



The Harvest is Now

Two new Cooperatives need your help.

July 15, 2011

This is an urgent and time crucial newsletter. I would ask that you open your heart and your mind to the words of need from our brothers and sisters in the villages of the Iringa area in Tanzania. Then truly listen to your spirits direction.

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Greetings friends and supporters.

Many of you have kindly asked how things are at Cheetah. Nothing has been still or stagnant and the hectic pace has been overwhelming, so apologies for the delay of this newsletter. Thanks to you we have new staff members on the Cheetah family, projects are moving forward, and the Cheetah board has a new face to it. There is much to catch up on, but today we need to focus on just one pressing thing.

Two new farmers' cooperatives have just formed which support more than a dozen villages. WONDERFUL NEWS, but with it comes incredible urgency.

Please read this excerpt from an email Ray sent from Africa:

This last weekend a new farmer's cooperative was resurrected from the ashes of a dead one. We finally have created a way to help farmers break through the barriers that are holding them down. But in a very short time we have to buy their crops, purchase transportation, find and rent a warehouse, and create crop storage systems, financial tracking, hire employees, etc. Oh yeah, did I mention this is a second cooperative? There are two of these to do together, one for corn and one for potatoes. Another minor detail: we are really short on money. If it doesn't happen, the crops will rot, credibility that took over a year to build with the farmers and with local officials will be gone, and 2500 people who have started to hope will slide further into poverty. This work has to happen in about one month.

Since Cheetah's model differs from traditional aid in that we work together with the villagers to come up with a plan, and then raise the money needed for implementation, we find ourselves with a tight timeline. The villagers organized just as their plan has been fashioned and their crops are ready to come in. Understandably harvest time is the impetus for action among the farmers.

- We need to pay families part of what their crop is worth when they hand it over. These are people make less than \$0.75 per day (counting the food they grow and eat.) Actual cash for the year is usually less than \$100/family and comes with the harvest. So as of now, they have been waiting since last year's harvest to get some money. Think of managing your family budget yearly instead of weekly or bi-monthly. Half of the crops value is \$50 times 500 families, is \$25,000. That is what we are looking for. How many families can you help?
- These families are desperate for money. They have to pay school fees for their children - schools beat kids if the fees are late (\$20/student). They need money for medicine, and for clothes (clothing is worn and tattered from a years use; its winter now; nights can be close to freezing and there are powerful winds in the mile high air.)
- They are acting in EXTREME FAITHFULNESS. Out of their dire poverty they are taking the ultimate step of trust. They are required to hand over ALL of their crops to the cooperative and TRUST US (you are part of Cheetah too!) to protect those crops from rats, bugs, and fungus; not steal their crops or the money; and trust that they will be paid over the course of the next year.
- The good news is that if we invest a little in warehousing and protection from bugs, fungus and rats, then the value of the crop will probably double over the next 10 months. That's a huge impact for a poor family! But we have to pay our expenses to do that, too. That will cost another \$13,000.
- So maybe their income this year goes from \$100 to \$150. It's an amazing first step. Once people see that we actually find a market and pay them back, two important things happen: 1. They will increase their production 2. More people will join the coop next year.
- And by the way, it means that food is saved from post-harvest losses and hungry people are fed as the dry season passes and we wait for the next harvest. It has been a bad year in some places. Famine is in the offing. Helping these people with their crops will serve others in less productive areas.

- The families who take this terrifying leap of faith will be provided health insurance. (In a few weeks we will likely receive a grant to launch our health care initiative.) We are going to save even more lives! Unless we make the coop work, the health insurance doesn't happen.

If we break down the money we need, think of it this way: Is an entire year of less hunger worth \$16 per person? And that covers school and clothing. \$16 per person! Let me say it again, \$16 per person! And we expect to recoup the cost...it is not a handout. This doesn't even take into account the lives saved through the health care benefits that come along with the co-ops.

Please, prayerfully consider what you can give. We need your prayer support and your financial gifts more than ever. Cheetah is on the verge of turning a tremendous corner but we need all our partners and supporters to help contribute.

You may give on line by clicking here: [Donate](#), or mail a gift to:

Cheetah Development, Inc.
906 First Street East
Hastings, Minnesota 55033

We will even accept investment loans from you, which would be paid back. To learn more about these type of loans contact us at info@cheetahdevelopment.org or +1-612-382-3533.

To better understand our work with the farmers check out the [white paper](#) or the [slide show](#).

You are all being trusted in by your unknown brothers and sisters in Tanzania. See them with the eyes of your spirit and give to them from the love of your heart. They are believing in you!

Blessings to you,

Lonnie Menard and the Cheetah Family

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