

Farmers in Tanzania's Mbozi district benefit from the Lubango variety promoted by Village-based Advisors

Project update: July 2016

Farm Input Promotions Africa Ltd (FIPS-Africa), with the support of the AGRA, has been partnering with Iffa Seed Company to quickly and cost-effectively create demand for the improved Lubango maize variety amongst small-holder farmers in Tanzania. Iffa Seed Company provides FIPS-Africa with small (50 g) branded sample packs of seeds to enable farmers to experiment with the variety on their own farms with little risk. Small packs are distributed to farmers through its networks of self-employed Village-based Advisors (VBAs).

In the 2014/5 growing season, 50 VBAs in Mbozi district distributed small 50 g packs of seeds to farmers. The variety performed very well, and farmers demanded their VBAs to sell them seed the following season.

In advance of the 2015/6 growing season, Iffa supplied seed of the Lubango hybrid to VBAs to sell to farmers in their Villages.



1. Gift Mwashambwa (pictured above) is the VBA in Ilemba village in Vwawa ward, Mbozi district.

“I am very happy to be the VBA in this village because I have seen my small-holder farmers benefit through the use of improved certified seed. Currently I am working with 4,000 farmers in the village”, says **Gift**.

In November 2014, Gift distributed small 50 g packs of seed of the Lubango hybrid to 300 farmers. He taught the farmers how to plant the seed using the best spacing (75 cm x 25 cm).

“The demand for the Lubango variety from the farmers who were supplied with small packs is very high due to the fact that the seed was very high-yielding and matured early,” Mwashambwa says.

This season I bought 20 kg seed of the variety to plant on 2 acres and managed to harvest 47 (90 kg) bags of grain.

For more information contact:



2. Catherine Nala is a farmer from Ilelmo village.

“Lubango hybrid is the best maize variety we have ever planted in our village because I managed to harvest more than 26 bags from 1 acre unlike the usual 5-8 bags from the old varieties”, Nala said.

Nala bought 10 kg seed of the Lubango variety from her VBA in the month of November 2015, and planted using the recommended spacing of 75 cm x 25 cm. She also applied fertilizer and farm yard manure in the planting holes as she had learned from her VBA's Mother demonstration in the village.

“The yields were fantastic. I have liked producing maize since my childhood but with the use of local varieties the production has always been poor compared to Lubango. Our VBA taught me to leave a space between lines as well as between holes, planting using a line and also use fertilizer correctly. This has enabled me produce enough food for my family and also surplus for sale”, she says.



3. Judith Mkumbwa also lives in Ilelmo village.

“Before adopting this Lubango variety I was using local saved seed from which I would produce only 4 bags of maize from an acre.

It was my first time to try this maize variety which my VBA introduced to me when I attended a field day in my village last season”, she says.

Judith learnt a lot at the field day about certified seeds and modern farming methods to produce good maize. This season I am expecting to harvest more than 30 bags from my 1 acre planted with Lubango. Through certified seeds of Lubango, I am food secure and capable of comfortably paying school fees for my daughter”, Mkumbwa said.

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4. **Magreth Cosmas** lives in Mbimba village, Vwawa ward, in Mbozi district. “The Lubango hybrid has really increased maize production in my farm. From 1 acre, I have harvested 34 bags. It’s just like a miracle. These good results came after our VBA taught me how to plant maize seed using fertilizer. We believed fertilizer use would spoil our soils but this is not the case anymore”, she said.

Magreth plans to expand her maize production this coming season. She intends to buy two more acres of land to plant the Lubango maize variety.



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5. **Enock Mkumbwa** is an old farmer in Mbimba village, Vwawa ward, in Mbozi district.

“Last season, I harvested 37 bags from my 1 acre. I sold 20 bags and used the money to repair my house and to buy farm inputs”, Enock said.

“Introduction of the Lubango hybrid by our VBA in my village was the best thing that has happened to combat poverty for most of the villagers. By introducing certified seeds of Lubango, FIPS-Africa accomplishes the government policy of *Kilimo Kwanza*. I have been farming for more than 30 years but our productivity has always ranged from 3-8 bags per acre”, Mkumbwa said.

“I thank our VBA for introducing good varieties like Lubango and bringing the seed closer to farmers in our Village,” Mkumbwa said.

For more information contact: