

THE HUNGER PROJECT MALAWI

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR FOOD SECURITY ANIMATORS

TRANSLATED IN 2022

MINDSET TOOLS ON HOW TO ERADICATE HUNGER AND POVERTY

The people should be taught five points on how to eradicate hunger and poverty in their homes and also in their area, they must also be given the chance to explain how they have understood the subject matter.

Mind-set change

Good leadership

Visionary

Dedication

Hands-on

HUNGER PROJECT DUTIES AT THE EPICENTER



People should be able to explain how each program is connected to eradicating hunger and poverty in their families and area.

ADVANTAGE OF USING MODERN FARMING TECHNIQUES

- High yield interest from a relatively small piece of land.

- Less effort in the farming processes (conservation farming or herbicides spraying)
- Using recommended seedlings.
- Methods for avoiding or protecting our crops from harmful pests.

ADVANTAGE OF HAVING ADEQUATE FOOD SUPPLY IN OUR HOMES

- No hunger in our homes.
- No malnutrition.
- Availability of money due to sale of excess food.
- Totally avoiding the hustle of scouting for food supplies.
- Peace of mind as there are no worries related to food scarcity.
- Children are able to go to school on a full stomach.
- Visitors are able to come to your home without you being worried about what to provide them.

ADVANTAGES OF BEING MEMBERS OF A CLUB

- Easy and accessible loan facilities.
- People are taught modern farming techniques.
- People share different ideas that are beneficial to the club members.
- People help each other when there is need due to inability amongst the club members.

ADVANTAGES OF GROWING A WIDE VARIETY OF CROPS

- The food supply is very adequate with a wide array of choices.
- Malnutrition is non-existent in such a scenario.
- You still get to harvest something even if the weather patterns have been erratic.
- Some crops such as legumes improves soil quality by adding nitrogen hence increasing soil fertility.
- Some crops are cash spinners and provide homes with liquid cash whilst others are for us to eat.

WHAT IS THE REASON BEHIND FERTILIZER AND SEED LOANS?

- To ensure food security in homes all year round.
- Reducing diseases that come with lack of food (malnutrition).
- For the people to find money after they sell the excess harvest.
- For the people to get easy loans for farming inputs.

HOW DO WE FIND PEOPLE TO GET THESE FERTILIZER AND SEED LOANS

- The food security committee convenes a meeting for the area/village through the village headman.
- People should be systematically sensitized about these particular loans and it must be emphasized that this is a loan facility and not a freebie.
- People should also be told that their loan pay back is through their maize yield and the quantity they are expected to payback must also be emphasized.
- Basically people must be told why they are paying back through 9 bags of maize.
- People must start nominating each other for the committee based on the agreed prescribed number.
- The committee together with the village committee rep should vet the names that have been nominated, if they are not satisfied with a particular nominee, they must agree to remove and replace with a more viable alternative.

WHAT KIND OF PERSON/FAMILY IS ELIGIBLE TO GET THE FERTILIZER AND SEED LOANS?

- Original (indigenous) settlers of the village and not new comers.
- Those with land to cultivate or those who can rent a piece of land within the same village this is to avoid giving out the loans to areas where the Hunger Project does not operate.
- Those who show seriousness and interest in farming.
- Those who have a good track record on paying back loans.

ADVANTAGES OF GROWING HYBRID MAIZE

- Must be bought from licences/authorized dealer.
- Check the expiry and the best before dates on the seedling packet.

These are the advantages of buying the seeds from an authorized dealer:

- The germination rate is generally higher.
- The crop grows with strength.
- You are in the position to choose the right seed for the type land condition.
- High yield per hectare of land based on how well you take care of your crops.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT KIND OF SEED (CROP)

- Different crops do well in different areas and also based on rainfall and weather patterns and also the kind of soil type in that area.
- The food security committee together with the epicentre should discuss about the right kind of crops that do well in their area.
- The Hunger Project counsellor (advisors) together with government counsellors should be part of these discussions where they will lead and advise them on the decision of crop choice.
- At the end of the discussions there must be a general consensus from the group on the right choice of seed they can plant.

TRAINING FOR ALL FARMERS

After the committee chooses the families that can access the loan within that year, all those chosen farmers should be invited to modern farming training. These training are conducted by government counsellors (Agriculture extension workers) within the area together with the Hunger counsellor.

The Hunger counsellor has the duty to ensure that the seed and fertilizer loan packs have been bought in time before the first rains for planting.

WHEN TO GIVE OUT THE LOANS FOR FERTILIZER AND SEEDS

All those people chosen should come to that epicentre on that particular day.

Nobody should receive the loan on behalf of others. Everybody must come in person to get their loan to avoid any complications.

Each and every club must be accompanied by their village Head who will come to bare witness.

Every loan accessed by an individual must be recorded in a pass book (see annex 2) and also in a farm input loan ledger (see annex 1)

Everybody should personally sign in the farm input loan ledger.

The Pass book must be taken by the farmer as their evidence whilst the loan ledger should be kept by the committee as their evidence.

INSPECTING FARMERS LAND

The food security committee, epicentre committee and club chairpersons have the duty to be inspecting the farmers land i.e. from when these farmers planted their seeds up until when they harvest. During this time they are supposed to be given advice in line with the state of their field.

PREPARATIONS FOR CROP COLLECTION (LOAN PAYBACK)

The Hunger advisor together with the food security committee and the epicentre committee must adequately prepare during this time. This is the busiest part of the job.

Issues that need special attention and that should be available are the following:

- Packaging sacks should be distributed in advance to the farmers before the collection day.
- Strings to tie the bags must be available.
- Preparations for food for who will come to collect the maize should be made.
- Properly calibrated scale should be available.
- Vehicle that will carry the maize to the epicentre must be made available.
- Loan ledgers should be available for easy access.
- Receipt book for loan payback should also be available.
- People who will be responsible for the collection of these debts should be properly prepared (the whole food bank committee, the whole epicentre and representatives of other epicentre committees.)
- Village Heads and clubs are supposed to notify people in their villages/clubs when they will give the maize and also the collection venue within the village should be identified.

APPLYING PESTICIDES TO THE MAIZE

- Carefully check for the expiry date of the pesticides you will use and their best before date.
- Carefully check that the bags you will use are hygienic and it's also recommended that each year you must use a new set of packaging bags.
- Make sure that your granaries are hygienic, meticulously swept and mopped, there are no cobwebs, properly sprayed and that before you put your maize in there, it's properly dry.
- Make sure that the maize is properly dried. If maize is not properly dried whilst in the granaries its weight gets to be reduced and hence little benefit from it at the time you would want to sell it. At time it might even rot whilst still in the granaries.
- Make sure that the day you are applying pesticides there is no heavy wind blowing or rather apply the pesticides in a concealed room with little or no wind going through.
- Make sure you follow carefully the instruction on the bottle on how to apply the pesticide.
- Have your maize in the bags and make sure their weight are standard.
- Have your bags sewed up and finally place them in the granary.

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF THE MAIZE IN THE EPICENTRE GRANARIES

Most of the times maize goes bad whilst in the granaries. Follow these steps to ensure that it does not go bad.

- Make sure that the maize is slightly elevated whilst in the storage granaries. You can use sticks for this initiative by making makeshift pallets.
- Your granaries must have windows so that they are well ventilated.
- Your granary must be frequently opened so that there is air ventilation (at least once every fortnight.)
- Go around your maize stack and observe if you can hear sounds of weevils.
- Try to observe that there are no mice/rats feeding on your maize in the granary.

WHO SHOULD KEEP THE KEYS TO THE FOOD BANK?

All the keys should be kept by a single person (Committee members must agree on a member who must take this responsibility)

SELLING OFF THE EPICENTRE'S MAIZE

Discuss the appropriate time to sell the maize when market prices are at their optimal so that you are able to benefit more from the proceeds. In addition, you might need money to buy farm inputs for the upcoming year so time and prices vary from epicentre to epicentre.

Before you start selling the epicentre maize, make sure the following processes have been adhered to:

- All epicentre committees must have a say in the set-price of the maize.
- You notify the HOP in writing on the agreed set-price.
- You have all the required receipts during the maize selling period.
- You have daily summary sheets that you will be using during this exercise (see annex 1)
- You've made sure that your scales are properly calibrated.

When you start selling the maize, share the following responsibilities in this way:

- Responsible for writing receipts and receiving money.
- Weighing the maize on the scale
- Writing a daily summary sheet.
- Cross checking the receipts of those who already bought the maize.

At the end check through the receipts and calculate how much sales have been made and how much money has been realized. The proceeds from the sales must be in line with the amount of maize that has been removed from the food bank and also what's been written in the summary sheet.

If the numbers are not matching, set up an audit trail to identify where the figures have mismatched.

The daily summary sheet must be kept together with the bank deposit slip in the same place and the figures should fully match.

WHO WILL BE DEPOSITING THE FOOD BANK MONEY IN THE BANK ACCOUNT

Since most epicentres are far away from the bank, the EPO has a motor bike so all the money realized from the sales must be taken to the bank by the EPO.

No money should be kept at the epicentre after 48 hours.

He/she should not leave with the money before the food banks chair or treasurer's signature.

When he/she comes back from the bank, they must give the deposit slip to the food bank treasurer or his/her cosignatory.

All deposit slips must be kept together in one place together with the summary slip and the figures must tally (committee members should discuss.)

THE FOOD BANK'S ACCOUNT

The food bank must have its own account. The chair of the food bank and secretary should be co-signatories of the account and must sign together with the Epicentre's EPO.

Every time money is supposed to be withdrawn from the food bank account, a letter is supposed to be written to the HOP explaining the duties that are supposed to be undertaken with the requested funds and the HOP will then write an authorization letter to the bank to have the funds released.

The food bank must have its own file pertaining to money issues.

