

Participatory Approach: A Tool for Improving Food Security and Empowering a Local Community in Chitima, Mozambique

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Abstract : Trough years, all kind of social development projects have tried to solve social problems such as hunger, poverty, malnutrition, food insecurity, among others, with poor success. Both private and state initiatives have invested resources in several countries and communities. Nevertheless, most of these initiatives are scientific or external developers-centered, with a lack of local participation. This compromises the sustainability of any intervention and also leads to a poor empowerment of local community. The participatory approach aims to rescue and enhance the local knowledge since it recognizes that this kind of problems are better known by native actors. The objective of the study was to describe the role played by the community empowerment on food security improvement in the NGO "O Viveiro" (15°43'37.77"S; 32°46'27.53"E) and Barrio Broma village (15°43'58.78"S; 32°46'7.27"E) in Chitima, Mozambique. A center for training in goat livestock and orchard was build. A community orchard was co-constructed between foreign technicians and local actors. The prototype was installed in February, 2016 by the technician team and local community with 16 m² as a nursery garden. Two orchard workshops were conducted in order to design a sustainable productive model which mixes both local and technological approaches. Two goat meat workshops were conducted in order to describe local methods and train the community to conduce their own techniques with high sanitary and productive standards. Technician team stayed in Mozambique until May, 2016. The quorum for the orchard workshops was 20 and 14 persons respectively, which represents 100% and 70% of the total requested quorum (20). For the goat meat workshops were 4 and 5 persons, which represents 80% and 100% of the total requested quorum (5). Until August, 2016, the orchard is 3.219 m² and it grows several vegetables as beans, chili pepper, garlic, onion, tomatoes, lettuce, sweet potato, yuca potato, cabbage, eggplant, papaya trees, mango, and cassava. The process of increasing in size and diversification of vegetables grown was led entirely by the local community. In connection with this, the local community started to harvest and began to sell the vegetable products at the local market. At the meat goat workshops, local participants rescued a local knowledge by describing and practicing a traditional way to process goat meat by drying it outdoors and then doing a smoked treatment. This information might contribute to describe the level of empowerment of this community, and thus give evidence of acceptance of foreign intervention for improving their own proceedings and traditions.

Keywords : children malnutrition, food security, Local community, participatory approach

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