

Significance of Vegetable Farming as a Strategy to Enhance Household Food Security in Communal Areas of Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Food grain crops are the focal point of household food production in communal areas of Zimbabwe. These have remained the prime target of national agricultural policies. Prioritization of cereals has been done at the expense of horticultural products' potential to stabilise communal food systems. This chapter reflected on how local communities in Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe district of Zimbabwe transformed their livelihoods through locally initiated small-scale vegetable farming projects. Information was collected through questionnaires, informal interviews and on-site observations as the basis for rapid rural appraisal. Local communities significantly improved on quantities of vegetable output and subsequently food access, availability and consumption patterns. Hectrage of land under cultivation has been extended from small gardens to communal or dryland fields. Farming is thriving viably without assistance from local authorities, central government and NGOs. The chapter concluded that sustainable reduction of hunger in rural societies of developing countries could be achieved if development and donor funding is centered on local initiatives. However, strategies to co-opt traditional vegetables and seasonally grown need to be devised in order to improve and maintain nutrition, especially for HIV/AIDS related illness.