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POVERTY ALLEVIATION: A ROLE FOR TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE?

The role of technologies and infrastructure in development projects in rural areas: Tanzania and Somalia case studies

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United Nations, in the framework of post-2015 agenda, underline the role of Science, Technology and Innovation for a sustainable and inclusive development: “(...) In addressing these issues, STI will need to be made more participatory and inclusive so that there is public engagement in the scientific endeavor from the full spectrum of social actors, including women, young people and indigenous communities. The least developed countries will require dedicated support to bolster their efforts to build STI capacity.¹”

CEFA (European Committee for Training and Agriculture) is an Italian NGO that promotes initiatives of development, cooperation and international volunteer service all around the world (East Africa, South and Central America, Maghreb, Balkans). Today I would like to present two case studies that indicate how the introduction of simple and “common” technologies and infrastructures can change people’s lives, improving living conditions at the economic and social sides.

- 1) **Hydroelectric plants in Southern Tanzania:** CEFA’s commitment to rural electrification in Tanzania lasts since 25 years, with the construction of the three hydro power plants (in Matembwe, Bomalang’ombe and Ikondo). The use of an “ancient” technology, the hydroelectric turbine, combined with new technologies (for example M-PESA _M = mobile and PESA = money in Swahili_ service to collect money from clients in a simple and traceable way through the mobile phone) and with a democratic

¹ United Nations, *Science, technology and innovation for sustainable development in the global partnership for development beyond 2015*,



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and inclusive management of the electric company, was able to ensure a) an inclusive pricing policy and b) the sustainability of the intervention.

Results:

- $556 + 252 + 130 + 280 = 1.280$ households served
- $64 + 76 + 46 + 75 = 261$ public institutions and economic activities connected

2) **Sesame projects in Somalia:** CEFA has been operational in Somalia since 1992. Since mid-2008 CEFA has been working on sesame chain. **Sesame** is a traditional crop, near indigenous to Somalia with little inputs required and is mostly grown organically. Our intervention was based on 4 pillars: **1) Infrastructures** (canals rehabilitations); **2) simple technology** (introduction of mechanic methods in plowing and seeding); **3) scientific research** (seeds selection and purification); **4) Public/Private Partnership** (Somali company + CEFA + farmers organizations).

Results:

- the introduction of an Ethiopian sesame variety (HUMERA) ensured an improvement of productivity and production of the white sesame, which has an interesting market
- The sesame seed multiplication by SESIMA (the public/private company) constantly provides certified seeds to the farmers
- Within the projects, 5.462 hectares are used for sesame cultivation
- The white sesame is exported to Europe, Middle East, Asia (even in China)
- In 2011 4.500 tons of seeds was exported; in 2012 5.922 tons; in 2013 6.150 tons
- In 2014, Humera sesame farmers (> 8800 households) earned between 1,40/1,60 \$/kilo against 0,35\$/kilo in 2009
- Yields have also increased from 300Kgs to 500-550Kgs per hectare



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