

TO'OS BA MORIS DI'AK

Quarterly Newsletter for the TOMAK Program

July 2018



A farmer in Baucau establishes a home garden for nutritious crops, with support from World Vision.

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NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

In this issue of the TOMAK newsletter, we provide an update on several key achievements, outline TOMAK's approach to increasing productivity and production, and further explore the program's focus on nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

Nutrition-sensitive agriculture (NSA) aims to strengthen the contribution of agriculture to nutrition. It focuses on the benefits of eating a variety of foods, recognises the nutritional value of food, and acknowledges the importance of food and agriculture in supporting rural livelihoods (FAO, 2014). NSA activities seek to address the **underlying causes** of malnutrition.

TOMAK is supporting its key NGO partners (CRS, Mercy Corps, and World Vision) to deliver a range of NSA activities in Baucau, Bobonaro and Viqueque. This involves working with farming households to increase production and diversity of nutritious crops

such as legumes, orange sweet potato and moringa.

Demonstration sites (exploring approaches such as kitchen gardens, perma-gardens and fish farming) are being established to help farmers develop a year-round supply of nutritious food, and address key nutrient deficiencies such **protein, vitamin A, and iron**.

TOMAK has also been working with government and NGO partners to develop a nutrition-sensitive agriculture training package for agricultural extension workers (more details inside this newsletter).

Together with ongoing support for Timor-Leste's National Council for Food Security, Sovereignty and Nutrition (KONSSANTIL), these activities are helping to build up common understanding of the link between agriculture and nutrition, which is needed to support ongoing multi-sectoral action in this area.

LAUNCH OF A NATIONAL NSA CURRICULUM

On 26 July 2018, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) launched a national curriculum in nutrition-sensitive agriculture for MAF's agricultural extension workers. The curriculum was developed in partnership with the Ministry of Health (MoH), TOMAK and HIAM Health, and introduces extension workers to important information about nutrition, including how agricultural practice can respond to known nutrition deficiencies.

MAF extension workers are based in every suku in Timor-Leste and support farmer groups to increase their production and improve their agricultural practices. Now, they are also learning how to help farmers to think about nutrition, including how to balance the sale of produce with the need to maintain a diverse and healthy diet.



An extension worker from Viqueque after completing the 3-day NSA training course at HIAM Health.



MAF Secretary General Cesar da Cruz signs an NSA training manual to formally launch the curriculum.

The training package, which includes facilitator and participant manuals, worksheets and job aids has already been trialed with 80 NGO field staff and 90 government extension workers from Baucau, Bobonaro and Viqueque municipalities prior to being adopted by MAF as a national curriculum.

The launch of the curriculum took place at a 2-day meeting of KONSSANTIL and was attended by MAF Secretary General Cesar da Cruz (representing the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries), MoH Director General Dr. Odete Viegas, and Australian Ambassador Peter Roberts, among other key actors in the health and agriculture sectors.

All materials are available through MAF and published on the TOMAK website www.tomak.org/resources.

STEPS TO INCREASE FARM PRODUCTIVITY

The development of commercial agriculture in Timor-Leste requires **increased productivity and production** from smallholder farmers. To achieve this, TOMAK is working closely with MAF and its suku-based extension service.

Targeted assessments helped TOMAK identify several agricultural products with good market potential (red rice, mung bean, onion, and peanut), and the program is now working with MAF and both female and male farmers to improve their farming practices and boost production. How this works is outlined below:

Before working with farmers, **Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) training** (or a refresher) is run for extension workers who work in areas where the target crop is commonly grown. TOMAK has supported MAF to develop and/or revise 5 GAP manuals that are used in this training.



Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) manuals.

As extension workers build up their expertise in the production of target crops, they also select a small number of farmers to host a demonstration plot or

STEPS TO INCREASE FARM PRODUCTIVITY (continued)

demplot. These farmers are selected based on their **location** (access to road/markets), **experience** (already growing and selling the target crop), and **motivations** (willingness to trial new practices and keen to invest in their own farm).

Demplots are established on the selected farms, with one or more small plots to demonstrate improved crop varieties and agricultural practices, and at least one comparison plot of the same size (which is planted with the typical seed variety, using traditional or more commonly used practices).

Farmer Field Schools, facilitated by extension workers, are carried out at key points in the cropping season (e.g. planting and maintenance), and allow 15-20 neighbouring farmers to observe and learn from what is being demonstrated.

Larger **Farmer Field Days** are then held at the time

of harvest and involve a wider group of interested farmers, during which the total yield from the demplot and the comparison plot is measured and compared, and overall **profitability is assessed** with the farmers.

Farmers that have already hosted demplots are subsequently given the opportunity to **expand production** in the following season, with a 50% subsidy from TOMAK for any associated cash inputs. This is done to kick-start wider adoption in the community and to help establish areas of high production that are better able to link with markets.

Farmers that host demplots (or who are expanding their production) are also invited to attend **agribusiness training** facilitated by the Institute for Business Support (IADE). This helps farmers to better understand the market and improve their business skills so that they can connect and maintain relationships with buyers.



Farmers measure the planting distance for peanuts at a demplot in Bobonaro.



Demplots and comparison plots are clearly marked, allowing farmers to follow and compare the results.

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF THE MARKETPLACE

Participating in economic activities allows women to make positive changes in their own lives and those of their families, with positive ripple effects for the whole community.

An estimated **75-85% of vendors** in municipal and sub-municipal marketplaces in Timor-Leste are women. Marketplaces are central to community trade and consumption and offer a space for local entrepreneurship to emerge. But they are often not organised in a way that supports economic opportunities for rural farmers and vendors, especially women vendors.

Together with partners at UN Women, the Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion (SEII), and a number of key municipal level stakeholders, TOMAK has recently conducted a gendered marketplace assessment of four marketplaces - two in Baucau (Baucau central



Woman vendor sells her produce in Maliana market.

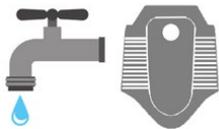
WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF THE MARKETPLACE (continued)

and Venilale markets), and two in Bobonaro (Maliana central and Atabae markets).

The assessment specifically prioritised women's voice by supporting women vendors to engage with municipal authorities and speak up about their issues. Municipal authorities, police and local leaders have recognised the value of this work for both planning and lobbying upwards, and have been thoughtful in finding practical solutions to the challenges identified using the resources they have.

Key priorities identified by women to improve the marketplace

(general findings across all 4 markets with some variation in results for each marketplace)



1. Access to water and toilets



2. Waste management



3. Management & control of the marketplace

Women also described facing risks in and around the marketplace due to inadequate **security** and limited/unsafe **transport** options.

TOMAK and its partners have presented back the assessment findings to women vendors and stakeholders in each of the 4 marketplaces, with a national presentation in Dili also planned.

At one results feedback workshop, the head of the administrative post remarked that “what women vendors are saying in the assessment is true. It's the reality we face and many of the solutions lie within ourselves. The marketplace provides so much to our community. It is at the heart of so many people's livelihoods. There are simple things we can do together to make improvements... we need to make sure the road and places for trading are open and safe for everyone, especially for women.”



Focus group discussion with women vendors (Atabae).

This newsletter series provides a snapshot of TOMAK's assessments and approaches, as well as our work with partners and communities. It outlines where and how we are collaborating with other programs, and highlights key challenges that we are trying to overcome.

For more information about TOMAK, please visit www.tomak.org or contact info@tomak.org.



TOMAK is a 5-10 year agricultural livelihoods program supported by the Australian Government in Timor-Leste. TOMAK is implemented by Adam Smith International in partnership with Mercy Corps.

