



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Supporting Women at the Helm of African Seed Companies



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Zubeda Mduruma explains the benefits of using high-quality seed to a group of women in Tanzania. The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) is implementing the Scaling Seeds and Technologies Partnership (SSTP), with support from Feed the Future through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in order to help smallholder farmers in developing countries gain access to seeds and fertilizers that can raise agricultural productivity.

The partnership works in six of the 10 countries that are part of the [New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition](#) - Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal and Tanzania - where it helps governments strengthen their agricultural value chains and increase production and storage of high-quality seeds to help farmers grow superior crop varieties.

To achieve these goals, the partnership works through grantees with proven on-the-ground capabilities. A little more than a year after the initiative began, SSTP's efforts are paying off, and women-led seed companies are among the key beneficiaries. Three of these enterprises in Ghana and Tanzania illustrate the successes.

Janet Gyimah-Kessie, founding chief executive officer of Josma Agro Industries Ltd. in Ghana, is a seed business entrepreneur who is changing smallholder farmer lives with large quantities of high-quality cassava planting material. Formerly a banker, she ventured into seed production after realizing that the country had a huge appetite for cassava and cassava-derived foods such as fufu (boiled and pounded cassava), but farmers were not growing improved varieties because they thought the roots were not suitable. In 2011, Josma approached AGRA for support in multiplying and disseminating 280 tons of certified cuttings of improved cassava to more than 1,000 smallholder farmers. Building on this success, SSTP in 2014 provided over \$200,000 to scale up improved cassava dissemination and reach 12,000 smallholders farmers.

Another Ghanaian firm, Innovations Village Seed Company Ltd., is producing high-quality maize and cowpea seed, as well as cassava cuttings with SSTP support. Afua Ansre, a development specialist, runs the company, which empowers women in her community to be more food-secure through profitable farming. Her plans are ambitious: produce 450 tons of maize seed, 30 tons of cowpea and 1.2 million cassava cuttings to reach more than 60,000 smallholders.

In Tanzania, local seed company Aminata is achieving similar results. Led by Zubeda Mduruma, a career crop breeder, Aminata is producing high-quality seeds for staple food crops such as maize and sunflower. Working with groups of women farmers, the company initially produced seed on contract for other established firms. However, through a grant from SSTP, Mduruma has improved her firm's capacity, increasing annual production to 500 tons, all of which is sold to Tanzanian smallholders. Her business also provides agricultural training and support to local women, some of whom have started

agribusinesses of their own.

Through this partnership, Feed the Future is helping smallholder farmers, especially women, access improved seeds and transformative technologies, so they can produce more nutritious food to reduce poverty and achieve agriculture-led economic growth.