

Innovation Platform

Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT), a catalyst for environmental and social regeneration, has brought only in Morogoro over 2000 small-scale farmers working together into the agroecological farming movement by demonstrating and practicing agroecological principles in 70 groups from 50 villages using farmer field schools. This network, with its experiences made in the field, builds the core-network of SAT's Innovation Platform. Through using an approach which acknowledges and appreciates the experience and knowledge of farmers, SAT does not only give inputs but receives as well information. This valuable knowledge is documented and stored. On this platform, all gained experiences from the field are refined together with new best practices and later made accessible to a national community of more than 50,000 small-scale farmers. Through this approach, this wealth of experience is also made available to public and private stakeholders and further disseminated in Tanzania and even outside the country. SAT achieves this outreach with operating a Farmer Training Centre (FTC) which is based on a 80ha demonstration farm. FTC has hosted since 2013 more than 1,600 farmers, extension officers and youths from all over East Africa. In addition, SAT co-publishes the monthly Farmer Magazine "Mkulima Mbunifu" which provides technical guidance for agroecological farming with reaching up to 45.000 farmers.



To increase the accumulation of agroecological knowledge, SAT collaborates with universities to link young researchers with the farming communities.

SAT's work within the Core-Farmer Network is based on a holistic approach. Different modules are facilitated which cover agroecology in all its facets. Farmers receive in the villages facilitation on organic agriculture, forestry, livestock, and entrepreneurship to build communities that are resilient, sustainable and independent of outside inputs. While increasing farm productivity, family incomes and health have improved, not only from better diets, but by removing expensive and often toxic farm inputs, protecting human and animal health. Restoration of natural processes sustains a biodiverse environment throughout the watershed. Successful farmers are even accompanied through organic certification by using a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS). The solution works with a participatory learning-by-doing approach by establishing Farmer Field Schools (FFS) in the villages. This approach is built on solidarity and strengthens the community cohesion. Groups are furthermore empowered to act in their communities and to train other farmers spreading their agroecological knowledge among their neighbors (Farmer-to-Farmer approach - F2F). SAT follows a social-entrepreneur philosophy. It provides high-quality products which are unique, disseminates them through appropriate marketing and uses a strong financial planning and control.



What makes SAT's work so successful is, in addition to a good team consisting of more than 35 employees and interns, the philosophy of working with the small-scale farmers face-to face on a horizontal level. Farmer group leaders are further trained not only organic agriculture, but also in leadership and facilitation. The steering committee is in regular communication with SAT and are involved in the early stages of decision-making processes, guiding project applications based on farmer feedback. This participatory approach allows training in organic agriculture to be tailored and improved to the needs of farmers' families.

SAT creates linkages between environmental protection and economic stability. Through agroecological farming practices, farmers improve soil health and productivity and increase yields of crops. They can even revive and once again use land degraded by overuse of chemicals and erosion. In a recent survey of SAT farmers, 64% reported re-using former degraded lands, with 91% using erosion control contours on their farms after completing the SAT training programme.

SAT works together with a total of 72 farmer groups within a radius of 80km around Morogoro (stand 12/2016) and 33 youth groups (27 in villages and 6 in schools) in Morogoro and Mbeya regions. The groups receive training in agroecological agriculture and/or poultry keeping on farm as well as food processing and value addition, entrepreneurship and business skills as off-farm activities that are highly lucrative for young people. Saving and lending is a cross cutting component across SAT groups, here small-scale farmers are able to save money in the group fund and access loans up to three times the value of their savings. The solution was standardized in a training manual and has already been replicated by other organizations, who learned about the SAT approach. A project which will engage further 1000 farmers has started in 2017. SAT has furthermore expanded its services to another region due to requests from the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. A Swiss organisation is now emulating this methodology in the Masasi Region and has enlisted SAT as a partner to reach 5000 farmers from that region. SAT is also invited to Ethiopia to implement an agricultural project based on the SAT solution.

New projects 2017:

- Uluguru Spice Project (*direct beneficiaries: 1000 small-scale farmers, 500 PGS certificated*)
- Farmers & Pastoralists Collaboration (FPC) Mvomero (*Direct beneficiaries: 2790 farmers and pastoralists*)
- Sustainable Environmental Schools (*Direct beneficiaries: 810 pupils and 14 teachers*)

