



## **Vaal University of Technology**

### **Evaluation of the Sustainability of Soy Restaurants Implemented in Conjunction with the Total Control of the Epidemic (TCE) Program through Planet Aid, WISHH, and USDA**

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#### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this activity was to conduct a small study looking at the soy restaurant model and including recommendations for contributing to the sustainability of soy restaurants.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The USDA Food for Progress program with Planet Aid is in its third year and will continue until December 2007. This will result in the possible cessation of the services rendered by the soy canteens should these canteens not be able to be self-sustainable. During this visit, various soy canteens were visited to familiarize ourselves with the operational as well as income-generating activities and to look at the plans made for sustainability. Before the visit, Mark Langworthy from TANGO had a sustainability questionnaire completed by all the soy canteens and we had a questionnaire completed by five randomly selected beneficiaries at each of the 50 soy canteens to measure customer satisfaction and needs.

#### **METHODS:**

##### 1. Data Collection:

Data were collected (sustainability questionnaire and customer acceptance survey) by the field officers and troop commanders and captured by Nina at the TCE office. During the visits to the various soy canteens, a tick list was completed and data collected regarding the sustainability plans, as well as available resources (ie land, agricultural activities, livestock, and other micro-environmental factors such as water and fuel availability). Furthermore, questions asked included the continuation and involvement from community leaders, soy restaurant personnel and beneficiaries. Data were also collected on the local food economy for future sustainability plans. Field officers and communities were involved and notified well in advance. ADPP achieved a high level of participation at all levels and the data collection process was as complete as possible.

## 2. Data Entry

A total of 50 sustainability questionnaires and 250 customer surveys were available for data entry. TCE personnel were made available to assist in the data processing and entry.

## 3. Data Evaluation

Data cleaning and statistical analyses of the sustainability questionnaires were done by Mark Langworthy. Data cleaning and statistical analyses of the customer surveys were done by Wilna Oldewage-Theron. The tick lists were captured and analysed by Jeanette Kearney. An analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints/threats (SWOT) was compiled with all the available data.

## **FINDINGS:**

A preliminary review, conducted by Mark Langworthy, showed that in three of the regions income-generating activities were in place, namely growing of crops/vegetables (51%), raising of animals (13.7%), bakeries (5.9%), small shops (5.9%) and selling of other soy food items, ie bolinhos (7.8%). Overall, the soy canteens have on average just slightly over one source of income. The soy canteens in troop 1 has an average of 2.2 sources of income compared to those in troop 2 and 3 regions where the average sources of income is less than one, indicating that the soy canteens in these regions have no source of cash income. Bakeries and selling of other soy products existed in slightly less than 40% of the soy canteens, mainly in regions 1 and 2. The review further found a wide range of variation in the profitability of the soy canteens. Almost 50% of the soy canteens did not report any profits from either sales of soy products or any other income-generating activities. Nine of the 51 soy canteens reported weekly profits of 100MT or more. Of the soy canteens that reported profits, about 50% of the profits were from the sale of soy products. The restaurants with the higher income were more likely to sell soy products compared to the lower income soy canteens. At this stage, the overall sales of soy products represent approximately half of all the income in the soy canteens. However, the ingredients used for these activities are mostly donated and may cease should the soy flour supply be discontinued. Of all the soy canteens visited, no raising of animals, however, were observed. A number of the canteens had vegetable gardens, but the vegetable gardens observed, were not maintained properly and would also not be able to sustain the canteens in future as very little money was raised from the vegetable gardens. Furthermore, the local markets sold the same food items grown by the soy canteens at very competitive prices, thus limiting the number of potential buyers or the distribution/despatch area should the soy canteens wish to sell to the markets.

## **SWOT ANALYSIS:**

### **Strengths**

- well-trained and committed passionates, field officers, troop commanders and ser
- adequate local technical expertise
- well targeted
- good programme management
- weekly reporting sheets indicate monitoring and evaluation in place
- recognition of achievements by community leaders
- good capacity development

### **Strengths (cont'd)**

- good community awareness raising
- strong partnerships with international and national training and research institutions leading to technical support
- good development approach

### **Weaknesses**

- planning for unforeseen circumstances and future needs (although plans are reported, it is still only a planned exercise and feasibility has not been established)
- low level of community involvement
- limited community participation (targets met, but more in need)
- community leaders not used to full potential
- income-generating activities limited
- weak advocacy to decision- and policymakers
- excessive dependence on TCE and external funding
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### **Opportunities**

- effective and community activities
- feedback, mobilization and motivation of community member involvement and capacity building
- establishing collaborative linkages with other relevant programmes and donor agencies, including local authorities and government programmes (specifically the national food and nutrition policy and/or poverty reduction strategy)
- integrated multi-sectoral approach
- more families in need to be included – passantes indicated more families in need of assistance
- expansion of existing income-generating activities ie agricultural activities
- trained and organized community workers can initiate other development activities and thus expose and expand the services rendered by the soy canteens
- development of new technologies can provide answers to community problems

### **Constraints (and threats)**

- failure to secure funding for the continuation of the programme leading to programme discontinuation and thus short-term hunger and long-term nutritional status deterioration of beneficiaries
- short time frame of the programme (3 years) may not achieve all the long-term nutritional goals
- lack of national awareness of nutrition problems and impact of this programme
- climatic problems ie floods could harm agricultural activities leading to loss of income and programme disruption
- poor infrastructure in remote areas limit access to communities and services rendered
- socio-economic constraints
- extreme poverty in communities leading to lack of resources to support the soy canteens

Almost 90% of the soy canteens reported having plans for sustainability in future. However, a lower proportion of the soy canteens without reported income have plans compared to the 100% of the higher income soy canteens. During the visit to the canteens, it was found that no plans were visible and the sustainability functions were still only “planned” and contact with the local community leaders, to assist with the plans, were also still “planned”.

The results of the customer survey showed that the majority of beneficiaries were satisfied with the service at the soy canteens as the majority rated the service as good in terms of friendliness (56%), fast (60%) and efficient (61%) and excellent (42%, 39% and 39% respectively).

The meals served most frequently at the soy canteens included rice with soy (n=75), rice with soy and leafy vegetables (n=69), rice with soy and beans (n=40), maize porridge with soy (n=25) and maize porridge with soy and beans (n=21). The meals were rated as follows:

- 72% good and 26% excellent for portion size
- 66% good and 34% excellent for taste
- 69% good and 30.5% excellent for variety and
- 72% good and 27.5% excellent for appearance.

The majority of the beneficiaries (96%) indicated that they would pay for the soy meal in future at an average price of 8MT.

### **SUMMARY and RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To summarise, the existing programme is well targeted and managed as proved by the weekly reporting sheets, indicating regular monitoring and evaluation. Good capacity development has been obtained through well-trained and committed passionates, troop commanders and field officers to continue with the soy canteens, however, a low level of community involvement has been obtained and there is still an excessive dependence on the funding and supervision from TCE. Although the majority of soy canteens have plans for sustainability, the time frame (3-6 months) in which these plans should be implemented, may compromise sustainability. The soy canteens with a higher income may become sustainable, but a dramatic effort will be needed by all the stakeholders involved to increase the income even further as the existing income does not reach the levels of the TCE contribution.

### **Recommendations for future soy canteen projects are as follows:**

- 72% good and 26% excellent for portion size
- Involvement with local government in the planning and implementation phases to determine the availability of government supplemental funding. This can also lead to the institutionalization of the programme after the initial implementation period has been completed.
- The local community should be involved in the management and maintenance of the soy canteens, as well as complementary income-generating activities to empower the whole community.
- A parallel income-generating project with separate funding should form part of the implementation phase of the soy canteens.

### **Recommendations (cont'd)**

- Training of passionate and troop commanders on business skills (including product costings and selling price determination, procurement procedures, profit and loss statements, etc) as well as agricultural development (including a micro-environmental analysis to determine the crop/animal production needs, vegetable preservation skills, etc). Other training programmes could include skills training on work improvement and productivity, marketing and promoting the soy canteens, as well as menu planning and recipe development in order to enlarge the range of food items sold.
- Financial assistance should be reduced every year to force the soy canteens to become more self-sufficient every year until they can be sustainable after a period of time. A planned schedule for handing over the funding responsibility should thus be in place.
- A longer-term perspective should be taken to ensure sustainability.
- In the long term, soy farming should be promoted and marketed to the local government, specifically the Department of Agriculture, to implement and subsidize soy farming in the countries where the arid conditions are suitable for soy farming. Farmers and local food industries should be trained on soy processing techniques so that soy could become more available on the markets.
- Consumer education on the health benefits of soy must be introduced to increase the long-term demand for the product. This can be done in co-operation with local government departments and the food industries in the country where the soy canteens will operate.