

Agroecology in Action



Stories from the continent

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FREE ISSUE

STORIES COMING UP



Using farmer champions to spread agroecological practice in Uganda

FROM THE EDITOR

This story from the green highlands of Tanzania is a testimony to the quiet power of agroecology in restoring not just soil, but dignity and community strength. Through the Healthy Soil Healthy Food (HSHF) initiative, farmers are rejecting harmful chemicals and rediscovering the knowledge rooted in their land and traditions.

What makes this story so compelling is the ripple effect: 15 extension officers trained 39 lead farmers, who have now empowered over 850 others. This isn't just training, it's transformation. It shows how agroecology spreads best through trust, local leadership, and shared success.

Part of AFSA's *My Food is African* storytelling series, this article captures how sustainable farming is reviving landscapes, livelihoods, and hope—one compost pile and seed exchange at a time.

Send your comment(s) to:
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Warmly,

Abbot

How Tanzanian Farmers are Rebuilding Soil, Food, and Futures

By Janet Maro, Kizito Mwajombe & Rashid Raswii, Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT) and Abbot Ntwali, AFSA

In the green highlands of Tanzania, farmers are bringing the soil back to life. Instead of using expensive chemicals, they are turning to compost, mulch, intercropping, and traditional knowledge. These simple but powerful methods are restoring the land, feeding families, and protecting nature.

At the centre of this change is Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT), working with the Healthy Soil Healthy Food (HSHF) initiative under the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA). Since 2021, SAT has trained farmers to practise agroecology and share their skills with others. The idea is clear: when one farmer learns, the whole community benefits.

It started with just 15 extension officers, who trained 39 lead farmers in nine districts. These lead farmers then became teachers in their villages, passing on their knowledge to more than

850 farmers. The results have been impressive. About 85% of those trained are now using agroecology in their fields, and more than half are women.

The changes are visible. Farmers are making their own compost and using mulch to keep the soil healthy. They are planting different crops together, saving and exchanging local seeds, and using natural pesticides instead of harmful chemicals. Their soils are richer, yields are improving, and costs are going down. Most importantly, farmers are more confident and resilient in the face of climate change.

This work has also reached national platforms. SAT's farmers have shared their success at the National

Ecological Organic Agriculture Conference and contributed to Tanzania's National Ecological Organic Agriculture Strategy. Their voices are now part of the bigger conversation on how to build a sustainable food system.

Of course, there are challenges. Some farmers are still reluctant to give up chemical farming, and limited funds make it hard to follow up with every community.

Reaching remote villages can also be difficult. But the proof is in the fields: where agroecology is practised, soils are healthier and families are more secure.

For many farmers, this journey is not only about crops but also about dignity and hope. As one farmer in Morogoro said: "We are no longer just growing crops. We are growing hope."

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