



2.

**FACILITATORS –
THE LYNCHPIN
OF JFFLS**

INTRODUCTION

The quality and experience of the facilitators involved in the JFFLS are key to a successful JFFLS. This quote from **Malawi** shows their importance:

*“ Facilitators make the JFFLS clock tick.
They are the fuel for the day-to-day running of the JFFLS.”*

Indeed, the **Mozambique** JFFLS coordinators have noted that the essential ingredients for a successful JFFLS are: an enthusiastic school director; and good facilitators. These are the people who make the JFFLS work.

Good facilitators ensure that the JFFLS achieve their objectives and the children are put at the forefront of all activities. There are many issues that arise in JFFLS around facilitation and facilitators. This chapter describes the different experiences from the various JFFLS around these issues.

FINDING THE RIGHT FACILITATORS

In **Swaziland**, many excellent local trainers are available even though they are located in different organizations. A broad range of local trainers were invited to the last JFFLS training of trainers (ToT). This means that an extremely professional group of highly motivated community facilitators is trained and ready for work.

In **Malawi** the criteria for facilitator selection was adopted from the “Getting Started” manual. Following the discussions on desirable qualities of a good facilitator, the school heads, local leaders and prominent community members chose facilitators. The JFFLS national working group recommended that each JFFLS facilitation team include: a local primary school teacher; an area agricultural extension officer; and three selected community members with recognizable capabilities. The inclusion of the extension worker and local teacher was mandatory as they are paid staff and work in the area, and the JFFLS work falls within their existing responsibilities. Each JFFLS selected five facilitators. Local individuals who could contribute local dances and songs as well as agricultural and life skills was considered essential.

One team in Mangochi district in **Malawi** included:

1. a well qualified extension worker
2. a local school teacher
3. a social animator who could not read or write
4. Two community members who could hardly read or write, but who could undertake diverse cultural, social and life skills activities.

In another district (Ntcheu), the team included three retired civil servants, an extension worker and a primary school teacher.

In **Zimbabwe** senior farmer field schools are closely linked to the JFFLS. Volunteer farmer facilitators often come from the senior farmer field schools, but also older JFFLS participants who volunteer after they have received basic training on facilitation.

In **Uganda** a mix of professions and skills that match the varied demands of the programme are used. The facilitators work in pairs to complement each others' strengths and to offer support in those areas where they are less knowledgeable. The facilitators fall into three categories: teachers, who are in charge of the JFFLS in the formal schools and whose work complements that of the community animators; the agriculturists, who also play a supervisory role and bring in the technical aspects in agronomy; and the social animators (some of whom are retired teachers or social workers), in charge of the community JFFLS, to ensure that the children within the communities have someone from their own community to provide the requisite support.

Different criteria altogether was necessary in Kakuma refugee camp in **Kenya**. In order to overcome the lack of transport, facilitators were only selected from the localities where the JFFLS were operating, so that they could walk to the JFFLS sites.

In **Sudan** local extension workers, teachers, and some social workers are primarily responsible for facilitating the implementation of the JFFL Schools. The communities have also nominated willing and capable progressive male and female farmers to be facilitators and "mentors" in implementing this intervention. These key local stakeholders, including the adolescents, designed the basic curriculum of the JFFLS in a very participatory manner.

MOTIVATING / COMPENSATING FACILITATORS

Although many facilitators are motivated by the joy of teaching and helping OVC, others still expect some type of compensation. Some facilitators anticipate free handouts or financial benefits. In **Kenya**, for example, some facilitators left when they discovered that no allowances were forthcoming. Ensuring their own relatives are participants at the JFFLS motivates other facilitators.

Long-term rewards for facilitators can be unforeseen. In Malakal primary school in **Kenya**, the head teacher was extremely interested in the JFFLS and demonstrated his commitment through his very active support for and facilitation of the project in his school. He was eventually rewarded by being promoted to schools inspector because of the success of the JFFLS associated with his school.

Financial compensation was not possible in **Mozambique**, but trainings, regional meetings, exchange visits and petrol allowances were all incentives offered to the facilitators. In 2007, the JFFLS coordinators suggested that bicycles be provided for all the facilitators. A further suggestion from Mozambique is that if JFFLS have funds for income-generating projects, the facilitators themselves should have the opportunity to access these funds and participate in and benefit from income-generating schemes. This would be a large incentive for facilitators. In Tranga Passo, for example, two JFFLS facilitators showed great interest in participating in a pottery micro-project and helped to facilitate a pottery income-generating group as a result.

In **Malawi**, even though the five-member facilitation team comprised one government-paid teacher and one government-paid extension worker, these facilitators often reduced their commitment towards JFFLS activities because of the lack of allowances. If they collaborated with NGOs operating other projects in the area, they would receive allowances. This is an interesting phenomenon, because NGOs generally complain that the reverse is true of United Nations (UN) initiatives (the UN used to be perceived as offering higher allowances than NGOs). Only those community members with a good record of voluntary activities should be invited to participate in the future, according to Malawi reports. A fully trained community worker can provide technical support in other JFFLS areas if he/she has transport.

Another problem noted in **Malawi** is the strong possibility of trained facilitators being 'head-hunted' by NGOs that wish to start up independent JFFLS or other initiatives. These NGOs will pay the 'volunteer' JFFLS facilitators, thus offering an attractive incentive. Some NGOs might be tempted to establish the JFFLS in what is termed by the Malawi coordinator as 'the easy way'. FAO is currently looking at the means of coordinating JFFLS activities in **Malawi**, because a lack of coordination might result in a dilution of the JFFLS concept.

In **Swaziland**, attention was focused on selecting those facilitators who would be available within the community and who would in all probability not migrate or leave. Interesting gender discrepancies were noted in Swaziland. Many of the male facilitators tended to be more elderly (or retired), as young males tend to migrate. Younger facilitators tended to be female, particularly women married within the community. Because such women were settled with children in the community, the likelihood of them leaving the area was minimal and they were favoured over the men.

In **Cameroon** local coordinators are already experiencing difficulty in covering costs for the transport of facilitators to the school sites, but they are seeking solutions with the line ministries involved in the JFFLS.

TRAINING FACILITATORS

As reported from **Malawi** and other countries, training of facilitators was informal and 'hands-on'. Facilitators were encouraged to share views and suggest changes to the schedule of the training as required. Because of the amount of content to be discussed during livelihood and life skills training, in **Malawi** two separate 12-day trainings (three months apart) were created to avoid overburdening the facilitators.

In **Tanzania**, agricultural training was held in Mumembwe village in the Ngara district and local village agricultural extension officers were trained as facilitators for the JFFLS. Training was organized to coincide with the weekend and public holidays, so that people were not taken from their regular work.

In **Tanzania**, as in other countries, it is thought that on-site facilitators and district level partners would benefit from periodic training



Training of
facilitators in
Kigoma,
Tanzania 2006

during the school year, to build their expertise. This would also help to ensure that all relevant topics supposed to be covered at the JFFLS are actually being covered. A second ToT course is being organized in Tanzania to improve on the experiences of the pilot JFFLS phases. At this ToT, the manual and training modules for the JFFLS will be tested and adapted. Likewise in **Zimbabwe**, refresher and reorientation training sessions are often deemed necessary.

During training of facilitators in **Mozambique** (as in other countries), it was found that practice sessions on facilitation techniques were essential. Constructive comments were made afterwards to help facilitators understand the completely different approach used in the JFFLS, in comparison to typical top-down, non-participatory teaching practices.

In **Mozambique** the best JFFLS graduates are asked to help facilitate the second phase of JFFLS schools. Graduates were generally proud to do so. However it was acknowledged that trained facilitators should also be present initially to provide the new facilitators with support. In the first year of the JFFLS in Nhanssana Primary School in **Mozambique**, the JFFLS did not produce good results because of the lack of trained facilitators at the school. The JFFLS also lacked agricultural extensionists to provide assistance. No children graduated

in 2004/2005. However, in 2005/2006, the facilitator problems were resolved and the children responded accordingly. The school decided to combine the first group of children who still attended, together with a new group (a total of 46 children).

In **Cameroon** training of facilitators took place four months before roll-out therefore further training was undertaken over a five day period to refresh skills and to make sure that everyone was aware of and in agreement with the basic principles of the JFFLS approach. In one or two pilot sites there is a shortage of facilitators from certain disciplines, which they hope to resolve in the near future.

SHARING FACILITATING EXPERIENCES

In **Malawi** facilitator meetings are organized every 40 to 60 days. These are district-level meetings, which provide a forum to share JFFLS experiences and discuss the way forward. A small allowance is provided to the facilitators at the end of the meeting to encourage regular attendance. JFFLS committee members are sometimes invited to these meetings to share JFFLS experiences as viewed from a committee perspective.

ADDRESSING CONFLICT AMONGST FACILITATION TEAMS

In **Malawi**, but not reported elsewhere, facilitators with a formal education often acted in a superior manner to those in the facilitation team who have not had the benefit of the same. This kind of reaction can mean that the facilitation team divides into *leaders* (educated) and *followers*. Leaders can adopt a superior manner and look down on non-formally educated co-facilitators. Sometimes the leaders would not allow JFFLS sessions to start unless they were present, negatively affecting curriculum coverage and resulting in the cancellation of some sessions. The community-based facilitators (without any formally recognized education) tended to link better with the JFFLS committees than the formally educated teachers and extension workers. In Malawi it was recommended that because teachers and agricultural extension officers generally do not come from the community, they should not assume leadership. Training of facilitators could possibly include topics on how those with formal education can 'un-pack' their attitudes towards those who have not had the benefit of a formal education, but who are nonetheless knowledgeable in different ways.



3.
THE JFFLS
CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

The “Getting Started” guide for the JFFLS has already been completed, and several country-specific facilitators’ guides are currently being tested. However this depends on the country, as some of the JFFLS are operating in their second or third cycles. Thus many countries already have a rich experience of implementing a JFFLS curriculum. They have adapted the curriculum to their particular context, changed the length of learning cycles and worked without a written curriculum using available training materials. JFFLS also have attempted to deal with sensitive topics and life skills issues, which many of them found to be quite a challenge initially. Some experiences from the field related to the JFFLS curriculum development are outlined in the sections below.

USING LOCALLY APPROPRIATE MATERIALS IN THE CURRICULUM

In **Mozambique** during the ToT, facilitators were asked to design creative exercises using locally appropriate materials. These creative exercises have fed into the Mozambique training manual. Those designing the training manual in Mozambique tried as much as possible to build on existing government-produced materials, so as to link with the school curriculum. Local speakers were invited to the training sessions for the facilitators. Their contributions were also turned into exercises for the manual. They used local examples and local crops to make the content more relevant. Using local information can also help to institutionalize the approach with district and regional agricultural bodies.

In **Mozambique**, one of the JFFLS facilitators, Hélder Moisés João, based in Gorongosa, is a very talented artist. He made beautiful illustrations for the Mozambique manual, and also designed a poster. Having a background in primary school education, he was also able to conceptualize and present the JFFLS ideas in a child-friendly way, linking examples to local rural realities.

ADOPTING A JFFLS CURRICULUM

In **Swaziland**, the JFFLS training manual is currently being reviewed, tested and amended by a team including the JFFLS facilitators, a consultant, and five university students.



Facilitator at work at the JFFLS, Malawi.

In Odhuro, in the Bondo district in **Kenya**, the following topics were part of the curriculum:

- Enterprise selection – short-term crops, long-term crops, medicinal plants and livestock
- Hygiene – good hygiene practices, good grooming, handling food, handling seeds, cleaning and maintaining farm implements
- Nutrition – food value, preparation and utilization
- Dental care
- Environmental conservation measures
- HIV and AIDS
- Home-based care for AIDS patients
- Drug abuse

In **Malawi**, following discussions, a four-month JFFLS curriculum was developed, with help from the examples given in the JFFLS *Getting Started* manual. This curriculum then formed the basis for discussions with the JFFLS facilitators and the community in each school, leading to the participatory development of a JFFLS curriculum adapted

to the activities, agricultural cycle and different needs identified. During facilitators' monthly report meetings, progress on activities identified in the curriculum was discussed. Following an exchange of ideas among members of the JFFLS team, FAO, WFP and the District Ministry of Education Office, these draft curricula were further adapted at district level. Each JFFLS later developed its own written session timetable or plan that sought to give equal weight to the livelihood and life skills components of the programme. JFFLS prefer to develop their session timetables for a period ranging from two to four months (rather than six months).

The **Malawi** JFFLS now follow their district draft curriculum. JFFLS differ in the contents of their session timetable or plans for activities for a designated time. All contents are in line with the local agricultural cycle and agro-ecological conditions. The learning cycle is one year, and all JFFLS cover every components of the curriculum. There is less focus on agricultural activities during the dry season.

LINKING AGRICULTURE TO LIFE FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF REFUGEE YOUTHS

Because of the particular situation in the Kakuma refugee camp (**Kenya**), where the target group for the JFFLS was of humanitarian concern, sessions on peace building, conflict resolution and repatriation were introduced into the JFFLS curriculum in an innovative way. For example, inter-cropping onions with kale for pest control was used to demonstrate how people who are not related can live peacefully together and benefit each other. Planting a hedge of *neem* trees to act as a windbreak around the vegetable gardens was used as a metaphor for communities benefiting when they interact, support each other and work together. Following the signing of the peace agreement in Sudan, the JFFLS at Kakuma refugee camp was used as a forum to inform the refugee youths about the importance of returning home. Social animation was introduced into the curriculum and used as a repatriation tool.

In **Northern Uganda** the JFFLS in the Adjuman District (10 out of the 36 in total) targets children affected by the war. To date in the area, more than 20,000 children have been abducted to serve as child soldiers and sex slaves. It is believed that more than 85 percent of the rebel army combatants are abducted children, who were forced

to commit atrocities against civilians, often members of their own families or communities (see Table 1 below). The information shared with the children through the JFFLS provides them with life skills and a means of re-integrating into their communities. The practical agricultural skills linked to life skills that they learn through the JFFLS can provide vital guidance for these youths and help them to leave or avoid the deadly cycle of violence and disease that threatens them.

Table 1: War violence experienced by abductees in Uganda

| | |
|--|-----|
| Witnessed killing | 78% |
| Tied or locked up | 68% |
| Received severe beating | 63% |
| Forced to steal or destroy property | 58% |
| Forced to abuse dead bodies | 23% |
| Forced to kill strangers | 20% |
| Forced to kill an opposing soldier | 15% |
| Forced to kill a family member or friend | 8% |

Source: Research Brief, Survey of War-Affected Youth (SWAY) 2006

USING PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES FOR CURRICULUM CONTENT

In **Zimbabwe**, the JFFLS developed the curriculum in a participatory way, using participatory rural communication appraisal tools. Field-based visualization techniques, interviews and group work were used to generate information and to design the curriculum. Participatory processes were used to identify and document the major constraints to crop production in the JFFLS pilot areas. Feasible options for dealing with these constraints were put forward. The curriculum was then organized around these options. For example, infertile soils, mining of the soil and unreliable rainfall were identified as constraints. A curriculum covering integrated soil water and nutrient management technologies was developed, with 14 modules divided into two interrelated sections on soil fertility and water conservation.

Similarly, the shortage of poultry feeds in the dry months and the lack of proper housing, resulting in high mortality, were identified as constraints to indigenous poultry production. Solutions put forward included supplementing poultry feeds with grain from the JFFLS

plots and providing low-cost improved housing for the animals. As a result, a six-module curriculum using participatory approaches was developed around these options and serves as a guideline.

Also in **Zimbabwe** one of the causes of the high incidence of HIV and AIDS rates in the communities was identified as resulting from a lack of knowledge on HIV and AIDS mitigation strategies. The JFFLS came up with a four-module HIV and AIDS curriculum.

USING CREATIVE AND CHILD-CENTRED ACTIVITIES

In **Zimbabwe** the JFFLS coordinators and facilitators emphasized the importance of group dynamics in the JFFLS curriculum. Child-centred activities were included in all lesson plans. Similarly in **Mozambique** it was found that starting with a story or game grounded in community living was the best way to introduce various JFFLS topics. Although children have few problems in developing and acting out role-plays around a story, not all facilitators are comfortable with the idea of theatre. In **Mozambique** ready-made plays were prepared for the training manual. A team of trainers from Ancis Politeia introduced the Patch Adams approach to include the use of humour as a way of tackling threatening issues such as child exploitation and dealing with loss. To this end, new exercises were incorporated in the Mozambican facilitators' guide

In **Malawi** cultural activities were high on the JFFLS agenda. Open field days were organized to pass on messages and also to have fun. Drama, songs, dances and poetry were used to pass on messages about HIV and AIDS issues (in the Nakundu JFFLS). Dances included *ingoma*, *chintali* and *mabeat*.

The *Ingoma dance* is a Ngoni warrior dance. The Ngonis (who live in central and northern Malawi) used to dance this dance after success in war. In the JFFLS, boys and girls dance together. The girls clap their hands and the boys brandish their weapons (hoes, axes, etc.).



Mabeat dance,
Malawi

They celebrate their victory over malnutrition and food insecurity. Children celebrate their successes together. This instils gender equity amongst the JFFLS boys and girls.

The *Chintali dance* is an all-girls dance, while two to four boys beat the drums. Most messages in the JFFLS *chintali* dance tackle girl child issues, e.g the need for girls' education, girl child empowerments, girl child protection, gender equity in household chores. Nutrition issues are also depicted.

In the *Mabeat dance* two children beat drums and the other children dance to the beat. Both boys and girls dance together. Normally there is no singing. This is an exercise dance and involves rigorous shaking of the entire body. Children use this as a form of exercise (energizer) during JFFLS sessions.

Both boys and girls can join in dance activities. Interactive drama and stage plays are put on, usually with a focus on HIV and AIDS, gender, agriculture and the JFFLS themselves. Likewise in Odhuro, in the Bondo district **of Kenya**, curriculum topics were reinforced with songs, poems and role-plays. For example, children performed a dramatized song for the Kenyan Agricultural Research Institute on the uses of cassava.

One youth in Odhuro, who had dropped out of school early, returned to the JFFLS and was able to entertain and educate other children with his own rap compositions on education. Drugs had been a part of this youth's earlier life. Being young and 'hip,' he was well able to relate to the JFFLS participants and pass on messages through rap about the importance of education.

In **Northern Uganda** at least 30 children who previously dropped out of school are now back in the JFFLS, where they are transferring knowledge gained to practice in their home gardens.

TACKLING THE LIFE SKILLS COMPONENT OF THE CURRICULUM

Experience from the JFFLS has shown that the schools can provide a safe space for both sexes to discuss sensitive issues. Nevertheless, there is often a need to strengthen the life skills components in the JFFLS. Facilitators require a lot of help in planning activities around life skills. How to integrate life skills into the curriculum is definitely an area that requires additional training. In **Mozambique** it was found that using humour to introduce 'serious' subjects worked well. In **Malawi** it was noted that most JFFLS prefer to place life skills sessions in between livelihood sessions, dividing sessions into things to know and things to do. In the pilot JFFLS in **Tanzania**, the partner COBET programme already provides life skills training to these out-of-school children and they tackled this aspect of the curriculum.

In **Mozambique**, it was found that it was necessary to include a life skills trainer in technical trainings to facilitate the integration of the life skills component in the JFFLS lessons.

Mini JFFLS libraries have been established at the JFFLS sites in **Malawi**. These are looked after by the facilitators in coordination with the JFFLS committee members. Resources are shared and important information on livelihoods and life skills are kept there.

ADDRESSING GENDER ISSUES

The AIDS epidemic has emphasised the inherent danger of acute gender inequalities when it comes to access to resources and the risks of HIV infection. To combat these inequalities the JFFLS in **Mozambique**

promote gender equal attitudes not only through the equal exercise of roles and responsibilities by both girls and boys in all activities, but also through the practice of human ecosystem analysis (HESA). In HESA the children learn to perceive and understand the links between the community and the field, the relationships between the social, economic and environmental spheres and of the gender system that dictates the relations between all of these.

In **Malawi** drama and dance is used by the girls and boys to illustrate these relationships in verbal and non-verbal way and help raise awareness with members of the community on how gender inequalities can make women and girls more vulnerable to HIV infection. Because gender analysis is seen as a cross-cutting issues in all activities in the JFFLS the girls and boys become more aware of traditional power relations between women and men, their shortcomings and as a consequence they develop culturally sounds ways of addressing them differently.

In **Uganda** the JFFLS are located near FFS where gender analysis is included in the training programme to assist the participants to understand the social, cultural and economic advantages of promoting gender equal attitudes. By creating strong links between the adult and youth groups the JFFLS participants learn by example that gender equality can lead to social and cultural advantages that benefit all members of the community.

In **Mozambique**, both boys and girls are involved in all the steps of processing fruits such as papaya, pineapple etc. and how to market the resulting produce. This is one way of encouraging some change in traditional roles.

In **Kenya** in the learning cycle “Protection” was introduced as one of the main topics. Refugees youths, boys and girls alike, were taught to make the link between the protection of their crops and protection of themselves. AESA was conducted on a regular basis and linked with reproductive health and HIV protection. On graduation day the girls and boys were able to demonstrate to their community members, through AESA and HESA, the links between crop protection and self-protection especially against HIV infection.

It was found in **Malawi** that most of the messages in JFFLS drama,

songs and dances depicted girls and women as the main culprits in the spread of HIV and AIDS, which is perceived as being spread only through sexual intercourse with a sex worker or a 'loose' girl. HIV and AIDS talks during the life skills sessions helped to dispel this myth.

In Odhuro in the Bondo district of **Kenya**, one girl who was very shy before joining the JFFLS gained confidence and self-esteem throughout the JFFLS cycle. This was evidenced by her ability to draw attention to some of the problems schoolgirls face during their menstrual cycle. This young woman even started a girls' forum in the school, where girls met weekly to discuss issues affecting girls in particular. The JFFLS coordinators later took some of these issues on board.

In the Caprivi region of **Namibia**, a traditional leader (Induna) told the facilitators that frank discussions about sex are taboo in Mubiza. Sexual education is typically only addressed in separate initiation ceremonies for boys and girls. However, the Caprivi Region has a staggering HIV infection rate of 43 percent. The challenge for the JFFLS was to address sexual education in a manner that is approved by the community while also addressing gender issues. The JFFLS came up with an action plan. They returned to the communities and created awareness about what would be discussed at the JFFLS. They involved the community in presenting sensitive issues on HIV and agreed to implement the action plan in separate male/female groups, followed by plenary discussions. Queries can be placed in an anonymous question box by the participants. Facilitators are not expected to present certain life skills topics to children until a comfortable rapport with them has been established.

INTRODUCING INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES

Some of the JFFLS provided the children with basic skills and know-how on developing business ideas. In **Swaziland**, for each of the JFFLS garden sites, the children reserved a portion of the land for each child to produce vegetable crops, which were consumed at their homesteads with excess being sold. One example from Mahlangatsha outlines how children learned about growing spinach and its nutritional properties. The children were assisted in pricing their spinach produce and marketing it in the neighbourhood. A notice was put up near the garden, advertising spinach for sale to potential customers. Sales from

the crops were a source of income to benefit the whole group, and children were encouraged to price each leaf depending on its size and quality. A fund from the plots was generated. Each JFFLS site then had to decide how to use the money. The facilitators encouraged them to save the income to purchase additional inputs for farming. Children began to realize the value of producing spinach for resale rather than only for home consumption.

In **Zimbabwe**, activities in the JFFLS are clearly linked to income generation. For example, extra birds produced at the JFFLS during poultry studies are either marketed or shared among members, or both. Income is subsequently used to support the JFFLS. Some JFFLS were formed around social groups such as soccer teams. Sometimes surplus income is channelled towards supporting their sporting activities, which is much appreciated by the children.

Unity and Malakal JFFLS in Kakuma refugee camp in **Kenya** formed groups that continued using their agricultural skills after graduation. The groups produced and harvested vegetables for sale in the local market. One member managed to start a kerosene business following profits made from selling eggs.

In **Malawi** following ten months of observation, the facilitation teams agreed that income-generating activities should be introduced into the curriculum to help ensure that the JFFLS become self-sufficient.

INCLUDING AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AS A SUBJECT

In **Tanzania**, JFFLS pupils were typically quite young because of collaboration with the COBET initiative. Young JFFLS participants provide a challenge, because they will not immediately implement what they have learned. Two questions that remain to be answered are: Should a school with an agricultural garden that teaches agricultural science as one of the subjects introduce JFFLS for a select group of orphans in that school? If the school does not have agricultural science in its normal curriculum, should the JFFLS be attached to the school organized as a school project?

ORGANIZING EXCHANGE VISITS

Exchange visits were encouraged amongst facilitators from different JFFLS in many countries, including **Malawi, Kenya** and **Zimbabwe**. In parts of **Mozambique**, exchange visits were found to create energy and fresh ideas for both children and facilitators, leading to curriculum diversification. In fact, the Ministry of Education focal point from Manica province is actively involved in organizing exchange visits between schools (including facilitators and children). Transport reimbursements are provided on approved visits.

Once the JFFLS in **Malawi** becomes self-sustaining (presumably after nine months), JFFLS coordinators are planning to fund exchange trips. In **Zimbabwe** the JFFLS, although autonomous, are linked to the senior farmer field schools and some activities are harmonized. JFFLS graduates are encouraged to visit and join the senior schools.

SPREADING LEARNING WITHIN COMMUNITIES

In **Mozambique** JFFLS community gatherings are organized periodically. At such gatherings guardians, parents and relatives of the JFFLS graduates have an opportunity to give their impressions of the JFFLS. The meetings provide space for the community to agree on income-generating activities for selected JFFLS graduates. In Nhamwale (Barué district, 150 km north of Chimoio in Manica province), at one such meeting parents recalled how they had actually learned from the youths attending the JFFLS. One man related that when passing the JFFLS field, he would consult with youths about when to seed and how to space crops, and discuss with them the advantages of planting in lines. Although he acknowledged that there was more work involved in line planting of crops using the correct spacing, he could see the rewards in terms of higher yields.

Also in **Mozambique**, the annual presentation of the JFFLS to the community has been a very positive way of getting the children to improve their presentation skills and disseminate learning. On a typical presentation day, two children present one crop, discussing different important points on its care and use. They also present the improved JFFLS infrastructures. Finally, different cultural presentations are given, with songs and dance from the JFFLS course.

In **Malawi**, the JFFLS were established at community primary schools. Given that communities have traditionally regarded schools with suspicion due to top-down authoritarian approaches, it took a lot of effort to gain their trust during the first two months of establishing the JFFLS. All members of the community were offered the 'freedom of the garden'. They could share ideas and innovations with the children. Communities are free to visit the JFFLS for any information regarding how the different crops are grown. The JFFLS children, facilitators and committee members welcome anyone from the community into the school garden and they are allowed to bring their own crops to experiment in the garden. Facilitators examine the crops and see if they are beneficial to the children. Various beliefs on the medicinal properties of some plants are assessed. Most communities now feel 'ownership' of the garden and help with most JFFLS activities. Such collaboration means that community members are available when help is needed and should mean the schools are a more organic element in community life.

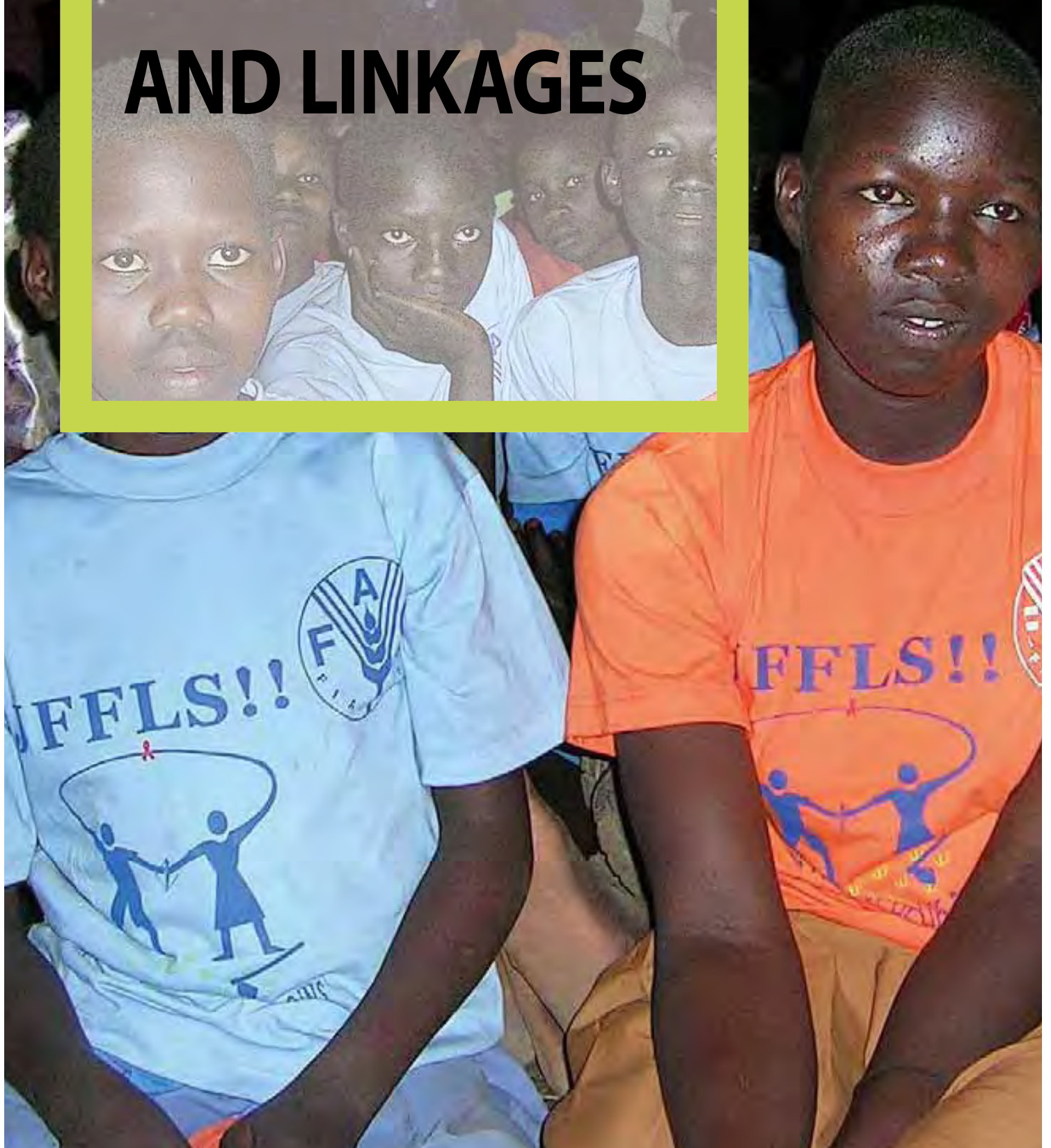
In Oduro, in the Bondo district of **Kenya**, the community around the JFFLS actually comes to the school for advice, seeking guidance on new technology, nutrition, herbal medicines, preserving foods, storing and so on. In fact, many guardians have joined the project for the sole purpose of learning new agricultural practices that they can apply on their own land.



Graduation day
in Namazizi,
Malawi

4.

SUSTAINABILITY AND LINKAGES



INTRODUCTION

Many JFFLS are faced with the problem of continuing to run their schools when funding ends. Linking with national systems to institutionalize the JFFLS in some way is ideal in the long term but not always possible in the short term. More immediately, there are many issues around meeting the high demand for JFFLS, and around the felt need that the school should reach more than 30 young people per school. If JFFLS are to expand, an important measure is to ensure that communities take their own steps toward sustainability, raising funds on their own, partnering with civil society organizations and local NGOS, and linking with local administrations and line ministries. In many countries, working through the formal schools does ensure that awareness of the JFFLS concepts reaches children beyond those who have been directly targeted. In some instances, facilitators or graduates have attempted to set up new JFFLS in other locations.

The short case examples that follow were provided by JFFLS coordinators in the field. They describe some of the issues that arise around sustainability.

LINKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Improved agricultural techniques seem to be applied around many JFFLS, demonstrating obvious results. In **Tanzania**, two JFFLS in Mnjobwe and Kazuramimba villages reported that they harvested a bumper maize crop at the end of 2006. They were able to feed themselves and sell the surplus to meet other school demands, ensuring sustainability of the schools. Plans are underway to expand and apply what was learned to individual one-acre plots. The commitment of the community to the JFFLS concept is evident in another village in Tanzania, Biturana. Even though the cabbage harvest in Biturana (grown through the JFFLS) was affected by floods, the community has still requested that cabbages be grown again in 2007.

In Odhuro in the Bondo district of **Kenya**, following the first cycle of the JFFLS, the school authorities were proud to be able to feed the entire school population of 622. The harvest from the JFFLS has diversified and includes sorghum, maize, onions, beans, sweet

pepper, sweet potato, cowpeas and kale. Guardians contributed significantly to the JFFLS success. When an agro-biodiversity project was introduced to this site, the medicinal and nutritional values of local vegetables (often no longer planted) were highlighted. Mito, Osuga, Susa and Dek were subsequently planted, making indigenous vegetables popular again.

In **Zimbabwe**, Catholic Relief Services (an international NGO) is implementing the JFFLS and works through local NGOs as partners.

Mozambique provides us with an example of how schools can move towards sustainability. The Nhamagua Primary School lies in the district of Macossa, a semi-arid district that suffers from a lack of food security and water supply. In 2004, a JFFLS was set up in this district with the objective of introducing appropriate agricultural practices for the area. It was hoped that the JFFLS would not only train young students but would also gradually provide the local community with sustainable agricultural techniques. Once the JFFLS programme was introduced, 30 youths started learning about various conservation agriculture methods, how to maximize water conservation and soil fertility, while depending as much as possible on locally available resources. At the beginning of the programme, many members of the community were sceptical and did not believe that positive results would be possible in such a difficult agro-ecological zone. However, the scenario began to change when the students achieved good results.

Having convinced the school director that progress was possible, the JFFLS programme then began negotiations with the local Chief to allocate more land for the school. The JFFLS youths shared their knowledge on better conservation techniques. Before harvest, the school organized a field day to enable the youths to share their knowledge with the community. They displayed their new skills, shared information on the production techniques used, and outlined what they had consumed and sold so far. From the sales they managed to earn 5.000 Mtn (about US\$200)! With their profits, they bought seed for the next season, as well as a pig and some chickens to commemorate International Children's Day. They also bought school materials to help schoolmates who did not have notebooks or other school essentials.

Today Nhamagua primary school has at least 11 goats, as well as ducks and chickens of its own. Not only is it a successful example of the JFFLS programme, but it is also a reference point for horticulture product sales. Producers and retailers from the area around the school go there to buy products.

LINKING WITH GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES

For World Food Day in 2005, one of the JFFLS in Odhuro, in the Bondo district of **Kenya**, was chosen to host district celebrations for the day. The Provincial Director of Agriculture, the District Commissioner and other dignitaries were present. The children were given the opportunity to show off their harvest and explain what they had been learning. The Provincial Director challenged the community to replicate what the children were doing, but to his surprise found out that some members of the community were already replicating the JFFLS activities. The Director was so impressed that the Provincial Administration offered to support the JFFLS from January 2006.

In **Mozambique**, one of the priority policies of the Ministry of Education is to have school food production on a large scale at all government schools. This ambitious aim has posed some problems in institutionalizing the JFFLS programme. The government wants large-scale production, while the JFFLS programme wants the emphasis to be on learning and small-scale production. Nevertheless, there are some good examples of synergy between the two programmes. At Nhamawale Primary School in Manica province, the school director has set up large production fields around the JFFLS learning field. In this way, the JFFLS youths can directly share and discuss the results of their experiments, as the rest of the school works in the nearby fields.

In **Mozambique** in Manica province, the government is currently testing a nutrition manual called *Vamos Comer* (Let's Eat) at three schools. The testing has proved to be a good means of linking to the JFFLS curriculum and including nutrition education throughout the province.

In one of the schools in Tambara district of **Mozambique**, nine youths (12-14 years old) are making their own gardens using the practices

learned in JFFLS. They have organized themselves into groups of two or three. When asked about their objectives, they said that they wanted to improve their food sources and to have money to buy notebooks for school. When asked who was giving them plants and seeds, they said they had asked the school facilitator and that the neighbours gave them watering cans. Two of the youths are orphans. They have already completed the fencing and are now transplanting cabbage and tomato. The JFFLS programme decided to support the initiative of these children and spoke about it with the Administrator of the district. The Vice-Minister of Education was visiting the school at the same time, and was impressed with the work carried out.

An ongoing discussion is underway on with the Ministry of Education to include the JFFLS approach in training at the Teachers' Colleges. This would mean that a future generation of primary school teachers would already have some background in JFFLS, increasing the pool of trained facilitators available.

In **Mozambique**, it is also felt to be important that the government agree to delay transferring any people trained as facilitators by the JFFLS programme for two or three years. As the majority of them come from the Ministries of Agriculture and Education, the government has the power to ensure that measures are taken to guarantee their presence in the area for the requisite period. It is also critical that there be enough capacity to keep the school going if someone is transferred from that school.

HELPING GRADUATES PAVE THE WAY FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Plans are underway in **Malawi** to give 'start-up' packages, including agricultural inputs, to the first group of graduates. This will allow them to put into practice immediately what they have learned at the JFFLS. Along with their guardians, they will be expected to form agricultural clubs and establish village learning gardens and share what was covered at the JFFLS with the community. In collaboration with the agricultural extensions development office in the area, graduates will be expected to act as trainers for other children.

In **Mozambique**, JFFLS graduates have been making presentations and giving demonstrations on good agricultural practices at the Chimoio

Open Centre in the Tranga Passo Barrio. The JFFLS graduates gather there with members of the church community three times a week and lead a 15-minute discussion on the different subjects covered at the JFFLS programme. All members of the community (both old and young) benefit from hearing new ideas.

High-value horticultural crops such as lettuce and cabbage are the sole source of income for people in the Tranga Passo Barrio in **Mozambique**. Having observed the use of conservation agriculture techniques through the JFFLS at the Chimoio Open Centre's fields, local producers decided to approach the Chimoio Centre's pastor to seek assistance from the JFFLS graduates to help them improve their horticultural production. Some of the graduates were selected to assist the local producers and, in exchange, the youths receive horticultural crops for their consumption, thereby improving their diet.

One of the orphans is the leader of the young JFFLS graduates involved in helping local producers. His life has greatly improved since entering the JFFLS programme. Now 17 years old, he has found his vocation as a main agricultural facilitator in the Centre's JFFLS programme. Along with his older brother, who also facilitates life skills at another centre, they hope to study at the agricultural college and become agricultural extensionists. The JFFLS programme is introducing bursaries with this follow-up strategy in mind. The brothers are already well on their way to fulfilling their dream!





**Empowering
orphans
and vulnerable
children
living in a world
with HIV and**

AIDS