

Getting Farmers to Market



How AFCAP is helping farmers get to market by improving access in Tanzania

In Siha district in Northern Tanzania, on the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro, the Lawate to Kibongoto road serves a highly productive agricultural area where one of the biggest sources of income is generated from selling milk and farm produce.

Farmers work on both sides of the road for its entire 13.5km length and need a route that is passable in all weathers so that they can earn a living all year round. The road, which is characterised by steep gradients and red volcanic soils, is passable in dry weather but immediately becomes impassable when wet. Roughton is currently providing consultancy services to the upgrading of the road to all weather standard, under the African Community Access Programme (AFCAP), so that farmers can access the road all year round.

“The road is important for the community,” says Siha District Executive Director, Rashidi Kitambulio. “It will increase their income and the life standard for them because they can access their business, send produce to the market and it will be passable throughout the year.”

“Economically it is going to improve very much,” agrees Kashashi ward councillor Susanna Kihunrwa. “People will be very happy. It is going to make their lives easy.”

“Before it was too slippery and it was difficult for people who were going to sell their commodities in the market,” says Susannah who has lived on the road for 40 years. “Especially women, when they want to sell their commodities they have to carry it on their head and pass through slippery roads, so they find it difficult.”

Dina, a 49-year-old farmer and livestock keeper who sells milk and farm produce at market describes the road before construction as “very very bad”. “It was terrible,” she says.

Lack of transport on the road limits the amount of produce that can be taken to market. Dina, who uses the road twice a day to travel to her farm and the local markets, explains: “When you are carrying a load with your head you will not carry enough produce

for you to sell at the market you will only carry the amount you can carry on your head.” On her head she is able to carry a quarter sack of maize, 25kg, or up to 20 litres of milk. But, sometimes the pressure from carrying heavy produce like this causes the women to go bald.

When the road is complete vehicles will be able to pass in all weather. “We will not have to use our heads,” she says. Every Monday and Thursday there is a market at the start of the road in Lawate. Dina says: “When it was muddy I used four hours to get to the market on foot. Now, I can use two to two and a half hours.” But, she believes after the road is complete “transportation will be easier” and the journey will be quicker

Also, the quality of the road before construction deterred visitors from coming to the area. Dina says: “There are many people outside the village who did not want to come to the village because the road was bad.” But she believes the new road will help. “What we produce here they don’t have so they will come to buy things like banana, plantain, milk and vegetables and they will leave money in the village so it will bring some development in the village,” she says.

“Honestly, there will be very very big changes in our lives,” she says. “We will produce more milk because we know there will be transport and the market will expand.”

Dina will use her extra profit to send her five children to school and also to improve her house.



Milk is a major source of income for villagers in Siha