

Carolina Chelele, a VBAA in Kikwawila village, expands her business to help small-holder farmers in Kilombero district to access the appropriate farm inputs to increase their rice crop productivity

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Images: Caroline Chelele at her shop in Kikwawila Village.

Over the last 3 years, through the intervention of the NAFKA Programme, Carolina Chelele, a self-employed Village-based Agricultural Advisor (VBAA) in Kilombero district, has helped more than 4500 farmers to experiment with improved rice varieties (*SARO5 and Supa*) and fertilizers (*Yara Mila Cereal, Minjingu Mazao and Nafaka Plus*) using FIPS-Africa's small pack methodology. She has also advised the farmers on aspects of best rice crop management, such as correct seed spacing, fertilizer placement and use of herbicides to control weeds.

This promotion work has resulted in the creation of a large demand for the inputs. To cater for this increased demand, she has opened a farm input shop at Kapolo market to supply inputs to the farmers. This (2014-5) growing season, she sold more than 350 (50 kg) bags of fertilizers to the farmers. She was approached by *Vest Farm* (a local organization), to provide farmers with inputs on credit. *Vest Farm* pays Carolina cash for the inputs she supplies to their beneficiary farmers.

Carolina also provides a rental service for agricultural implements. She currently has 5 *Knapsack Sprayers* and 5 *Planting Rake Jembes* which she rents out to farmers for TZS 2000 per day. This current growing season, about 100 farmers have rented the equipment. She is now planning to implement a contract spraying service, and will employ a team to spray more herbicides to help more farmers control weeds. Through training with the *Planting Rake Jembe*, more than 90% of the farmers in her Village have now adopted the 20 x 20 cm seed spacing.

Carolina has also been taught how to produce Quality-declared seed (QDS) of improved rice varieties to sell to farmers in her Village. This current (2014-15) growing season, she sold

Quality-declared rice seed (QDS), that she produced on a 2 acre farm, to more than 100 farmers.



Because of the increased demand, Carolina is producing QDS rice (SARO5) seed this season on a 4 acre farm. She is expecting to harvest at least 3000 kg seed per acre (a total of 12,000 kg). If she sells the seed for TZS 1500 per kg, she will earn TZS 18,000,000 (USD 9,000). She is planning to grow 6 acres in the coming (2015-6) growing season.

Carolina cannot meet the demand for SARO5 seed on her own. She is also working with 11 farmers in her (Kikwawila) Village to grow QDS over another 20 acres. This seed will help to meet the demands of the 4500 farmers she has reached with the small rice seed pack promotions.

Carolina is 1 of 50 VBAs in Kilombero district. She has assisted link Mr. Mnguu, the Kilombero District Council-based TOSCI Seed Inspector, to the other VBAs to help them also to produce QDS for farmers in their Villages.

As a result of adoption of the use of an improved variety and good management practices, farmers are increasing their yields from as little as 300 to more than 2000 kg/acre.



Mr. Athuman Matola (above left) purchased 60 kg seed of the SARO 5 variety from Carolina. Mr. Jardi (above right) purchased seed of the improved SARO5 variety from Carolina to plant on 2 acres of land. They are both expecting to harvest at least 20 bags of rice per acre.