



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Farmers in Tanzania Develop Technologies to Reduce Labor and Increase Productivity



Giselle Aris

Members of a peanut sheller group in Tanzania grind nuts using a prototype they developed. This technology can shell up to 20 kilograms of peanuts in just five minutes – an amount of work that would otherwise take an entire day.

In Tanzania, as in many other developing countries, women tend to perform agriculture's most time- and labor-intensive activities. Yet unfavorable regulations and sociocultural norms limit women's decision-making power and reduce their access to the assets they need to improve food security and nutrition for their households.

That's why Feed the Future is investing in smallholder women farmers in Tanzania through a [program](#) funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development that trains farmers in community-centered technology design. Implemented by [Land O'Lakes International Development](#) in partnership with the [Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Development Lab](#), the program works with farmers in the [Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania](#) to identify agriculture-related challenges – particularly those faced by women – and develop solutions-based prototypes that increase incomes and productivity while easing time and labor burdens.

"When you are a farmer, you are only a farmer. You will never think to yourself that you are an inventor," says Julia Bwire, one of the program participants.

But with assistance from the program, Bwire's design group developed a vegetable solar drier that reduced waste in the perishable produce the members grew in their gardens. Instead of having to throw out vegetables that didn't sell at market during the peak season, the women could use the drier to preserve nutritious vegetables and use them to feed their families. Now, the group is generating additional household income by renting the drier to their neighbors at a small fee.

"We realized this was just the start and that we can do more," says Bwire.

Another local group received training on a hand-operated device that shells single cobs of maize at a much faster pace compared to shelling by hand. This spurred the group to develop their own motorized version of the sheller, which generated such great demand among other farmers that they eventually sold it for about \$600. The group is now seeking investors to help develop more prototypes.

Over the next two years, in coordination with Feed the Future projects throughout Tanzania, the program aims to expand its work into new regions of the country.

[Learn more](#) or [watch a video](#) about this work in Tanzania.