



# STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE THROUGH ASSET CREATION

## A SOUTHERN AFRICA PERSPECTIVE ON FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR ASSETS

“What has changed? Look at me, I'm all skinny when I used to be robust!”, says Ranobolee. She is a 54-year-old fisherwoman living with her three grandkids in the Androy region of Madagascar. The climate crisis and the resultant rising sea level and temperature, changing wind patterns and a decline in the number of fish is making fishing in the region unviable for those, like her, with small boats, who need to go further out to sea to find any catch. Her income from growing maize and cassava has fallen too, due to unpredictable rains and poor harvests. She participated in a food assistance for assets (FFA) activity to fix sand dunes by planting sisal, reducing the threat of shifting sand dunes. Prior to that initiative, families had to move every few years to escape the shifting dunes. While her earnings are precarious, Ranobolee no longer needs to worry about her home getting buried in sand due to wind erosion.



### FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR ASSETS (FFA) APPROACH

Through FFA initiatives, the World Food Programme (WFP) addresses vulnerable people's immediate food needs with cash or food transfers while supporting the development or rehabilitation of assets that enhance the resilience of communities.

WFP works to limit the risks associated with climate shocks by reducing erosion and desertification, improving soil conditions, increasing agricultural productivity, and strengthening livelihoods. In southern Africa, the initial focus tends to be on post-crisis recovery, followed by a transition to long-term community resilience-building.

WFP FFA activities in southern Africa include:

- Clearing land to tap into more agricultural potential
- Developing irrigation infrastructure such as canals, ponds and wells
- Building embankments to mitigate the risk of flooding
- Distributing seeds and fertilizers
- Planting trees and establishing nurseries
- Building and rehabilitating community infrastructure like low-cost housing, schools, storage facilities, aggregation centres and toilets
- Improving access to markets by building/rehabilitating feeder roads



## A SOUTHERN AFRICA PERSPECTIVE ON FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR ASSETS

WFP and partners are enhancing community resilience to shocks through FFA interventions in eight southern African countries. In 2021, over 1.3 million people in the region participated in such projects. A recent cost-benefit analysis in Zimbabwe showed that every dollar invested in FFA generated a return of four dollars.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, WFP is strengthening the resilience of farming households by supporting the construction of small bridges and the rehabilitation of feeder roads. With these initiatives, WFP aims to increase trade in food commodities while also cutting transport costs, thereby improving the food security of participating households, and of their communities.

In **Eswatini**, WFP is providing cash to FFA participants to clear roads and pathways, rehabilitate foot bridges, and clean drains and markets. The aim is to enhance participants' food security while protecting the environment.

In **Lesotho**, WFP is supporting the development of communal gardens, orchards, stone terracing, water tanks and livestock rearing, as well as the clearing of shrubs to rehabilitate land. FFA strengthens community assets while boosting earnings and household savings.

In drought-stricken **Madagascar**, FFA activities support the rehabilitation of canals, the digging of drains and the development of water systems for drinking and irrigation.

In **Malawi**, in return for food or cash, FFA participants work in community gardens, develop irrigation systems and support reforestation. In addition to meeting their immediate food needs, WFP improves their skills and earnings opportunities.

In **Mozambique**, WFP complements its lean season assistance with FFA activities that develop back-yard gardens and fruit nurseries, and support brickmaking.

In the **Republic of Congo**, WFP works with refugees and the communities hosting them to facilitate fish breeding and rehabilitate fishponds.

In **Zimbabwe**, WFP has been training farmers to encourage adoption of conservation agriculture, compost-making, tree seedling management and animal husbandry.

### Boosting social cohesion while developing community vegetable gardens

Honoré is from the Central African Republic (CAR), and since 2014 has been living in Bétou, the Republic of Congo, with his wife, three children and two grandchildren. War in CAR forced the family from their home.

He has had few work opportunities since arriving but has been receiving WFP food assistance.

He was included in a joint WFP and UNHCR FFA initiative to support community gardening for the local market. He received tools, seeds, training, and worked with members of the host community.

"Working in a group works better than working individually. We work with friends, men and women from different tribes, who speak different languages. It's a blessing because we are exposed to their cultures and their experiences", said Honoré.

He is now the president of a gardening group, called "Hand-in-hand", which is made up of locals, and refugees from CAR and the Democratic Republic of Congo. He wants to continue growing produce to sell in the market and is grateful for WFP's support. "We thank you for all that you have done."



**Photos:** Ranobolee, fisherwoman and participant in a sand dune fixing FFA project in southern Madagascar. © WFP/Alice Rahmoun  
Backyard gardening to produce fresh vegetables in Zomba district in Malawi. © WFP/ Badre Bahaji  
Honoré working in the community garden in Bétou in the Republic of Congo. © WFP/ Cécile Mercier