

ABBREVIATIONS

BEST:	Business and Entrepreneurship Support Tanzania
AHEAD:	Arumeru Holistic Empowerment And Development
LADS:	Local Area Development Strategy
CCC:	Community Coordinating Committee
GMt:	Grass-root Management training
TOT:	Training of Trainers
MEN/MEA:	Meru Education Network/ Mtandao wa Elimu Arumeru
CBO:	Community Based Organization
NGO:	Non – Governmental Organization
MRDF:	Methodist Relief Development Fund
IGA:	Income Generating Activitiy

Business and Entrepreneurship Support Tanzania (BEST)

Annual report 2007

Geographical location

BEST is situated in Arusha Region in Tanzania. It is Located at Themis Hill Njiro within Nane Nane Show Grounds near JKT House in Arusha Municipal.

Areas of operations

BEST operates in Arumeru and Arusha Districts. The area of operation is evergreen on the slopes of famous Mount Meru, where villagers are engaging in agricultural activities as well as dairy cattle keeping. The population density is high in the north and decrease slowly as you go away from the mountain areas. In lowland areas, the land is semi-arid. Villagers are occupied with local livestock keeping, agricultural activities and petty businesses. The Arusha district is surrounded by Arumeru District. People from Arumeru are intermingled with Arusha district. So there is no real demarcation of Arumeru and Arusha Municipality because they are just near. Main occupation for small scale entrepreneurs in Municipal is small businesses.

The rain fall is about 1000 mm in the northern zone (in the slopes mount Meru) and 500 mm in the mid zone and 300 mm in the lowlands. Temperature ranges from to 33⁰ Centigrade in lowlands to 20⁰ Centigrade in the slopes of the Mountains.

BEST serves the area of 3,089 square kms, (Arumeru 2996sq kms and 93.0sq kms (Arusha) with a total population of **799,526 people (2002 census), 407,346 women and 392,180 men.**

In Arumeru District, more people are found on the slopes of the mountains and fewer on the semi-arid lands. People are doing petty businesses in their famous markets namely Usa River, Tengeru and Kikatiti in the eastern part and Ngaramtoni ya Juu, Oldonyosambu and Kissongo in the western part. The market places are located in the semi-urban and situated near the main roads where accessibility of transport is available and people can do businesses.

BEST's vision

A community of equal opportunities empowered to manage economic and social development activities sustainably.

BEST's mission

BEST is committed to socio-economic empowerment of small-scale entrepreneurs through business management training and consultancy, gender awareness raising and provision of credit.

BEST s' goals

1. Increase the income of small-scale entrepreneurs by providing business development services so as to improve their living standards.
2. Promoting networking with other development actors for sharing experiences and securing support.
3. Promoting gender awareness for increased participation of women and low income earners groups in business entrepreneurial development.
4. Improving the institutional capacity of BEST for effective and efficient delivery of services.

BESTs objectives

To provide financial and non-financial business development services (BDS) in the form of business management training for business entrepreneurs, business loans and to create gender sensitivity within the population. Also to advice business on management skills for the aim of reducing poverty among small-scale entrepreneurs.

Target group

The target group is women and men aged 15 – 60 (fifteen to sixty) years with low income, with or without business experience interested in learning issues related to basic business skills.

Program Activities

In the year 2007 BEST has managed to do various activities, which are highlighted as follows:

Training of entrepreneurs

Training for small - scale entrepreneurs on business management skills was conducted in Arumeru and Arusha Districts. **468** entrepreneurs were trained. The trainings offered to the target group empower the entrepreneurs (especially women) and enabled them to increase the value of their businesses in terms of quantity and quality. If women earn an income, they get empowered and encouraged to participate in making decisions concerning the businesses and other household issues.

Micro-entrepreneurs were taught on: Business idea generation, Marketing, Business planning, Pricing and costing and Record keeping. Other topics included training in IGAs. At Sidai women groups they were trained in local soap making. The entrepreneurs are now able to make liquid and solid soap. Batik making were also among the subjects taught. At Migungani women groups the topics on food processing were introduced. The topics were more on elaborative as to why there is need of processing food stuffs. The entrepreneurs develop interest and requested BEST to conducts food processing course to them in the year 2008. Having seen the need of the trainings, BEST sent a Food

processing project proposal to Methodist Relief Development Fund. The proposal was accepted by MRDF for funding.

BEST identified income-generating activities and disseminated the information to 156 people from Arumeru District. After the dissemination of the information BEST conducted trainings on identified new income generating activities to the community of Arusha and Arumeru Districts.

The training on income generating activities helped entrepreneurs to increase the level of income. Some of the income generating activities such as Artemisia production is still new and have attracted many clients due to its profitability.

Handing over the AHEAD Project

In AHEAD project came to an end in February 2007. The project implementers made a joint visit to the district and village level to hand over the project activities. BEST handed over the 36 local trainers of trainees (TOT) to the village leadership. the local trainer of trainees were elected from the trainees of business management trainings. the TOTs will continue helping the entrepreneurs at village level, in each village there are nine TOTs. The village leadership will include the TOTs in their village programs.

Follow-up visits

BEST made follow up visit to 75 trained entrepreneurs to see how well they are progressing after the training. The visited entrepreneurs were given advice on how better they could do the business. The issue of keeping business record was emphasized during the visits.

Training of BEST Staff

BEST staff was trained on relevant issues regarding to BEST activities. The trainings were targeted to equip BEST staff with more skills in carrying out the planned activities. BEST staff at different times attended different courses as indicated below:

- Gender courses conducted by Tanzania Gender Networking Prgogram (TGNP)
- Export Trade conducted by Board of External Trade Tanzania (BET)
- Micro-finance course conducted by the Bank of Tanzania (BOT)

The courses attended are very important to the institution. The courses strengthening the capacity of BEST staff in delivering entrepreneurship skills in export trade as well as strengthening gender trainings. The micro-finance course also have streamlined BEST's core activities. Having the knowledge of micro-finance in place BEST is preparing to start issuing loans on her own instead of proving that service through an agent.

Networking with other NGO Forums.

BEST worked with other actors in the district and regional level. BEST found it important to work in collaboration with other actors so as to realize the objectives. It is not easy to accomplish objectives without the involvement of other actors. This is due to the fact that, the activities done by one NGO do complement the activity of others in realizing the goals and objectives. Thus BEST has seen the need of networking with other actors rather than working in isolation.

BEST is a member of Arusha Non Governmental Organization Network (ANGONET). ANGONET has made available a web page where BEST has publicized her activities. The web page is <http://www.angonet-tz.org/members/best>

BEST has extended her relationship with Tanzania Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Arusha (TCCIA). This collaboration has enabled BEST to explore opportunities of linking entrepreneurs with other business people.

Facilitation of Credit

BEST is providing micro-credit to her clients. Since it is not a financial institution, BEST entered into a contract with Mount Meru Saccos to provide credit to her clients. The contract was for one year, renewable.

The entrepreneurs are trained at BEST on how to manage credit in groups and means of repaying. The women are organized in a group of five each and forwarded to Mt Meru Saccos to receive credit. Loans are issued in a sequence of 50,000/= to 150,000/= in the first phase. Then followed by 150,001/= to 300,000/= in the second. The third phase is from 300,001/= to 500,000/=. Each individual in a group receive the amount requested per phase, but the whole amount taken by the group is regarded as one loan.

In 2006, the amount of credit given to the entrepreneurs was Tshs 101,713,296.37. When the entrepreneur reaches the bar of Tshs 500,000/=: she is considered to be a mature client. At this point she is advised to approach financial institutions to access bigger loans. In 2007, there was total violation of the contract by Mount Meru Saccos. The handling of the clients was different from the previous years. Clients were not given funds on time, there was complaints every corner. BEST was not invited to witness the issuing of the loan to her clients. That made BEST to start questioning Mount Meru Saccos as to why situation have changed so drastic. The reactions from Mount Meru Saccos were not promising. So BEST decided to terminate the contract and ask Mount Meru Saccos to repay back the loan fund as stipulated in the contract.

Mount Meru so far have managed to repay 23,000,000/= (twenty three million shillings) of the seed capital. The remaining 88,713,296.37 plus interest is still lying with MMSaccos. The matter was taken up to the Arusha District Commissioner for mediation and also for asking MMSaccos to repay back the money.

Furnishes of the Classroom

BEST has started remodeling of her current classroom to fit at least a hundred people at a go. The first stage of renovating the classroom started in 2004. In year 2005 BEST has made a continuation of uplifting the roof to be able to supply enough space and air in the classroom and make participants sit comfortably. In year 2006, glass windows were fitted in the classroom and the classroom was painted.

In 2007, 34 table and 54 chairs were purchased for the classroom. Still there are small things to be fitted so as to complete the classroom. Those small things to be completed include: fitting and painting the ceiling board and curtains. However we invite any interested person/donor to support the completion of the classroom.

Donors

Trias is financing BEST in her current projects namely LADS (Local Area Development Strategy) which will come to an end in 31 March 2007. Methodist church (MRDF) has shown interest on BEST programs. MRDF has already committed Tanzania shillings 25,780,409.00 for Food Processing Project (FOP) from November 2007. Food Processing is a one year project. We thank God for this new support as it came at the right time because TRIAS will phase out in March 31st 2008. Still more support is required to continue BEST Programs.

End of LADS program Evaluation

The process of program evaluation started from June – September 2007. The evaluation was done by reflecting back the implementation of the program from the point of inception of the project to its end.

The evaluation process involved all project stakeholders, that is: beneficiaries, project staff, village leadership, district authorities and the donor. Questionnaires were sent to the beneficiaries and focus group discussions were held in each village where answers for the questions were discussed and compiled. Problems faced, challenges and suggestions for improvement were given.

Lesson learnt

Fighting poverty is not an issue of a single unit. It needs the government efforts, civil societies, the private sector and the community at large. So government should continue supporting development actors because they complement governments' activities.

Adult education is still needed to villagers who cannot read and write. Development should come when people are educated and knowledgeable. They can act only when they are aware of the problem. Communities are ready to do things. The only problem is how people see them and help them. Commitment to serve people should really come from the heart.

Lesson learnt

The trainings offered to the target group empower the entrepreneurs, (especially women), and enable them to increase the value of their businesses in terms of quantity and quality. If women earn an income, they get empowered and encouraged to participate in making decisions concerning the businesses and other household issues. Women are eager to learn, the problem is that, they miss those opportunities.

BEST's services are expanding tremendously. This is due to the fact that women are interested to learn, implement and copy good things from others.

When women are empowered they become very active and can easily cause changes in their environment. For example trained women entrepreneurs are no longer relying on local cattle with low milk production; instead they are now keeping dairy cows with high yield and eager to learn more on better methods of dairy keeping. They also keep records that show the trend of their businesses. They can easily realize whether they are making a profit or loss.

There is a need of networking with other development actors in the District to ensure wholeness in serving the community. Working in isolation will not speed up the development issues as they depend on each other. For example there will be no real development if a problem of raising income per household is addressed alone, while other issues like water and sanitation, health, roads, education, housing are left behind. So networking with other development actors is very important.

Future plans

BEST will continue soliciting funds from interested donors to increase the existing credit capital and to support her operational plans. BEST is planning to implement her strategic plan as from 2008- 2012. It will also continue linking male entrepreneurs to MFIs that issue individual loans.

Networking with other NGOs, Local government, and CBOs for the purpose of exploring opportunities and also to be able to share and deliver quality services will continue to be strengthened. BEST will continue linking women entrepreneurs who cannot read and write to the institutions that are offering illiteracy services so that they can be able to join BEST trainings.

BEST will also continue strengthen the capacity of its staff so that they become up to date and knowledgeable on the subjects. Also to facilitate and implement strategies that will ensure sustainability.