Food and Inputs for Child-Headed Households as a Social Protection Intervention in Swaziland: A Case Study

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Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme (RHVP)

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This is one of 20 case study reports prepared for the Regional Hunger & Vulnerability Programme (RHVP) by locally-based researchers in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe during 2006/07, covering a cross-section of recent and ongoing social transfer schemes in those countries. The reports were used alongside other materials in the preparation of the case study and thematic briefs under RHVP’s Regional Evidence-Building Agenda (REBA) (http://www.wahenga.net/index.php/evidence/)
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**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>CANGO</td>
<td>Coordinating Assembly of Non Governmental Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHHs</td>
<td>Child-Headed Households</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Emalangeni (local currency), where E1 is equivalent to 1 ZAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU-Micro-projects/MPP</td>
<td>European Union Micro-projects Swaziland</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H/H</td>
<td>Household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<td>HIV/AIDS Committee</td>
<td>Chiefdom committee appointed by the community to supervise and manage the activities of OVC in the community</td>
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<td>JFFLS</td>
<td>Junior Farmer Fields Life Schools</td>
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<td>JICA</td>
<td>Japanese International Cooperation Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCPs</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Care Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>NERCHA</td>
<td>National Emergency Response Council on HIV and AIDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDAs</td>
<td>Rural Development Areas</td>
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<td>REBA</td>
<td>Regional Evidence Building Agenda</td>
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<td>RHVP</td>
<td>Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>OVC</td>
<td>Orphaned and Vulnerable Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern Africa Development Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWAGAA</td>
<td>Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme (UN-Agency)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZAR</td>
<td>South African Rand (unit of currency)</td>
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**Glossary of siSwati Terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bandlancane</td>
<td>Chief’s inner Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucopho</td>
<td>Political position, meaning Development Facilitator and Coordinator at Chiefdom level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gogo</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ka-Gogo Centres</td>
<td>Traditional Grandmother’s hut, now refers to a place of refuge within Umphakatsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indlunkhulu</td>
<td>Traditional Chief’s homestead, carries a connotation of a sense of security (refuge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kukhonta</td>
<td>To be settled by traditional rites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinkhundla</td>
<td>Constituencies Offices (Local Political Administrative Structure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tintsandzane leticakile</td>
<td>Double orphans, where both parents have died</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umphakatsi</td>
<td>Chief’s place of residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umshibo</td>
<td>Relish, something, typically a stew/sauce or vegetable mixture prepared to make it more palatable</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As anywhere else in this region (SADC), the Swaziland Government is faced with the daunting task of finding workable, affordable, effective and sustainable strategies towards the mitigation of HIV/AIDS-related effects and legacies on human life and livelihoods and, their far-reaching implications to the economy and families or households, which are the foundations for a sound and sustained socio-economic activity. With respect to the plight OVCs and their communities or neighbourhoods find themselves in, the value and wisdom in the old Swazi adage that “It takes the whole community to raise a child” has never been as relevant as a guiding principle for all interventions or forms of assistance in this regard. The external assistance received such as that leveraged by the JICA for protecting the food security and productive assets like the land or fields of child–headed households, can only make a significant impact in alleviating the related primary and secondary vulnerabilities if it finds that there is a solid national policy, strategy and common vision that supports and ensures the real participation of the beneficiary communities. As rampant or poorly informed distribution of inputs or assistance, even in such compelling cases, can lead to other unanticipated or more complicated forms of vulnerability.

The researcher reviewed pertinent project documentation and held discussions and interviews with key informants in the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives at national and regional levels, EU-Micro-projects, NERCHA, community-based structures as well as visited 10 participating households in 2 administrative regions in Swaziland.

The JICA has committed a total of E24 million over 3 years – beginning with the 2004 ploughing season – to the Swaziland Government to be used in sourcing food and agricultural inputs, materials and support as strategies towards the protection of the food security, and the preservation of the home base and land assets of selected child-headed households in the four administrative regions in Swaziland. Twenty-six households in each of the 320 chiefdoms that are eligible (because the households are allocated fields as part of their home), making a total of 8,320 beneficiary households selected on the basis and degree of need to participate in the programme by the community’s leadership. In this project JICA has partnered with EU-Micro-projects as the local cooperating and hosting agency, while the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives is the implementing agency. Partnerships have also been forged with NERCHA as the agency responsible for the implementation of the Indlunkhulu programme – a parent programme for the OVC child-headed households. This step has enabled the leveraging of other critical resources to the project like transport for the distribution of the inputs and, has also provided the context for the project as NERCHA is the government’s organ for the HIV/AIDS policy implementation and response action.

With optimum growing conditions prevailing, it is estimated that the inputs issued should translate to yields of 1.4 metric tones of maize, valued at E2,000 and 0.66 metric tones of legumes, valued at E1,200 per household, quantities estimated to be adequate to feed a family of 7 per annum. However, these values are just values with no real meaning on the
intended benefits or outcomes unless buttressed with actual household yields or output data. From evidence gathered, the situation on the ground appears to be far from attaining these yield levels as there seems to exist other factors that seem to compromise and militate against the achievement of the objectives of the inputs programme.

There is no pertinent data to guide household intervention entry points or strategy, as the study found that the different child-headed households were at variance with respect to their vulnerability status and predisposition. Available documentation does not reflect total yields or output for each of the seasons or even the productivity levels of these households at before the intervention or in indicating the current household food situation, but only reports on total area planted and total seed and fertiliser issued. This situation makes it difficult to track performance trends or to assess or determine the cost-effectiveness or market impacts of the project and to assess the real benefit or impact to the beneficiaries. The project, it seems, is implemented as a humanitarian emergency activity (maybe because of the desperate situation on the ground) and not as a programme whose aim is behavioural or scenario change. Weak collaborative and coordination arrangements among key partners, coupled with lack of the requisite capacity and preparedness on the part of the communities, insufficient or generalised data and documentation seem to combine to undermine the effort and impact or benefits to be derived from this intervention and robs planners, practitioners or concerned parties of critical and solid data for improved, systematic and effective targeting and programming.

The strategy of providing assistance with agricultural inputs and targeting child-headed households in a bid to promote and protect against their food insecurity and loss of productive assets is not only necessary but visionary in that it protects against the demise of an important component of the agricultural sector – rural based smallholder productivity. In addition, assuming that the prevalence and rate of HIV/AIDS infection trends will remain unchanged, being the highest in the 15–30 age category (PRSAP, 2005), the mean and modal ages of orphans are expected to drop to below age 10 years, a situation that will present challenges in implementing this project in the current manner. The project, while remaining focused on the original objective and desired outcome, will have to work out a differentiated strategy with a staggered or phased yet rationalised and systematic implementation plan to ensure optimum nurturing and preparation of these youngsters to eventually become the assets and champions in this threatened sector.

Furthermore, the project requires to deploy trained community facilitators (modelled along the ones in the EU-Micro-projects/Kellogg programme) who, understanding what the project’s intensions are, will then do the relevant and required facilitation and monitoring to enable the beneficiaries to view this assistance as a lever to their own efforts than just aid, because E24 million in 3 years for a country the size of Swaziland is significant!
1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study was commissioned by RHVP as part of the REBA’s evidence gathering and building on active strategies and efforts implemented for or towards the protection of food insecurity and loss of land assets of members of selected Child-Headed households in mostly the rural areas in Swaziland.

Swaziland is a small country (17,364 square kilometres) divided into four ecological zones viz, the high, middle, low veld and the plateau. The population is 927,718 (1997 census). Swaziland is classified as a lower-middle income economy with a GDP of E8,102 million (~ US$1,157 million), and a GDP per capita of E9,086 (US$1,298). Despite these promising income levels, ~69% of the population lives below the poverty line of E71.00 (~US$10.00) per month. Although agriculture is a dominating activity, with remittances forming the major source of income, more than 48% of the population, typically in rural areas cannot meet their food requirements and more than 40% of households in these communities never have enough to eat. Chronic poverty prevalence, which is a major predisposing factor to a host of vulnerabilities, is highest among rural households, what with the increasing number of households headed by orphaned children that have had their parents succumb to HIV/AIDS related deaths. With an estimated HIV/AIDS prevalence of 38.6% in 2002, the situation is poised to worsen as the number of orphaned children is projected to be 120,000 by 2010 (PRSAP, 2005).

1.1 Project Description and Background

Child-headed households are typically, households that have been left to the care and custody of the minor children or dependants of HIV/AIDS deceased, absent or incapacitated parents. This project, which provides assistance mainly with agricultural inputs as a strategy to promote and protect their household food security, an offshoot and an extended activity to the Indlunkhulu fields programme (covered in another REBA case study) and hence programatically is treated in the same way differing only conceptually to give recognition and prominence to the plight of these emerging types of households and, as a social experiment to pilot the validity or logical sense of the concept of ‘child-headed households’ before complete roll out. The project also assists in the establishment and construction of Neighbourhood Care Points (NCPs) in the different chiefdoms. This is where the younger orphaned children can be looked after and fed (with donated food, typically from WFP) during the day. This is a different but complementary activity to the inputs programme. On its third year of implementation (2006/2007) as a pilot, the project is expanding its activities to include backyard gardens, a part of the inputs component of the project where these households and the Indlunkhulu fields programme will be given horticultural crops such as vegetables seedlings and a variety of fruit trees as a strategy to supplement their diet and broaden their source of food supply. The project also provides funding for building the capacity of selected NGOs, who are expected to assist the project with its implementation and monitoring activities of this project and the Indlunkhulu fields’ programme.
In Swaziland all the land in rural areas is owned by the Institution of the Monarchy on behalf of the Swazi people, (referred to as Swazi Nation Land) and the appointed substantive Chiefs are the custodians of the land on behalf of the Monarchy and the people. Every family that is settled on Swazi Nation Land is typically provided with enough land for building a home and for agricultural purposes as agriculture is the main source of livelihood and food security in rural areas. According to Swazi culture, after the death of parents the land is passed on or inherited by the children. Basically the children inherit all the immovable property and also continue to pay allegiance to the chief, just like their parents did. The project “Food and Inputs for Child-Headed Households” is an offshoot of the Indlunkhulu Fields Programme. It is different from the Indlunkhulu in that it is intended to emphasise the need for the children in this emerging type of household to preserve and retain their home base (which gives a sense of safety and belonging) and to highlight their plight. The project has a budget of E24 million over 3 years (2004 – 2008) to fund the following activities: Food production (for the purchase of inputs), Establishment of NCPs (construction of decent structures made out of concrete blocks to replace the stick and mud structures and buying of cooking utensils or equipment, NGO collaboration (which is mainly through the support of backyard gardens) and Sensitisation (which includes mainly training and monitoring and evaluation). In the first year the project was allocated 7 million Emalangeni; E5 million in the second year; E5 million in the third year and the balance will be spent in the fourth year of the programme, which has been created as a result of the delayed start and the unspent funds.

In Swazi lore and custom the Indlunkhulu is a place of authority, refuge and the epitome of the Swazi traditional social order and welfare, policy-making and enforcement that was mostly active in pre- and neo-independent times in Swaziland.

With the worsening HIV/AIDS situation and its legacy in homesteads and households, the Swaziland Government saw it appropriate to support the revival of that care-giving traditional role and function of the Indlunkhulu as a strategy to better target, channel and equitably distribute and monitor whatever assistance to deserving members of the community. Implementation started in earnest in the 2004 ploughing season with funding support from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and EU-Micro-projects serving as a local cooperating agency, with the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives responsible for implementation. Previously, there was no differentiation by type of household but the need to do this grew with the increasing number of such households and the recognition that these households needed to be assisted in keeping them viable, albeit in the hands of minor children. They were catered for under the Indlunkhulu Fields Programme, which designates fields solely for growing food for all destitute households and individuals in the community.

The project is active mostly in the rural areas, in all administrative regions of Swaziland. At local level it is administered and overseen by the Umphakatsi HIV/AIDS Committee. Out of a total of 360 chiefdoms throughout the country, 320 participate in the project because they have the land on which they can grow the crops. The community also helps to plough the fields with tractors or draught animals, where the children are still too young to do it on their own. In fact, on the ground the households that are termed ‘child-
headed’ in the strictest sense are very few, and are common mainly where the parents relocated from their ancestral community and were settled by -(kukhonta)- in the community where they met their demise. Typically, a relative (great-aunt, uncle, cousin, or other relatives of the extended family) oversees the general welfare of the children.

1.2 Assumption and Rationale

According to the National Coordinator of the Indlunkhulu Fields Programme, the assumption underlying the differentiated approach was that where children had been orphaned by both parents, or orphaned by one parent and deserted by the other, or left to the care of a frail and incapacitated grand-parent, there is an increased probability of increased vulnerability to food insecurity, loss of assets (particularly land and specifically crop fields) or displacement brought about by loss of constant income, means of production and/or active parental guidance. The evidence was compelling to justify a somewhat differentiated approach. In addition, the thinking was that if such households are kept active and viable through supporting mainly the farming activities, then the land (crop fields) and other critical assets like livestock or granaries can be respectively protected from being re-assigned to new settlers (kukhontisa), depletion or dilapidation. This would further ensure that those inherited resources and assets that are basic and critical to livelihoods and food security are retained to support the children until such time that stability had been restored and vulnerability minimized. This thinking or concern however, while justified, has not been followed with a solid programme that would ensure the achievement of the intended outcome.

1.3 Objective

Although the project does not have a concept document or written objectives per se, from discussions with the National and Regional coordinators, and the Coordinator of the funding agency “EU Micro-projects”, the project’s aim is to target and give assistance to child-headed households as separate entities by supporting farming activities that would ensure that they retain and remain on the land left to them by their parents, learn agricultural skills as a livelihood option and do not deplete other productive resources and assets essential to their livelihoods. The project also hopes that these households can have a surplus that can be sold to generate income to sustain the activities started through the project and for other household needs like buying laundry or bath soap.

1.4 Methodology

Data and information on this study was obtained from available documentation, which was in the form of regional field quarterly reports, national quarterly reports compiled from regional reports and from a workshop power-point presentation. Most of the information on project’s intension and purpose and programme activities was given orally using conference style interviews and discussions with project officers namely: the
Senior Agricultural Officer who is the National Project Coordinator, the Project Coordinating Officer and Coordinator of the funding Agency, ‘EU-Micro-projects’. At regional and community levels information was given by respectively the Agricultural officers who are also the regional coordinators for the project; the members of the HIV/AIDS Committee (also referred to as Indlunkhulu Committee), rural health motivators and Care-givers (also in oral form). The study also had discussion interviews with the beneficiaries—the children- to get a historical insight into their situation before they were orphaned, their current situation and where possible, their views about the project. Discussions were also held with a senior officer at NERCHA. This was done in order to be able to place the project in the broader scheme of things and, to perhaps find programming synergies and/or linkages that can be recommended for consolidation, strengthened implementation and/or mainstreaming.

2.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

2.1 The Project

The project buys inputs like maize or sorghum seed, different types of legumes like beans, jugobean, cowpeas, mung-beans seed, and fertiliser for distribution to each household. Quantities issued are enough to plant 0.5 Ha per crop of cereal grain and 0.5 Ha of legume grain per household per year. These inputs are distributed to the different collection points with the help of other collaborating partners like NERCHA and the Ministry of Regional Development and Youth Affairs which houses the Tinkhundla department. While the crops are still growing, between December and January the beneficiaries, through the Indlunkhulu programme also receive food aid as a humanitarian gesture. Through the agricultural extension service, the project is also expected to impart pertinent agricultural skills – like production husbandry skills and the proper construction of granaries- to the beneficiaries, a strategy to minimise respectively in-field and post harvest losses. As there is the thinking that these households must be self-sufficient and sustainable with time, this past season the programme had introduced straight maize varieties, which can be kept for seed, like Nielson Choice or Afrique 1.Undoubtedly not much yield was realized to save seed for the next season due to the drought that beset the country this past season. The programme would do well if it were to diversify and introduce more drought-tolerant crops such as sorghum, sweet potato and cassava. In 2007 the programme will introduce and provide horticultural inputs, like vegetable seedlings and fruit trees for all seasons as a strategy to supplement and broaden the base of food resources per household and hence ensure better food and nutrition security.

Visits to some of the communities revealed that in some households the inputs had not been used at all or had been used only partially. The real reasons in each case were not specified nor documented (hence robbing the programme of cumulative experience) that can help give better direction as to what could be the intervening variables or trends and what needs to happen to enable the programme to be more efficacious. In addition, according to the reports of the two years of implementation, only a few cases, less than 30 participating households had received the technical training in agricultural skills.
The implementation and project management structure and team comprises of a National Project Coordinator who is the Senior Agricultural Officer based at the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives Head office; the four (4) Regional Project Coordinators, who are the Agricultural Officers responsible for guiding and coordinating the different agricultural activities in each region; and the Agricultural Extension officers that are based in the chiefdoms or Tinkhundla. Other collaborating staff includes the four (4) NERCHA Regional officers and the EU-Micro-projects Project Coordinator. At community level, there are the local structures responsible for selecting the beneficiaries, distribution of inputs and management and monitoring of the project and they include the Umphakatsi HIV/AIDS committee, in which Bandlancane is represented, the care-givers, health motivators. The Umphakatsi HIV/AIDS committee is the structure that is accountable to Bandlancane and the Management team.

The Management team and collaborating partners meet once a month for debriefing, strategising and future planning on the project.

Other than sourcing and distributing the inputs to Tinkhundla Centres, the study found that there had been no follow-up from the implementing agency since inception, no systematic monitoring, documentation and management of pertinent information for lesson learning or for use to further inform implementation and no capacity building to enable the communities to do these on their own. The communities are just recipients and distributors of the assistance. They seem ill prepared to cope and appear overwhelmed by the worsening situation. This state of affairs subjects communities to more vulnerability to unscrupulous management tendencies. Furthermore, they have no knowledge as to the duration of the assistance and what strategies have been put in place for sustainability. They therefore indicated that they felt ill prepared for an eventual or abrupt exit of the external assistance.

### 2.2 Project Thematic Areas

#### 2.2.1 Vulnerability

From discussions with community structures in the communities visited, there were indications that although the routes to vulnerability by the different households may have been different, the primary and common predisposing factor seems to have been the early departure and loss of a provider and breadwinner, due to HIV/AIDS-related illnesses. Other contributing factors to vulnerability to food insecurity include the persistent droughts whose impact have been greatest in rural areas where farming is the typical livelihood and source of food security, poverty which is also more prevalent in rural areas and that may further predispose members of these households to a web of other social ills and vulnerabilities.

The vulnerability of the child-headed households stems mainly from the fact that they are minors, young and inexperienced to be heads of households and, that at adolescent; they are prone to different kinds of abuse and are perhaps emotionally unstable to really make
good sense of the kind of help whose benefits are more long-term. In one community where there were records with demographic information, the median age of OVC was 10 years with the graph skewed to the left, indicating that it was younger children who were mostly affected and therefore would be considered under-age to be able to benefit on their own from the inputs programme. In fact in the few cases where the study tried to talk to the children it failed because they were tearful (both boys and girls). With the exception of the Ndwandwe family, in Jubukweni (Annex 1, case 1), the condition of the homes visited was appalling in that things were not placed or stored in an orderly manner, untidy, unhygienic surroundings. The bags of donated food were lying uncovered on dirt floors. This kind of situation further predisposes the children to other infectious diseases and food borne illnesses. With the increasing number of orphans who fall in the category of younger children (10 years and younger), there is need to modify or re-structure the strategy or social protection package so that it is more responsive to the needs of this age category.

The study was able to talk to older children (22 and 19 years old) in only 2 of the cases visited. These were in two of the households at the Jubukweni (case 1) community that were considered to be doing well. Generally, the study found that in this community the members of the HIV/AIDS Committee and health motivators were active and actively monitored each situation, making sure that they receive the necessary additional assistance from the greater community. They had all the pertinent information about each of the cases in their community. This has been viewed as a good practice example by the researcher as it forms the basis for effective and rationalised programming, targeting and prioritisation for a programme that has limited resources to cover all deserving cases. In another child-headed household case in Mavula community (case 2) the two male children double orphans aged 11 and 17 years had never been to school when their parents were alive. The local school however, embraced them and offered them placement in Grade 1 half way through 2006, at the request of the older boy. In 2007 they are both in Grade 2. It would appear that their orphan status opened doors to opportunities (education) they would have never seen had their parents still been alive, which is a rare happening in Swaziland.

Yet in another case at ka-Dlovunga community (case 3) the 3 girl-children (ages 7, 14 and 15) orphaned by their father and deserted by their mother, the older child seemed overwhelmed, disoriented and took a long time to respond, often looking up to the 14-year old for answers who, may be knowing the situation about her sibling, would then respond to the questions asked. When probed about the frequency of meals and diet quality in general they indicated that it was common for them to have only one meal a day and would, at times, use vinegar as relish (umshibo) as they had done in the previous evening meal. They sometimes used sugar as relish. In this case their land asset is even threatened unless the community authorities intervene as a new settler had also encroached on their parents’ land through -(kukhonta). The situation of the children in this case seems to have started deteriorating when their mother deserted them when their father was still alive but ill. In the opinion of the Researcher, these children would not be in a situation to make anything out of the inputs programme. They are just dependants
and still need constant guidance and parenting from adults. The same applies to the
Mtfombotsi children in Mavula (Annex. 1, case 2).

The foregoing scenario demonstrates clearly that the programme of inputs alone without
proper assessment of the prevailing situation in each household, capacity building,
change of mindset or linkages to other mutually supportive programmes may create an
unanticipated inter-linkage of vulnerabilities, hence making the cycle more difficult to
break. The study also found that even in cases where the family was well off before the
parents died, the family’s safety nets might have been depleted due to the long illnesses
that often accompany an HIV/AIDS immune-compromised victim. The other
complicating factor mostly in rural Swaziland is the denial syndrome, often leading to the
belief by the victim or relatives that the illness came about because of witchcraft. This
scenario leads to estrangement and alienation, a situation that may make the children lose
their immediate support structure, sense of belonging, security and trust, elements that are
the foundations of their being.

2.2.2 Targeting and Exclusion

The project targets households that still have children living in them and, that have been
left to care and fend for themselves after their parents died or deserted them due to
HIV/AIDS related causes. These must be children who, for different reasons, were still
dependent on their parents before they succumbed to death or before they left the
household. The study found that the ages of the children in the visited households ranged
from 6 years – 25 years. The project is implemented alongside and as an offshoot of the
Indlunkhulu fields programme, which is the umbrella programme for all types of
vulnerable groups and members of the community. In Swazi lore and custom the
Indlunkhulu is a place of authority, refuge and the epitome of the Swazi traditional social
order and welfare, policy-making and enforcement that was mostly active in pre- and
neo- independent times. With the worsening HIV/AIDS situation and the legacy it leaves
in homesteads and households, the Swaziland Government saw it appropriate to support
the revival of that care-giving traditional role and function of the Indlunkhulu as a
strategy to better target, channel and equitably distribute and monitor whatever assistance
to deserving members of the community.

In selecting the beneficiaries of child-headed households, the following guiding
principles are used to identify households that are eligible to participate and benefit from
the project:

- The Umphakatsi HIV/AIDS Committee works with the community health
  motivators to draw up a list or registry of all AIDS-affected households in each
  community where the project is operational. The HIV/AIDS Committee
  identifies and classifies the different households according to the severity of the
  situation and degree of need.
- The household must have one or more children of school-going age who have
  lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS-related illnesses.
- Must have crop fields that were productive during the lifetime of their parents.
On the basis of these eligibility criteria, 26 households are selected according to the criteria below to benefit directly from the project. It is important to mention that this project is still at the pilot and experimentation stage, and hence will hopefully provide the lessons to be learnt and considered for an eventual programme roll out, when this one ends or exits.

1. Households that have children who have either lost the breadwinner or both parents, where the surviving children are termed double orphans.

2. Where the children have been left alone with a grandparent who does not have the strength to tender the fields anymore.

3. Where the mother had absconded even before the death of their father leaving them to fend for themselves or in the care of a frail and incapacitated (due to old age) grandparent.

4. Where the relatives are distant or destitute.

Generally, more households than the required number meet the eligibility criteria per participating community. Discussions with the National Coordinator revealed that, by and large this figure was arbitrary and, that the thinking at project inception may have been that 26 was a large enough number of households to enable effective lesson learning or to demonstrate the need for special focus on this emerging type of household by policy custodians, relevant technocrats and community leadership. However, the general feeling at community level was that that decision ought to rest with the community leadership and governance structures as the number of deserving cases was increasing at an alarming rate, making it difficult for them to determine and justify who should/should not benefit.

Although this is a pilot project it is important for the study to raise issues that may lead or result in the following exclusion or inclusion errors:

- Basing the eligibility age on the fact that these were dependent on their parents before they succumbed to death can result in the exclusion of the younger children who are even more vulnerable because they are still under-aged and cannot be in employment or are not physically fit to produce and prepare their food and meals. There will be need to set an age limit for eligibility.

- The number of localities in each chiefdom can range from 5 to 12. This can cause exclusion problems as it may be difficult to have all localities selected in the bigger chiefdoms. The project may benefit those where the leadership is active in tracking, monitoring and documentation of the situation in the different households and exclude more destitute households. The other factor may be isolatedness of some of the localities, making them inaccessible to health motivators as there is no transport provided for outreach work.
Where there are leadership, chieftaincy or family disputes as the study learned the service does not even reach those who have been selected because of such related reasons.

Where the members of that household are still too young and physically challenged to till the land.

Targeting of child headed-households, and providing inputs as a strategy to protect their food security in the immediate term and, their immovable assets like land in the long term, is relevant and appropriate. However, with the growing number of households with younger and under-age children, there is a need to further differentiate the strategy for targeting and/or re-visit the strategy for purposes of reconceptualisation or partnering with other relevant programmes to enable effective targeting of assistance for the younger members of the household.

2.2.3 Cost-effectiveness

The project did not hire new personnel but is using those officers already in employment, like senior agricultural officers in the four regions who collaborate with NERCHA and EU Microprojects regional officers. Although this arrangement appears strategic and a strength from the standpoint of the impact the project seeks to make, on the ground this position of advantage and expertise has not translated into real gains for the project. These are officers who are senior, well established and networked to be able to leverage those required additional resources critical to a more effective implementation. The collaboration among these agencies enables a cost sharing of the costs related to the distribution and storage of the inputs to the beneficiary communities. This is viewed as a strength as well as being cost-effective as the project does not have its own transport, storage facilities and personnel to enable the proper handling of these bulky consignments. These arrangements, both in terms of manpower and transportation costs, are viewed as relevant because interventions aimed at the mitigation of the effects of HIV/AIDS and its legacy must be henceforth viewed as forming a significant part of social protection programming and therefore requires that all efforts be made towards integrating and mainstreaming their activities.

Through the collaborative effort, the regional coordinators have access to vehicles for which they report the total mileage travelled and litres of fuel used in doing work for the project per reporting period (quarterly). From the field reports the vehicles and fuel are used to conduct field visits, to prepare for and attend field demonstrations, for example the construction of proper maize cribs, for the distribution of smaller quantities of materials to beneficiaries in all the chiefdoms and to go to meetings. There is no indication of this resource being used to do follow-up work or monitoring at the community and household level to determine the extent to which the intervention is meeting the project’s objectives. The project would do well to deploy trained community-based facilitators who would do the necessary facilitation, training and mentoring, mobilization and monitoring at household level so that the project can make a real difference in terms of food security and quality status and the preservation or protection of assets.
In the opinion of the researcher, the project also needs to have basic household data - such as information on food consumption patterns, household food basket composition and quality, frequency and quality of meals, food storage and safety, what time of the year is most difficult in meeting dietary requirements etc - on a year to year basis, to be able to measure the impact of the intervention or for effective targeting. In addition, the study also found that the intervention has not been properly baselined, benchmarked and with no indicators set to measure progress towards the attainment of the stated outcome or to track and ensure that the inputs are indeed making a discernible impact to the lives and livelihoods of those the project seeks to assist.

The cost-effectiveness of the project could be improved if the capacities of the HIV/AIDS committees, community health motivators and support groups on surveillance, monitoring and evaluation, information documentation and management and coordination can be built. In addition the Ministry of Agriculture as the implementing agency would do well in making the project to be more cost-effective if it used its position of strength to mobilize support and forge strategic linkages with other complementary projects as a way of strengthening synergies. Capacity building in effective data gathering and management for the officers working in this project is critical. Without good data, there cannot be a way to measure impact, net output or outcomes. The project has tried to cut down on implementation costs through collaborating with other stakeholders, but there is need to ensure that the beneficiaries are using the inputs optimally and as designed to achieve the intended benefits and outcomes for one to truly assess the cost-effectiveness of the intervention.

2.2.4 Market Impacts

As data is scanty and incomplete in terms of actual yields and records on how much the programme contributes to the net food requirements of the households, it is difficult to follow market trends and/or make an inference on what effect or impact the project has/is having on the market. Notwithstanding, the absence of critical data, its obvious that on the inputs side, the market is benefiting tremendously as the project has already spent more than E8 million on inputs since inception. This is a significant contribution to the sector and country’s economic profile and outlook, which stands to benefit because of the large volumes traded to meet the requirements of target beneficiaries. On the retail side traders of maize meal for example may be negatively affected, as the tendency would be for these households, which are growing in number with each passing season, to grind their own maize meal instead of buying. Further down the value chain, grinding mill operators in the community also stand to gain as more households bring their grain for grinding than buying commercial maize meal. At household level it is estimated that with optimum growing conditions, the inputs issued per household are expected to yield 1MT per ha which translates to 20 x 70Kg bags of maize (E2,000.00), and 3 x 50Kg bags of cowpeas, beans or particular legume type (E1,200.00) per household. These quantity estimates are viewed to be adequate to provide the staple food that is sufficient to feed a family of 7 for a year.
In 2005 the area planted under the different crops for OVC child-headed households was 219.5ha for Maize and 5.7ha for legumes (beans and/or cowpeas) from all the four regions. In 2006, with data missing from one of the regions (due to late submission of report) the area under Maize was 164.15ha; sorghum 39.47ha, data available from 1 region; legumes 56.5ha. The Lubombo region was able to diversify by also planting sorghum partly in anticipation of the drought and, because of the Ministry of Agriculture’s extension service successful promotion of the growing of the more drought resistant crops like sorghum in the region. Generally, discussions with project staff and community structures indicate that the performance of the project with respect to crop quality and yield and community participation is improving. They applauded this exercise (research), saying that it amply demonstrated the importance of capacity building for effective project management and, the need for frequent and quality follow ups and monitoring, particularly at household level.

Overall, the situation seems to favour inputs market activity for the immediate and long term. This is so because donor money buys inputs in large volumes. Secondly, even if only 10% of the child-headed households are sold on the idea of farming as a livelihood option, the market stands to benefit than losing all the households that were productive.

### 2.2.5 Coordination and coverage

Poor coordination among key stakeholders and lack of collation or feedback on pertinent planning information have been cited as key problems implicated in the late delivery of inputs at the Tinkhundla Centres, the point of collection by chiefdoms. The late deliveries make it difficult for communities to take advantage of early season rains. Coupled with that are the long distances and not easily available transport to collection points, which cause further delays in planting. The study also observed that due to disputes in some chiefdoms, the inputs never really get out to the respective localities and beneficiaries.

From lessons learnt, this coming season, project management will use the RDA centres, which are closer to the different communities as distribution and collection centres for inputs and other materials like fencing materials and seedlings for the backyard gardens. This will also enable the project to have better control of stock and ensure that inputs are issued only to the selected households.

Other than the revival of traditional coping systems, like referring such matters of destitution or orphanages to Umphakatsi (local leadership structures), there seems to be no comprehensive strategy or common vision on how the different interventions combine to address the plight of these emerging households, or how information is shared and/or coordinated across the different initiatives operating in these communities. If left unchecked or the communities are not empowered to do the coordination of all the incoming help it can lead to more vulnerability as has been observed elsewhere with programming that has a humanitarian slant or dimension. Communities need to be given the capacity and assistance to document, monitor and manage basic demographic data by household. The coordination function is better delegated to the community structures once they have been given the necessary capacity and tools to enable them to be on top of the situation.
As has been mentioned elsewhere in this report, inputs alone or the issuing of inputs in isolation of other mutually supporting interventions could render the intervention ineffective for this target group. For the intended objective or goal, it is recommended that other criteria be introduced to select OVC child-headed households that stand a better chance to effectively model this social experiment on this emerging type of household to use for replication or lesson learning. Other cases like the Mtombotsi and ka-Gogo Mkhwanezi households can be put on other types of assistance while being slowly integrated and enabled to participate fully in the inputs programme (a differentiated and staggered intervention strategy). There are programmes like the 4-S and the JFFLS programme and for those in school there is also the Schools’ Agriculture and Home Economics programme. There are other programmes offered by other NGO’s like Family Life Association and SWAGGA. Above all, it is recommended that the project employ the services of properly trained community-based facilitators who would spend quality time doing facilitation, mentoring and monitoring with each household. This way the resources can be used in a more cost effective and sustainable way. In fact, the assistance given by the project should be viewed as an attempt to leverage mainstream vulnerability social protection programmes or strategies.

There is also a need for all the stakeholders and partners to periodically give account on the status and progress being made by the programme to the communities and to each other.

2.2.6 Asset Protection and Building

According to the regional coordinators of the two regions visited (Hhohho and Shiselweni) and visits made to individual child-headed households, the programme has had minimal impact towards the achievement of the stated objective (s) or intended outcome. One of the reasons being that these inputs are given without due consideration of whether the respective household members are interested in agriculture and ready to undertake farming activities as a food security and livelihood option, or have the requisite basic skills, or if in school they participate or have enrolled in the school’s agriculture subject or are linked to the Ministry of Agriculture’s 4-S programme1 - a programme designed to cultivate interest in agriculture as a livelihood option for youth. Furthermore, there is no consideration of whether the said households have storage facilities and/or skills for preventing harvest losses.

Among the 3 ‘best’ households visited, there was only one where the minor children had amply demonstrated these qualities, and this was because they were actively involved with the farming activities when their parents were still alive or around. The expectation or assumption that children will automatically embrace agriculture or use it as a way to keep and protect the land or other assets that they inherited needs re-thinking.

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1 The 4-S programme is a programme within the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives that is similar to, and been modelled along the 4-H youth programme in the USA. It is an out of school, extra-curricula programme that is aimed at cultivating technical skills and knowledge in and, passion for agriculture and home economics among the youth.
There is a need to offer training on sibling parenting and sibling-to-sibling relationships in the new circumstance they find themselves in, to enable them to build a common vision and to assist the adult child to cope with their new responsibilities, as the study found that it could be difficult at times.

2.3 Additional comments

There is so much variation in what is actually happening in this project that it would be unfair to imply that what was observed is a true representation of the situation. It is recommended that a fully-fledged study be commissioned that would perhaps give a better picture, hence resulting in better evidence building. In addition, the drought of this past season served to remind all concerned that agriculture itself is also vulnerable to unanticipated natural disasters, hence the need to also train communities to always anticipate and then plan for it. The strategy of using the senior extension officers as regional coordinators is relevant to the objective and intentions of the project, but there is need for the project to give them skills in strategists planning, implementation and coordination.

In addition, data are scanty and typically reported only in terms of community or regional averages, a situation that can contribute to poor targeting as these statistics have the tendency to conceal what is actually happening at household level, vis-à-vis trends in vulnerability status. As the unit of impact is the child-headed household, data gathering and reporting ought to be by household rather than generalised because the project seeks to redress the extent of vulnerability there. Even then, analysis of documentation reviewed seems to indicate estimates of fields under the different crops based on quantity of seed issued, rather than reflecting projected or, actual fields planted as well as actual harvest yields and perhaps net contribution (in quantifiable terms) of this project to total annual food requirements of each household. As the project also seeks to impart farming skills to the orphaned children, there is no mention of the extent to which the necessary crop husbandry and management practices are followed and in a timely fashion. In fact, one of the child-headed households will have a bumper harvest of maize despite the drought, because they diverted water from a perennial stream from the mountains to irrigate their fields. This is not documented anywhere and could not be known to the programme if this study had not been done.

2.4 Weaknesses and Constraints

1. Lack of a community based mechanism or system for continued tracking and surveillance for vulnerability indicators and trends.

2. Roles of the different structures and agencies not well coordinated for efficacy (There is a lot of help yet very little in real terms filters to the beneficiaries).

3. Agricultural inputs are distributed without due consideration of other intervening variables such as interest, age, ability, availability of implements that may militate against the intended or desired outcome.
4. There is no systematic monitoring of livelihood and regular surveillance of food security related activities or trends of beneficiaries to determine if intervention is having the desired impact.

5. The study further observed that the project did not make further provision for infants or toddlers who are threatened by nutritional insecurities because of their stage of development.

6. Poor coordination and role definition of the different HIV/AIDS related initiatives/interventions in the participating communities.

7. Lack of adequate staff for continuous monitoring and evaluation to enable continuous feedback and learning for enhanced project results.

8. Lack of capacity on the part of the community and local implementation structures.

9. The tendering for suppliers of inputs is bureaucratic and too centralized, elements that tend to frustrate smooth and timely distribution of inputs.

10. There are no direct inputs suppliers for the project. This is another contributing factor in the late delivery of inputs.

2.5 Lessons

- The effort and strategy of preserving the home base and immovable productive assets through the inputs programme has foundation and is visionary.

- It is also a good example because it strives to cultivate the love for agriculture among the young.

- In a way this project is also trying to prevent the demise of rural smallholder or subsistence agriculture, in which the rural households are the major players.

- This project has amply demonstrated the need and importance of baseline data and a comprehensive but relevant audit framework of the situation for effective programming.

- A key element that was overlooked in this project as has been in other social programmes/projects/experiments seeking to make a difference or positive impact is the absence of a solid capacity building and facilitation programme for the community that is/will be the beneficiary of that project.

- Proper documentation and a system to manage programme information are also critical elements of effective programming, without which there can be no cumulative record for knowledge generation.
3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Like poverty, vulnerability to socio-economic ills is a vicious cycle and hence a predisposing factor to a disabling and counterproductive living and livelihood mindset if not tackled holistically.

2. At local level the project should use the Agriculture or Home Economics or community development officers, who know where the households are located as the project link to other complementary mainstream programmes.

3. It is recommended that the project provide basic small animal production inputs (for example, 5 layers, a communal fish pond, planting material for yellow sweet potato varieties, two rabbits, or two communal milk cows) to take care of the nutritional demands of the younger children who are more nutritionally vulnerable.

4. It is also important to document other pertinent information about the food situation (like dietary habits, food consumption patterns, etc) to be able to determine an appropriate entry point and strategy for each case. This is where the different officers from the different agencies can collaborate to effectively and systematically address the situation by household or community to pave the way for the inputs programme, which is a long term strategy for addressing and protecting against food insecurity and loss immovable productive assets, like land.

5. There is need to have a mechanism that will ensure that the inputs go to the intended beneficiaries and that the beneficiaries use them for the intended purpose.

6. It is of paramount importance for the programme to devise an exit strategy, a monitoring and evaluation framework to be able to track and benchmark progress and, to link the project with ongoing programmes such as the 4-S programme, the Schools’ Agriculture, the FAO Trade Fair Inputs programme or the recently launched FAO driven Junior Farmer Fields programme for sustainability.

7. There is need to conduct a social capital audit of these programmes to determine how they can be mutually beneficial to each other and/or be used as strategies for mainstreaming.

8. There is need to conduct broad-based and targeted training for capacity in holistic and defensive living and disaster preparedness and strategy development for communities, households and individuals.

9. The programme must resist the temptation of isolating issue-based projects, which are often well resourced but time-bound from mainstream programmes, which can add value to the project via the use of other resources like stores of knowledge and experience.
4.0 CONCLUSION

The inputs strategy and the idea of targeting child-headed households is a solid one from the standpoint of nation or neighbourhood building and national asset building for the protection of agriculture and food security in rural communities in totality, who although their output is currently not factored in, in calculating the country’s GDP, they are the backbone and major contributors to the gross food basket and domestic product in this country. That is why the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives must take keen interest and use the resources leveraged by this external assistance to re-position and re-conceptualise their programmes and/or service delivery strategy. Fortunately, the Ministry is currently conducting that exercise, through stakeholder discussions in the different regions, that which will culminate in a national agricultural summit whose theme is that of redefining the direction and content of its services.
Table 1. Basic Data on the ‘Food and Inputs for Child-Headed Households’ project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Swaziland</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of Project</td>
<td>Food and Inputs for OVC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>A programme that provides food and agricultural inputs to child-headed households to protect and promote their household food security. Training in farming techniques is supposed to be provided by the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Objectives</td>
<td>To promote and protect the food security of child-headed households.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Rationale</td>
<td>To provide the support at their homes as a strategy to preserve family and protect assets like fields, buildings livestock and other assets for the specific use and benefit of the children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Implementing Agency</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Funding Agency</td>
<td>Japanese International Cooperation Agency in partnership with EU-Microprojects, Swaziland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Budget</td>
<td>The project has a budget of E24 million over 3 years (2004 – 2008) to fund the following activities: Food production (for the purchase of inputs), Establishment of NCPs (construction of decent structures made out of concrete blocks to replace the stick and mud structures and buying of cooking utensils or equipment, NGO collaboration (which is mainly through the support of backyard gardens) and Sensitisation (which includes mainly training and monitoring and evaluation). In the first year the project was allocated 7 million Emalangeni; E5 million in the second year; E5 million in the third year and the balance will be spent in the fourth year of the programme, which has been created as a result of the delayed start and the unspent funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Start-Date</td>
<td>2004 ploughing season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Duration</td>
<td>Estimated to be 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Group</td>
<td>OVC Child-Headed Households</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Eligibility Criteria | 1. Each chiefdom Bandlancane appoints The HIV/AIDS Committee, health motivators and support groups who in turn identify and classify the different households according to the severity of the situation and degree of need.  
2. The household must have one or more children of school-going age who have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS-related illnesses.  
3. Must have crop fields that were productive during |
the lifetime of their parents.

### Selection of beneficiaries

1. From the list the committee selects 26 homesteads that have children who have either lost the breadwinner or both parents (where the surviving children are termed double orphans).
2. Where the children have been left alone with a grandparent who does not have the strength to tend the fields anymore.
3. Where the mother had absconded even before the death of their father leaving them to fend for themselves or in the care of a frail and incapacitated (due to old age) grandparent.
4. Where the relatives are distant or destitute.

### Geographic coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of beneficiaries</th>
<th>26 Households per chiefdom (8,320 child-headed households)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Geographic coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of beneficiaries</th>
<th>320 Chiefdoms in all the Four Administrative Regions of Swaziland.</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At time of project Inception</th>
<th>No information available</th>
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<tr>
<th>Later Changes w/ dates</th>
<th>No changes have been noted, except that the communities sometimes put the help in one pot and then re-distributes due to the increasing number of destitute and even more deserving households.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Transfer per Beneficiary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regularity</th>
<th>Inputs, Once per year (every ploughing season). Food, mainly during December and January when crops are still growing. And on request from the <em>Indlunkhulu</em> programme by rural health motivators on behalf of the child-headed households.</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount Each Time</th>
<th>Enough seed and fertilizer to plant 0.5 Ha of each crop issued.</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount per year</th>
<th>Enough seed to plant 0.5 Ha per crop Enough fertilizer, LAN and stalk-borer to cover area under planted crops.</th>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Estimated planted area crops in (Ha), 2005 and 2006 cropping seasons</th>
<th>2005: Maize (219.5); Legumes (beans and/or cowpeas) (5.7). 2006: Maize (164.15); sorghum (39.47), data available from 1 region; legumes (56.5) for the 3 regions, data from 1 region is missing due to late submission</th>
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<tr>
<th>Yield Estimates and their value per household</th>
<th>With optimum growing conditions the inputs are estimated to yield 20 X 70Kg bags of maize (E2,000.00), and 3 X 50Kg bags of cowpeas, beans or particular legume type (E1,200.00) issued per Household. These quantity estimates are viewed to be adequate to feed a family of 7 for a year.</th>
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</table>

### Delivery/distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery/distribution</th>
<th>This activity is enabled through a collaborative effort</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrangements</td>
<td>between the Ministry of Agriculture and NERCHA who organize and share the costs for delivery at Tinkhundla Centres. From there the Chiefdoms make their own arrangements to collect the inputs or food for storage at ka-Gogo centres. Discussions with the National Coordinator have revealed that this coming season the plan is to use the Rural Development Areas (RDAs) as delivery centres for a timely, more efficient and more cost effective delivery and better monitoring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Information on Project Documentation, Evaluation and Outcomes

| Documentation Available on Project | Regional Field Quarterly Reports (standard format) and National Quarterly Reports compiled from regional reports. Workshop power-point presentation. The National Coordinator gave most of the information on project orally. At regional and community levels information was given by respectively the senior extension officers who are the regional coordinators for the project and the members of the HIV/AIDS community and rural health motivators (also in oral form). |
| Contact Details for Project | Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and Micro-projects Programme |
| Evaluation of Project (undertaken by and when) | Not applicable |
| Evaluation Results (summary findings in brief) | Not applicable |
| Summary Statement of Project Outcomes | Over the past two ploughing seasons the project has made minimal impact to the lives of the intended beneficiaries (the child-headed households) due mainly to poor programming. |
| List of Strengths | 1. There is community involvement. 
2. Community has organised itself into committees and support groups but requires capacity building to manage project effectively. 
3. Access to and latitude to allocate the land resource. 
4. The integration of the *Indlunkhulu* as the local support and monitoring structure for the programme ensures that there will be sustainability after external assistance exits. |
| List of Weaknesses | 1. Lack of a community based mechanism or system for continued tracking and surveillance for vulnerability indicators. 
2. Roles of the different structures and agencies not well coordinated for efficacy (There is a lot of help yet very little in real terms filters to the beneficiaries). 
3. Agricultural Inputs are distributed without due consideration of other intervening variables such as interest, age, ability, availability of implements that may militate against the intended or desired outcome. 
4. There is no systematic monitoring of livelihood and regular surveillance of food security related activities or trends of beneficiaries to determine if intervention is having the desired impact. |
5. The study further observed that the project did not make further provision for infants or toddlers who are threatened by nutritional insecurities because of their stage of development.
6. Poor coordination and role definition of the different HIV/AIDS related initiatives/interventions in the participating communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constraints and/or challenges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of adequate staff for continuous monitoring and evaluation to enable continuous feedback and learning for enhanced project results.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of capacity on the part of the community and local implementation structures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The tendering for suppliers of inputs is bureaucratic and too centralized.</td>
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<td>There are no direct inputs suppliers for the project. This is another contributing factor in the late delivery of inputs.</td>
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<th>Additional Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Like poverty, vulnerability to socio-economic ills is a vicious cycle and hence a predisposing factor to a disabling and counterproductive living and livelihood mindset if not tackled holistically.</td>
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<td>At local level the project should use the Agriculture or Home Economics or community development officer, who knows where the households are located as the project link to other complementary mainstream programmes.</td>
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<td>There is need to have a mechanism that will ensure that the inputs go to the intended beneficiaries and that the beneficiaries use them for the intended purpose.</td>
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<td>It is of paramount importance for the programme to devise an exit strategy, a monitoring and evaluation framework to be able to track and benchmark progress and, to link the project with ongoing programmes such as the 4-S programme, the Schools' Agriculture, the FAO Trade Fair Inputs programme or the recently launched FAO driven Junior Farmer Fields programme for sustainability.</td>
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<td>There is need to conduct a social capital audit of these programmes to determine how they can be mutually beneficial to each other and/or be used as strategies for mainstreaming.</td>
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Broad-based and targeted training for capacity in holistic and defensive living and disaster preparedness and strategy development for communities, households and individuals.

On the ground the manner in which the programme ‘Food and Inputs for Child-Headed Households’ is implemented seems more of a humanitarian emergency type of relief than a strategy towards promoting and protecting food security. There is no systematic documentation or follow-up or monitoring of the help given. There is no programme in place to guide implementation, lesson learning for organizational development or institutional transformation for increased effectiveness.

The programme must resist the temptation of isolating issue-based projects, which are often well resourced but time-bound from mainstream programmes, which can add value to the project via the use of other resources like stores of knowledge and experience.
REFERENCES

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Examples of Cases of Child-Headed Households visited

Case 1: Ndwandwe Household at Jubukweni- Hhohho (Best practice example)

The Ndwandwe family has an intact big homestead, with a number of buildings for accommodation and service rooms. The father died first in 1996 and the mother followed in 2006. They left behind 5 children, 4 boys and 1 girl aged between 12 to 25 years. There is also a girl-grandchild mothered by the girl child that has remained with her uncles. Two of the children are attending school. The girl aged 19 years eloped and lives with her husband in a distant community. The children inherited 5 cattle, a sizeable number of chickens, fruit trees (banana, avocado and peaches), about 1 ha of fields for cropping, an intact cattle kraal, well-kept granaries and a generally clean and orderly yard and surroundings. The father was employed in the Ministry of Agriculture and the mother was a hawker. For a while the family lived off the father’s employment terminal benefits. The whole family was also active in farming activities. The family relocated from Sigombeni in Manzini region and was settled at Jubukweni, which is in the Hhohho region by the traditional process of (kukhonta). The first-born child aged 25 years we were told by the Bucopho of the area is not mentally stable. But the informant said that he was the one in charge of the family because of his birth position.

The 3rd born child boy who is 20 was the informant and the one who was responsible for the family’s upkeep and ensuring that the farming activities continued unabated. When the study visited, the field under maize and beans looked impressive with good yield. There were also pumpkins intercropped with the maize. The family benefited from the programme for the first time this past season. They are poised to have a bumper harvest from both the maize and beans. Despite the drought they managed to harness water from a perennial stream from the mountains to furrow-irrigate the fields. This boy said he got motivation from his parents to love agriculture. He also does hawking to generate income for other basic needs of the family. They also sell the fruit.

He further indicated that as he had minimal skills in farming he would like to receive more training to be able to diversify and make the land more productive. With help he received from the project he started a garden and grows spinach, (Swiss chard, tomatoes and carrots). He said the inputs programme was better than food aid. In addition, he indicated that there was a need for organized youth activities in the community like associations as a form of support group. He added that being a breadwinner for siblings placed enormous pressure on him, as he had to ensure that everybody was taken care of. He has put off his own plans of marriage to ensure that his two brothers and the niece finish school.
**Case 2: Mtfombotse Household at Mavula (Hhohho)**

This is a family of 2 boy children aged 11 and 17 and a teenage girl of 19 years who are surviving through the mercy of the community. Both their parents passed away, the father in 2002 and the mother in 2006. Generally, in this community the standard of education is low as most males opt to go to work in South Africa, mainly in the mines at a young age (about 16 to 18 years). This is being brought out to partially explain why the boys were not attending school when their parents were still alive. When the mother passed away in 2006 the community made arrangements that the younger boy be enrolled in Grade 1. The school officials accepted him. He, however, was not stable and would time and again absent himself or just run away from school and hide. The school would go out of their way to try and find him and bring him back to class. Halfway through the year, the older boy presented himself to the school authorities and asked if he could be enrolled as well. He was enrolled in Grade 1 and both of them are in Grade 2 this year. The younger boy was tearful and looked down to the floor throughout the interview, which with hindsight should not have been done with them. There is a fear that the girl is already a live-in lover with someone as she was not at home when the study visited.

According to the **Bucopho**, who was mainly the informant in this case, the parents left no livestock or assets with any value. They left three single-room buildings, which are dilapidated. The community is trying to construct a one-room building with cement bricks for them, as the current structures would not stand for long. However, as there is also general apathy in the community, the progress in building this accommodation structure has been painfully slow. They have no relatives in Swaziland. They indicated that their relatives are in South Africa.

The building that is used for cooking has, apart from falling apart a leaking roof. The food rations that they receive from the **Indlunkhulu** Fields Programme were placed on dirt floors with pots and other cooking and eating utensils lying all over in a disorderly manner. There were however fruit trees like paw-paw, guavas and peaches. The surroundings are generally not well kept. The community tried to plant maize for the family but a neighbour’s cattle destroyed all the crops. There is a case pending with the local leadership structures against the culprit. Hopefully the family will get redress.
Case 3: Gogo Mkhwanazi’s Household at ka-Dlovunga (Shiselweni)

At this homestead there are 3 girl-children aged 15, 14 and 7 years old who live with a frail and somewhat incapacitated gogo (granny). When the study visited they were all alone playing house and playing at being models. They were not in school because they had no one to pay their school fees or buy them uniforms. The informant was the 14-year-old as the older one looked disoriented or preoccupied with something. She sat behind the 14-year-old and did not want to look at us. The 7-year-old sat on the lap of one of the members of the HIV/AIDS Committee that accompanied the team. All the children looked nutritionally stunted and the younger child’s head was infested with ringworm patches. Their mother abandoned them when their father was still ill from HIV/AIDS-related diseases; she has not returned since.

The housing structures, two in number, look stable but require repairing or maintenance to prevent them from falling apart as they are constructed from stick and mud. A new settler has encroached on their land and the community members that came along expressed shock to see what had happened. They will follow-up the matter. Due to the drought and the lateness in the delivery of the inputs, there was no attempt made to plant any crops. When asked about the frequency and composition of their meals they indicated that they have at least one meal a day, which they cook. They indicated that they often use vinegar as relish (umshibo) as they had done in the previous evening meal.

This visit was an eye-opener to both the researcher and the Regional Coordinator for the project (who is the senior agricultural extension worker) to the reality on the ground vis-à-vis implementation activities and strategies.