



Fund for Innovation
and Transformation

Fonds pour l'innovation
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THE ROLL A HIPPO FOUNDATION

Food Security Training Program

Context

In South Africa, 54% of the population is hungry or at risk of hunger. With the loss of income and disruption of food supply chains resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic (combined with political unrest and climate change) the country is seeing even higher levels of food insecurity. Women, especially those located in remote rural areas, are disproportionately affected and struggle to meet the nutrition demands of their households. While the pandemic has had a devastating effect on food systems, it has also provided an opportunity to reassess food production systems to make them more resilient, sustainable, de-centralized and gender sensitive.

The Innovative Solution

Supported by FIT, the Roll a Hippo Foundation and Wana Johnson Development, Harvest Health tested an innovative solution that provided food security training, hippo water rollers and 'Survival Garden Kits' to 600 impoverished women in rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces, South Africa. The aim of the initiative was to ultimately facilitate improved and diversified livelihoods, as well as greater economic independence for participants. The training offered mentorship via phone, gardening demos and an introduction to WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene). The kits included a spade, hoe, garden fork, rake, watering can, fertilizer and, seedlings.

Advancing Gender Equality

The gender equality strategy included having local women-led organizations coordinate training sessions, monitoring and evaluation, survey administration and focus group discussions. As the innovation progressed, the gender dynamic of participants evolved. At first, while training sessions were held in the courthouse, participants followed the building's layout which separated men from women. Since the project encouraged teamwork, the participants eventually no longer saw the need to sit separately.

Testing Framework

The testing framework included a variety of techniques to help gather a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Pre and post survey analysis was used to measure the impact of the test. A survey was issued to participants before the delivery of the Survival Garden Kit, and an identical survey was issued five months later. Staff support was provided to women who could not complete the survey on their own due to illiteracy. A mid-point mobile phone survey was also conducted to measure initial reception of the kit. In order to assess the impact and understanding of the test on a larger scale and dig deeper on issues communicated in the pre-post surveys, qualitative data was gathered in both participant and community-wide focus groups.



COUNTRY	AMOUNT
South Africa	\$214,062

TESTING PERIOD
7 months
Ended April 2022



GENDER RESPONSIVE (GE2)

THEME: AGRICULTURE

Results and Impact

The innovation's short timeframe, as well as the impact of COVID-19 restrictions/ lockdowns, floods, rising food prices, inflation, and unrest in the community greatly impacted the desired outcome of improving and diversifying the livelihoods of women and girls in South African communities. However, there was a major decrease in time spent collecting water (from 5 trips to 1 trip per day) which afforded more play time to children and allowed them to get to class on time. At endline, 93% of the participants in cohort one continued to earn less than R5000 (roughly \$425 CAD per month) compared to 92% at baseline. For cohort two, 96% of the participants were earning less than R5000 at endline compared to 95% at baseline. However it was later noted that the salary increase bracket was quite large. Therefore, while there could have been an increase of (R500-R1000) the individual would remain in the same income bracket.

Of note:

- 92% of participants had a household income of less than R5000 (94% for females, 83% for males) increasing to 96% at endline not meeting the 75% target. This may have been caused by a number of external factors during testing including COVID-19 Omicron wave, severe flooding, inflation and rising food prices.
- At baseline 69% of beneficiaries did not gain any income from selling food at the market, increasing to 76% at endline. It is suspected that the reduction in selling food at the market may be due to the fact that severe flooding impacted many of the gardens, and rising food prices may have caused beneficiaries to keep their food instead of selling it.
- 78% of participants gave a rating of 3 or higher for the statement "I am self-sufficient" decreasing to 45% at endline.
- An improvement of water access was achieved with 76% of participants giving a rating of 3 or higher to the statement of "my access to water is reliable and consistent" increasing from 36% at baseline.
- At baseline 60% of participants experienced greater food production capacity increasing to 82% by endline.

Key Lessons

1. While the initial plan was to offer participants formal mentorship, the short timeframe and COVID-19 restrictions meant informal phone call check-ins with mentors were needed. This proved very effective and allowed for close, frequent connections between mentors and participants. Elders played a role in sharing their knowledge on Indigenous crops and how they have historically grown food – which in turn made them feel valued.
2. In the future, conducting the training and having the demo gardens at schools has the potential to introduce agriculture as a subject or enhance existing agriculture programs.
3. The local partners stated that their voices were heard during the test and benefitted from consistent communication with the Roll a Hippo Foundation.

"Participating in this project has made me spend more time in the garden as a result I have not had to buy fresh produce especially since the increase in food prices." - woman participant

PARTNER ORGANIZATION

Wana Johnson Development and Harvest Health

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

600 women

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ABOUT FIT

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation supports Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) testing innovative solutions that advance gender equality in the Global South.



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