

Mauritania: A new way to preserve the catch



Located between Morocco and Senegal, Mauritania, is a desert land with 2 million people and 1 percent arable land. The country's marine fisheries are one of its few resources. But getting fish from the Atlantic coast to the vast hinterland is a problem because of spoilage.

TeleFood donated US\$7 878 to a fishing cooperative in the capital Nouakchott to improve fish drying activities.

In January, the project started with the identification of the site for the new drying plant and of the experts who would teach 50 women how to process the fish. In March, drying tables were constructed and equipment such as tubs, knives, aprons and gloves were purchased, as well as a tonne of salt.

By April, production was underway at the beachfront plant; a step towards improving the lives of the women workers and their families, and towards getting a good source of protein, and future income to citizens faraway from the coast.

For further information contact: photo-library@fao.org



TELEFOOD PROJECTS IN THE WORLD

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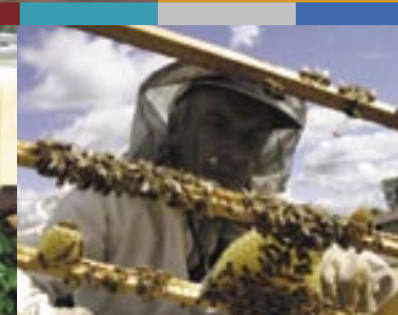
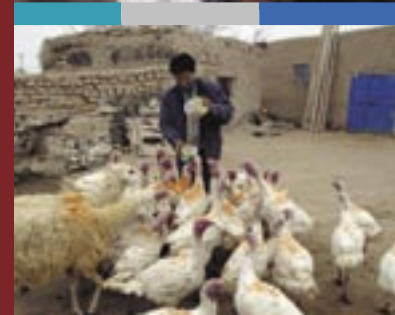


One Seed for a Big Harvest:

Small projects that make the difference

Many people in the developing world and in transition countries could produce more food and income if only they had the resources to put better production and marketing methods to the test. Since 1997, the TeleFood initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has made that possible by funding more than **2500** projects in **130** countries around the world.

Since its start, the TeleFood campaign has generated over **US\$ 20 million in donations**. The TeleFood Special Fund finances grassroot-level micro projects that help small-scale farmers produce more food and generate cash income, for better access to food. Project categories range from crop production to fish and animal production, including support to school garden initiatives and apiculture. The budget of each project does not exceed US\$10 000 and a duration of 12 months. Telefood projects are proposed by FAO member governments and approved by FAO's technical experts. Although small in scale and cost, **TeleFood projects have been making the difference in the lives of small-scale farming communities.**



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Peru: Returning exiles reap a rich harvest

The people of Vilcabamba district in a fertile valley of the Peruvian Andes have had rough times. After more than a decade of exile due to armed conflict in the area, many returned to their land in the 1990s, facing the prospect of starting from scratch. TeleFood, established a small vegetable garden and pig-raising project to help alleviate poverty and fight malnutrition in this area.

Since the region had not been cultivated for 14 years, the villagers faced a lot of preparatory work before they could make use of the seeds, tools and pigs provided by TeleFood. First, they built terraces on the steep slopes, then they got trained in cultivating their land, producing fertilizer from worms and crop residues, and taking care of small farm animals.

"Before, we didn't know how to cultivate our land, now, we know how to grow vegetables, how to transplant them and how to make our own fertilizers," says Felicitas Arsega. The villagers sell their products in a nearby village, the modest revenue of which allows them to buy basic foodstuffs.



Zambia: Helping AIDS orphans help themselves

In Zambia, a nation of just under 10 million people, more than 800 000 children are orphans – nearly 18 percent of the total child population. In northern Zambia's Mansa Township, where growing numbers of AIDS orphans are struggling to survive, residents are rising to that challenge, with the help of FAO's TeleFood initiative.

To give the children a home, Mansa's Seventh-day Adventist church opened a small orphanage with donations and support from congregation members, the local Rotary Club and the Zambian Government. With a roof over the children's heads, project organizers next tackled the question of meeting the orphans' food needs. They wanted to establish a half-hectare garden on the orphanage site that would be cultivated by the children themselves under the supervision of a qualified volunteer gardener. In this way, the children would not only enjoy a healthy diet thanks to the food they produced, but would also acquire valuable vocational skills in the process.

A small grant from TeleFood gave the project the boost it needed. The one-time investment bought seeds and other planting materials, tools such as hoes, wheelbarrows and shovels, fertilizers and a simple, small-scale drip irrigation system. Now, under the careful tending of the children, the garden is flourishing, producing cabbage, eggplants, peas, green peppers, soybeans, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes.

"They are completely self-sufficient for vegetables, maize and poultry. They are producing enough surplus to sell at a market, and are reinvesting the proceeds back into the garden," says an FAO nutritionist.



Cambodia: TeleFood project pumps water in dry season

Cambodia's main rice-growing area is situated in the lowlands of the Mekong Delta with mainly rainfed rice-ecosystems. The wet season rice crop can easily be jeopardized by erratic rainfall during the dry spells of July and August, when rice is at tillering stage and crop water requirements are high. Supplementary irrigation is necessary to overcome the dry spells, to ensure a timely seedbed preparation and to avoid scalding of the rice at the maturing stage.

Fellow rice farmers come from miles around to see Tai Ny's new diesel water pump. Thanks to FAO's TeleFood Fund, Tai Ny's family is one of 350 target farmer households who benefited from the joint TeleFood and Special Programme for Food Security project.

If rice production is reduced, farm families face severe problems for two to three months of the year. This is where Tai Ny's pump comes in. Purchased with the TeleFood funds, the pumps are shared by up to five farm families.

"Before, I only harvested one rice crop, just enough for a family. Now, I can count on two or three crops, letting me sell some rice," said Tai Ny.



Armenia: TeleFood funded projects bear fruit

Two microprojects funded by TeleFood are helping disadvantaged Armenians to plant fruit trees and vegetable gardens.

"We are very happy with TeleFood help. It is the first time in 10 years that we have something of our own," said Nicolai Gragian, one of hundreds of refugees of Armenian origin who fled unrest in the neighbouring country of Azerbaijan in the late 1980s. The refugees settled in a rural area 100 km from the Armenian capital of Yerevan, an area with 90 percent unemployment.

Mr. Gragian, a father with four children, is one of about 500 refugees who have received fruit trees, packets of vegetable seeds and hand tools. The project targeted disadvantaged families, the elderly and other vulnerable groups.

A second TeleFood project in Armenia has provided fruit trees, vegetable seeds, irrigation material, fertilizer and tools to School N80, an elementary school in Yerevan with 600 children.

"We're faced with budget shortages," said Rita Arsenyan, director of the school. *"Our teachers get paid US\$10 a month. We don't have the resources for food so either the students go home for lunch or they don't eat lunch. The idea of the garden is to provide school lunch food."*

