Food security

Green Health – Back Yard Gardening to increase food production among vulnerable households in Malawi

“Being HIV positive, I thought I could do nothing in this Community but thanks to DAPP with the support from EU for training me in various farming technologies, I am now able to produce much more food through conservation farming methods and to feed my family throughout the year.”

Mr. Smart Chinomba

Context

The Zomba district in Malawi has the second highest food insecurity figure in all of Malawi and the highest HIV prevalence rate (17% against the national average of 12%). Particularly vulnerable to lack of access to food are the households of people living with HIV/AIDS. These are people who have taken the courage to go for HIV testing and counselling and who have started to build up their lives with the knowledge that they are HIV positive. This target group is even more affected by existing food insecurity as their immune system needs boosting in order for them to be able to implement the hard physical labour which is needed to grow their crops and sustain their health.

Objectives

- Increase the agriculture production and capacity through promoting backyard gardening to 5,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in the Zomba District of Malawi.
- 25% increase in food production among the targeted 5,000 households living with HIV/AIDS; 5% increase in household income through back yard gardening, the produce of which can be consumed thus reducing the need to buy food on the market.
- Increase knowledge on nutrition and general health.

Impact

- Improvement of food security status at house hold level; ability to pay school fees from the sales of fish and vegetables which have reduced the numbers of children dropping out of school.
- Nutritional and health levels have risen due to more crop production and diversification leading to more regular and varied food intake.
- Farmers now own assets and farm animals that increase their income.

For more information: www.dapp-malawi.org
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One of the members from the support group (Rhoda Chiwaya) has made the following testimony:

“At first, people thought I was wasting my time by disclosing my HIV status and joining the support groups established by the Green Health Project. After joining, I was trained in horticulture gardening and got agriculture inputs such as seeds, water canes and fertilizer from the project, which was like a dream to me, I decided to work hard and realize something out of it. From the small land that I have, I cultivated and produced vegetables that helped me to eliminate the burden of vegetable shortage at my homestead and buying vegetables at higher prices and earned K 3,100.00 after selling the surplus.

I got fertilizer (Urea and 23:21:0+4s), 4Kg Maize seeds, 1Kg Groundnuts and 1Kg Soybeans for the rain fed production. I have realized a lot from these inputs and my family is now food secure. When joining I didn’t expect to get all these things and as one of the garden instructors, I received trainings that enables me to produce more and teach others in the community. I also received a bicycle that enables me to visit, train and supervise the 29 farmers in the club.

With the impacts seen so far I will never turn back to where I was and will continue working hard even when the program phases out.”

Support Group members demonstrating nutritious food