



Students of the *Cultivating Learning with School Gardens* training demonstrating transplantation techniques at the ADPP One World University garden (4 July, 2013 / Photo: ADPP Mozambique)

Learning to Grow Food For Body and Mind ***Food for Knowledge Professionals Trained in School Gardening***

A hoe flies down in an arch and cuts sharp into the dry soil, raising a cloud of dust at the feet of the curious spectators. "The first thing one needs to do when establishing a garden or preparing to transplant is to prepare the land: to get rid of the weed and grass, mold the earth and wet the soil," explains the excited student with the hoe during a school garden demonstration session and moves on to show how to transplant small salad seedlings. The fellow students follow his work intently and share tips as the work progresses. "Don't forget the 20 centimeters' distance between the seedlings!" reminds someone from the back row.

The 5-day *Cultivating Learning with School Gardens* training of trainers took place between 1-5 July 2013 at the ADPP One World University (OWU) premises in Changanane, Maputo Province. Organized in the context of the ADPP and Planet Aid *Food For Knowledge* Program (2013-2015), its objective was to provide the specifically trained program staff, or the so-called "Food For Knowledge Professionals", with basic notions on how to establish and care for a school garden and how to use it for various learning purposes in primary schools in rural settings.

The two trainers of this USDA-funded training program, Mary Crave and Tom Syverud, both from the University of Wisconsin, USA, were giving the training for the first time in Mozambique. "The idea was that the students learn to train school teachers in using the school gardens as learning laboratories," explained Mary Crave. "The school gardens will also complement the school feeding component of the *Food For Knowledge* Program by ensuring that all schools have access to nutritious food year round," she added.



Besides the 25 Food For Knowledge Professionals, altogether 30 third-year students in *Community Development* from the ADPP One World University and 10 district and provincial education officials covering the focus districts of Manhiça, Magude, Matutuíne and Moamba participated in the training. The representative of USDA in Mozambique was also present.

The training itself consisted of lectures, group works and practical exercises, both in the classroom and out at the university model gardens. The students were taught various gardening skills, including transplanting techniques and preparing natural insecticides and pesticides, and were encouraged to come up with creative ways to teach different school subjects, including mathematics, biology and arts, by using the garden as an example and classroom.

"The training was very useful. The school gardens will bring a great benefit for the schools in the communities in which I am working," said Jerónimo Jotte, a 22-year old *Food For Knowledge* Professional who participated in the training. "I just wish we had more time," he added. "One week is not enough for all of the things we discussed!"



The trainer demonstrating how to use a school garden to teach geography and mathematics. A student translating the lesson from English to Portuguese. (4 July, 2013 / Photo: ADPP Mozambique)



Jerónimo Jotte, Food For Knowledge Professional (left):

"The school gardens will bring a great benefit for the schools I will be working in. They will be a great help for the schools in teaching various school subjects and for the children in learning many new things," says Jerónimo Jotta, 22, with a convincing look in his eyes.

Jerónimo is one of the Food For Knowledge Professionals trained through the Food for Knowledge Program to coordinate the program activities on the community level. While he was already familiar with working in school contexts and with local communities - thanks to having graduated from the ADPP Teacher Training College of Gaza in 2010 - he believes that he has learned a great deal in the trainings.

"I was taught how to establish and take care of a school garden and learned how to be creative in using it as learning support in some school disciplines," he explains. "The School Garden training gave me an opportunity to strengthen my skills in working with children and in motivating people in working together as well," he adds.

"The school gardens (...) will be a great help for the schools in teaching various school subjects and for the children in learning many new things."

Rosme Cassimo, student, One World University (right):

"Composting techniques, planting various types of garden plants, growing a plant nursery, transplanting, preparing homemade insecticides – and the importance of it all in teaching children various school subjects..." Rosme Cassimo, 22, lists some of the things she learned during the School Garden training. "I even had the opportunity to practice my English!" she adds smiling.

Rosme is a third year student of Community Development at the ADPP One World University (OWU) and took part in the School Garden training as part of her degree studies. She is convinced that the things she learned during the training will be useful in her future. "As a future agent for community development, I am certain of it. And urge all of my colleagues to be serious about it as well. The Program should reach the whole region."



Elsa Carlota Machaieie, DDEC, Matutuine (left):

"Our role as the district focal points of the Food For Knowledge Program is to support the Food For Knowledge Professionals in coordinating the activities in the districts and to monitor the implementation of the Program in general," explains Elsa Carlota Machaieie from the District Department for Education and Culture (DDEC) of Matutuine.

"We are also responsible for training others," she adds. "This is where the training manual comes in handy," she says and draws out the manual distributed during the training.

Even though Elsa is a professional in the area of agriculture, she thinks that the School Garden training was very useful for her as well. "I learned new things about the exact dimensions of garden plant transplantation and about mixing biological insecticides, among other things."

"I was very happy to participate in the training."



Almeida Zacarias, USDA Mozambique:

"The *Cultivating Learning with School Gardens* is a project coordinated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on behalf of USAID's African Education Initiative (AEI)," explains Almeida Zacarias, Agriculture Specialist from USDA Mozambique.

"It was originally initiated in 2005 and has since been implemented in various African countries before coming to Mozambique," he continues. "In Mozambique, the objective of the training is to bring added value to the *Food For Knowledge* Program that is now being implemented by Planet Aid and ADPP Mozambique. The idea is that the newly trained *Food For Knowledge Professionals* will now train the teachers in their respective communities in elaborating school gardens and using them for both teaching and nutrition purposes."



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