



MILLENNIUM
CHALLENGE CORPORATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



Success Story

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The Road to Prosperity

Issa Ali has ridden the bus up and down the road almost every day for the past seven years.

The bus—a weathered green passenger coach emblazoned with hand-painted Ferrari logos—begins each day in Tanga in northeastern Tanzania. As each passenger prepares to board, Ali collects the fare and helps pack their luggage in the cargo hold.

The bus's first stop on its daily five-hour journey is the Tanzania-Kenya border crossing at Horohoro, followed by a trip west to Mwakijembe, and then back to Tanga.

It wasn't always an easy ride to Horohoro from Tanga.

"For so many years, the road was so bad," said Ali, 31. "We frequently broke down. The springs would pop. The tires would pop. Now, that doesn't happen."

That's because the Millennium Challenge Corporation, as part of its five-year, \$698 million compact with Tanzania, improved this vital stretch of road by widening and paving 65 kilometers. Safety curbs were installed to partition and protect walkers and bicyclists. Eleven bridges received upgrades, and six cantilever walkways were installed.

Gravel to asphalt improvements to the road, which help link the region with the port of Mombasa, Kenya, about 120 kilometers away, were completed on September 30, 2012. The upgrade means that an asphalt-paved highway route now exists between Dar es Salaam and Mombasa.

The new road should particularly benefit the region's farmers. A large share of the fruit grown near Tanga—mostly pineapples, passion fruit, oranges, and mangoes—travel to market through Mombasa's port, said T.G. Massaba, the acting regional supervisor for the Tanzania National Roads Agency.



Issa Ali, second from right, helps load cargo during a stop in Horohoro near the Tanzania-Kenya border. He said the improved road is faster, smoother and easier on the bus.

And traffic has already increased fivefold along the road, from about 200 to 1,000 cars each day as of late 2012, Massaba said.

“Horohoro used to be a sleepy border,” he said. “It’s much, much busier now.”



The improved Tanga-Horohoro road includes safety curbs to partition and protect walkers and bicyclists.

One Road, Many Benefits

Along the length of the road beneficiaries from various backgrounds talked about saving money because of the project.

A roadside drink stand owner feels safer and is hopeful more customers will come. A teenager can strap an ice chest to his bike and sell desserts to remote villages because he can reach those villages more easily. A truck driver is driving the length of the road in less time and with lower maintenance costs. A shop owner is able to save money on inventory restocking costs and use the savings to expand his business.

Batuili Karata hopes the increased traffic will mean more business. She runs a restaurant along the highway just outside of Tanga. From under a small thatch roof, she sells tea, coffee, ugali, rice, beans, and bread to pedestrians and cyclists.

Karata has been running the restaurant for more than 10 years. She believes the improved road means people will be walking or cycling farther, meaning they’ll be approaching Tanga hungry and thirsty—and ready to buy a meal from her.

But even if that spike in potential customers never arrives, she is thankful that the project has brought more safety to that stretch of the road. Her business sits near a bend in the highway that previously was narrow; a pack of robbers used to hide in the bush nearby and steal from travelers, especially pedestrians.

The project widened the road and cleared the vegetation nearby, leaving the robbers with less room to hide. Karata hasn’t heard of any crime occurring in the area since then.

“They robbed people all the time,” she said. “Now it’s more open. There is more traffic. It is much harder for them to hide.”

For Helman Munyi, distance is money. The 15-year-old leaves Tanga each morning with an ice chest full of frozen-fruit slushies attached to his bicycle. He returns after selling the full stock, and he sends part of his income to his parents, who are smallholder farmers.

On a typical day, he will bike about 20 kilometers outside of town, and then begin selling to villagers who live off a side road. Students and teachers at a secondary school along the way are among his best customers.

“Before, I couldn’t bike very far out of town to sell,” said Munyi. “Now, I can go up to 20 kilometers in a single day. I’m selling this far out because the new road is here.”

Not far from where Munyi turns off the highway to sell to rural communities, Mzee Yusuph parks his tractor-trailer four times a week to receive a shipment of salt.

A standard haul consists of 31 tons of salt, shipped to Tanga from a mine not far from the ocean. The drive used to take more than an hour; now, it is less than 30 minutes. It also causes less wear on the truck.

“It’s so much more comfortable now,” he said. “Before, the truck would always bounce around.”

One of Yusuph’s destinations is the border crossing at Horohoro, where Joseph Moshi owns a small shop that sells drinks, clothing, food, and medicine.

The improved road has been a boon to Moshi, who sends a truck each week to Tanga to purchase inventory. When the road was dirt, the truck would leave early in the morning and arrive after nightfall. Now it takes three hours, round-trip.

The new road is also helping Moshi save fuel and maintenance costs. A trip on the old road would require 20 liters of gasoline. He now only needs seven liters for the trip. And there is far less wear and tear on the vehicle, he said.

“I used to have to send the car to the garage often—sometimes even after a trip or two,” he said. “The road was that bad.”

With the cost savings, Moshi is reinvesting in his business. He now offers a wider range of products, such as more brands of soft drinks.

“With more products to offer, people tend to buy more things,” he said. “It’s helping my business continue to grow.”



MCC’s improvements mean that an asphalt-paved highway route exists between Dar es Salaam and Mombasa, Kenya, for the first time.