

Tip-taps in Lesotho

for better nutrition and livelihoods

PROJECT TITLE

"Protecting and improving food and nutrition security of orphan and HIV/AIDS affected children (GCP/RAF/388/GER)"

INTERVENTION DOCUMENTED

Tip-Taps and primary health care in the Mafeteng district (pilot project)

CONTEXT

The district of Mafeteng suffers from recurrent droughts, high rates of HIV, and has the country's second highest rate of orphans (Mafeteng Situation Analysis 2004). Baseline studies highlighted high stunting rates, particularly in resource-poor households that host OVC (orphans and vulnerable children). The main problems identified include inadequate food quality, poor dietary diversity and lack of awareness of nutritional needs. Additionally, insufficient hygiene practices increased the risk of contamination and infectious diseases in children and adults debilitated by HIV/AIDS. Mafeteng was selected for a pilot experience carried out between November 2004 and May 2008 to support food and nutrition security and livelihoods of vulnerable HIV-affected communities, in particular of the OVC, under the umbrella of a wider project for southern Africa funded by Germany. The Mafeteng intervention is in line with the National Policy for Food Security.

TARGET POPULATION

Orphans, vulnerable children and rural, food insecure, HIV-affected households and communities.

STAKEHOLDERS

Emphasis of the project was on capacity building; intersectoral and interagency collaboration. The National Project Steering Committee was co-chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and other members included the Ministry of Education and the National AIDS Commission. A Technical Working Group composed of FAO, WFP and UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Project Management Team. The District Child Protection Team, composed of professional and technical staff from relevant government departments and other development partners, oversaw, coordinated and monitored activities at district level. Community groups were involved from the planning process, through participatory approaches. This intervention was implemented by the NGO "Send a Cow Lesotho" (SCL).

THE INTERVENTION

In the framework of the Mafeteng pilot experience, SCL supported household food production for consumption through organic agriculture and livestock rearing. The positive impact of these activities on the nutritional status of beneficiaries was reinforced by side-interventions on primary healthcare and disease prevention, through education and development of **home-made Tip-Taps**, between others. Even with a good diet, a person's nutritional status and health can be negatively affected by infections and parasites that hamper the body's capacity to assimilate nutrients from the food consumed. Thus, good sanitation and hygiene are of primary importance in improving nutritional status, as well as to mitigate the risk of infections for HIV/AIDS affected persons.

A Tip-Tap is a very simple device that facilitates hand-washing thus reducing the spread of communicable diseases, particularly in areas lacking piped-water systems or where water is scarce in general. Tip-Taps reduce water usage and can be operated by foot, avoiding the risk of picking up germs from washing hands in the same bowl, and tap handles. It is used to clean hands after using a latrine or working in a garden and before cooking, eating or caring for young children, elderly or ill persons.

Tip-Taps can be made out of non-costly material, easily available locally: pegs, wire, string, soap dishes made of old cans and used plastic water containers of medium size (mostly 5L).



Tip-tap next to vegetable garden: nutrition and hygiene

Independently of the type of Tip-Tap, the basic steps to build one are:

- Build a frame with pegs, about 1 meter high and soundly planted in the ground.
- Dig a hole between the pegs and fill it with rocks, for the drainage of used water, or with a container, to collect waste water to be used for the irrigation of vegetable 'keyhole' gardens.
- Use string, wire or sticks to tie a used plastic container to the pegs' frame. If necessary, holes can be made in the container using a heated nail or metal wire.



German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection



Send a Cow
change a family's future



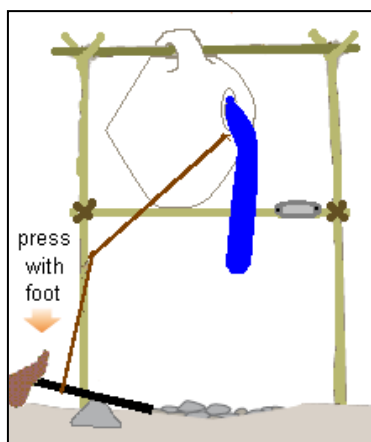
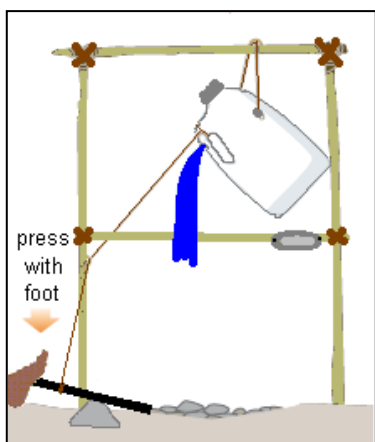
Tip Taps: **tip** the jerry can and it becomes a **tap**!



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- Attach a peg, or any other object that can serve as pedal, to one end of a long string. The other end of the string is to be tied to the container, next to the hole(s) from which the water is supposed to pour. The length of the string must be such that the pedal touches the ground without laying completely on it: stepping on the pedal will put the string in tension, and tip the container, making water pour out from the apposite hole(s).
- If soap is available, make a soap dish with a used can or other available material, to be tied to the pegs' frame.



CAPACITY BUILDING

A 3 hours' training session is normally sufficient for a "hands-on" demonstration on how to build a Tip-Tap device.

Posters and models at scales can be used to illustrate the technique to the participants; videos and slides can be used to show the construction of Tip-Taps in other villages and show other beneficiaries' reactions and testimony on the impact of Tip-Taps on their daily life. However, none of these materials are indispensable to the training. The only basic requirements for the training on Tip-Tap construction and use are the availability of the necessary materials to build the Tip-Tap, a good trainer and a hands-on learning method.

Participants should designate one of them as knowledge keeper, to take records of the demonstration so that the community can build other Tip-Taps even in the absence of the trainer.

MATERIAL PRODUCED

During this project, a *Training Manual* was developed by Send a Cow Lesotho, with relevant "how-to-it" training material on Tip-Taps, as well as on organic gardening; group dynamics; livestock husbandry; dams; fuel saving stoves; nutrition and marketing.

Other training materials on the construction and use of Tip-Taps are available from Send a Cow UK (<http://www.cowfiles.com/african-gardens/african-garden-ideas/how-to-make-a-tip-tap>), or from project managers (see Contacts).

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In target communities, almost all households reached by the trainings managed to build a Tip-Tap and the incidence of communicable diseases, such as cholera and dysentery, has diminished since the use of Tip-Taps has been introduced. In addition, support to primary health care activities and home-based care groups have improved access to health care for OVC and their families.



Set of training materials developed during the project

UPSCALING/REPLICABILITY OF THE PROJECT

The experience described here can be successfully up-scaled/replicated in similar contexts, if the following principles are applied:

- the actual promotion of and training on Tip-Taps should be implemented in parallel to interventions supporting food and nutrition security and safety, to have a relevant impact on the health status of populations;
- the promotion and setup of Tip-Taps can be easily integrated as support side-activity in nutrition and health projects;
- participatory approach should always be adopted to actively involve beneficiaries in the construction and training activities, to develop sense of ownership and responsibility: people will care more for things that they perceive as theirs;
- the training sessions on construction and use of Tip-Taps should be combined with basic health care and nutrition education sessions;
- the knowledge and experience of local populations should never be ignored or under-estimated: nobody knows the constraints and opportunities of their environment better than them.