

## SUCCESS STORY

### Community Garden Helps Farmers Weather Drought

**Through USAID-supported garden activities, community members earn an average of nearly US\$380 per harvest—approximately 1.5 times the average monthly income in Swaziland.**



Photo: Helen Ho, USAID/OFDA

*Deliwe Makama working in the Sitanani Bomake community garden.*

**“Having water available on-site has made the gardening much easier. Before, I had to bring water to irrigate my crops from a dam several kilometers away. Now, I can get water from the tank here.”**

— Deliwe Makama, IRD beneficiary in Lubombo District

Deliwe Makama, a mother of five children, earns enough income to cover transport and school fees for her two school-aged children and purchase other essentials for her family, thanks to her participation in the USAID-supported *Sitanani Bomake* community gardening group in Lubombo District, Swaziland. *Sitanani Bomake*, which means Women Helping Each Other, is a group that grows vegetables in a community garden; once sold, the profits from the garden’s communal harvests are shared equally among group members—18 women and 2 men.

Lubombo District, situated in the lowveld of eastern Swaziland, is prone to erratic rainfall and drought. For farmers dependent on rain-fed agriculture, inconsistent rains make it very difficult to grow crops and vegetables year-round. In 2008, with funding from USAID, International Relief and Development (IRD) installed an electric pump to transport water from a nearby borehole to an elevated water tank in the community garden. By installing the pump, IRD helped ensure the availability of water for growing throughout the entire year, thereby providing group members with a consistent source of vegetables and regular income. With part of its earnings, the group can pay for electricity, seeds, and tools, supporting the garden’s sustainability.

In addition to addressing water needs, IRD connected *Sitanani Bomake* group members to Swaziland’s National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBoard) and grocery stores, allowing members to sell produce at competitive prices. IRD and NAMBoard instructors also provided training to garden members on group and financial management, crop selection, and sanitation and hygiene practices. Through USAID-supported garden activities, community members earn an average of nearly US\$380 per harvest—approximately 1.5 times the average monthly income in Swaziland.

With a stable water supply and linkages to markets, Deliwe now plans to grow maize and beans during the winter, in addition to the vegetables she grows year-round. Since maize and beans are not usually grown in the winter, shortages often lead to an increase in local markets prices. By growing these crops in the off-season, Deliwe will likely be able to boost her income and guarantee her family’s access to these staples all year-round.