



Carlos Lássimo (right) teaches his son Adamo (left) how to graft seedlings

The Cashew Apple Doesn't Fall Far from the Tree

Meet Carlos Lássimo: cashew farmer, seeding producer, promoter and proud father

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In the small village of Cataputa in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, Carlos Lássimo grafts cashew seedlings with his 10-year-old son, Adamo. Just as Lássimo learned about cashew production from his father, he is teaching his son traditional farming knowledge, which is typically passed on from generation to generation.

However, Lássimo is sharing more than traditional knowledge with his son. He is also sharing new and expanded knowledge that he has gained through his work with MozaCajú, a TechnoServe project funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which is working to connect smallholder Mozambican cashew farmers to factories and markets.

Teaching best practices

Lássimo is also sharing his knowledge of best practices with the greater community. In 2014, he was chosen to become a MozaCajú promoter, a farmer who is trusted and known in his community and who is trained to deliver technical assistance on cashew production to other farmers.

Accordingly, MozaCajú has specific criteria for choosing the promoters, including attainment of a certain level of schooling and literacy as well as approval from the community. Lássimo was so well respected and liked in his

community that he was chosen as promoter despite his lack of formal qualifications.



Over the past two years, Lássimo has joined other MozaCajú promoters in receiving training on techniques and technology for improved cashew production including cleaning, pruning, and post-harvesting. Most recently, in early June 2016 he participated in a training on crop

protection techniques, i.e. spraying and chemical treatment for the cashew trees. As protection from disease and pests could double cashew production, this is one of the most important trainings of the crop season.

As a promoter, Lássimo is responsible for attending MozaCajú trainings such as these and then disseminating this knowledge and information in his community. Lássimo uses his own field of 50 cashew trees in order to teach the other farmers and demonstrate the impact of the learned techniques and technologies.



Each promoter teaches up to 200 cashew farmers in his or her community on these various topics. In this way, MozaCajú reaches over 23,000 cashew farmers through the extension services of these 165 promoters like Lássimo.

Sowing seeds of profit

Though it may seem simple – sharing knowledge on basic production techniques – this type of training can make a big difference to a smallholder farmer. Since Lássimo began applying these techniques to his own cashew trees, his production increased from 600 kg in 2013, to 800 kg in 2014, and finally to 1,150 kg in 2015 – almost double the initial production quantity and thus, double the profit.

MozaCajú also provides *My Cashew Business* trainings on commercialization techniques and strategies, which have helped farmers like Lássimo increase their incomes from their improved crops. Lássimo and his neighboring farmers aggregated their cashew yields and were able to negotiate with a trader for a higher price (an extra 2 MZN per kg). For Lássimo, this resulted in revenue of 34,500 MZN (around \$630 USD) for the season – which was approximately 2,300 MZN (around \$40 USD) more than selling at market price. He also earned 6,000 MZN (around \$110 USD) from the sale of cashew apple.

In addition to learning improved production techniques, Lássimo has learned how to grow cashew seedlings through MozaCajú trainings on grafting and seedling production. Following the trainings, Lássimo received materials and support to establish his own cashew seedling nursery on his farm. During the 2014-2015 crop season, he successfully grafted 1,200 seedlings at a 76% survival rate. This past season, he successfully grafted 9,724 seedlings at a 82% survival rate.

Seedlings and nurseries are an important part of cashew production as without access to these, farmers like Lássimo cannot re-plant and expand their farms. This is of utmost importance in Mozambique where the aging of cashew trees has become a major barrier for increasing production levels. Planting new trees and substituting unproductive trees is vitally important to creating a profitable industry.

Additionally, nurseries provide another business opportunity for farmers through the sale of the seedlings. With few existing private nurseries in northern Mozambique,

MozaCajú has supported farmers like Lássimo to establish 85 nurseries.

After delivering the seedlings to local producers – purchased on a subsidy from MozaCajú – Lássimo earned an additional 97,240 MZN (around \$1,800 USD). At the same time, he produced 4,650 polyclonal cashew seedlings, an improved and certified seed that is more tolerant to pests and disease and also used his knowledge of cashew seedling grafting to successfully graft 600 seedlings of various other fruit trees. All told, Lássimo was able to earn a total of 135,490 MZN (around \$2,500 USD) last season from his nursery activities.



Carlos Lássimo and his seedlings

An example for others

Lássimo, a dynamic cashew farmer, promoter and seedling producer, has been a positive example for his family and community. He has collaborated in planting various fields, including planting 2,000 cashew seedlings in the community of Tutua. Moreover, he competed in the MozaCajú grants program through which he was able to buy three atomizer machines to be used for application of chemical treatment during the spraying season – a service which is very needed by his fellow cashew farmers.

Lássimo has already begun to reap financial reward from the new production methods. He has started building a brick house in his hometown of Montepuez, and is paying for school for his children and grandchildren. He is also investing in new planting on his own land; during the last season, he planted 400 new cashew trees. Moreover, he has begun cleaning an area to plant 300 more seedlings in the next rainy season. In a few years, Lássimo hopes to have a field with 1,000 cashew trees as well as 2 hectares of banana and 2 hectares of sugar cane.

Lássimo's son Adamo has shown a keen interest in growing and grafting cashew trees, in fact he wants to become an agronomist and eventually take over the production of the family's cashew trees and seedlings. With the extra income that Lássimo hopes to gain from his new production, he plans to pay for agronomy school for Adamo.

In the Lássimo family, the cashew apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

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