Promotion of HIV/AIDS mitigation and wildlife conservation through improved village poultry production in Southern Africa

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1\ INTRODUCTION

Many poor rural households in developing countries rely on village chickens (FAO, 2004a). In rural households affected by HIV/AIDS and areas surrounding protected wildlife populations, they play a particularly important role (Alders \textit{et al.}, 2007; McDonald, 2006). In farming households, the illness or death of family members due to HIV/AIDS leads to loss of valuable labour resources (FAO/UNEP, 2002). Consequently, the focus of household activity turns to maintaining family food security. In affected households, food security is maintained through revising the complex division of labour in accordance with the possibilities presented by the local farming system. Throughout Africa, expanding human populations have created situations in which large numbers of poor people live close to protected wildlife populations. Inevitably, the needs of people and wildlife come into conflict. One approach to ensure that meat intake is maintained while reducing bushmeat hunting is to improve the ability of people to subsist on alternative sources of protein and income.

Village chickens provide a scarce resource – animal protein – in the form of meat and eggs, and can be sold or bartered to meet essential family needs such as medicine, clothes and school fees. Village chickens are active in pest control, provide manure, are required for special festivals and are essential for many traditional ceremonies. The output of village chickens is lower than that of intensively raised birds, but it is obtained with minimum input in terms of housing, disease control, management and supplementary feeding. The chickens are generally owned and managed by women and children (Guèye, 2000) and are often essential elements of female-headed households (Bagnol, 2001). As women are the main carers of sick people, chickens can play an important role as they provide the women with additional resources to carry out their important task of supporting people living with HIV/AIDS.
The components of village poultry production include indigenous poultry breeds, feed, shelter, disease control, and community collaboration and group formation (FAO, 2004b).

2 PROJECT: HIV/AIDS MITIGATION IN MOZAMBIQUE
The main activities of this project include: baseline studies and annual participatory rural appraisals; training local NGOs volunteers as community vaccinators against Newcastle disease (ND) (Alders et al., 2003); training NGO technical staff and local government agricultural staff in ND control; implementing ND vaccination campaigns; training farmers to experiment with low-cost improvements to village poultry husbandry; working with volunteers and NGO staff, local health posts and primary schools to promote village poultry production and consumption of poultry meat and eggs; and technical backstopping, and monitoring and evaluation. The project has demonstrated the potential to deliver triple benefits: direct support to people affected or infected by HIV/AIDS (FAO, 2005); income generation for carers and community-based organizations; and an increase in the capacity of communities to support welfare activities.

3 PROJECT: WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN ZAMBIA
This project focuses on the sustainable control of ND in village poultry (Alders et al., 1994; Songolo and Katongo, 2001); improved village poultry husbandry and management strategies including marketing (Alders, 2007; McDonald, 2006); and improved household

![Figure 1](image_url)

**FIGURE 1**  
Sra (Mrs) Celestina Zimbabwe, a widow in Manica Province, Mozambique

Celestina received one rooster and three hens. Six months later, she had 21 birds. She was delighted with the results and so were her children. Celestina also helps with the training sessions for child-headed households and continues to provide advice to four households in her local area
welfare, including improved nutrition and food security as a means of reducing the need for communities surrounding South Luangwa National Park to hunt, eat and sell bushmeat (Faiela et al., 2007).

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REFERENCES


