

**WORKSHOP URBAN MICRO-FARMING AND HIV-AIDS**  
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**The Local Economy and Professional Training**  
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**By**

**Ing. Américo Cassamo**  
**Municipal Agrarian Development Office**  
**Maputo City Council**



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## INTRODUCTION TO MAPUTO'S URBAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAMME

In Mozambique, about 60% of the population live below the threshold of absolute poverty. The situation is getting even worse for citizens infected and affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic since this disease brings with itself the increase of family responsibilities (care for the diseased), reduction of income and the depletion of the scanty economical resources of those families.

The Municipal Council of Maputo (CMM) has tried to find new tools and solutions to support the citizens infected and affected by HIV Aids in their struggle to survive. As part of its efforts to reduce poverty and mitigate the effects of the HIV-Aids pandemic, CMM has identified the problems encountered by the urban farmers. Among a large variety of problems mentioned, three main ones were identified: 1. lack of work force; 2. lack of abilities to cultivate food and 3. lack of employment.

As the main strategy to improve the situation of those citizens confronted with these problems was to sensitize them to establish farmers associations. As a means to encourage this process **Agriculture Houses** were established in the Municipal Districts where the affected citizens are located, which offer services to the urban farmers that are well adapted to their real needs.



The **short term** objectives of the Agrarian Houses are: to promote the establishment and strengthening of the farmer's associations, to enhance literacy and technical training of urban farmers and to provide agricultural support services.

Under the paradigm of "a support house for the urban farmers" the Municipality of Maputo, through the Council for Local Economic Development and Professional Training, tries to bring together all local farmers in the agrarian house. The Agrarian Houses seek to establish partnerships between urban farmers and hospitals, hotels, restaurants, etc, with a view to strengthen the farmers economical resources, as well as to ensure that the farmer associations have more resources to help the families infected and affected by HIV/AIDS to cover expenses for medical care and/or in education (school taxes and materials) among others.

Under the slogan "an agrarian house for the sensitization and the farmer's literacy," Municipal Council promotes partnerships with agricultural schools and colleges in order to allow the graduate students to train poor urban farmers in literacy as well as to provide free technical information and support to HIV/AIDS affected and infected

farm families. The literacy helps the families in that they can read prescriptions on medicines (less accidents), read or write legal papers (less loss of land), understand technical information leaflets, etcetera

Through these activities the Municipality of Maputo expects to improve the basic conditions for enhance the production of horticultural products, enhance alimentary safety of the urban poor and HIV affected families and increase their job opportunities and income.

In the **longer term**, the objectives of the Agriculture Houses are:

- To realise larger competitiveness of the urban green areas
- Strengthen the capacity of the producers to participate in the dynamism of the agricultural market for local production, to link up with distributors, negotiate good contracts, and persuade different types of consumers.
- To enhance added value of the products grown and to meet the needs of modern distribution;
- To enhance the quality of the horticultural products grown and to accomplish the quality standards of the World Trade Organization

In June 2004, CMM started a project named **Rapid Generation of Incomes (IRR)**, with view to generate income and improvement of the alimentary diet for 100 families infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in Catembe (an Urban District of Maputo City) through agricultural activities (horticulture and raising of small animals) in cooperation with the National Council of Combat to the HIV/AIDS (CNCS) and financial support of the World Bank.

Many families affected by HIV-Aids have lost (part of) their lands to others since many adults died from AIDS without leaving behind proper inheritance testimony or property documents. This project focussed on families that experienced such problems in an effort to strengthen the economic capacity and quality of diets of families and communities affected by HIV/AIDS.

The project contained the following components:

1. **Publicity:** Announcement of the project through the Agriculture House;
2. **Selection of families** (horticulture: 70 families) and fattening of chickens (30 families)
3. **Training:** all team members and beneficiaries were trained in horticultural management and fattening chickens;
4. **Horticulture:** the Municipality granted **lands** to the affected families for horticulture production; **provision of agricultural inputs** (hoes, rakes, shovels, boots, seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and fungicides);
5. **Aviculture:** Acquisition of material for the **construction of hen houses** for the fattening of chickens; **provision of agricultural inputs:** chicks, heaters, illumination lamps, vaccines against new castle, etc;
6. **Monitoring and technical assistance:** To monitor the management of the chickens and the horticultural production as well as the commercial and nutritional aspects (consumption and sales).

The project does not only benefit the selected families, but also the wider community in the district since it guaranteed that the agricultural extension reached all people in this area that, in certain measure, are discriminated and stigmatized, due to poverty and living with HIV/AIDS, and the project promoted that these families are included again in the community organizations.



## **LESSONS LEARNT**

This experience demonstrates that this kind of projects (IRR, Agricultural House) help communities to strengthen their agricultural practices as a way to solve the reduced income earning capacity due to HIV-AIDS and to guarantee food for their alimentary diet.

This can be done both through promotion of horticulture activities as well as through the distribution of chickens, goats and pigs to the families that are infected by HIV-Aids and assisting them in their agricultural activities, by providing loans for equipment as well as technical and other advice.

It is very important to carefully plan the agricultural activities in order to ensure that the cultivation can take place in the most proper periods of the year and do not meet adverse conditions due to wrong timing. Also the protection of the agricultural areas against the action of domestic animals turned out to be very important.

Also very important is that the urban farming areas are formally zoned for agricultural cultivation in Maputo City and thereby under the protection of the Municipal Council. Where urban poor are penalized for cultivating in areas zoned for construction, the Municipal Council will offer them help to find alternative income sources or other farming area.