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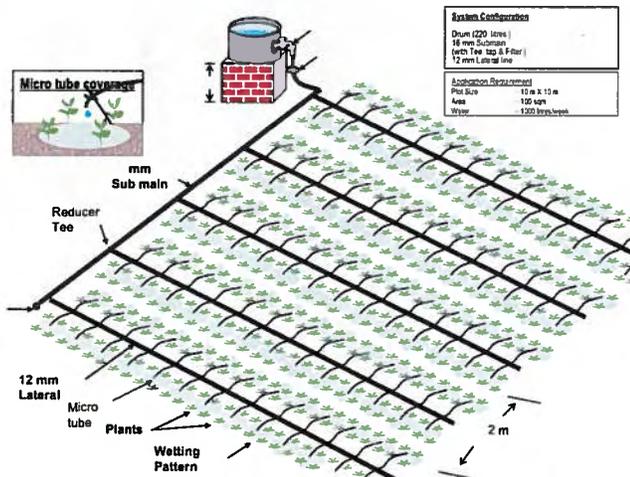
HOUSEHOLD NUTRITION GARDEN PROGRAM

IMPROVING THE RESILIENCE OF AIDS-AFFECTED HOUSEHOLDS IN ETHIOPIA, MALAWI, AND ZIMBABWE

HIV/AIDS is not just a health epidemic but it also impacts affected households by causing reduced labor availability for agriculture, reduced financial resources for investment, and reduced assets. This results in a negative financial impact on the household that peaks at the time of death when expenditure on medical treatment is at its highest, followed by the funeral costs. The key question is:

How do we improve the resilience of AIDS affected households to the negative impacts of illness and death to enable them to maintain their health for as long as possible as well as their standard of living?

One activity that meets these requirements is household nutrition gardens. These are small garden plots of between 40 and 100 m² that use low-labor drip irrigation. The drip irrigation requires 50 percent less water, 50 percent less labor, is better for soil and plants, produces a better quality crop and increased yields. This benefits anyone who uses the technology, but in particular allows severely labor and water constrained households to participate where they may not have otherwise been able to.



The benefits of the program are many. The gardens directly boost household food security by diversifying diet with nutritious vegetables (approximately 50 percent of the yield is consumed) and increasing the ability to purchase food through increased income (approximately 50 of the yield is sold; in Zimbabwe the benefit was \$20/crop cycle for three crop cycles per year). The income is used to build household resilience to impact of HIV/AIDS through purchasing food, paying for medical costs, and purchasing livestock and agricultural inputs. This is also a good livelihoods opportunity for women as in many places they are responsible for the vegetable gardens.

Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) on behalf of USAID has implemented three household nutrition garden programs to date. In Zimbabwe, DAI facilitated the development of 40,000 gardens, targeting food insecure and other vulnerable households. In Ethiopia the program has established 7,000 gardens targeting HIV affected women in urban areas and aims to increase both their nutritional status as well as increase income. In Malawi, DAI is integrating agroforestry into the household nutrition garden program as a livelihood opportunity for a natural resource management program.