

# FOOD *Forum*

2nd Issue 2003 • Issue 64

Food Aid Management

1625 K Street, NW, Suite 501 • Washington, DC 20006

## Capacity Building in The Private Sector: Secondary Impacts of Small-Lot Sealed Bid Tenders

By R. Savoie and G. Bamugye, ACDI-VOCA Uganda

The Uganda PL 480 Title II program started in 1989 monetizing 10,000 MT of vegetable oil. The sealed-bid tender system was introduced to encourage small buyers to participate in the small-lot auction on equal terms with larger buyers. Since the early days of the program, one of the pillars of the tender system has been transparency and absolute adherence to the policies and procedures outlined on the reverse side of the bid form. By making no exceptions to the rules, ACDI/VOCA has earned the trust of the traders.

**Small business owners learn business skills by participating in small-lot sealed bid auctions.**

Over the past 12 years, ACDI/VOCA's approach to monetization has led to several interesting improvements in the business practices of small-scale entrepreneurs. Participants have learned to analyze market prices and make competitive bids. In our tender system, traders submit a bid for a minimum of 1 lot (approximately 1 metric ton) of oil packed in 4-litre tins. The bids are sealed and require a 5% deposit. Bids are opened in a public forum, read aloud, bank draft and totals are verified, and the bid is recorded. Once the bids are sorted by price (highest to lowest, and first-in), a line is drawn at the number of tins to be released that month. For example, if there are bids for 500 lots, but only 400 lots offered, the top 400 lots bids would be awarded.

ACDI/VOCA has ensured fair policies that are the same for every person who bids. Certain policies, such as requiring

bank drafts for payment, have forced traders to open and manage bank accounts for the first time. These traders now have a strong understanding of broader banking services, such as lines of credit, that are specifically designed for the small business owner.

Mr. Saaka bids for oil in nearly every sale. He has adequate working capital to buy 100 lots of oil per month and can buy an additional 20 lots on credit. When he first started bidding nearly 10 years ago, he would buy a few lots per month, reinvest the capital and bid for more lots in subsequent auctions. Today, Saaka has even negotiated terms of payment for sugar based on the payment process used for the oil.

Many of ACDI/VOCA's earliest customers have branched out or moved on to other high-value commodities such as sugar or salt, and other materials such as corrugated iron sheets.

Monetization is a critical component of the current DAP program and the oil sales will generate \$2,500,000 to fund programming activities.<sup>1</sup> ACDI/VOCA continually works to encourage small and medium-scale traders to participate in oil auctions. The development of private sector micro-enterprise is clearly an excellent secondary benefit of the Uganda Title II Program. Sustainability is a cornerstone of all ACDI/VOCA programs and, the monetization team will continue to explore how private sector capacity building can be built into the process of generating project funds.

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<sup>1</sup> Programming funds are also generated from negotiated wheat sales; the current DAP includes 10,000 MT of wheat which should generate approximately \$2,600,000.

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Mercy Corps Int'l • OIC International • Project Concern International • Save the Children • SHARE de Guatemala • World Vision

# Sharing our Success, Learning from our Experience: Title II Results Reports

*Editor's Note: In this issue of Food Forum, we are proud to present some of the numerous success stories which Title II Cooperating Sponsors submit to USAID/Food for Peace (FFP) with their yearly Results Reports. This article will highlight the multitude of creative projects undertaken around the world with Title II resources, as well as the many FAM Member organizations producing positive change in situations of extreme hardship. Through these stories, we hope you'll find inspiration and new ideas to challenge your work, as well as the "human face" of the programs with which we work.*

## Stories from Africa

**Cooperating Sponsor: Food for the Hungry International (FHI)**  
**Country: Mozambique**

- *"Health and Nutrition education has empowered us to fight against malnutrition*
- *HIV/AIDS awareness has empowered us to fight against the pandemic.*
- *We are empowered by hygiene education, diarrhea and malaria prevention education.*
- *Malnutrition is gone, cholera is gone, and child deaths are gone*
- *We are happy with FHI" – A song in Sena (local language) translated into English from Mecumbezi community mothers in Nhamatanda district.*

Teteria Jack is a volunteer mother of Mecumbezi village. She sang the song above as a way of showing gratitude for what FHI has taught her, and the results are revealed in the song. Teteria Jack participates in FHI's child feeding lessons (Positive Deviance/Hearth), diarrhea and malaria prevention, HIV/AIDS prevention and hygiene practices. She recounts a difficult and bitter past as follows:

*"My child had stomach problems two years back and this was before FHI intervened in the area. His stomach was swollen. He could not walk. His growth was stunted and eating was a problem. When FHI started operating in Mecumbezi area, the health promoter attended to my child. He taught me what I should feed my child to maintain proper and healthy growth and he showed me how I can prepare a balanced diet with resources I can afford. Now my child gets nutritious porridge and drinks milk daily. With time, my child began showing signs of good health. I have been doing this for a year now and my child has gained weight, the ballooned stomach disappeared, his growth changed and he started walking. If you see that child today, you can't believe that he was once a sack full of bones. He is healthy today. FHI likes us. We like what we are taught and our health styles have changed for the better."*

When health staff probed further, they discovered that the whole community believed in the power of the shamans. When a child fell sick he/she was taken to a shaman. When an adult's health failed, they also consulted a shaman.

Nowadays, it is more common that sick people are taken to the hospital, bypassing shamans. FHI advised them to refer all the sick to the hospital and there is increasing acceptance of the idea. When asked if the community has or had AIDS patients and if any deaths occurred, Teteria Jack denied both the presence and deaths of AIDS patients in her community. She only affirmed that deaths of such patients occurred twice but the patients were not residents of Mecumbezi community. They were people who came from the towns. Hospitals could not manage to cure the disease anymore. These patients came to the community looking for shamans as an alternative. "They died in our community while searching for shamans. Our community is well informed about AIDS awareness and we try hard to be careful" she said.

The child rehabilitation exercise in Mecumbezi community has helped mothers to understand the importance of good nutrition. This community had 485 children who were below 5 years of age in the year 2002. 150 of these children were rehabilitated under the community-based nutrition "Hearth" program. Out of the 150 children, 136 of them gained weight in a period of two weeks. The others (14 children) were on a follow-up exercise to monitor their responses to nutrition.

Nutrition education based on food preparation and how it is fed to children has shown positive results that convinces community mothers. Stewardship delegation extended by FHI Nutrition Extension workers has led to these acceptable results produced by mothers of Mecumbezi community.

**Cooperating Sponsor: World Vision**  
**Country: Mauritania**

*To Get a Glass of Water in Mauritania*

To get a glass of water in Mauritania, a country that is 75% desert, inhabitants have to stand in line at government installed water "fountains," fighting with other people and animals for a chance to fill their containers. If they are lucky enough to get water from the ever-short supply, it is almost always contaminated by the muck surrounding the taps, making it dangerous to drink.

Getting water is even harder for those who do not have access to taps. They are forced by circumstance to purchase water from dirty, donkey-drawn carts at high prices. Women then carry the water quite long distances. Families purchase the absolute minimum amount, often times less than what is recommended for the family needs.

But, thanks to new clean water cisterns, residents of the slums of Nouakchott, the capital city, no longer have to worry about their water supply. World Vision built 52 water storage cisterns around the city, providing 12,000 people with clean water. Provided by the government at deeply discounted prices, negotiated by WV, the water is sold to residents for about three cents per 20-liter jug – 80 percent less than what is charged by the owners of the donkey-drawn carts.

The cisterns were built with a \$1.8 million five-year grant from USAID's Mauritania Antipoverty Program. The funding is provided through commodity monetization of Food For Peace Title II commodities. Last year, World Vision sold 5,400 metric tons of wheat donated by FFP to Mauritanian mills and used the money for development activities. Projects

*continued on page 4*

# FANTA supports meeting on Community Therapeutic Care

October 8-10, 2003

For the past year, the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) Project has supported monitoring and effectiveness of the new Community and Therapeutic Care (CTC) approach in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Malawi, with funding from USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the Bureau for Global Health/Office of Health, Infectious Diseases and Nutrition. CTC is a community-based approach for treating acutely malnourished people in times of stress, providing fast, effective, low-cost assistance in the least disruptive manner and creating a platform for long-term food security and public health solutions.

Concern Worldwide and Valid International, with whom FANTA is collaborating on the project, sponsored a CTC workshop in Dublin, Ireland from October 8 to 10. The workshop brought together approximately 70 key players around severe malnutrition management, including those implementing CTC, home treatment, and so-called "ambulatory care," as well as technical advisors, academics, bilateral donors, and multilateral agencies such as UNICEF and the World Food Programme. The workshop's objectives were to clarify the state-of-the-art on CTC and home treatment, facilitate exchange, share protocols, define criteria, identify gaps, and address implementation priorities for moving forward. After three years of operation, FANTA and its partners have collected substantial data from initial pilot studies in Ethiopia and Sudan and interim data from ongoing CTC interventions in Malawi, Ethiopia, and Sudan. Although there is tremendous interest in CTC and several peer-reviewed journals have published articles on the approach and its implementation, the CTC workshop in Dublin was the first formal platform to share practical experience, implementation techniques, and extensive lessons learned.

The data presented by workshop participants suggested that the CTC program achieves coverage rates two to five times greater than traditional therapeutic feeding centers, at less than half the mortality rate and less than half the default rate, and at a competitive preliminary cost. One of the best-received studies demonstrated that at Queen Elizabeth Hospital's Nutrition Rehabilitation Unit in Blantyre, Malawi, ready-to-use therapeutic foods (known as Plumpynut®), which are central to home treatment in phase two of the CTC approach, resulted in a 50 percent mortality reduction. Nutriset, the manufacturer of Plumpynut®, promotes locally-produced therapeutic food formulations in several countries, which show promise for use in applications such as therapeutic feeding of the chronically ill.

Other presentations included cultural and ethical considerations, the history and development of ready-to-use therapeutic foods, local production, and alternative formulations. Working groups discussed specific propositions and made recommendations on admissions and discharge, outpatient medical protocols, nutritional products, community involvement, integration and long-term issues, and management of infants less than six months old. FANTA also chaired a

panel of bilateral and multilateral donors, discussing costs, current donor climate and trends, rolling out CTC, and the impact of HIV/AIDS on severe acute malnutrition in southern Africa. An open floor discussion brought to light several issues: terminology, rights to access, and sustainability.

In December and in cooperation with Concern Worldwide, FANTA will post a summary of the workshop and presentations on its website ([www.fantaproject.org](http://www.fantaproject.org)). The Emergency Nutrition Network will also post the proceedings of the Dublin CTC workshop online ([www.enonline.net](http://www.enonline.net)) in the near future, detailing the areas of consensus, key points, agreed protocols, areas of controversy, and next steps.

FANTA will use the workshop outcomes to help clarify the various types of CTC and home treatment interventions for USAID and other stakeholders and provide informed advice on the best ways to move forward. Ongoing support for this innovative approach will ensure United States-based private volunteer organizations have access to lessons learned and better practices in malnutrition treatment and prevention.

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## Food Forum

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*Food Forum is published quarterly by Food Aid Management (FAM), an association of 16 United States Private Voluntary Organizations and Cooperatives working together to make U.S. food aid more efficient and effective. With its members, FAM works towards improved food security outcomes by promoting information exchange and coordination, providing forums for discussion and collaboration, and developing food aid standards. The Food Forum provides food aid and food security professionals with a forum for the exchange of technical information, field experience, and recent events.*

Funding for the Food Forum is provided by the Office of Food for Peace, Bureau for Humanitarian Response, U.S. Agency for International Development. The opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID.

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include the water program, a \$3 million micro credit project currently benefiting 18,718 people, and 12 feeding centers that care for more than 1,000 malnourished children every month. The communities contributed approximately 10% of the total cost of the cisterns (roughly \$2,500) and appointed committees to manage and maintain the cisterns. Profits are used for maintenance of the cisterns, and also for community income-generating projects. Elmedina El Mauna Warra is a group in the Elmina zone that benefited from the first watercistern in the area. In order to raise the finances necessary for the community contribution, the group gathered together 14 cooperatives from this zone, which suffers from a continuous shortage of water. The total contribution of 69,065 UM - representing 12% of the total cost of the cistern - was raised, and an agreement between the group and WV was established for the construction of the cistern. The effort in working together to raise the funds helped to create a greater cohesion among the various cooperatives.

Once the cistern was constructed, and after training by the WV team, the group started to manage and provide the maintenance for the cistern. Within just three months, they had made a profit of 27,000 UM (\$100) that they shared among the cooperatives. However, they realized that this was not the best way to invest their money and began discussions on how it could be better used. Once they had made some more money, they started to make small loans to group members with a little interest charged on each loan.

Elmedina El Mauna Warra has now been doing this for nine months, and the loans have generated an interest of 74,000 UM (\$284). The water cisterns are not only a source of clean water in the community but also are a base for strengthening community cohesion, which can lead to further initiatives that help to improve the lives of the poor in the area.

**Cooperating Sponsor: OIC International**  
**Country: Guinea**

*Aboubacar Bailo Diallo and Youssouf Diallo: Animal Husbandry Offers a Solution to Poverty and Rural Exodus*

At the age of 25, Aboubacar Bailo Diallo had plans to leave his hometown of Boulliwel in search of work either in the capital city or, ideally, abroad. Like many other young Guineans who were forced to drop out of school due to a lack of funds (45% of the young Guineans, in fact), rural exodus was Aboubacar's only hope for escaping the poverty in which he grew up. Just at the time of his planned departure, his elderly father got news of a 6-week training program in poultry husbandry being offered by OIC's Livestock Farm in Tolo. After a lot of effort, Aboubacar's father convinced him to enroll in the program as an alternative to leaving home, since it could provide a new, crucial source of income for his 24-member family.

Now, two years later, Aboubacar says that it's the best decision he has ever made, and that he no longer has any intention what-so-ever of leaving his hometown and his family in search of "a better life." With his new-found knowledge in chicken-raising and assistance from OIC in the installation of his first chicken shed, he was able to create this "better life" at home. Beginning with 300 chicks, he now has 450 egg-laying hens; and with the income from the sale of their eggs,

he was able to build a second shed on his own. He is able to contribute greatly to the family's expenses, particularly by paying for medical fees. The income from the chicken farm also pays for the schooling of nine children in his family. "I am determined to make this work so that my sisters and brothers won't have to quit school, like I did. I no longer want to leave home because it would mean abandoning them and putting a stop to their education," says Aboubacar.

He prefers to stay in Boulliwel to teach others what he has learned so that his needy neighbors may benefit from animal husbandry activities. In fact, at this moment he has eight trainees. He also encouraged his 28-year-old best friend, Youssouf Diallo, to participate in OIC's Poultry Husbandry Training in Tolo. Before receiving the training, Youssouf lived with his mother and younger brother and was totally dependant on his mother for all of his basic needs. He quit school in the 10th grade in order to engage in small-scale commerce, since mother's home garden barely provided enough food for the three of them, let alone enough money for clothes, schooling, and medicine. Now, Youssouf is successfully raising chickens in two 4m x 4m sheds and has become the bread-winner of the family. He has even earned enough money to get married and support his first child, who was born last year. He, too, is teaching animal husbandry to his friends and neighbors - a total of 7 men from 15 to 27 years old.

Not only is the improvement in food security obvious in Aboubacar and Youssouf's families, where the babies are chubby and the children rarely become sick, but it is becoming evident in their community. Now-a-days, eggs are consumed on a daily basis by each family, whereas just two years ago, eggs were hardly eaten at all. The eggs are even being sold in near-by villages and shipped to the principal regional centers. Aboubacar proudly comments, "I'm better off than all my friends who left for Conakry [the capital] in search of work and money... and so whenever they come back to the village, desperate and hopeless, I teach them how to succeed, as I have."

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## Stories from Asia

**Cooperating Sponsor: Catholic Relief Services (CRS)**  
**Country: India**

*CRS/India Uses PL480 to Eradicate Child Labor Through Education*

Catholic Relief Services in India has used PL 480 title II food resources for the last decade to enable local partners free children from the bonds of forced labor. As a result of food aid and cash grants complemented by CRS' private funds, children make the transition from laborer to student. Each year thousands of children enter PL 480 supported "bridge school" designed to help them catch up with their peers and obtain the fullest possible education.

Bhagya Lakshmi is one such example. She is a beautiful girl of 14 whose sturdy shoulders and muscled arms betray an exhausting childhood. When we last spoke with her she radiated confidence. Her bright eyes locked on her visitors until asked how she came to live where she does now, a Catholic Relief Services-supported, residential "bridge" school for former child laborers in southern India. Then an embarrassed



Bhagya Lakshmi describes how she became a part of CRS' "bridge" school.

smile slid across her face and her eyes fell to the classroom floor, warmed by long strips of mid-day sun. She quietly explained how, frustrated by picking cotton on a farm and hauling heavy bags of sand at a construction site while her friends and siblings attended school, she stole money from her parents and ran away.

Initially, Bhagya was drawn to the school—part of a program to abolish child labor developed by the CRS partner M. Venkatarangaiya Foundation

(MVF)—for the security it offered. On the farm, if caught talking with friends, she would work the rest of the day without pay. And though she often experienced severe chest pains after weeding the pesticide-soaked soil—particularly after rain loosened the chemicals from the ground—such ailments hardly exempted her from work, presenting a sort of catch-22: if she asked for a break, the farmer would scold her, saying, “why did you come if you cannot work?” If she stayed home, he would snap, “Why weren’t you here?”

Now, free from hard labor, well fed and surrounded by friends, Bhagya has come to appreciate education for its own merits, realizing she needs “to know about things.” If “I need to go to another place,” by bus, for instance, “I can find out for myself by reading [the signs]. I don’t need to get directions.” The bridge school’s highly intensive program covers years of curriculum in months, meaning Bhagya can matriculate in eighth grade less than a year after arriving. As for her long-term future, she wants to teach.

A child attending school works less, if at all, and is less susceptible to exploitation while improving his or her career potential. (And adults can command higher wages when the employee pool shrinks.) But millions of Indian children are denied an education because they work in people’s homes, on farms, in factories, at mines, or as prostitutes. Many are lured by false promises of endless gifts and trips to the movies, others bonded to employers by their parents’ debt, some kidnapped and forced to work—all stripped of their childhood for their cheap, obedient labor. The exploitation is often rationalized by employers through one myth or another: for instance, farmers argue young girls make the best cotton pickers for their height and “nimble” fingers.

CRS/India supports a number of local partners like MVF undertaking child labor eradication programs, in urban slums as well as far-flung rural areas. Most programs entail meeting with village leaders and, subsequently, entire villages, to convey the importance of education, using traditional communication methods such as dialogue, plays and songs. In many cases villagers, including students, assume the role of education activists, organizing rallies and door-to-door campaigns to boost enrollment. And to ease the strains increased enrollment brings to schools and teachers (including private, as well as government-supported schools and teachers, which are linked to the initiative), infrastructure improvements to the school facilities are provided and

teaching assistants are trained to help teachers. Aside from CRS’ support, villagers contribute monthly to ensure the improvements are sustainable.

For 50 years, CRS has used Title II resources to support initiatives in India to help disadvantaged children, particularly girls, break the cycle of poverty through improved access to quality education. Beyond the fight against child labor, innovative CRS education programs include supporting “multi-grade” schools, particularly in small, disadvantaged villages where teachers are lacking and a single villager can learn to teach students of different ages performing different tasks simultaneously. CRS also supports Early Childhood Development Centers, similar to preschools, which offer profound educational benefits to the young children attending and free their elder siblings from babysitting, enabling them to attend school themselves.

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**Cooperating Sponsor: Mercy Corps International**  
**Country: Indonesia**

*Sewing a Brighter Future with Food for Work*

Twenty years ago Sudarsih moved to Jakarta from West Java with her five children, looking for a new start following the death of her husband. She remarried and had two more children, and today the family lives in Kedaung Kali Angke. But supporting the family on her new husband’s income has been a struggle. (As a subsistence farmer he earns roughly Rp. 300,000 a month, around \$34). In lean times, she has had to cut back on household expenses including food, clean water and school fees.

In 2002, Sudarsih joined the Mercy Corps TAP FFW skills program and learned how to make handicrafts like the brightly colored doormat shown in the photograph. Project leaders found that doormats could be sold for twice the cost of materials used. Sudarsih and her friends rapidly became expert at making the mats. During her time as a FFW beneficiary, Sudarsih also received 50 kg of rice a month, saving her family the cost of the staple food and providing food security for her children. After leaving the program in 2003, however, she has remained in the cooperative with other former beneficiaries, making crafts for local vendors. Food for Work has provided her with long-term income generating skills.

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**Stories from the Caribbean**

**Cooperating Sponsor: Save the Children**  
**Country: Haiti**

*Haiti Food Security Program: A Model Farmer*

Michel has earned the respect of his neighbors and community because of his honesty, hard work, and relative success, despite his modest means. He has participated in Save the Children’s food security program for 18 months and is now serving as a model farmer. He was elected to lead a group of 50 male and female farmers in their efforts to improve their production and incomes. They hope to achieve a long-term improvement in their ability to feed themselves and care for their families.

At 38, Michel looks much older. He lives with his wife and four children, who range in age from 8 months to 18 years.

He is a small, self-effacing man who manages to feed his family on his two acres of corn, sorghum, millet and peas. He also sells some of his production in town. He has banana, papaya, and has improved his orange tree and eggplant by grafting sweeter and more productive varieties. His wife works hard as a small trader, buying goods in town and walking to distant communities to sell them.

Michel is managing the small nursery started by the farmers group with seedlings and planting materials provided by Save the Children. When the papaya, sedre (for firewood production) and other fruit tree seedlings were ready, farmers in the group were able to buy them at a reduced rate. The funds collected will be used to finance the nursery or additional projects chosen by the farmers with the help of Save the Children's agricultural agents. Farmers in the group have received regular technical assistance from the agents, who have promoted greater crop diversity for family consumption as well as sale. They have also worked with sub-groups interested in expanding production of a particular crop or practice. The land on the lower plateau is good, although many farmers in Michel's group must rent land, adding to the cost and making high productivity critical.

Interested agricultural program participants and representatives from local organizations have received training in small scale income generating activities related to food processing, e.g., production of jams and jellies from local fruits.

Participant families with pregnant mothers and children under 2 are also eligible for the health/nutrition component of the program. Michel's son, at 7 months old, is a participant in growth monitoring sessions. His family is happy to know that he is healthy. Malnourished children and their mothers participate in mothers' support groups for several weeks, and receive larger food rations until they recuperate.

Michel is proud of his older daughters, who are completing high school. They are tall and radiate good health, evidence of the results of a diet that is both sufficient and nutritious. Because he wants to help his neighbors and because of his belief in education, he has given a half-acre of his land for Save the Children to build a school which will be run by the community itself. It will open soon and many more parents will be able to enroll their children, as the 4 miles to town is too far for younger children and requires crossing on foot a river which often rises unexpectedly. Michel doesn't know that links between mother's education and childhood nutritional status have been proven, but he has made a contribution also to the long term food security of his community.

With the help of people like Michel, Save the Children is making a difference in the lives of women and children in this community and the greater region of Maissade. Save the Children's community based and integrated approach to programming in Haiti addresses both immediate needs and long-term solutions to hunger and malnutrition. It is designed to work with 40,000 direct beneficiaries and their families through direct implementation and through local implementing partners across the Central Plateau, and is just one of Save the Children's 14 integrated food security programs world wide.

## Stories from Latin America

**Cooperating Sponsor: Project Concern International (PCI)  
Country: Nicaragua**

*Center for Rural Development: Bringing Best Practices to Life*

*Contributing Authors: Janine Schooley, Christina Gagliardi and Christine Mundt*

Through its Title II funding from USAID's Office of Food for Peace, Project Concern International (PCI) has established a Center for Rural Development (CRD) in San Rafael del Norte, Jinotega, Nicaragua. The CRD is the result of a long and fruitful partnership between PCI and several other governmental and non-governmental agencies, including USAID, CEPS (Center for Education and Social Promotion), the local municipal government, and the Ministry of Agriculture. The purpose of the Center is to provide a place where local farmers can come together to exchange positive experiences with one another and receive hands-on training for improved agricultural techniques. Built on 10 acres of land, the Center contributes to sustainable rural development through the improvement of agricultural and related production practices through active learning, coupled with motivation to actually change behaviors. In addition to offering meeting and classroom space, the CRD more importantly provides a real-life setting for hands-on and applied knowledge and skills transfer.

The CRD has been designed as a collection of demonstration sites or "living laboratories" where staff and local farmers can observe sustainable agriculture in action. The CRD gives participants the opportunity to hone their skills in the proper care of livestock including pigs, goats, chickens, rabbits, and fish. Plots of land have been designed to display various models of irrigation, soil conservation, non-traditional crop cultivation and ecologically appropriate latrines. The Center is fully equipped with office space for PCI programs, several classrooms, a kitchen, eating area and library as well as 3 large warehouses. A "situation room" at the Center displays information on the program's desired results and progress towards achieving them. This helps bring the project's monitoring and evaluation efforts to life and connects activities of the Center with monitoring and documentation of project achievements. The Center also functions as an advocacy and partner cultivation tool, as PCI often brings partners, donors, and other key stakeholders to the Center for meetings and to see the Title II program in action. The Center therefore helps to ensure that teaching is innovative and links to broader program interventions and impact, and that learning of both beneficiaries and program staff is applied.

As part of PCI's current Title II program, local agricultural producers are brought together at the CRD to capture and share successful practices and lessons learned in the use of



The "Situation Room" at the Center for Rural Development helps participants keep track of the project's progress

organic fertilizers, improved seeds, revolving funds, development of community credit funds, soil and water conservation and the importance of keeping accounting records. At a recent such event at the CRD, one local farmer commented: "Nature gives us everything we need, we just didn't know how to take advantage of it." Items they formerly burned, such as corn husks, coffee pulp, ash and cow manure, are now used to develop natural compost to fertilize their land. Other farmers spoke of the importance of keeping records and managing their affairs as a small business: "This exercise will help each producer prepare themselves to be successful after PCI's project ends."

One of the most important elements of the CRD is its role in going beyond training to actually stimulate new and improved practices. The farmers become believers after they see improved practices in action. What they know intellectually becomes a reality because they can see how to make it so. For example, Augustine Rugama, a local farmer and participant in PCI's Title II program says: "My grandfather came here, my father was born here and I was born here. A little while ago I seriously thought of leaving



Farmers discuss new techniques and share their experiences at PCI Nicaragua's Center for Rural Development (CRD)

the farm and moving to the city. But now, with the help of PCI and others, I think I'll wait and see how things go. Before PCI, I had some ideas about soil conservation because my sister is married to an engineer. But I never paid attention. Then PCI came and I realized it was important to try these new things. It's really hard to believe these things enough to follow-through, not just start and get impatient. PCI helped me understand this. Once I understood, then actually doing it was easy." Rugama is working with 5 other neighboring farmers to help them use some of the same techniques he has learned. It isn't just that he knows what needs to be done to increase the production of his land; it is that he is convinced of it, enough to provide dedicated and inspired leadership to his neighbors, and enough to help ensure that all of these farmers will pass down this new knowledge, skills and conviction to their children.

It is very difficult to capture the breadth and scope of the CRD without a special wide-angle lens. You have to be there to really experience it. You have to see the way that local farmers get excited about doing something new by understanding the benefits of doing so, seeing how easy it is to do, and believing in the value of doing it. The CRD has already shown itself to be a behavior change strategy in action, not only for individual practices, but for integrated development on a community-wide scale. However, the CRD is new and is still under development. Future plans include a dormitory, offices for the Ministry of Agriculture, and internet hookup via satellite. In order to build on this potential and work towards sustainability of the CRD, PCI and partners are currently discussing the possibility of utilizing the CRD as an

agricultural certification program site with the Nicaraguan Ministry of Agriculture, given that no such school exists in this part of the country.

Empowerment and capacity building means getting local community members excited about doing something differently and better, and passing along this new way of doing something to other community members and to the next generation. With USAID Food for Peace support, PCI does this with mothers and fathers, with community volunteers and with health workers, with traditional healers and village elders, with school teachers and parents, and, through the CRD, with farmers like Augustine Rugama.

**Cooperating Sponsor: CARE**  
**Countries: Honduras and Peru**

*Using Title II as a Mechanism to Promote Good Governance & Improved Food Security through Municipal Strengthening Activities*

*By the CARE PHLS Unit, December 2002; excerpted from consultant Chuck Schnell's report*

Some CARE missions have allocated portions of their Title II food security program budgets to municipal strengthening (MS) and promoting participatory local development (PLD) processes, in order to promote enhanced food security and good governance. This has raised an issue: would these funds be better used to expand or intensify interventions that augment food security more directly?

The experience of CARE Honduras and CARE Peru, two leaders in the effort to integrate municipal strengthening into food security programs, is relevant. In both cases CARE's Title II programs were redesigned to incorporate USAID's broadened concept of food security and CARE's Household Livelihood Security (HLS) approach that emerged in the 1990s. The HLS framework encourages cross-sector coordination of activities to enhance synergism. It puts people at the center, and promotes participation and empowerment.

The combined MS/PLD model used in Honduras by the PODER project and in Peru by FOGEL grew out of experimentation with the HLS framework. This approach facilitated participatory, consensus-based planning and implementation of local development agendas by organized communities and civil society actors, including national and international NGOs, in coordination with municipal governments. Permanent participatory Municipal Development Councils ("Mesas" or "Consensus Tables") were established to facilitate these processes for each local government. Municipal authorities were provided job training and skills building, to support decentralization and improve governance. The strengthened municipalities, with their permanent status and public funding, provided resources and stability to the MS/PLD process.

**"The Mesas are not the mayor's, nor the municipalities. It is the people's"**

-Aco Cro Council Member, Peru  
-San Isidro Regidor a, Honduras

The growth in capacity for municipal governance and PLD processes at all levels made it possible to build toward lasting food security, based on the participants' ability to analyze problems and organize solutions. Long range strategic

plans done in each municipality prioritized projects that support food security: better health, education, water, nutrition, farm production, access to markets, and incomes. Annual action plans to mobilize resources and carry out projects led to implementation of many within one to two years. Most importantly, the participants assumed the role of protagonists and demonstrated the ability to overcome problems, thereby greatly favoring future food security and other basic needs.

Results from this comparative study lead to the conclusion that municipal strengthening, in combination with participatory local development processes, appears to be an effective tool to promote sustainable food and livelihood security. Indeed, there may be no better way to make food security both real and lasting. Further post-project study is needed to determine post-exit fate of the PLD Good Governance processes and the conditions under which it could become self-replicating.

**Cooperating Sponsor: SHARE de Guatemala**  
**Country: Guatemala**

*Small Business Development: Locally Grown Chicken*

SHARE's IFI component works with small groups of rural villagers, organized around a productive activity. In the community of Patzaj, Chimaltenango, 15 farmers who had always wanted to diversify their income sources finally have an opportunity. The farmers knew that the market for chicken meat was constant in their area but had never raised chickens on a scale larger than that for their family's own consumption. Financial resources were tight and the disincentive of entering into an unknown market was too large.

When some of these farmers heard about SHARE's [Rural Development Program] they went to the regional office to find out more. With SHARE's help, the 15 farmers formed a group with a legally registered board of directors. Their group, called 'Desarrollo Comunal La Colina', was clear in its vision: Within one year, form a fully functional chicken farm with the capacity to sell chicken meat throughout the municipality.

Since March of 2003 SHARE has been providing technical assistance to the group, providing help as needed to write the organization's legal statutes, study the market for chicken meat in the municipality, design the chicken coops, and supervise their construction. In June of this year SHARE invested approximately \$1,500 for the purchase of construction and other materials not available in the community including chicken feed, the chicks, medicine and vaccines, and feeding devices. The community, in turn, invested around \$100 for the provision of wood, adobe and other local construction materials and offered land and their own unskilled labor to build the chicken coops. The group built seven chicken coops and filled one per week with 100 chickens, completing the cycle in seven weeks.

In addition to production, the group also spent time planning and targeting their market to assure demand for their meat when available. The group made several visits to other communities in the area and also to small eateries in the municipal center. At each stop along the way group members proudly spoke of their quality, locally grown, product and provided potential clients with the number of their cell

phone as a way to place orders. Because the chicken growing process takes between seven and eight weeks, the group is able to "harvest" one chicken coop per week, reinvesting the sales proceeds both to re-pay SHARE 30% of its original investment and also to create capital for the group which it will use to expand the chicken coops to a capacity of 200 birds per coop in 2004. So far, the group has already completed the production and sales of one entire cycle of chickens (all seven coops), generating a net income of \$2,015 and profits of \$465.

The group is clearly motivated by its success. Nelson López, the IFI facilitator for SHARE working with this group says "You notice the difference with this group. Before they worked on their land during the day, but by 4 pm you found them all on the soccer field; now it is more likely that you will find them cleaning the chicken coops at 5 pm and sitting and talking about how to improve their business at 6 pm. They are very committed. They appreciate the opportunity that they have and want to make this work."

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## Local Capacity Building in Title II Food Security Projects: A Framework

*By Suzanne Gervais for the FAM Local Capacity Building Working Group*

*Editor's Note: This article is excerpted from the forthcoming paper by Suzanne Gervais, and is the completion of the FAM Local Capacity Building Working Group's 'Capacity Building Indicators' project. The paper is scheduled for release in December 2003, and will be posted on the FAM website, [www.foodaidmanagement.org](http://www.foodaidmanagement.org).*

### Executive Summary

Although food security projects have always conducted capacity building activities in the field, they have scarcely been monitored, evaluated or documented, leading to a paucity of lessons learned and little understanding of best practices. The new strategic plan under development by USAID's Office of Food for Peace (FFP) for 2004-08 will give a higher priority to capacity building activities within projects. This initiative provides a hospitable environment and an incentive for Cooperating Sponsors (CSs) to more systematically conduct, monitor and evaluate capacity building activities within their projects.

This paper establishes a conceptual framework on local capacity building within food security (FS) projects. It is designed to provide Title II CSs with a basic reference tool for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their capacity building activities at the local level.

This framework builds on the USAID food security (FS) framework, in which food availability, access and utilization constitute the three pillars of food security. It focuses on the local level, and therefore accounts for all actors who work toward FS within a geographic community, such as a dis-

trict, village or neighborhood. These actors include individuals, households, and associations, as well as the local leadership. Each plays a different and useful role in producing community food security. Community food security is the result of their combined activities and efforts.

The framework defines capacity as the ability to productively use one's assets base to protect and enhance one's food security. It further defines capacity building as a process by which actors increase their abilities to use their assets and enlarge their assets base, or at least maintain it. This applies at the community level as well, where the assets base is the pool of public goods, and its managers are the community's representative leaders. The assets the various actors use to protect and enhance their food security generally fall under some of the following categories: managerial, physical, environmental, human, technical, financial, economical, and social.

The local level capacities that protect and enhance food security as well as control risks and decrease households' vulnerability are divided into two broad types: analytical and managerial capacities and general capacities.

Analytical and managerial capacities enable populations and their leaders to discuss and reflect together on their concerns about food security; to assess the FS situation; to establish a FS action plan; to target, monitor and evaluate FS activities; to design ways to mitigate risks and decrease vulnerability; to advocate for FS; and to make other decisions that affect FS at different levels in the community.

General capacities include all other capacities. They are more directly associated with each FS pillar separately. They refer to those capacities needed: (1) to produce food and otherwise increase its availability, (2) to produce income, control food prices and promote food accessibility, and (3) to adequately utilize food. In many cases, they materialize through capacity building activities that promote improved practices and behavioral changes at the individual and household levels.

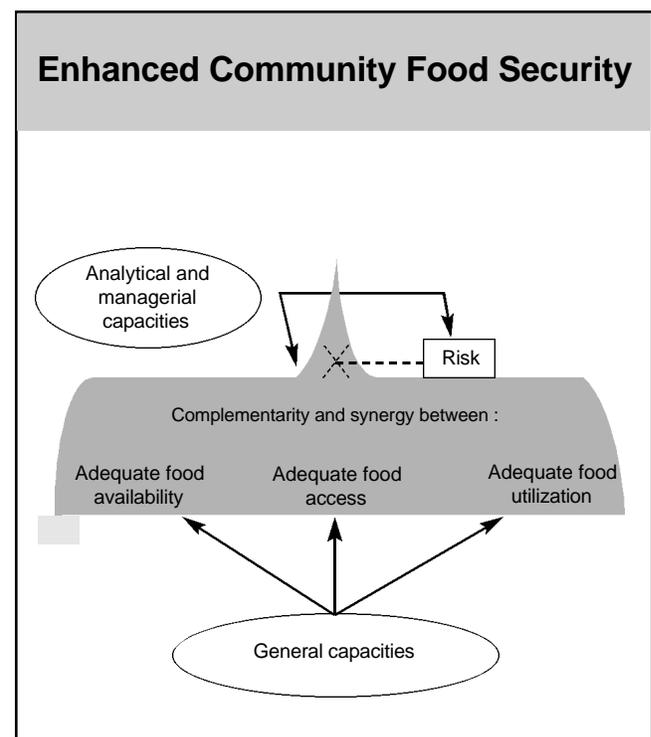
Emphasizing capacity building in community food security projects has some implications for project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It affects the nature of beneficiaries, the time at which beneficiaries should be involved in the project, the choice of project activities, and the sequence of their implementation.

Monitoring and evaluation of these projects should look at the increments of the assets base at all levels in the community, and at the increments of the different actors' abilities to use their assets base productively toward the protection and enhancement of their own food security, and that of the community as a whole.

Assessing the potential for sustainability of new capacities can include an examination of: (1) the autonomy of the beneficiaries' performance, (2) the availability of necessary resources over the medium term and the community's capacity to access them, and (3) the sense of participation, including community support of volunteers who provide services to protect and enhance their community's food security.

To globally assess a community's capacity to protect and enhance its food security, projects should consider the following:

1. The existence, functional level and potential for sustainability of public assets essential to food security;
2. The existence, functional level and potential for sustainability of a locally accepted and legitimate social structure that is responsible for managing public assets, food security and risk management plans;
3. The sense of community participation and the level of community support for food security activities, and for the leaders and volunteers of such activities;
4. The existence and value of food security action plans;
5. The existence and value of risk mitigation plans;
6. The existence, functional levels and potential for sustainability of local associations conducting activities which promote household food security;
7. The level of vulnerability of community members (relevant cut-off values and significant qualitative elements of this variable need to be developed with local communities and aligned with international norms, when they exist);
8. The level of resiliency of households;
9. Food availability at the community level (presence of food in market and household production);
10. Food accessibility at the community level (affordability and stability of food prices and food basket price relative to income); and
11. Food utilization at the community, household and intra-household levels (adequate practices in food handling, preparation and consumption at and within the household level, as well as in food stands and local restaurants).



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