

Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS)

- Uganda -

PROJECT TITLE

"Protect and Promote Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods of the households and communities affected by HIV/AIDS (OSRO/RAF/707/SWE)"

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Strengthen the food security, nutrition and livelihood of households and communities affected by HIV/AIDS by teaching Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) basic practical agricultural knowledge and life skills to increase their self esteem and livelihoods prospects.

CONTEXT

In Northern Uganda, many children remain orphans or are separated from their families during armed conflicts or in war-related causes like abductions, displacements, epidemics, malnutrition and starvation. Displacements and insecurity exacerbates the HIV/AIDS epidemic, producing yet more orphans who abandon schools to find often unsafe coping strategies. Most programmes, as the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) of the FAO Emergency Coordination Unit (ECU) in Uganda, target the adult population while most of the youth programmes on HIV/AIDS focus on awareness raising. Due to the emerging high number of OVC and to the high incidence of hunger and nutrition worsened by the 2007 floods, ECU adopted the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) to complement existing programmes, address the immediate needs of OVC and offer them possibilities for a meaningful future.

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS TARGETED

The project targeted OVC of both sexes, from 12 to 18 years old. Vulnerable children include in- and out-of-school children, children affected directly or indirectly by HIV/AIDS, children from displaced/disjointed households and other children in distress.

THE PROJECT

Thirty JFFLS have been setup by two Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs): the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in the Adjumani district and the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) in the Kaberamaido district. Each JFFLS comprises 25 to 30 children and two facilitators, one with agriculture skills and another with social skills, who work together with the overall technical backstopping of a coordinator. Facilitators are carefully selected and trained in the JFFLS approach prior to the initiation of the schools. Locations are chosen according to the availability of infrastructure for theoretical classes and of agricultural land for practical exercises.

The JFFLS approach is participatory and aims at improving the children's self esteem, sense of initiative and of solidarity. Using agriculture as a basis, social/health skills are integrated during the crop cycle, thus the children acquire agricultural and social skills as the two sides of a same medal.

Agricultural skills taught: field preparation, sowing and transplanting, weeding, irrigation, pest control, utilization and conservation of available resources (i.e. biodiversity, medicinal plants, etc).

Post-harvest skills taught: utilization and processing of food crops, harvesting, storage and business/marketing skills (in particular the principles of saving and re-investing).

Social skills taught: gender sensitivity, basic nutrition, hygiene and basic knowledge on impact and prevention of diseases like malaria, common colds and HIV/AIDS.

Examples of results obtained:

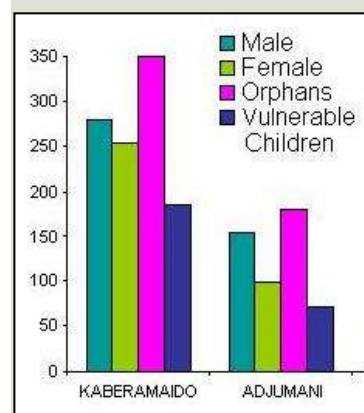
- 11% of the children participating to the Kaberamaido community JFFLS returned to school;
- children from Primary Schools JFFLS started a piggery project and bought new seeds for the following planting season with savings from the sale of their surplus production;



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Statistics on children enrolled,
FAO JFFLS programme, Uganda
2006-2007

STAKEHOLDERS

At National level, FAO coordinates the JFFLS activities in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the ministries of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Education and Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries.

At district level, the JFFLS are implemented and managed by partner NGOs, with the active participation and involvement of District Local Governments, primary and secondary schools, community leaders and other NGOs working on child HIV/AIDS related issues.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The whole approach of the JFFLS, as that of the FFS, is participatory thus allowing a learning-by-participating process benefiting all stakeholders at different levels.

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

To ensure the sustainability of the JFFLS, efforts are made to mainstream the programme into the Primary School Curriculum and into the activities of the ministries of Education, Agriculture and Gender.

At District level, the DLG are involved in the identification of beneficiaries and in the coordination of the JFFLS activities.

At community level, community ownership of the programme is build through a participatory approach: joint monitoring communities composed of care-takers/parents, facilitators and local leaders are set-up and participate to the identification of beneficiaries, the supervision and monitoring of the JFFLS activities. On another hand, primary school JFFLS and community JFFLS are established in pairs and managed by pairs facilitators, including a primary teacher and a resident community social worker, thus building upon local intersectoral cooperation for community appropriation and continuity.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Based on the successful results of the JFFLS pilot phase in Uganda, the programme will be up-scaled in target areas, in collaboration with relevant ministries and local partners.

The JFFLS and FFS' curricula will also address new topics such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), transactional sex and property rights. Support will be provided by the FAO Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESWDD), according to the results of a research carried out in 2006-2007 in Western Kenya on 'HIV/AIDS, gender inequality, sexual and gender-based violence and equal property rights.



*Statistics on children enrolled,
FAO JFFLS programme, Uganda
2006-2007*



*JFFLS Getting Started! Manual
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a111e/a1111e00.htm>*

UPSCALING/REPLICABILITY OF THE PROJECT

The experience described here can be successfully scaled-up/replicated under the following conditions:

- equal numbers of girls and boys are enrolled to maintain gender equity;
- all activities are planned around the local agricultural calendar;
- the JFFLS setup are interdisciplinary, including one extension worker, one school teacher and one social animator;
- children are provided with on-site meals during trainings and take-home rations, to incentive participation and relieve household burdens;
- both traditional and modern good agricultural practices are covered during trainings;
- theatre, songs, dances and other cultural methodologies are use to link life skills to field activities: children learn to use problem-solving approaches and decision-making skills both for field and social life problems;
- children are encourage to play, think, discuss and share their problem with one another;
- children are introduced to they rights during trainings, accordingly to the country's legislations: right to food, right to property -especially through inheritance, children's right, etc;
- empowerment and self-esteem of children is boosted through their involvement in all aspects of the project, aside with community representatives, through participatory approaches.