

Food Security Program

EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN CHAD

Food for Work Activities

In June 2005, IRD launched the program, Emergency Food-for-Work and Agricultural Assistance Initiative for Affected Villages in Eastern Chad. This program provides emergency food security and agriculture improvement opportunities for villages in Eastern Chad affected by the influx of Darfur refugees fleeing neighboring Sudan.

This program is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) in conjunction with the United Nation's World Food Programme (WFP), which has provided 1,000 Metric Tons of food. Using a community-based approach, IRD is mobilizing communities in villages affected by drought and refugee flows to undertake agricultural improvement projects primarily targeting local Wadis (river bed watersheds).

Projects will include the construction and rehabilitation of:

- Barrages (dams)
- Hafirs (water catchment basins)
- Wells for potable water



Mother and child beneficiaries of the blanket supplementary feeding program



Searching for potable water

Villages provide the manual labor to restore these local irrigation systems and water wells. More than 12,000 beneficiaries are employed under this program and receive food parcels as salary supplements in the targeted villages surrounding the Iriba District. In addition, IRD is distributing seeds from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and providing short-term technical assistance for improving planting, harvesting and processing techniques. IRD also provides basic agricultural kits (up to four varieties of seeds, planting tools and one wheelbarrow) to the most vulnerable families. This project is expected to benefit approximately 80,000 people.

BETTER FOOD FOR BETTER LIVES IN CAMBODIA

Improving Health and Nutrition

IRD is currently utilizing food commodities to develop and support production and distribution of fortified, soy-enriched foods. IRD's staple products provide low-cost, micronutrient-fortified food for low-income families and school children in economically deprived areas in Southeast Asia. The programs also incorporate job creation and income generation components, directly generating more than 3,000 new jobs and indirectly creating thousands more.

IRD also contributes to improved understanding of food utilization through its promotion of dietary diversification and micronutrient intake. In 2000, IRD began producing soy-enriched, steam-dried noodles. These noodles, produced through contracts with local factories, are sold to low-income consumers at reduced prices. To date, IRD has produced three billion noodle packages.

In 2001, IRD introduced soy-enriched snack noodles for distribution to 75,000 primary school children in Central Java and Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The nutritional value of the noodles is enhanced by the addition of defatted soy flour. By utilizing a 20/80 mixture of soy/wheat flour to produce the snack noodles, IRD is increasing the protein content from 9.21 percent to 17.28 percent. The resulting product provides 6.05 grams of protein per 35 gram serving.



A girl eating soy-enriched snack noodles



Men Sarung noodle factory employee

IRD also began marketing soy-enriched rice noodles in 2003 through its USDA-funded programs. Recently, IRD expanded its rice noodle initiative to include production and marketing of soy sauce fortified with iodine, iron, and vitamin A. IRD also began producing fortified soy milk in Cambodia beginning in 2005.

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DROUGHT RELIEF AND EMERGENCY FOOD AID IN MOZAMBIQUE

Feeding Vulnerable Groups, Mitigating Future Droughts

Massinga district, the most populated district in Inhambane province, experienced a devastating drought in 2005 and 2006, leaving an estimated 76,000 people – 41 percent of the province’s population – either without or with limited access to food. In response, IRD, in partnership with the World Food Program, immediately initiated feeding programs for vulnerable groups and Food-for-Work activities in October 2005.

Under the Food-for-Work component, local communities began the construction of eight water catchment areas, rehabilitation of ten water wells and construction of three hand-dug wells in the district. By December 2005, 3,870 households were participating in these activities. Non-food items support was provided from USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).

With the increased support from OFDA beginning in January 2006, the water catchments have since been completed and lined. IRD is currently installing water pumping systems, holding tanks and water purification filters in tanks specified for human consumption. IRD works closely with local authorities and community water catchment committees to ensure that local people are trained to maintain the systems and maintain water sanitation. Through a project extension, IRD will complete the construction of three additional water catchments and 13 school rainwater collection systems with cisterns.

In addition to the rural water component, IRD supports agricultural production through the distribution, planting and training in the multiplication of drought-resistant emergency crops. Through the project, 7,000 of the most vulnerable families in the district will be able to start their own drought-resistant crop fields. To increase local nutrition and income generation, IRD also supported the planting of more than 100 acres of drought-resistant cassava, pineapples and cashews.

Immediate and long-term income generating opportunities were also provided through the introduction of improved beekeeping techniques and honey harvesting methods. IRD has trained 92 households in improved beekeeping technologies, and several local craftsmen in building improved hives. IRD is also in the process of creating linkages between the beekeepers and a private sector processing and marketing company, Frutimel. IRD will continue to support the business development of the local apiculturists and expand the training to other drought-affected areas in the district.



Inhambane residents retrieve water from a tanker provided by IRD. The water will be used to assist with construction of water catchments to help mitigate future droughts.



Ten Years of Innovative Solutions

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Expanding Agricultural Opportunities in Georgia

In the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions of Georgia, IRD helps farmers and other rural entrepreneurs increase their income. The program is accelerating private sector development in Georgia by supplying small-scale farmers with quality-certified seed potatoes, providing training on potato production practices, and developing a substitute import potato market, and establishing two rural enterprise centers, one in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region and one in the Kvemo Kartli region.

IRD has sold 15,000 metric tons of hard red winter wheat donated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is using the proceeds over a 24-month period to:

- Improve private sector agriculture by procuring 2,857 metric tons of high-quality seed potatoes and distributing them to 9,500 small farmers' households in the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions of Georgia. The seed distribution to small farmers will include training on agricultural practices to ensure improved yields; and
- Strengthen two rural enterprise centers, which will provide training, in-kind supplies, and equipment, individual consultation to at least 2,500 farmers and rural entrepreneurs, technical assistance in start-up village-scale businesses, and local products access to markets to enhance the probability of success.

Over the life of the project, IRD activities will reach 15,900 people directly and an additional 60,000 people indirectly.



Georgian farmers with a healthy crop of potatoes,

HAMBANTOTA EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN SRI LANKA

Improving the Educational Environment

In Sri Lanka, IRD is working to assist 12,000 rural students through the Hambantota Educational Support Improvement Project (HESIP). This project, supported by USDA, has three primary objectives: to work with a local dairy company to provide daily rations of milk to 12,000 school children; to work with parent teacher associations and school committees to renovate school sanitation facilities; and, to assist the Ministry of Education in its health and nutrition awareness campaign. The continuous supply of milk combined with better sanitation practices and facilities improves students' health and concentration, as well as provides an incentive for parents to send their children to school during the harvest season.



A girl in the Hambantota district drinks UHT milk

This program targets students living in rural areas to improve their educational environment. The daily distribution of milk improves the children's ability to concentrate on their studies, reduces the number of children fainting and provides an incentive for parents to continue to send their children to school during the harvest season. IRD also tested and treated for parasitic infections to help kids stay healthy and remain in school, recognizing that healthy children are better able to engage their studies.

Unfortunately, many of the schools lack sufficient water and sanitation facilities or have crumbling walls and roofs. IRD worked with school staff and community members to identify the most-needed repairs and provided the resources necessary for improvement.

Following the tsunami, IRD provided 12,000 school kits and other supplies through the support and donations of North West Medical Teams and American schools. IRD is hopeful that this program makes it possible for more students to remain in school and obtain an education that will enable them to grow strong and experience an improved quality of life.



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Bringing Agriculture Back to Southern Sudan

After decades of civil war, generations of farming knowledge have been lost in Southern Sudan. This is particularly true in areas like Upper Nile State, near the border with Ethiopia, where semi-nomadic cattle herding was a more strongly rooted tradition than settled farming. With cattle herds still small and crop yields low, there is little food available to area residents. "If you go in the village now, you will not find a single vegetable," says David Duop, IRD field assistant.

International Relief & Development (IRD), with funding from the U.S. State Department, is bringing agricultural expertise back to the Sobat River corridor in Upper Nile State. IRD staff members have designed a series of training courses covering preparation of beds, composting, planting, harvesting, livestock production, and food processing. IRD works with local leaders to identify plots of land that program participants can use, so that after they learn the theory, they can put it into practice. IRD field assistants live in the community so they can continue to offer advice throughout the planting season.

In addition to providing expertise, IRD brings seeds and tools to participating villages. In the coming months, fishing line, hooks, and canoes will be delivered so that residents can add more protein to their diet.

The program, which will run through the end of 2008, will also help farmers with issues they may have getting their produce to markets, which will increase their incomes.



Women are a focus of the agricultural project.