

# TANZANIA – STORIES FROM THE FIELD

5 GENDER  
EQUALITY

Christina Elia Muigumila, Kikombo Village Government member and Chairperson of the Village Bee-keeping Group, Dodoma City Council has provided a secure future for her family

## Women embrace leadership roles in central Tanzania

If you live in semi-arid central Tanzania there are many benefits of joining small community groups who have been supported to generate incomes and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The EcoACT project, part of the Global Climate Change Alliance funded by the European Union has done just that, training both women and men to run small businesses and not only turn a profit but also contribute to forest conservation efforts by changing habits and raising awareness of the need to protect their environment better. Since the project began over eight years ago, a focus on women's participation has featured strongly on the agenda.

Christina Elia Muigumila, member of the Kikombo Village Government and also Chairperson of the Village Bee-keeping Group, Dodoma City Council, said she has had the opportunity to develop better leadership skills from her experience. **"Being in charge of a group means I realize I have more power as a single woman than ever before. I am raising four children on my own and am able to convince other women to join in and benefit from the group".** Since Christina joined the bee-keeping group she is able to harvest honey and realize an income that way. She is also part of the village savings and loans group (VSLAs) and has managed to buy four acres of land and farm maize, sorghum, peanuts and pearl millet. **"Rainfall was scant early this year so I am grateful that the project has taught**

**me to plant drought-resilient crops and adopt climate-smart agricultural techniques including ways to collect precious rainfall by creating troughs between rows of crops on my farms,"** she added. Drought is common in Dodoma so Christina is happy because she feels comfortable, she is producing enough food for her family and is also able to sell surplus crop yield and earn cash that way.

**"Initially I was involved in a tree-nurseries initiative, also introduced by the project, and was invited to attend a workshop in nearby Chololo village about modern beekeeping techniques,"** she said. During the training Christina was told if participants managed to form a group they would be provided with a modern beehive by the project, so a group came into fruition in 2018 and they placed a modern beehive in the nearby forest and are now successfully keeping bees.

In total, 14 people are in the bee-keeping group, eight are women and six are men. They began harvesting that same year and were able to produce 60 litres of honey sold for 300,000.00 Tanzanian Shillings (Approximately 130



USD) even this nominal amount gave the group a boost to continue. Honey is also valued locally for medicinal purposes.

Like many other villagers who have attended the EcoACT training workshops, Christina continues to reap the benefits of promoting her farming in a sustainable way. **"I keep natural trees on my farms where before I may have cut them down for firewood".** Christina also has drought-tolerant seeds so that when she harvests crops there is less residue and more seeds are produced which she then sells.

**27%** of groups supported by the projects with women in board positions other than treasurer

Income generating activities including bee-keeping have provided women with leadership roles

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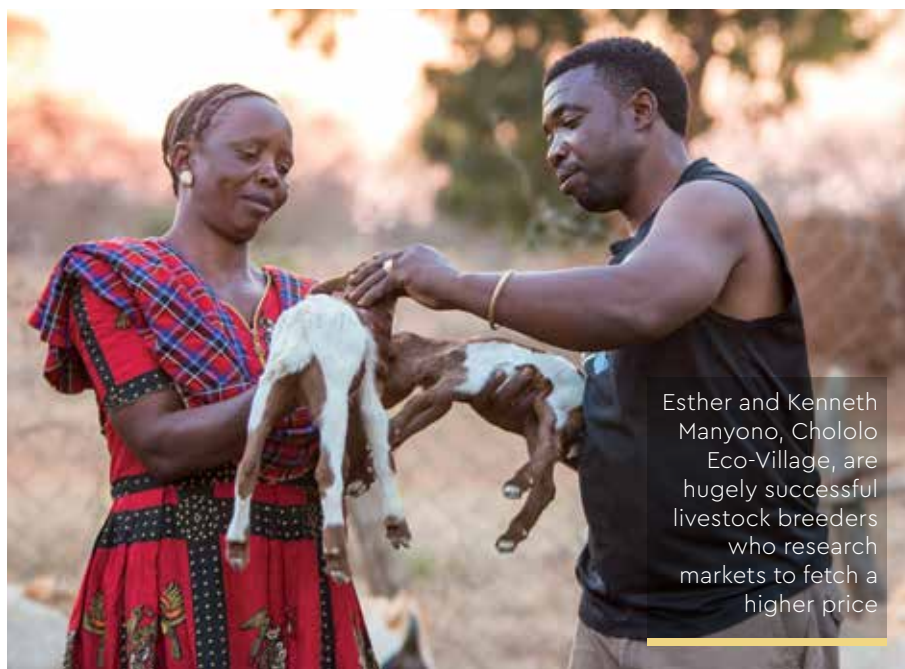
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TANZANIA

On average Christina gets a monthly income of 130,000 Tanzanian Shillings (approximately 70 USD) from all her activities. She is even getting a surplus of sorghum these days and sells it to increase her monthly income.

Inevitably there are challenges. With a woman as a group leader some men are reluctant to be part of some activities. For example, when the group first placed the beehive in the forest some men did not attend but they did contribute money and paid for someone else to place the beehive over the trees. Many men can also not see the benefit of reinvesting in bee-keeping and wish to spend the money immediately. When the group cannot reach a consensus they call in someone at Ward level to mediate and the issue is normally resolved peacefully.



Esther and Kenneth Manyono, Chololo Eco-Village, are hugely successful livestock breeders who research markets to fetch a higher price

## Better together

Esther and Kenneth Manyono, from Chololo Eco-Village were given a blended goat and a Mpwapwa bull from the EcoACT project eight years ago and the rest shall we say is history. The couple have successfully bred over 100 kids and realize a yearly profit of between eight to ten million shillings per year. That's about 4000 USD, quite a sum in this small rural community. The livestock originated from the research institute Mpwapwa in Dodoma Region and has a twinning ability and through hard work the couple have managed to nurture their goats to produce twins. They sell on average 80 goats per year. They are now carrying out market research and planning to sell their livestock in the commercial capital, Dar es Salaam where they will fetch a higher price. The husband and wife team have bought a house, expanded their farm to 30 acres and are able to pay for school costs to send their four sons and one daughter to school.

**"We were given the buck and bull after we attended a seminar organized by EcoACT,"** said Esther who has gone on to buy their own livestock to breed. It's a balancing act of buying and selling on in two years to avoid in-breeding. Regular immunization is also vital to ensure the livestock remain healthy.

Esther and Kenneth are adapting to the impact of climate change, **"we keep livestock feed on the roof of our livestock pen to preserve it and feed our livestock a type of local watermelon which thrives in the dry season,"** said Kenneth.

The couple have also received training about the importance of gender rights which they have incorporated into their daily lives. Ultimately, they make decisions and cooperate on everything together and the strong bond between them is palpable.

## Sustainable future

The project is striving to reduce villagers' dependence on the use of rain-fed agriculture and in 2018/19 some villagers achieved a zero harvest, so this activity can be expanded and is key to future developments.

**"Diversification is needed to survive, we cannot depend on rain-fed agriculture, slowly the villagers can become experts on almost anything. We have a leather factory group, led by a female Chairperson, which is now producing high quality footwear, unimaginable at the beginning of the project,"** said Dr. Francis Njau, EcoACT Project Manager.

The local authorities are continuing to also support the communities and are mainstreaming climate change adaptation activities into their budgets.



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