

Ujeje's PPP Story

By Hilda C. Tizeba

As fisherman Ujeje heads home empty handed for the third day in a row, he cannot hide his sadness. What are my children going to eat tonight? Can I pay for my youngest daughter to do her standard seven exams this year? How do I explain to my wife that once again I was unsuccessful? These and many other questions leave his mind restless.

For Ujeje and hundreds of other fishermen from Dar es Salaam, the Msasani Fish Market is more than just a market. It is the key to their livelihoods, the wellbeing of their families and self-respect. Now 57 years old, Ujeje has been a fisherman for more than forty years. He started fishing when he was a young boy, sailing and fishing Zanzibar's Pemba and Unguja islands, just as his father did before him. Through fishing, he has been able to support his wife and five children as the family's sole breadwinner.

As a fisherman, Ujeje lives with both high and low tides. At the moment, Ujeje feels as if he is at his lowest. Just three days ago, he lost several containers of fish because the Msasani Market lacked proper cold storage. He was devastated to bring his fish all the way across the strait from Unguja island and then throw them out, spoiled. He and his family have since only afforded one meal a day. It breaks his heart. They say there are plenty of fish in the sea, but what's the point if you can't get them home?

Ujeje wants the Msasani Fish Market to have modern cold rooms and storage facilities so he can keep his fish fresh. He is looking forward to the re-construction and upgrading of the market through the proposed public-private partnership (PPP). Several months ago, he and other fishermen provided suggestions on the design for the new market. He voiced his need and was happy that his views were well received. He knows that a re-developed market could help transform the lives of fishermen using the market and enable them to become better providers for their families.

PPPs provide a new way of delivering better infrastructure and operation at Tanzania's markets. They are being used to provide cleaner, safer and more usable markets for customers that create opportunities to earn a decent income. The Kinondoni Municipal Council is consulting many stakeholders, including Ujeje and other fishermen, as it prepares the PPP for the Msasani Fish Market. This has helped the Council better understand the needs of fishermen, local residents and others as well as understand how to feed their expectations into the design of the proposed PPP project. Ujeje's story is one of the many examples of people whose lives are to be improved by the project.