

# TIAMOYO EMPOWER PROJECT INC STRATEGY DOCUMENT 2020

## Community Adoption of Improved Agricultural Systems in Africa

### 1. Community Leadership Development

The precursor to economic development needs to be the empowerment of local village and religious leaders. This works best in stages. We have been involved in doing this for many years in Tanzania and have developed well proven strategies for training and empowering local leaders.

#### **Empowered Worldview Training: Character and Integrity**

This is a program developed by World Vision Tanzania and it now being used all over the developing world. It addresses the issues of Character and Integrity that hinder development. Many projects have failed because of character issues. People coming from tribal backgrounds need assistance and mentoring in a deeper way than just the adoption of some new technology or practice. They need to be able to identify malignancies and mindsets that have resisted progress in their communities, and they need the skills to enlarge their own personal capacity to be able to handle social and economic development, and to continue to effectively lead their communities through change.

#### **Empowered Vision and Worldview**

It propels the local leaders to expand their horizons of what is possible. In taking ownership of their present, it empowers them to dream of a better future for their communities and together to strategise how they can work together to see tangible improvements in their community.

**Seed Project.** To complete the training the local leaders have to nominate a ‘Seed Project’. That is they identify a real need in their community and design a strategy how they can all work together to meet the need. When the project is deemed a success, they graduate from the Empowered Worldview training. By this stage the local leaders already have a small committee and a chairperson. These are the most valuable people to us as it is their vision, and our goal should not be the ‘clever foreigners who come in and show them how to do it’, but our role is simply to serve them and empower them to fulfil the dreams that are in their heart.



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## 2. Farmer Training

### a. Foundations for Farming.

This is the God-given program for training African village farmers that has transformed the lives of tens of thousands of small lot farmers in 26 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It began in Zimbabwe in the 80's and teaches local very small-lot farmers the principles of No-till, Conservation Agriculture. They learn simple principles and disciplines that enable to Conserve the soil and the rainfall and enhance the soil biology. By ceasing any tillage and preserving the straw and crop residues on top of the ground, their yields have increased from 3-4 bags of maize to the acre to 30-40 bags to the acre with little or no financial input from the outside! A very large emphasis in the training is on developing personal management skills so they can better steward their resources. The basis of Conservation agriculture is learning to farm without disturbing the soil, and retaining all crop residue to maintain a 'blanket' of straw and mulch over the soil. This prevents weed growth, encourages soil biology and keeps the soil cool and moist. We will help provide the farmers better quality seed and appropriate fertiliser. We would like to see this training become the entry level course for all farmers, and to have them all learn to maintain a small plot as a demonstration of the benefits of FfF practice.

### b. Financial Literacy Training: Small Saving, Lending and Borrowing Groups

This has been developed for Africa and has been promoted by World Vision and others. There are thousands of these groups and they have helped poor people save money and to advance financially. Maybe not all areas need this training, but a great tool for those who can benefit. It is definitely a must for the poorest people who really battle to get into any meaningful micro-business, or to save any money. For our farmers it enables them to save for crop inputs, and once they have established a good savings history, this can qualify them for micro finance for the purchase of machinery.



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## The Tiamoyo 6 -Tiered Approach to empowering farming communities

Once the village leadership have invited us to assist them, and the farmers have all been through the above training, we would seek to work alongside them to assist and empower them in one or maybe two of the tiers described below that would be most appropriate for their village.

### **Tier 1. Very Small lot farmers up to 5 acres. Foundations for Farming**

These are the poorest of people in the village, sometimes widows or perhaps with a physical or medical problem. The Foundations for Farming program has lifted 10s of thousands of these people out of poverty. It requires little or no finance from outside though we would help with improved seed and fertiliser, the cost of which is repaid after harvest with interest. The training the farmers receive is comprehensive, practical and gives them ongoing mentoring and provides an excellent and well-proven basis for understanding No-till Conservation agriculture, and demonstrates on the first year the many benefits of improved farming systems. This is a totally manual system depending on the hoe for cultivation and weed control, and mulch and animal manure as the main fertiliser.

### **Tier 2. Small Lot farmers up to 10 acres. Animal Traction No-till Mechanisation**

The most common form of cultivation in Tanzania is the ox drawn plough. We can provide single row No-till planters that are suitable to being pulled with oxen, giving local farmers access to improved farming techniques that will improve both their soils and their yields, while still being able to make use of their draft animals. We can also provide small sprayers for weed control that can operate from the ox carts that are everywhere available. This can all be done with minimal cost. The farmers who engage in the program will be on contract and will repay the machinery cost and also any crop input costs after harvest.

We do not be funding all their inputs, but fund a few acres each to demonstrate the potential and give them the incentive to save to fund the their whole crop.



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### **Tier 3. Small Lot farmers up to 20 acres - Two Wheel Tractor powered mechanisation**

These are also sometimes in extreme poverty, especially in dry areas and invariably using poor farming techniques, their income is small. This tier probably would involve the largest number of farmers and would be based on a mechanised system using Two Wheeled Tractors also called Power Tillers, or Walking tractors. The Two Wheeled Tractors are common now in East Africa and come with a trailer that is very useful and would carry a small boom sprayer for weed and crop spraying. It also would pull a single row, or double row no-till planter.

Depending on the decision of the local Farmer Group, outside finance would be required to fund this. It has been found better to have the group choose one farmer to purchase the machinery and work as a contractor to the group. The reasoning behind this is that 'everyone owns it', therefore, 'no one looks after it'. Vision Fund would be willing to help us provide micro finance for this kind of situation, once the farmer group has built some relationship with them.

All the farmers would sign a contract each year to be involved and would repay the cost of crop inputs not provided by them after harvest, with interest. Again we would not be funding all their inputs, but fund a few acres each to demonstrate the potential and give them the incentive to save to fund the their whole crop.



### **Tier 4. Small farmers up to 200 acres - Small tractor mounted No-till mechanisation**

Under an ambitious aid program tractors were introduced to Tanzania about 30 years ago. It was thought this would bring the 'green revolution' that has happened in the West in 50's and 60's. It seemed to go well for a while, but with no training, or soil improvement, the yields soon began decreasing year on year until today when the national average Maize yield is around 4 bags to the acre. Over-ploughing and lack of attention to soil health has resulted in soil depletion, severe erosion and as well as declining yields, a tragic loss of drought resilience.

There remain however, many tractors around the country, that can ably pull suitable No-till planters, that can help revive the damaged soils. This involves farmers who have some means, but wish to improve their production, profits and sustainability. This involves providing them with tractor mounted sprayers and No-till planters. We work with local framers groups and would require the group to nominate a farmer to purchase the equipment, he would own and operate the machinery as a business, and provide a contract service to other farers. He would repay the machinery from his profits. We may be able to provide the finance or we may be able to connect the farmer with a micro finance provider and perhaps only fund trials in the area as demonstration crops that would run permanently to showcase the benefits of no-till and improved cropping practises.



### **Tier 5. Large Farms up to 1,000 acres – Larger tractor mounted mechanisation**

As village farmers become competent in No-till and modern farming practice, there are incredible opportunities for them to expand their farming operations. There are millions of hectares of “unused” arable land. This land is very difficult for outside ‘investors’ to access but for the local people, who have the support of the local village leaders, it is possible for them to obtain it. Africans are very entrepreneurial and this will develop as a matter of course, as they see better yields and profits from their farming. They do not need financial help, but just training and access to no-tillage and improved farming systems.

### **Tier 6. Very large broad acre farms – Best practise broad acre No-till Conservation Agriculture**

These might be few in number due to limited availability of large lots and again they do not need financial help, but just training and access to no-tillage and improved farming systems that suit these circumstances. There is a deficit of grain in East Africa and there is huge potential for well managed, ‘climate smart’ No-till farming that will help restore the depleted soils, and provide much needed grain in a way that is both profitable and sustainable.

### **Our Main Focus**

Even though we are continuing to look for a large property as a base for our operations, our main focus is Tiers 1-3, as these represent the vast majority of the poor village farmers that we are wishing to assist. A permanent base would provide many opportunities for training and support of farmers and toward the long-term sustainability of the project.