

# BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY: EMPOWERING VULNERABLE WOMEN WITH FOOD CULTIVATION AND LIFE SKILLS

UP ONE HEALTH FOR CHANGE CLUSTER

INTERIM REPORT DEC 2021

# RESEARCH FOCUS

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- 25 vulnerable women with identified household food insecurity, living in an informal settlement in Gauteng, RSA.
- Action research focused on producing educational programs and short-term interventions towards achieving economic independence, food security and personal health and hygiene.
- Topics as part of a focused skills and educational intervention included food cultivation (vegetable and egg), production and processing for use or resale. How to design a budget and formulate a life plan. Health topics included education on contraception and HIV/AIDS, family planning and reporting of abuse.



# CAPACITY BUILDING - PLANTING OF BAG GARDENS

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- The aim of the project was to promote female urban farming (food production) and transfer critical health and social skills for health and livelihood to the urban residents of Cemetery View informal settlement to support and enable independence and the ability to make informed decisions about one's health and nutrition. This research project followed an action research framework to develop and test food production (farming and animal protein) using an educational kit that includes entrepreneurship, food production skills, (cultivation and preparation, and maternal and childcare to advocate and create a supportive environment for vulnerable women.



The mothers divided into groups to come and water the bags every morning and afternoon



**IRRIGATION INSTALLED FOR THE BAG GARDENS**



# PLANT PRODUCTION

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The following three sessions were held between Sept-Nov 2021:

- Seedling production demonstration
- Moringa planting
- Bag gardening



## COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS

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- Four workshops were held to demonstrate and educate mothers on the importance of diet diversity.
- Interventions were practical and mothers not only tasted the food (with their children during the cooking demo), but received similar parcels home to replicate this for their families

# DIET DIVERSITY EDUCATION

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- Reasons for including protein in a diet include: to ensure healthy child growth.
- This is key to diet education for this community as the number one nutritional problem and type of malnutrition in the Cemetery view community is stunting.



# EGG PRODUCTION AS PART OF A HEALTHY DIET

- Women were trained and equipped to build a chicken-coop, grow chicks into hens and farm for egg production.
- Initial knowledge testing included a short questionnaire with the women on their knowledge on chickens and eggs at the start and end of project
- Training material was developed (info – packs on keeping chickens)
- Daily recording of eggs produced and management parameters (feeding, water, mortality, change of bedding and egg storage)
- Integration of eggs with vegetables were demonstrated by the dietetic team

4 servings

## 1. EGG FRIED RICE

Prep time: 10 minutes  
Cook time: 10 minutes  
Total time: 20 minutes

**Ingredients:**  
4 large eggs  
3 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1 small onion, diced  
1 red/green/yellow pepper  
1 carrot  
1 tomato  
1 small bunch of spinach  
Salt  
Pepper  
Spices of choice  
1 cup rice



**Instructions:**

1. Boil the rice in a pot until tender.
2. Chop the vegetables (onion, bell pepper, carrot, tomato) into evenly sized pieces and set aside.
3. Wash the spinach, remove the stems and tear the spinach into small pieces.
4. Heat the oil in the pan.
5. Add the onion and cook until soft.
6. Add the carrot, bell pepper and tomato and cook for 5 minutes.
7. Drain the cooked rice and save some of the water that the rice cooked in.
8. Add 1 cup of the starchy water from the rice to the vegetables and cook for 15 minutes. Add the spices of choice.
9. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs with salt and pepper.
10. Add the eggs to the pan and cook with the vegetables.
11. Add the rice to the vegetable and egg mixture and stir everything together.
12. Season to taste and serve immediately.

**TOMATO BENEFITS**  
HEART HEALTH  
IMPROVED VISION  
HELPS PROTECT THE SKIN  
PROTECTS AGAINST CANCER

# INTER-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

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- This project brought together qualified professionals and experts in primary health care, dietetics and nutrition and food cultivation, animal husbandry. The combination of these disciplines in a targeted health and nutritional skills transfer workshop(s) had a major impact on vulnerable women living in Cemetery View informal settlement, Gauteng, South Africa.



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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- The UNICEF project highlighted the importance of working within communities to address and achieve the social development goals. The inter-disciplinary approach enables different stakeholders to learn from one another, not only having a greater impact on the community, but also on future research and community based projects.