



TRAINING FARMERS AND ENHANCING FOOD SECURITY IN SWAZILAND

Agriculture has traditionally been the backbone of Swaziland's economy but has experienced severe decline. Its contribution to GDP has decreased gradually over the last two decades due to a number of factors, including recurring drought, chronic underinvestment and the impact of HIV and AIDS. Despite this, agriculture-based products account for around 75 percent of the country's total export revenues.

With key extension officers lacking the skills to disseminate nutrition and gender-sensitive agricultural technologies and practices, the project sought to strengthen national capacities through the establishment of Farmer Field Schools, with farmer representatives trained as facilitators in order to support on-the-ground activities using this approach.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project developed the capacities of extension providers in the field of nutrition-oriented Farmer Field Schools. This was achieved through a series of intensive training and awareness raising workshops. As part of the workshops, particular emphasis was placed on strengthening the capacities of master trainers and helping them to facilitate further training courses both during the project and after its closure.

Farmer field school groups were formed by master trainers, including both existing food and nutrition garden groups and new participants.

IMPACT

The effectiveness of the trainings and workshops implemented meant that a greater number of officers than anticipated saw their capacities strengthened, while more were exposed to Farmer Field School methodology.

Given the potential effect of this approach upon food security in Swaziland, the Farmer Field School methodology was proposed as one of the participatory approaches to be adopted by the country's Ministry of Agriculture, as outlined in the draft Extension Policy.

KEY FACTS

Contribution

USD 292 000

Duration

July 2015 – July 2017

Resource Partners

FAO

Partners

Ministry of Agriculture

Beneficiaries

Smallholder farmers, extension service delivery officers



ACTIVITIES

- Inception workshop to review the project’s work plans and monitoring and evaluation plans held in July 2015, attracting 75 participants.
- Farmer Field School curriculum tailored to the national context of Swaziland – mainstreaming nutrition and livelihoods in general – developed by the master trainer facilitator.
- 12-week training for 22 extension staff (10 women and 12 men) conducted in two segments between October 2015 and April 2016.
- Four regional awareness creation workshops conducted over a three-day period in each region of the country, attended by a total of 120 officers.
- Three-week training of facilitators conducted in October 2016. The training was facilitated by a team of six master trainers, with guidance from one senior master trainer. The course was attended by a total of 22 field facilitators (15 women and seven men).
- 22 master trainers formed Farmer Field School groups within their localities.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Project Code
TCP/SWA/3502

Project Title
Improving Nutrition and Household Food Security using Farmer Field Schools in Swaziland

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