

## Peter, onions, and growing money

When we were just starting our THRIVE program in Zambia, one of the first people I met was Peter and his mother Theresa. You can see the video we did about them here: [Zambia: Peter and Theresa's Story](#).

Over the years while traveling to Zambia, I met Peter a good number of times, and he embraced the idea of growing onions. In Africa, I like to encourage smallholder farmers to grow onions. I call it, "Growing money."

An early THRIVE participant, Peter soon began organizing local farmers into the Mwamba Kasama Onion Association. The association included and learned from experienced local onion farmers, beginning by teaching members how best to grow onions from seed and grow healthy fields. They quickly moved from production to a host of issues that arise to make money growing onions. These issues included when and where to go to market, making market connections and linkages, how to obtain needed financing, quality control, labor saving technologies, value adding processes, and others.

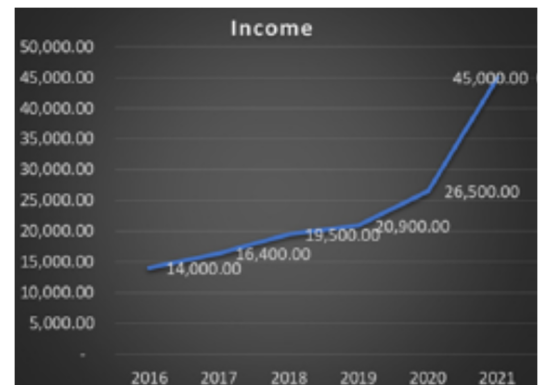


Currently, the association has 4,000 members organized into 36 commercial producer groups which produce, store, package, and sell over 600 tons of onions annually to domestic and international markets.

What does this mean for some of Peter's neighbors?

Association member, Francis Mubanga, has grown his onion business, and the graph to the right charts his income. With the increased money from onions, Francis has been able to build a good house, diversify his income by investing in goats and chickens, and buy a motorcycle for taking his agricultural products to market. He also uses the motorcycle as a taxi. As we expect from successful THRIVE farmers, Francis is meeting the basic needs of his family, including paying the school fees for his children and providing them with plenty of good food and clothing.

Fortunately for Francis and the entire association, Peter is a natural leader, a fast learner, and a good farmer. I was always impressed with Peter and his potential. He is positive, productive, and enthusiastic, and he has multiplied his life's impact by helping his entire community. Now THAT is a good example of THRIVE farmer.



*Francis and Faith Mubanga*