic changes in farm yield and food security."

The AGRA funds will be used to invest in bulk purchase and transport of the products; to purchase soil testing equipment; and to fund farm demonstrations. Homa Lime Company in Kisumu and the Athi River Mining Company in Nairobi will supply their products at a discounted cost. Equity Bank's Kilimo Biashara program will make loans available at a 10% interest

rate – the lowest rate available to local farmers and agro-dealers. Moi University will provide technical support and get new acid-tolerant maize seed farmers, and train several MSc students to assess the agronomic, economic and environmental benefits of these interventions. The CSO SACRED Africa will work to improve marketing opportunities as farmers increase their yield.

"Continued development not only threatens biodiversity but would ultimately alter the regions hydrology and affect the water supply for millions of people, from Lake Victoria all the way to the Nile River," Jama says.

He also stresses that using lime for maize farming is an entry-point.

"We must also use this opportunity to diversify," he says. "While 90% of farmers here grow maize, it alone will not end poverty. Farmers also need to grow beans, sweet potato, and soybeans. All of these crops will make money, improve the resilience of

farms and the nutrition of families."

The farmers of Majemo village are setting the pace. Their Majemo Agro-Farming Network supports use of lime and diversification. Emily Nunda, the association coordinator, grows beans, cassava and vegetables as well as maize. She keeps a dairy cow and several sheep. She is eager to strengthen her soil with lime and other supplements, convinced that it will finally enable her to make a meaningful profit.

In September, the first truckloads of lime should arrive. In the meantime, KARI-Kakamega, Equity Bank, the agro-dealers, and the farmers will be hard at work, preparing to transform subsistence farming into a successful commercial activity, and end the long seasons of hunger. ■



Farmers purchasing inputs.

Achievements So Far

Report from AGRA President Dr Namanga Ngong’i



In the past two-and-a-half years, AGRA’s integrated programs have begun to catalyze the kind of change that is so urgently needed. These early accomplishments, implemented by our staff, partners, and grantees, are documented in a new publication: [AGRA, Early Accomplishments: Foundations of Growth](#). Now available on our website www.agra.alliance.org

New seed varieties

African farmers are using new improved seeds of staple food crops developed by agricultural scientists incorporating traits from national research organisations, CGIAR and farmers. AGRA’s funding of this work has led to the release of 68 crop varieties adapted to specific local conditions. These include crop varieties of cassava, bean, sorghum and maize. To make these improved seed varieties available to farmers, AGRA is supporting two dozen small- and medium-size seed companies and cooperatives—nearly doubling their seed production within two years.

Getting supplies to farmers

Our agro-dealer program is strengthening national networks of suppliers in 11 countries. These small farm-input shops get quality seeds and fertilizers to farmers in remote areas. In Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia 4,400 agro-dealers have been trained.

Western Kenya farmers served by the program have increased their maize yields by 115 percent. The distance farmers must travel to buy supplies has been cut from 17 km to 4 km.

Policy support

The goal of the Policy and Partnerships Program is to transform the current national agricultural policy environments that severely constraint the modernisation of agriculture. The program has engaged with governments and other development partners to promote smallholder-friendly policy changes needed to improve incentives for adopting new improved crop varieties and sustainable integrated soil health technologies by farmers, building of markets, facilitating trade, and encourage private sector investments in agriculture to promote equity and sustainability.

Commercial credit

Our innovative financing work is unlocking low-interest credit from commercial banks. Thus far, AGRA and it’s partners have used “loan guarantee funds” totaling \$17 million to leverage \$160 million in low-interest loans for large numbers of smallholder farmers and agro-dealers.

Revitalizing the soil

AGRA’s Soil Health Program is working to restore 6.3 million hectares of degraded farmland over 10 years. We co-launched the continent-wide African Soil Information System to improve how Africa’s soils are evaluated, mapped, monitored and managed.

Getting the goods to market

AGRA’s Market Access Program is getting better market information directly to farmers, as well as training them in marketing. For example, through our support to Technoserve, 12,000 banana growers in Uganda—more than one-third of them women—have increased their farm gate prices by 30 percent.

Africa’s farmers need and deserve the same tools and opportunities available to farmers around the world, from good seed to tractors. AGRA’s strategy aims to open these opportunities and make smallholder farming commercially viable, efficient and sustainable. In this way, Africa can meet its food needs and help to ensure a food-secure world. ■

Grantee innovations bringing transformation...



NEWS NEWS>>

Developing Doctors of Soil and Water Management

A green revolution requires dedicated, innovative scientists. And since Africans know Africa better than anyone else, AGRA is supporting the development of scientists from the continent.

In a new effort to do so, Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania is leading other universities in nurturing PhDs in soil and water management.

Sokoine University drafted a curriculum and presented it to stakeholders at a workshop for refinement in April this year. The 40 workshop participants included academics, administrators and scientists from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and Zimbabwe as well as representatives of Association for Strengthening Agriculture Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), Kilimo Trust, the Africa Highlands Initiative and Tanzania's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Cooperatives.

AGRA and Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), a consortium of 25 universities in Eastern and Southern Africa, will largely co-fund the program.

Africa Fertilizer Financing Mechanism

Fertilizer is vital to boosting crop yields. But the costs of fertilizers have sky-rocketed in the recent past so that African farmers, some of who live in remote areas are unable to access fertilizer.

At a ministerial meeting in Nairobi in March, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda collectively expressed their readiness to establish a regional fertilizer procurement facility once a model is finalized.

Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia also requested the Africa Development Bank support the establishment of a Fertilizer Procurement Facility within their zone.

The meeting was attended by ministers of Finance and Agriculture (or their representatives) from eight East and southern Africa countries--Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique and Ethiopia. International organizations like the African Union Commission (AUC), FAO, African Export-Import Bank (AFREXIMBANK), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA) and the African Union's NEPAD were also represented.

The Africa Fertilizer Financing Mechanism is an initiative of AGRA and the African Development Bank (ADB) will help reduce the costs of fertilizer.

Mozambique: Soil Management Program

In October, AGRA launched the "Program for Integrated Soil Management" aimed at improving production among 20,000 farmers in the fertile province of Nampula and Zambezia. Under the program, AGRA will disburse about 800,000 US dollars for a three year period for the project, covering the districts of Morrumpula, Malema, Ribaué and Monapo in Nampula, and Alto Molocue, in Zambezia. The project is to be implemented by the Mozambican Agricultural Research Institute (IIAM). This project is intended to create conditions for the farmers to have access to good quality seeds, fertilizers, and technical assistance for them to be able to use these inputs properly.

...to farmers' lives



Celebrating a Green Revolution Champion

June 11, 2009



Dr. Gebisa Ejeta, Distinguished Professor of Agronomy at Purdue University, was named the recipient of the World Food Prize for research leading to the increased production and availability of sorghum in his native Africa. Ejeta, a plant breeder and geneticist, developed sorghum varieties resistant to drought and Striga, a parasitic weed.

Speaking at the 2009 World Food Prize announcement, Mrs. Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State, had this to say:

“...Dr. Ejeta began his journey in a hut in Ethiopia, where he was born to a mother who was passionately committed to his education. He walked 20 kilometers every Sunday to attend school. He boarded in town for the week, and then he walked home to his family every Friday. Eventually, he made it to college, where he planned to study engineering, but his

mother convinced him he’d do more good for the world if he studied agriculture.

“After completing his PhD at Purdue he went to work focusing on sorghum, a staple crop in parts of Africa, Central America, and South Asia. He helped develop Africa’s first commercial hybrid strain, which needed less water and actually yielded more grain. Then he developed another variety, resistant to Striga weed, which had regularly wiped out a significant portion of Africa’s cereal crops.

“Even while he was making breakthroughs in the lab, he took his work to the field. He knew that for improved seeds to make a difference in people’s lives, farmers would have to know how to use them, which meant they would need access to a seed market and the credit to buy supplies. So he traveled to India and studied its flourishing seed industry and then returned to Sudan, where he helped create one there, along with a system to train farmers in crop management and help them purchase seed and fertilizers on a regular basis. Today, more than a dozen seed companies are operating in Sudan in the market he helped to build.

“Now, he reminds us that a system of agriculture that nourishes all humankind requires more than a single breakthrough or advances in a single field. It requires a sustained and comprehensive approach. We need to create a global supply chain for food. Today, that chain is broken, and we need to repair it and make it stronger.”



Grieving the Death & Celebrating the Life of

Dr Norman Borlaug

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa grieves the passing of Dr Borlaug.

Borlaug, the father of the Green Revolution and an infinite source of inspiration in the cause of ending hunger and poverty. We celebrate his life, his dedicated work and passionate resolve. It was through Dr Borlaug’s efforts that farmers across much of Asia and Latin America were able to grow enough food to avert famine and save the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

We commend Dr Borlaug’s role in advocating for a Green Revolution in Africa. He was painfully aware that the

science-based farming practices that did so much to feed the populations elsewhere failed to take hold in Africa, where population growth has continued to outstrip food production.

As head of Sasakawa-Global 2000, Dr Borlaug’s work touched the lives of millions of Africa’s farmers and thousands of government extension professionals and their counterparts in agricultural research. His work on farmers’ fields – aiming to ‘set the grassroots on fire’ as he liked to say – and his ceaseless advocacy with African governments and policy-makers have helped ensure that agriculture is now at the heart of Africa’s development agenda.

Borlaug’s words and work were an inspiration as well for Mr Kofi A Annan, who as Secretary-General of the United Nations, called for a uniquely African Green Revolution. Annan now chairs the AGRA board.

Just months prior to the launch of AGRA, at the African Fertilizer Summit in Abuja, Nigeria, Dr. Borlaug challenged African and world leaders to find the political will to start an African Green Revolution by replenishing the continent’s severely depleted soils. ■

Green Revolution Taking Root in Africa



By Dr Akinwumi Adesina, Vice President, Policy and Partnerships, AGRA

The tide is slowly turning in favor of Africa’s smallholder farmers, as nations such as Malawi, Tanzania, and Rwanda take bold steps to revitalize agriculture.

In Malawi, government policies, including seed and fertilizer vouchers for poor farmers, have helped transform the country from a net importer to a net exporter of maize for four years running. This has fueled a national economic growth rate of seven percent.

In Rwanda, policies which increased farmers’ access to quality seed and fertilizers have boosted food production for two straight years. Food production grew by 15% in 2007 and 16% in 2008. This growth has improved national food security, even as 20 million people in neighboring countries must depend on food aid for survival.

In the Southern Highlands of Tanzania, a national “smart” subsidy program and new low-interest agricultural loans have enabled hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers to invest in improved seeds and fertilizers, boosting their productivity. Meanwhile, a growing private seed sector is increasing the diversity of improved crops available to smallholders. Such changes are part of a broader effort to achieve the goals put forward in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Plan (CAADP).

The Plan was initiated by the African Union’s New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and adopted by African countries in 2003. It commits governments to allocating 10 percent of their national budgets to agriculture, in pursuit of 6 percent annual agricultural growth. As importantly, it provides a framework for achieving these goals, with National Roundtable processes set up to bring together all sectors with an interest in strengthening national agricultural development.

AGRA is actively engaging in CAADP processes, even as it works to strengthen African countries’ policy-making capacities, and to put in place comprehensive programs which support smallholder farmers. ■

In the News

THISDAY Abuja, NIGERIA, 07.29.2009

Agriculture and Water Resources Minister, Dr. Abba Sayyadi Ruma, said Nigeria’s agricultural budget had gone beyond the Maputo target, while receiving the report of the Vision 2020 National Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Food Security after a stakeholders’ roundtable of the National Food Security Advocacy Group, a private sector and civil society pressure group for the sector. Etim Imisim reports that Nigerian agriculture never had it so good.

The verdict of the Nigerian government and the civil society this week was that the long-awaited the green revolution in the country may have started.

‘Kilimo Kwanza’ starts to bear fruits as House fast-tracks Bill

The East African 26th-30th October 2009

Tanzania’s newly introduced agriculture policy — Kilimo Kwanza — is beginning to bear fruit with the introduction of the National Cereals and Other Produce Bill, 2009.

The Bill, which will benefit all sectors of agriculture, including fresh support for fruit and vegetable producers, provides for policy reforms that are aimed at improving agriculture and helping cereal producers remain competitive in the global market.

The Bill, which has been praised by MPs and farmers alike, is expected to sail through parliament to become the National Cereals and Other Produce Act, 2009. The legislation provides for a new board of Cereals and Other Produce to supervise production and subsequent marketing of traditional food crops.

The new law addresses the concerns of taxpayers, increases support for agricultural environmental program and balances the diverse needs of Tanzania’s family-based food and fibre production system.

“Kilimo Kwanza” means ‘Agriculture First’

‘Rwanda wins praise over food security’

The East African Monday, November 23 2009

Rwanda has joined Malawi as the next successful example of a green revolution in Africa.

Besides Tanzania, it is the only other East African country that has committed at least 10 per cent of its budgetary allocations to agriculture as part of its ambitious green revolution program that has increased farmers’ access to quality seed and fertilizers.

This is being cited as the most possible reason why its food production has grown by 15 per cent in 2007 and 16 per cent in 2008.

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa says Rwanda is following in the footsteps of Malawi’s President Mbingu wa Mutharika and will soon supply food to its partners, who are battling hunger.

Policy Initiative: Empowering Africa Shape Home-grown Agricultural Policies

Des Moines, Iowa, October 2009



Grantee sharing experiences on millet crop breeding.

AGRA's Policy initiative was launched recently to empower African governments to shape home-grown agricultural policies that provide comprehensive support to smallholder farmers. The initiative is supported by a \$15 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. With an initial

focus on five countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique and Tanzania), the initiative will strengthen African agricultural policy-making capacity through training agricultural policy analysts; bolstering policy think tanks; establishing data banks to support evidence-based policy development; and coordinating national policy hubs. It will focus on policies that support farmers in the areas of seeds; soil health; markets and trade; land rights; women's rights; equity; environmental sustainability; and climate change.

While announcing this grant at the World Food Prize Symposium in Des Moines, Iowa, along with a package of nine agricultural development projects totaling \$120 million to address long-term food security, Mr. Gates said, "Melinda and I believe that helping the poorest smallholder farmers grow more and get it to market is the world's single most powerful lever for reducing hunger and poverty." ■

Special Initiatives with AGRA

Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD)

The Initiative's goal is to double rice production in ten years, achieve production of 28 million tons by 2018 in Sub-Sahara Africa. For sustainability, CARD aims to have rice development embedded in the overall national development strategies so that related projects have greater chance of being funded by the Governments as well as development partners.

CARD has so far supported twelve CARD First Group countries, including Kenya, to prepare their National Rice Development Strategies and currently the Initiative is supporting these countries.

www.riceforafrica.org

Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF)

Private sector can and wants to lead in African agricultural development.

A year after the Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF) was launched at the World Economic Forum (WEF) held in Capetown; the fund has recorded significant success.

Three rounds of competition have so far been organized. The responsiveness of the private sector exceeded all expectations. Of the applications, more than 500 were eligible and the best 23 projects were selected, an approval rate of less than 5%. They scored high on innovation, commercial viability as well as development effect in terms of jobs and income.

The projects will benefit more than 4 million African smallholders and their families over a three year period.

www.aecfafrica.org

Good Seeds, Better Lives: Developing Seeds to Meet the Needs of Local Farmers

The road winds like a river through Katumani, a town in the eastern highlands of Kenya. Past brightly painted churches and beauty salons, past butcher shops and bars, and up through terraced swaths of land cut into sloping valleys, lies the Kenyan Agricultural Research Institute (KARI). This is where Clement and Joseph Kamau come to work each morning. And 10 years from now, if millions of Kenyans have managed to plant quality seeds that help boost their yields and increase their incomes, this will be a place worth coming back to visit.

Clement and Joseph have dedicated their lives to reducing hunger and poverty by improving agriculture. And they are experts in more than agriculture. “We know what it’s like to be hungry. We know what it’s like to not be able to concentrate at school due to an empty stomach,” Clement says.

Clement and Joseph could almost be brothers, even though they’re actually not. In addition to sharing a last name, they both grew up in poor farming families in Central Kenya; they both received scholarships—and PhDs—from the African Center for Crop Improvement (ACCI) at the University of KwaZulu Natal, in South Africa; and they are both working to develop improved crop varieties for African farmers with the support of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

This KARI station is located in a semi-arid region of Kenya where most farmers grow maize. Rainfall is rare, drought is common, and farmers frequently struggle to produce enough maize to feed their families. Every year, approximately 80 percent of the district receives emergency food assistance.

For the last 10 years, Joseph Kamau has been working to develop improved varieties of cassava, a starchy root crop that does much better than maize in harsh climates with little rain. He believes that growing cassava—instead of, or in addition to, maize—would protect farmers from vulnerability and ensure a steady and nutritious diet.

Monica Ndeti, 56, is one farmer in the area who is growing cassava. Ever since her husband passed away 20 years ago, she has followed his example and planted a traditional variety of cassava, along with maize, cowpeas, and several other crops, on three acres of well-tended land. The combination of crops has helped her put seven children through school. Unfortunately, the type of cassava variety she plants is outdated, and is susceptible to pests and diseases. This year, 80 to 90 percent of her cassava crop shows signs of cassava mosaic disease—an affliction that will cost her more than half the potential yield, and income, for each plant.

In a field an hour away from Monica’s farm, Joseph Kamau walks among dozens of different cassava varieties. After listening to farmers like Monica, he comes back to this test field to develop new varieties that solve the problems small farmers face. Then he goes back to the farmers to seek their input and continues refining. This process, called participatory variety selection, is essential to the success of his work. Listening to farmers ensures not only that the crop varieties he breeds meet their needs;

it increases the chances that farmers will use them. Joseph explains: “You’ve got to move along with the farmers. If your statistics tell you one thing and the farmers tell you another, you’ve got to go back to the farmers.”

After years of work, Joseph has developed a variety of cassava that is resistant to cassava mosaic disease and produces cassava in nine months instead of the customary 16, ensuring an additional harvest. But will the farmers like its taste, texture, and appearance? To find out, Joseph is off to yet another farm 90 minutes away—a demonstration plot.



Francis and Juliana Mutungi on their cassava farm.

Here, he’s met by Francis and Juliana Mutungi, the owners of the farm, and 24 friends and neighbors who are part of a local farming cooperative. Earlier this year, the couple received a sample of Joseph’s new cassava variety. They also received training. Francis says, “We learned to space the plants a meter apart, to check for pests and diseases.”

Francis and Juliana planted their varieties at the same time Monica Ndeti did. But instead of foot-high plants with blighted leaves, today they stand amid plants that are three-to-four feet high, with healthy green leaves. They will have a bumper crop—enough not only to eat, but to sell to the local bakery, which will grind the cassava into flour and make bread, buns, and other cheap and nutritious foods. Francis, standing with his wife and a 3-year old granddaughter, knows exactly what he’ll do with the additional income. “I would like to help my family. The kids are all here at home because we didn’t have the school fees.” He’d also like to buy more land so he can support his 10 children.

As Francis talks about his dreams, Joseph is talking about cassava. The 24 members of the farming cooperative are assembled in a circle, listening as he shares advice and encouragement. He is transformed—no longer a crop breeder, but a teacher. And he knows that his passion can help farmers—those standing in the field with him and millions more throughout Kenya—transform their lives.

The demonstration has been a success. After three farms and hundreds of kilometers, it’s time for Joseph to head back to his office in Katumani. As he leaves, the farmer group says goodbye through a song in Kikamba, a local language. They sing, “This is a blessed day. We are happy to see you.”

Joseph Kamau is happy, too. “It makes me so happy to see them appreciate my work, to see these healthy plants. This is why I am here.”

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Purchase for Progress: Grantee Leads the Way



Koptigei Widows Group sell their produce to WFP—a major breakthrough for small scale farmers in Africa.

In early 2007, a group of 24 women came together to save their meager earnings through a ‘merry-go-round’* scheme. Koptigei Widows group remained dormant as the women, who earned little from working as farm laborers lacked meaningful resources to save.

“Although we live in a district which has a potential to produce 30,000 metric tons of maize, lack of capital and skill is holding us back from starting any income generating farming activities on our farms”, confessed Christine Chebii Ngogi, the group leader at the beginning of 2009.

The break for the Koptigei Widows Group came when AGRA’s partnership with Cereal Growers Association (CGA), World Food Program’s Purchase for Progress (P4P) and Equity Bank landed in South Rift Valley, Transmara West District in Kenya.

On 23rd October 2009, the dream of selling to the Top of the Supply Chain buyer became a reality when the group, which had grown to 54, witnessed the loading of 100 metric tons of maize into WFP trucks. “I cannot believe we have just been issued with a bank transfer slip of Kenya shillings 2.45 million!” said Lucy Chepngeno the group’s treasurer.

How it worked

AGRA mandated CGA to work with World Food Program’s (WFP) P4P to ensure that smallholder farmers receive the requisite training to participate in WFP tendering process and to produce

quality that would sell to other top of the supply chain buyers like large millers.

The Koptigei Widows Group was one of the first beneficiaries of the three-year \$999,642 grant to CGA. The organization trained them in post harvest handling (aspects of quality, grading, weighing, bulking and storage), book keeping, collective marketing and tendering processes of WFP.

The women were also trained how to access and use of market information and e-services such as Regional Trade Intelligence Network (RATIN) to know “who wants what, where”. This helped them price their maize.

Kilimo Biashara’s Equity Bank

CGA also linked the group to Equity Bank under Kilimo Biashara, another AGRA grantee, to help them access credit and also facilitate their trading activities. With the training and financial backing, the group participated in a competitive WFP P4P tender targeted at smallholder farmers who can match the stringent high quality standards of WFP and deliver as per contract terms. Koptigei Widows Group won a tender to deliver 250MT worth 6 million Kenya shillings.

The joy and pride of farming as a business is now magnified across the Southern Rift Valley of Kenya by groups like Koptigei Widows Group who are transforming their lives by becoming active market participants. ■

* *Merry-go-round* –Small groups of women across Africa use this informal mode of lending where members contribute an agreed sum regularly and lend to each other from the fund.



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