Swaziland: good food security practices to share and replicate

International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation's Global Agenda (2006-2010)

Over the next five years, the collective focus of the Federation will be on achieving the following goals and priorities:

Our goals

Goal 1: Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.

Goal 2: Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.

Goal 3: Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.

Goal 4: Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

Our priorities

Improving our local, regional and international capacity to respond to disasters and public health emergencies.

Scaling up our actions with vulnerable communities in health promotion, disease prevention and disaster risk reduction.

Increasing significantly our HIV/AIDS programming and advocacy.

Renewing our advocacy on priority humanitarian issues, especially fighting intolerance, stigma and discrimination, and promoting disaster risk reduction.

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A model for replication

In order to increase the resilience of communities to drought and HIV/AIDS, a multi-facetted and innovative food security pilot project was implemented in a number of communities in Swaziland over a three year period (2002-2005).

Working with some of the most vulnerable communities, training and resources were provided by the Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross Society, in association with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation) and the Finnish Red Cross, to set up a series of sustainable nutrition-enhancing and revenue-generating projects in the following areas:

- Communal gardens (individual and income-generating);
- Backyard gardens (individual);
- Communal fish ponds;
- Communal poultry production.

Results from the pilot project show that, on the whole, these initiatives helped to improve food security within the communities by decreasing dependence on single crops (vulnerable to drought), diversifying and enhancing the nutritional value of family diets, as well as providing additional sources of income.

This publication provides an overview of the various projects and examines their merits, as well as the challenges encountered, leading to recommendations for those who may wish to undertake similar programmes in the future.

The International Federation is committed to reducing people's exposure to the risks caused by natural and man-made disasters. Working closely with and within communities, the Red Cross Red Crescent aims to assess and reduce local vulnerability to hazards, whilst enhancing capacity to deal with them.

1. The context

Swaziland has a high incidence of HIV/AIDS, with an estimated 39 per cent of adults (15-49 years) affected at the end of 2003.[1] Even more alarmingly, HIV prevalence among pregnant women reached 43 per cent by 2004.[2] Furthermore, some 66 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line.[3]

This has bred an all-too recognizable vicious cycle: a reduced ability to cope with the effects of drought due to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and weakness brought on by drought in turn compounding people's risk of exposure to HIV/AIDS – resulting in a population which is increasingly vulnerable to disasters.

In regions heavily affected by HIV/AIDS, families often struggle to make ends meet. Communities are therefore looking for alternative sources of food production and revenue-generation in order to maintain their food security.

A majority of the population of Swaziland relies on subsistence farming. This can mean that at times crops and/or livestock are barely sufficient to provide food for farmers and their families, with little or no surplus left over for sale.

As a result, households remain vulnerable to food insecurity and people are forced to sell valuable assets in order to survive. Given the high levels of poverty, this often means selling the very possessions so crucial to survival (particularly farming tools), thereby driving families deeper into destitution.

The interaction between HIV/AIDS, drought and food security is a complex one. For the poor, this unfortunate confluence can mean:

- Lowered productivity – An ailing individual is less productive. Households with a smaller number of healthy adults have a higher dependency ratio. For example, if farmers are ill, they cannot work their fields. At the same time, money is needed for medicine and care - leading to a gradual depletion of household assets;
- Greater exposure to risk – People may resort to desperate practices, such as prostitution, in order to secure sufficient food for themselves and their families, thus increasing the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS;
- Greater isolation – The rural poor have reduced access to relatives living in urban areas and/or abroad, and tend to receive smaller and less-frequent gifts than better-off households;
- Restricted access – Opportunities for regular employment and access to pensions, property and medical services are non-existent or curtailed;
- Insufficient information – There is poor access to information on HIV/AIDS;
- Insufficient diet – Vulnerable households lack sufficient and sufficiently nutritious foods; yet a proper and balanced diet is a key factor in increasing the life span of HIV affected individuals.

Due to families' poor health and impaired nutritional status, communities with people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) are substantially less resilient to disasters and other shocks.

[1] UNAIDS 2004 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic
http://www.unaids.org/bangkok2004/GAR2004_html/GAR2004_00_en.htm
[2] http://www.who.int/hiv/FS_SubSaharanAfrica_Nov05_en.pdf
[3] (CIA Fact book) http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/wz.html#Econ

2. Pilot project description

From 2002 to the end of 2005, the Finnish Red Cross and the Finnish Government funded a Food Security pilot project that was implemented by the Baphali Swaziland Red Cross Society, with assistance from the Regional Delegation of the International Federation and the Finnish Red Cross.

The project was carried out in three different areas in Swaziland: Sigombeni, Mahhashinni and Maphungwane.

Objective

The *objective* was to make vulnerable households food secure by **improving their food production and increasing their income** – thereby reducing their vulnerability to droughts and other common disasters.

Project design

In each of the three geographical areas, a Site Officer was employed to implement the programmes with the selected communities and monitor their outcome. A Food Security Officer ensured overall project management and provided technical support.

The three-year period of implementation ensured that the projects could evolve according to the needs and demands of the communities. This also allowed sufficient time for technical input and sharing of expertise to make most projects viable. The Food Security Officer, who acted as the focal point throughout, provided for continuity and ensured quality oversight of the projects.

Four types of projects were undertaken within the overall programme:

- Communal Gardens;
- Individual Backyard Gardens;
- Communal Fish Ponds;
- Communal Poultry Production.

As a crucial first step, land was made available by individuals within the community, with permission from the chief, which was then cleared and fenced by the project members. In addition, financial assistance was provided for project infrastructure, where required: e.g. construction of dams and ponds; procurement of water harvesters, water tanks, seeds and seedlings; purchase of poultry chicks and feed; installation of irrigation systems and pumps, etc.

All projects were managed by a committee within each community, selected by the project members (with the exception of the backyard gardens, which were individually managed). The committees were encouraged to draft a 'constitution', setting out basic operating procedures.

Training was then offered in the areas of food preservation techniques, agricultural skills, and project management. In addition, Baphali Swaziland Red Cross Society staff received training in management skills, and monitoring and evaluation techniques. Financial assistance was also provided to the National Society to ensure effective financial monitoring of the project.

3. Project impact

Main findings

It is estimated that approximately three quarters of the crops from the communal gardens and individual backyard gardens were consumed directly by household members of the project. The remaining quarter was shared with vulnerable people, bartered or sold - with cash earnings being used to purchase school material and essential non-food household items, and to pay for medical consultations and transport.

In cases where the soil on project sites was too poor for farming purposes, the introduction of poultry production served to optimise land use and provided a viable means of reducing vulnerability. The projects generated income, strengthened coping strategies and were sustainable. Some communities used the income earned to expand their operations into egg production. Larger scale contracts to supply supermarkets were also being developed, however their impact has yet to be determined.

The fish production project ran into some difficulties, due primarily to poor water retention in the fish ponds. This did not allow for adequate facilities to sustain fish rearing. Results from this project remain inconclusive, pending the rehabilitation of the ponds.

It is important to note that not all of the projects were equally successful, nor did they all lead to results as rapidly. For example, individual backyard gardens provided almost immediate results, whilst some of the collective projects required a longer timeframe before delivering the desired benefits. The communal projects nevertheless led to important contributions in sustaining social networks - including the desire and ability to assist the ill, elderly and orphaned.

A project-specific overview of the main findings is presented in Annex 1.

Communal and individual gardens increased direct availability and access to food for households, thereby decreasing their food insecurity.

Backyard gardens produced crops within three months and were easily manageable for families with PLWHA and/or orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS (OVC). They could potentially be used as a relief intervention - as they are simple to set up, easy to manage and quick to implement.

Communal gardens are more successful when they are primarily made up of individual plots, complemented by additional shared plots, due to greater commitment on the part of participants.

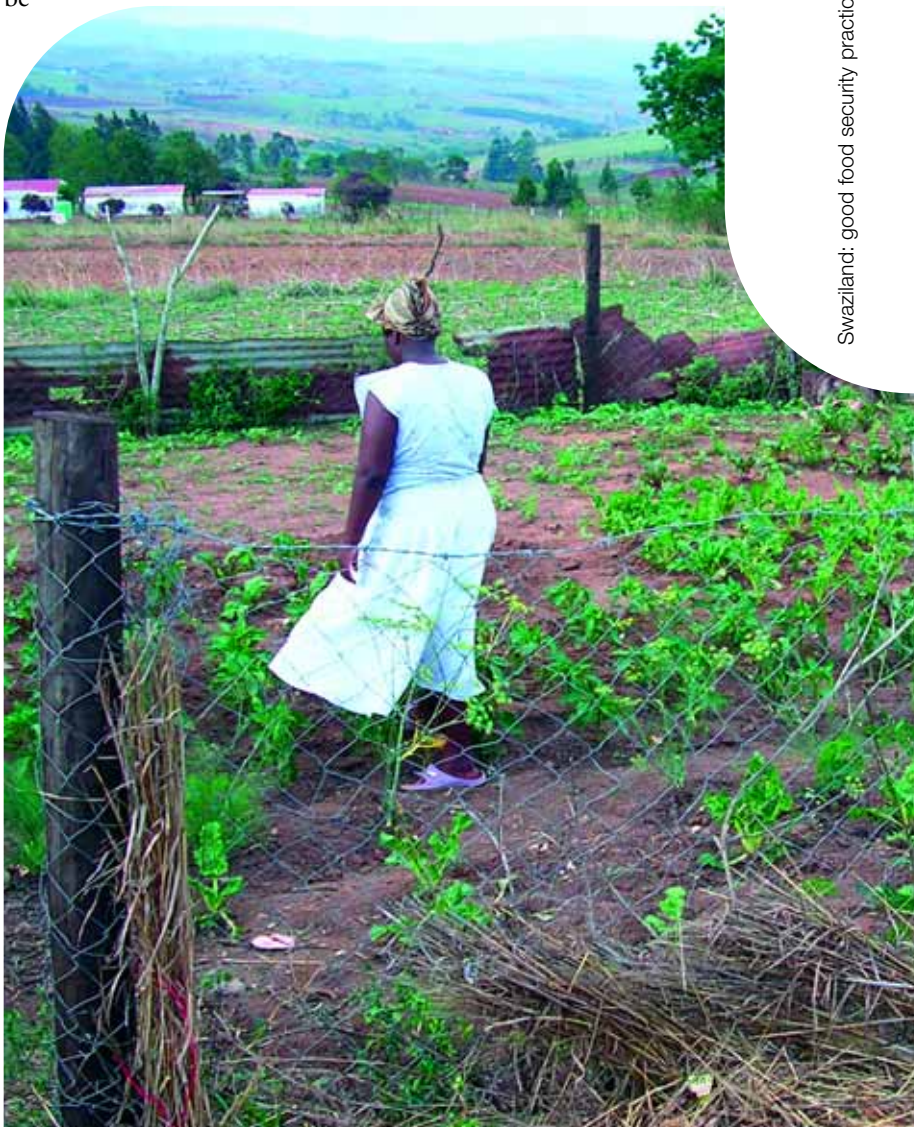
Communal gardens and poultry production provided for added revenue and greater food security, as well as enhancing nutrition. Fish production was curtailed due to problems associated with water retention in ponds.

4. Lessons learned and recommendations for replication

National Societies in other countries may wish to undertake similar projects in the future. In considering replication of these and related projects, the following considerations may prove useful:

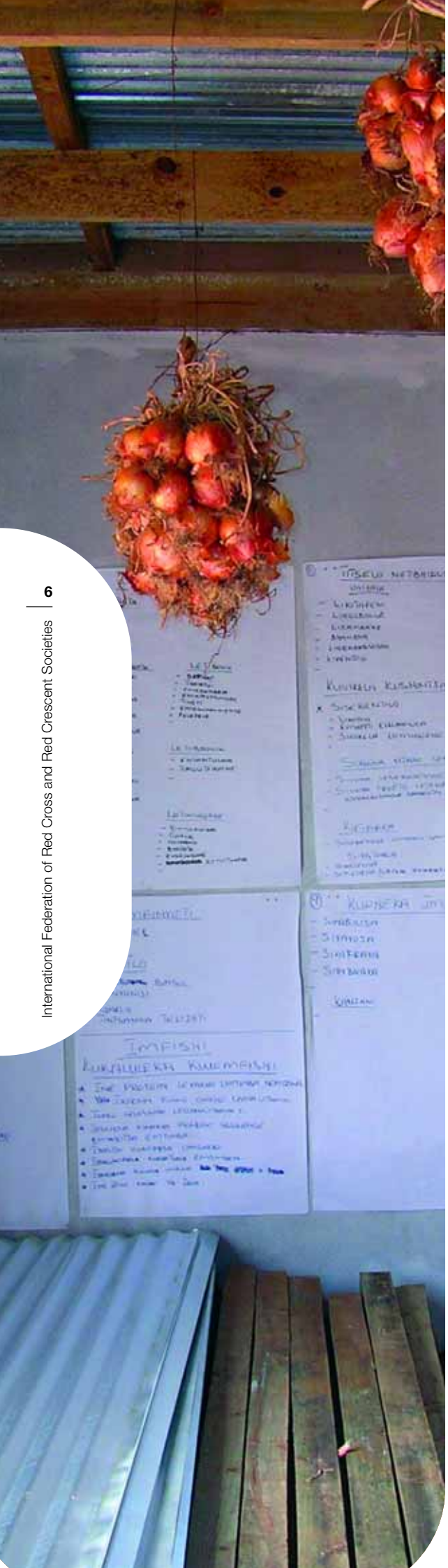
Beneficiaries

- **Selection** through Home Based Care Facilitators can be a very effective way of identifying **vulnerable families**. Pre-existing groups provide a strong base for any given project. However, it is important to ensure that targeting also includes the most vulnerable, who are often less well organized and less easily identifiable.
- **Project membership** issues need to be clarified at the onset – preferably by way of an agreed constitution and rules of operation. The National Society may wish to encourage continuity of project membership within households – i.e. transfer to others within the household, when a project member is too ill to participate or has passed away. In addition, a minimum (and possibly maximum) number of members should be determined beforehand, in relation to available land and financial resources, so that expectations can be met and commitments kept. In some cases, RC membership was made a prerequisite to joining; the membership fee may have prevented the most vulnerable from participating.
- **Numbers of projected beneficiaries** need to be carefully estimated, in order to ensure adequate material for project implementation. For example, in the garden projects, the number of members per household was originally estimated at seven individuals. This proved to be too low. On average each household had six children, two adult women and sometimes one adult man. Many households wanted to extend their plots, but were constrained in doing so due to a lack of adequate fencing material.
- On-going planning also needs to take into consideration the possibility that communal projects may suffer a **decrease in membership** over time. Reasons for this can include:
  - physical constraints (i.e. unable to perform heavy work due to sickness or age);
  - relatively high mortality amongst project members (presumably due to AIDS or related illnesses);
  - withdrawal from the project because of unmet needs (e.g. unable to wait for collective revenues to be shared).



Project design

- The compromised **physical condition** of individuals within communities with a high rate of HIV/AIDS needs to be taken into account. Where physically demanding work is required, proper means of outsourcing should



be considered (e.g. motorized equipment hired/purchased (pumps, tractors), outside labour, the use of plastic water containers instead of concrete ones, etc).

- A working **constitution**, prepared and adopted by the project members, is essential in setting out the parameters under which the project activities will be undertaken, the roles and responsibilities of each member and the way in which profits or dividends will be shared.
- A **Memorandum of Understanding** between the National Society and relevant agencies could guarantee access to local expertise (i.e. Ministry of Agriculture, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, etc.). For example, the Ministry of Agriculture could assist with technical issues (e.g. agricultural techniques) for an agreed number of days per year.
- Working links to the Ministry of Health and other relevant ministries engaged in HIV/AIDS and food security should be ensured. Regional and national strategies, priorities and policies, including those for monitoring and evaluation, should be considered at the planning stage of the project. In areas of high HIV/AIDS prevalence, **awareness** and **education campaigns** should be integrated into the food security project.
- **Training** is an important component of such projects. Training needs should be reassessed on a yearly basis. Additionally, training for new members and adolescent household members needs to be ensured. Ideally, training should be provided to a minimum of two people per family.
- A proper **exit strategy** should be developed at project inception and revised (if need be) half way through, and immediately prior to the phasing-out period of the project. If the National Society is working with a partner (the International Federation and/or Partner National Society), agreements must clearly state who has responsibility for what in relation to the exit strategy.

The exit strategy should ensure the following:

- Six month phase-out plan prior to the end of project funding;
- Existence of well-organized committees for each project;
- Review of the constitution to ensure that all essential issues have been dealt with;
- Capacity building in the area of project management, to guarantee continuity when external managerial/administrative support has ceased;
- Clarification of ownership and responsibilities in relation to capital assets;
- Addressing the issue of new membership within the constitution or linked to other existing community-based programmes (e.g. Home Based Care).
- Informing beneficiary households in a timely manner regarding the end of project and what will be expected from them; this may require some facilitation in defining solutions for any major concerns.
- Recommendations regarding ways in which to secure support from other donors, if deemed necessary.

Sustainability

- The **National Society** divisions and branches should be involved during the planning and implementation period, to enable project sustainability once external funding has ceased. The National Society will be called upon to provide on-going technical advice to the communities.
- **Youth** should be involved with their parents whenever possible, to ensure skills' transfer and sustainability within the household in cases where parents can no longer participate.
- The community invests its labour and may choose to **re-invest financially** (from income-generating sales) in the project. Communal funds encourage continuity of activities and provide the means for dealing with problems or expanding operations (e.g. installing a heating system (poultry project), improving irrigation (fish project), as well as for purchasing collective goods (seeds, etc)).
- Water availability was generally a problem and remained one of the main threats to sustainability. In drought-prone areas, diversified project interventions that include a **combination** of crop and animal husbandry activities should be encouraged. This spreads risk and ensures that income sources are maintained. Diversification also increases food crop variety, potentially improving the nutritional status of household members.
- Attention needs to be paid to the location and **quality of land** being allocated – which was not always desirable (e.g. excessive distances to water sources and difficulty of access for the elderly). Heavily stoned terrain also impeded participation by the less physically able. On one occasion, the task of clearing land had to be outsourced and required additional funds.
- It is important to ensure a **sufficient period of time** for implementation, in order to maximize sustainability. Communal projects may require more time (two to four years) than individual backyard gardens (one to two years). Funding should cover such aspects as training, technical advice during implementation, problem-solving, monitoring and a gradual phase-out.

Monitoring

To ensure proper monitoring and evaluation, the following should be undertaken:

- **Formal needs assessment and/or feasibility study** (e.g. Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA)): This will assist the National Society and community in deciding whether or not to proceed and if so, which projects are most suitable and feasible in response to local needs. Only then can an informed choice be made on the nature and structure of proposed projects, be they:
  - backyard gardens (individual);
  - communal gardens (with mostly individual plots);
  - commercial projects (poultry, vegetables, fish rearing, etc).
- **Baseline information**: This is essential and should include clearly-defined indicators such as quantity and quality of meals, household and/or community economics, coping strategies, etc. Impact cannot be measured unless this type of information is gathered prior to the implementation of a programme.
- **On-going monitoring**: Verifiable indicators will need to be identified (i.e. number and variety of crops, number of beneficiaries trained, plot sizes used, sales records, etc). Process and results-oriented monitoring will not only help in identifying the components most beneficial to the project, but will also show how and why they had an impact. This information is crucial for on-going adjustments to the projects, as well as in enabling decisions on whether or not to scale up or down. Training in record-keeping is therefore a necessary component of such projects.
- **Evaluation**: The baseline information and on-going monitoring should ultimately feed into the overall evaluation of the programme. In designing the evaluation, it is important to remember that certain benefits are not easily measured in monetary terms, even as they form an important component of a project's impact (e.g. social cohesion, knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention, etc). One idea is to establish a partnership with a university for monitoring and evaluation purposes. Students could then assist with the collection of baseline and outcome/impact data, freeing up volunteers for project implementation tasks.
- The views of **OVCs** (direct and indirect beneficiaries) should be considered in assessments, mid-term and final evaluations.[4]
- Good **record-keeping** (by project committees, individuals or site officers) as to level of production per project (i.e. in terms of crops and chickens) – is essential in providing for transparency of revenues and other benefits accrued.

[4] Guidelines for interviewing children - Save the Children UK
http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk/jsp/resources/details.jsp?id=2843&group=resources&section=policy&subsection=details

Some project-specific considerations

Gardens (communal and individual)

- Communal gardens are more successful when they are primarily made up of individual plots, complemented by additional shared plots, due to greater commitment on the part of participants.
- Other forms of communal gardens, such as **school gardens**, can also be developed. These would contribute to the availability of food for the community and generate income, while serving as training centres ('good example gardens'). In addition, a 'model' backyard garden could be set up on the grounds of a **clinic or local National Society office**, where members would be able to discuss problems once external support had been phased out.
- Soil fertility should ideally be improved using organic materials, such as livestock waste, leaf litter and green manures. Project members can be taught how to make compost, and shown how to produce green manure – as a supplement to other forms of organic **fertilizers**, especially if livestock is not kept in sufficient numbers.
- Where **pesticides** are not recommended for insect and disease control, project members should be encouraged to grow "trap crops" such as hot chilli peppers, garlic or shallots, for crop protection purposes. Crop rotation should continuously be promoted to reduce pest and disease build up.
- New solutions should be brought to the garden projects concerning **water** harvesters, in consultation with the beneficiary households. Water collection from thatched roofs, hiring of labour to construct cement harvesters or budgeting for plastic containers are issues that need to be considered. A local water and sanitation expert could advise on the desired water harvesting capacity in each geographical area and on collection techniques. Introduction of drip kits to optimise water use could be considered.

Fish ponds and poultry production

- Consider the heightened risk of **malaria** if stagnant water (e.g. fish pond) is introduced to an area where water was not available before. Advice from the Ministry of Health should be sought before project implementation.
- Fish have to be sold fresh or dried. Drying fish requires adequate knowledge and sufficient space for processing and storing before sale. Practical constraints in selling fresh fish at **market** need to be taken into account.
- Flexibility in terms of how and in what quantity products are sold helps to **widen the overall consumer base**. For example, to improve accessibility for those who could not afford a whole chicken, some broilers were cut into smaller portions and kept in a deep freezer. This option requires access to properly-functioning and well-maintained deep freezer facilities.
- For poultry production, training must include information on **hygiene and cleanliness**. This proved most valuable and contributes to the below average losses of chickens due to disease or transportation.

5. Conclusions

Overall, results indicate that the projects achieved in:

- increasing households' access to food, education and health services;
- enhancing their financial resources;
- strengthening their ability to assist others, leading to positive social implications;
- reducing communities' vulnerability to drought and other disasters, through income diversification, and improved irrigation.

In replicating a similar programme, National Societies may wish to introduce a more restricted number of projects at any one time – allowing these to evolve within the community, before gradually scaling-up or introducing other projects, following positive evaluations. It is important to keep the project designs simple and to ensure that sufficient means are available for both beneficiaries' needs, as well as to build capacity within the National Society branches on food security programming and monitoring.

Overall, the project members made good use of their newly-acquired skills as a result of training – with the exception of food processing and preservation techniques. This is likely due to the fact that the need for immediate consumption outweighed the need for preservation. Nevertheless, the skills acquired by project members and the experience developed within the National Society remain assets that continue to benefit the community as a whole.

It is apparent that the *individual* set-up of the backyard gardens assured commitment and responsibility by each project household. The crops provided food within one to three months and household members were fully responsible for their own decisions (i.e. when to consume and/or when to cash in revenues). At the end of three years, the number of members was three-fold the original estimate – attesting to the project's success. The simple design and quick revenue-generation caused enthusiasm throughout the community and a desire to be included in the project.

Although backyard gardens proved to be the least costly per beneficiary compared with the communal projects, it is important to remember that certain benefits in communal projects are not easily measured or valued in monetary terms – such as the impact on social cohesion.

Indeed, once implemented, both the individual gardens and the community-based programmes achieved their stated goal of reducing risk and increasing communities' resilience in coping with food insecurity. In all cases, commitment on the part of community members to the projects proved to be the key to their success.

Communal gardens – Vegetables

Maphungwane and Mahhashini

Description

The original concept entailed having a *communal* plot (3–4 hectares*) which project members would work collectively. It was anticipated that vegetable and maize production would yield enough for home-consumption as well as providing a surplus for sale.

Results

Project members decided to transform the communal plot into individual household plots. A small communal section was maintained as a revenue-generating source for vulnerable members of the community (elderly, sick, orphans, etc.). Crops were rotated on a seasonal basis and included beans, sweet potatoes, spinach, lettuce, cabbage and beetroot. Maize was planted during the rainy season. Seeds, seedlings and other materials were purchased collectively and were therefore cheaper.

Individual plots generated sufficient food for members' households and provided a small income, which was used to purchase school materials and uniforms, and basic household goods (i.e. candles, salt, etc). Project members were able to improve their agricultural skills.

Conclusions

Communal vegetable gardens with both individual and communal components decrease the level of food insecurity in a community highly affected by HIV/AIDS. The number and regularity of meals reportedly increased over the course of the project.

*1 hectare = 100 x 100 m

Communal garden – Income generating

Mahhashini

Description

The plan called for clearing four hectares of land for the production of cotton and maize for income-generation purposes. The introduction of cotton as a cash crop was seen as a means of strengthening the communities' coping mechanisms. Cotton production is common in the area.

Results

During the implementation of the pilot project, cotton prices fell (locally and globally) and cotton production became less lucrative. The project community decided to shift to other more profitable crops.

The project members decided to grow fruit trees (oranges, bananas) and green maize on communal plots and a new plan was introduced to grow vegetables on *individual* plots, but on a larger scale. The idea was to produce vegetables collectively (but on individual plots) on a contractual basis for a large supermarket. This is currently in development. The site has increased to six hectares, including 0.5 hectare for fruit trees.

Overall, project efficiency has been hampered by the frequent breakdown of the diesel pump, used for irrigation. In order to reduce running costs, an electrical pump has been acquired.

Conclusions

It is premature to draw firm conclusions. Members believe that the project is sustainable and that it will continue to generate income, using diversified crops. The community's resilience to drought has increased. Although contract farming will not necessarily increase the availability of food within the community itself, it is thought that the income generated will improve food security overall.

Individual backyard gardens

Sigombeni

Description

The objective of the backyard garden project was to ensure that PLWHA and their families had reliable access to sufficient and nutritious food and clean water.

Individual households of OVCs and PLWHA were identified by Home Based Care Facilitators, in collaboration with the local clinic. Each household established a backyard garden, thanks to the provision of fencing material (10 x 10 m plots), seeds and seedlings (sufficient for one year), as well as material for the construction of water harvesters.

Results

All identified households established individual gardens – leading to an increase in availability and accessibility of vegetables*. About three quarters of the produce was used for own-consumption. The remaining crops were sold and revenue was used for medication, basic non-food items, transport, school materials, school uniforms, and seeds. Profits were shared with relatives and OVCs.

Membership increased over the duration of the project, beyond the initial planned numbers.

Construction of cement water harvesters was not as successful, due in part to physical constraints within beneficiary households. The problems of water shortage were partially resolved by recycling domestically used water after 'treatment with ash'.

The majority of the families had no regular source of income. Many families expressed their desire to expand the gardens, but were constrained in doing so due to a lack of fencing material and insufficient access to water.

Conclusions

Backyard gardens reduced food insecurity and likely improved the quality and quantity of food within the households. The gardens were (financially) self-sustainable. However, the relatively high mortality rate among project members (PLWHA/OVCs) may restrict transfer of knowledge within the community.

* At least 5 or more of the following varieties were grown in each backyard garden: beetroot, spinach, tomatoes, beans, cabbage, fennel, peppermint, lettuce, green pepper, chilli, garlic, spring onions, and maize.

Communal fish pond

Maphungwane

Description

A fish production project was developed (in addition to the community garden project), so as to enhance the community's food security and reduce its vulnerability to drought. Fish production is not labour intensive and relatively inexpensive to maintain, once set up.

A small dam was built near a natural water source and additional ponds constructed for rearing fish. The fish (tilapia) were to be harvested and sold, providing an additional source of income for members, as well as increasing the availability of protein-rich foods within the community. Project members were provided with training in fish farming techniques.

Results

Excessive seepage from the ponds has hampered the projected outcome. Currently, fish is only being produced in the dam, as the ponds cannot contain enough water to sustain fish rearing. This is not enough for fish harvesting and/or income generation. The future of the project is dependent on the rehabilitation of the ponds.

Conclusions

The impact on nutrition and income generation will only become apparent once the fish ponds are fully operational.

Communal poultry production

Maphungwane and Mahhashini

Description

Poultry rearing and selling were introduced as income generating activities for the community. The project included construction of a poultry-raising facility, as well as training in project management and chicken husbandry.

Results

Broiler chickens were sold within the community and neighbouring towns. To improve accessibility for those who could not afford a whole chicken, some broilers were cut and kept in a deep freezer acquired by the project (this option eventually encountered difficulties and had to be discontinued). In another instance, project members initiated egg production, using revenues generated by the broiler project to finance this expansion.

Income from the broilers has increased the overall income of beneficiaries and enabled the purchase of additional (non-)food items. Availability and accessibility to nutritious food has improved.

Fixed contracts with larger purchasers could reduce problems with unstable markets. The number of birds lost due to diseases or during transport was below average for such projects. The project is able to generate sufficient funds to cover the heating costs necessary for raising chicks.

Conclusions

Where soil is too poor for farming, poultry production serves to optimise land use and provides a viable means of reducing vulnerability. The projects generate income, strengthen coping strategies and are sustainable given strong project management by members.

ANNEX 1

Project-specific findings: an overview

Communal projects (gardens, poultry production, fish ponds)

	Positive	Negative
Selection	Project groups consisted of previously-existing community groups, made up of people who shared a common interest in improving food security within their community. This had positive social implications on team spirit, cohesion, and commitment.	The down-side of working with existing social groups is that selection of members is not necessarily based on level of vulnerability nor linked to Home Based Care programmes. Project members' families did not necessarily include PLWHA or OVCs. In some cases, Red Cross membership was made a prerequisite to joining; the membership fee may have prevented the most vulnerable from participating. Communal projects suffered a decrease in membership over time. Reasons included: ■ physical constraints (unable to perform heavy work due to sickness or age); ■ relatively high mortality rate amongst project members (presumably due to AIDS or related illnesses); ■ withdrawal because of unmet needs (unable to wait for collective revenues to be shared). A policy for inclusion of new members was not well defined and not systematically implemented – in particular once the original member of a household had passed away. New members did not always receive training. A minimum (and possibly maximum) number of members should be determined beforehand, in relation to available land and financial resources, so that expectations can be met and commitments kept.

	Positive	Negative
Project design	Communal gardens were subdivided into individual plots, upon members' request, thereby increasing individual responsibility and commitment. This was possible thanks to the flexible set-up of the projects, which allowed for adjustments in design and implementation. Project communities decided themselves on which crops to grow, whether for income generation or for direct consumption. A working constitution, prepared and adopted by the project members, was essential in setting out the parameters under which the project activities would be undertaken, the roles and responsibilities of each member and the way in which profits or dividends were to be shared.	There was no clearly-defined exit strategy. This meant that there was a risk that technical and organisational support could have been withdrawn at the end of the project. Generally speaking, Red Cross branches were insufficiently involved to ensure continuity, technical support and skills' transfer. A Memorandum of Understanding between the National Society and relevant agencies would guarantee access to local expertise (i.e. Ministry of Agriculture, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, etc.). For example, the Ministry of Agriculture could assist with technical issues (e.g. agricultural techniques) for an agreed number of days per year.
Sustainability	The community invested its labour and was able to re-invest financially (from income-generating sales) in the project. Communal funds encouraged the continuity of activities and provided means for dealing with problems or expanding operations (e.g. installing a heating system (poultry project), improving irrigation (fish project), as well as for purchasing collective goods (seeds, etc)). During training and project implementation, sufficient attention was paid to indigenous methods of plant protection.	Water availability was generally a problem and remained one of the main threats to sustainability. The location and quality of land allocated was not always desirable (e.g. distance caused obstacles for the elderly; excessive distance to water sources). The heavily stoned terrain also impeded participation by the less physically able. On one occasion, clearing had to be outsourced and required additional financial input.

	Positive	Negative
Monitoring	Overall there was good record-keeping (by project committees, individuals or site officers) of production per project (i.e. in terms of crops and chickens), providing for transparency of revenues and other benefits accrued.	
Outcome	Communal gardens and poultry production provided for added revenues and greater food security, as well as enhancing nutrition. Fish production was curtailed due to problems associated with water retention in ponds.	Communal gardens were not the ideal project for generating income for other projects, such as Home Based Care projects.

Individual projects (backyard gardens)

Beneficiary selection	Individual project members were all selected through Home Based Care Facilitators, attached to an existing clinic within the community. This guaranteed that project members were from vulnerable households that included PLWHA and OVCs. If members died, membership was passed on to other household members, ensuring continuity. Additional members were accepted into the project only after identification by the Home Based Care Facilitators.	Training was systematically provided to new project families, but not repeated for households from which initially-trained project members had died.

	Positive	Negative
Project design	The individual set-up of each backyard garden ensured commitment and responsibility by project households. The crops provided food within one to three months. Decisions on when to consume or when to cash-in revenues could be taken directly by household members. The number of members was three-fold the original estimate after three years. The project's simple design and quick revenue-generating capacity caused enthusiasm throughout the community and a desire to be included in the project.	Numbers of projected beneficiaries need to be carefully estimated, in order to ensure adequate material for project implementation. The number of members per household was originally estimated at seven people. This proved to be too low. On average, each household had six children, two adult women and sometimes one adult man. Many households wanted to extend their plots, but lacked adequate fencing material to do so. The compromised physical condition of individuals within communities with a high rate of HIV/AIDS needs to be taken into account. For example, the planned construction of water harvesters was partially abandoned because of the heavy physical input required from households. Alternatives should have been sought more quickly and tested. In areas of high HIV/AIDS prevalence, awareness and education campaigns should be integrated into the food security project.
Sustainability	Most backyard gardens were planted throughout the year, with alternating crops. No project members withdrew from the backyard garden project.	Young people were not systematically engaged in cultivation, nor provided with training. Targeting mainly the elderly and PLWHA could be a threat to sustainability. Ideally, training should be provided to a minimum of two people per family.

	Positive	Negative
Monitoring	Good record-keeping was maintained by the Site Officer regarding each family's level of production and consumption.	Information was pulled together quite late in the project and precluded an on-going analysis.
Outcome	Some project members were on anti-retroviral drugs. The project increased the quality of their food - which presumably will have increased their quality of life.	

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity
The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality
It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality
In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence
The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary Service
It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity
There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality
The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

The *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people.

By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The International Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

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