

3.10.6 Funding of the project (A20; B7)

The question of who was funding the project was asked to find out whether the people know where the funds come from.

Three women participating in the project did not know who funded the project, while twenty-seven of them mentioned that they received funds from the Department Of Health and Welfare. The last group, that is seven of the women, said that the funds are from two organisations, the Department of Health and Welfare and SASKO.

This question was not in the questionnaire for the non-participants.

The officials from the Department of Health and Welfare stated that they help with the payment of services and the mobile clinic, which helps to stabilize the health of the community.

3.10.7 Are the community members supportive of the project and how are they supportive? (A21,22; B8,9; C,14,15)

This question was asked to find out whether the community is working together to build the project.

Thirty-four participants and all of those not participating in the project mentioned that the community is very supportive of the project. The people buy the products produced at the vegetable garden.

Only three of those participating in the project stated that the community does not support the project. The reason given was that people from outside the study area are not satisfied, as they also want to work in the project. Especially the last section of this answer indicates the type of problems that can be encountered when projects of this nature, funded with tax payers' monies, are implemented in selected areas, while some other people do not have the same benefits.

In interviews, people not taking part in the project also indicated that they are happy about the project and that the women participating in the food security project get experience, which can and will be used in future. Some of the villagers wish that most of the non- participating women could have an interest in what is happening at the project, and that more activities can be implemented, because working using one's own hands is advantageous. These skills, say the spokespersons, will 'be in one's blood'. This is something that cannot be taken away from the owners of these skills, but will stay for life.

The villagers stated that families are no longer forced to go hunting and gathering but only do it when they wish to. They are happy that some children are given a chance to get education, not like before when they were forced to wake up early in the morning to milk cows and to go and look after them. The villagers are impressed that children now know the difference between formal schooling and circumcision school and that they are able to get formal schooling for the sake of their own future. Girls are no longer regarded as housewives only, but through the work of the women at the project, people are able to realize that girls are often the ones handling the futures of families and that they might be the key to future success in the villages.

In interviews, people not taking part in the food security project stated that they are happy that their community has changed and it is progressing like other villages. They mentioned that they can now survive compared to the previous years, as they now have a market close to them and they have access to health services regularly and they do not have to pay for transport or walk for long distances to get such services.

In interviews, men mentioned that through the help of the officials from the Department of Health and Welfare, their wives now implement family planning; they do not just have children that they cannot afford, but they look at the future before taking any step to have children. The men even

stated that young girls are no longer plagued by teenage pregnancies as the girls too are given advice about contraception. They mentioned the fact that children are taken for check-ups regularly, as there is a health office nearby. They stated that the infant mortality rate is lower and that they no longer experience as many deaths of older children and adults as before (this statement cannot be proven but it is an indication of a positive perception).

In interviews, women who are not participating in the food security project stated that they too find the project helpful. They mentioned that they also survive through the help of the food security project in their area because they can buy vegetables at low cost. The women who are not in the food security project mentioned the fact that they too are able to get health information or can consult with the project, which does not waste their time as taking long trips for consultations would. They also indicated that they can save money, because they are able to walk to the consultation rooms, rather than taking a taxi or a bus, which runs irregularly and rarely in any case.

**3.10.8 What was the situation before the introduction of the project?
(Has the situation improved?) (A18,25,26,36;B10,28; C18,19)**

The purpose of this area of questioning was to determine improvements

brought about by the project, that is, the difference between the previous situation (before the project) and the present situation. The question probes whether the project is important to the people and whether they feel they can rely on it.

All the respondents who are participating in the project mentioned that they did not have access to low cost fresh vegetables before the project started.

The respondents indicated that the project has brought some improvements to their lives. It has brought food to them: since the introduction of the project they are able to buy vegetables at low cost. The children can now go to school, as their mothers participating in the project can afford to pay fees from the money they get from the project. Children (whose mothers participate in the project) who are under the age of five receive early education because the project has a crèche, unlike before when they just stayed at home. The project has also brought a clinic to address health issues, which was not the case before the project started. The project is a great relief, as the respondents stated that they do now rely on the project and that the situation they are in at present is better, compared to that before the project was introduced.

In interviews, the officials from the provincial Department of Health and Welfare also indicated that the situation in the food security project itself

has improved since its inception (A18,25,26,36), the reason being that women now know what to do, that is, they do the horticulture without being fully supervised in all the actions. Women now know how to plant and tend the vegetables, they know the planning processes and how to look after the vegetables, so it is easy for them to grow vegetables. They get more and better products than before, because they know what they are doing and no longer waste time as they were forced to do before when they had to wait for officials to help them (Mothapo 1998: Pers.com.).

In interviews, participants not taking part in the food security project also indicated that the present situation in Bochum regarding the ability of the families of the women participating in the project to feed themselves is better than in previous years. The respondents in the food security project stated that the families of the people who do not participate in the project but who also depend on the project seem to be in better health. The respondents claimed that the life of the community has improved since the implementation of the food security project.

The spokespersons in the food security project indicated that the programme develops and supports formerly unemployed women and their children in partnership with all stakeholders. Educational and employment opportunities have been facilitated for women and their children under the age of five in order to allow them to break the poverty cycle. The project

has empowered the disadvantaged by building capacity that addresses the people's own needs.

In interviews spokespersons also indicated that they must feel and believe that it is their own efforts that drive the development process. The women in the project manage their own human, financial and material resources. The respondents mentioned that external support from the officials of the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Health and Welfare and the community help them when they cannot manage for themselves.

3.10.9 What did participants do before the introduction of the project? (A2; B19; C11,12,13)

This question was asked to find out whether people participating in the project were happy in their previous work and whether the project is important to them.

Twenty-six of the people participating in the project mentioned that before the project they had just stayed at home. Eleven indicated that they had not been happy working for local farmers, as they were over-worked and not paid enough. Since the introduction of the project, they buy vegetables at low cost and even get money for working on the project. The respondents stated that their lives have really improved and that their standard of living

is better.

Even the people who are not taking part in the project mentioned that their lives have improved and some of them said that their situation could be better if they too could be given a chance to participate in the project, to learn skills and get money for their families. The women not taking part in the project also wanted to be trained on how to keep a garden, and to acquire skills and knowledge of the gardening process.

3.10.10 How many people did the project have when it started and how many are in the project at present and why? (A7, 8; B11, 12, 13, 14)

This area of questioning checked whether the number of people participating in the project has increased or decreased and to get the reasons why the number has increased or decreased.

According to the officials, the project started with 120 participants, in other words, twenty women from each of the six villages. Most of the participants themselves were not certain of the initial number of participants. All the respondents indicated that there were more than a hundred women involved when the project started, but that there were less than 70 at the time when the research was done. According to the officials,

the number had decreased to 67. The reason for the reduction in the number of participants was that most of those taking part in the project initially thought they were going to earn more money than they do, or even get free vegetables without control. Some of the women who had participated in the project had died, while others had married and moved to other villages.

The respondents stated that the women who are still participating in the project are the ones who want to be healthy and have better lives. Those that are participating mentioned that they were looking for a place where they can make a better living and now that they have got the food security project where they can get fresh vegetables, they do not want to lose the opportunity.

As indicated above, the officials from the Department of Health and Welfare stated that the number of women participating in the project is now 67. In interviews, spokespersons indicated that this number has been stable since late 1997. The officials from the Department of Health and Welfare stated that the figure had fluctuated between 100 and 70 in 1997, but now it seems to be stable (Mothapo 1998: Pers.com.). The women who are now participating in the project seem to be more enthusiastic, according to the officials. The number is expected to grow as soon as the officials from the Department of Health and Welfare and the participating women of the food

security project introduce more programmes – as the project is meant to be a multi-purpose project (Mothapo 1998: Pers.com.).

3.10.11 What activities are involved and are participants satisfied?

(A12, 13,14; B15, 16; C19, 20)

The question was asked to find out about the activities involved in the food security project and to determine whether the people participating are happy about the activities.

All the respondents who are participants in the project were impressed with the project and said that the activities are excellent. The activities are maintaining the vegetable garden (where they get fresh vegetables), using the crèche (children's daycare), the clinic (health services) and operating a small market to sell their products from the project. They are satisfied with the activities.

In interviews spokespersons from the Department of Health and Welfare also indicated that they had decided on a bread-making and a sewing project as programmes they can add to the food security project. The women approve of the bakery idea. They believe it will be successful, as people will be buying bread daily, including the families of the women participating in the project. SASKO runs a private bread manufacturing

company in Pietersburg and is also willing to help the participants of the food security project to acquire the skills needed to bake bread (Manamela 1998: Pers.com.).

The sewing programme seems like a good suggestion, as the people in the study area are very far away from town and they will benefit from having access to the clothes sewn in the project. The clothes made in the project might be a little bit cheaper and people in the village and the surrounding areas will not be paying a lot for transport as they are near the project and can walk to the project.

The officials indicated that, so far, the project is making good progress (Manamela 1998: Pers.com.). The women who are responsible for the project's finances and the officials from the Department of Health and Welfare said that the project had generated R12 714.85 in 1998. However, the officials from the Department of Agriculture argue that the amount generated by the food security project is low compared with the number of women who are participating in the project (Phoshoko 1998: Pers.com.). For this reason, the officials are thinking of adding more income-generating activities.

In interviews the officials from the Department of Health and Welfare also made the point that the educational training opportunities for women in

Bochum had increased, as they can provide for the basic needs of their families and of the community. They even stated that the resources provided (training, equipment and material) enabled otherwise unemployed women to enhance their overall functioning (Mothapo 1998: Pers.com.).

The women taking part in the food security project indicated that the only non-agricultural programme in the food security project at present is a daycare centre that was introduced early in 1997, as the women participating in the project have young children and cannot work and produce good products with children on their backs. As was stated in Section 3.4.2, the day-care centre is housed in one of the containers that the project got from SASKO (Manamela 1998: Pers.com.).

3.10.12 Are the people who are involved in the project trained?

(A15,16; B17)

The question about training was asked to find out whether the women participating in the project are trained, that is, given agricultural skills in planting crops, the use of fertilizers and the irrigation system. The question was also asked to find out who had trained them.

The respondents taking part in the garden indicated that they were trained but that they did not think they had had enough training, because the

officials from the Department of Agriculture who had come to show them how to prepare seeds and plough did not come frequently. The people from the Department of Agriculture come only once in a season. Those participating were first shown how to prepare the land, then the seed planting process, irrigation, harvesting and lastly marketing. Those taking part in the garden were given advice by the officials from the Department of Agriculture on how to spray (to avoid plant diseases) and water the vegetables and when to irrigate the plants.

The answer above indicates that extension of agriculture in the Northern Province is not what it should be. According to people taking part in the food security project, this was mainly due to the lack of funding from the government (Agricultural Department) for officials to do their work in the Northern Province. Lack of funding has serious consequences for the continuation of government-funded projects in the Northern Province.

In interviews the spokespersons from the provincial Department of Agriculture indicated that they are also giving women more knowledge on how to plant and produce good products. It is now easier because the women already know about vegetables and their diseases, so that the officials no longer need a long time to explain things (Phoshoko 1998: Pers.com.).

The women are impressed by the skills they got from the officials from the Department of Agriculture and they can now work on their own and even for their community in general. Through the help of the officials and women's work, the participants think that the community's life is better than before the project started.

In interviews spokespersons from the food security project argue that, as they now have knowledge and skills, they are experiencing problems with the vegetable garden because the land for the project is not big enough to sustain the families of all the women participating in the project and the surrounding villages. In response, the provincial Department of Health and Welfare stated that it is seriously looking at diversifying or adding more activities to the food security project (Mothapo 1998: Pers.com.). According to officials of the Department of Agriculture, an alternative is to extend the field or garden itself. However, they doubt that the available water will be sufficient. The water issue was raised by the Department of Agriculture's engineers (Phoshoko 1998: Pers.com.).

In interviews spokespersons from the Department of Health and Welfare also mentioned that human development is an integral part of the process. The women and children must be involved in strengthening their self-esteem and also in obtaining and internalizing knowledge and information through life skills programmes initiated and developed by themselves. The

spokespersons have established an enabling environment that promotes empowerment and capacity and even ensures self-reliance and social well-being.

3.10.13 Will the project be sustainable? (A23, 24; B18, 29; C9, 10)

Eighteen of the respondents who participate in the project mentioned that they did not want to see the project coming to an end. In their own view, the project will survive as its survival depends on them. If it 'dies', they stated that they will be faced with poverty; they will go back to poverty like that before the establishment of the project. Four respondents participating in the project stated that the project would end because they did not get enough money from the Department of Health and Welfare. These answers imply that development benefits those that want to help themselves.

Many of the women who do not participate in the project would like to see the project surviving so that they too could get an opportunity to participate. The respondents also stated that the people working in the project could even work for themselves. Eight women not taking part in the project stated that they would like to work in the project so that they can acquire skills for the future. Respondents not taking part in the project wish to see the food security project going on as they too depend on it. They buy products at low cost and are able to sell the products that they have bought

to get their own money.

In interviews, spokespersons from the Department of Agriculture and those from the Department of Health and Welfare also indicated that the food security project is thriving and yielding very good results (products). The reasons why the food security project is working so well is that the women participating in the project have been trained periodically by the professionals from the Department of Agriculture and the women were willing to learn and work together with the officials. The training of the participants instilled a lot of confidence in the women participating in the project; hence the officials stated that they see the quality of the crops improving (Phoshoko 1998: Pers.com.).

In interviews officials and women participating in the food security project also indicated that the produce is on the market and that the demand for the produce locally is very high. The spokespersons even stated that there are very few occasions where they think of selling outside the Bochum area.

The officials from the Department of Health and Welfare also indicated that they had proposed a day's workshop to discuss embarking on the future plans with the people participating in the project. They stated that the prime objective would be to make the project more economically viable and self-sustaining (Mothapo 1998: Pers.com.).

The women in the food security project believed that the project must be an integrated and sustainable programme and that it must also be a people-driven process. Co-ordination and co-operation with all community structures must ensure that the project addresses the needs of the community and limits duplication of services. The spokespersons also mentioned that the process must be transparent in order for it to be a learning experience for the whole community.

If all these aspects remain positive, the project has a good probability of being sustainable.

3.10.14 Who is benefiting from the project and how do they benefit?

(A32, 33; B20, 21, 22, 23; C16)

The question was asked to find out whether the community at large is benefiting and how it benefits.

Thirty of the respondents participating in the project stated that the community at large is benefiting from the vegetable garden, because the people buy products at low cost for their homes and even sell the bought products to neighbouring villages to get their own money. However, seven participants stated that those benefiting from the project are the participants

only.

All the respondents said that the participants' families depend on the vegetable garden. The family members support the participants in that they encourage them to keep on with the work as it helps avoid kwashiorkor and other diseases. Three of the respondents suggested that only the participants benefit from the project, because they get money from the Department of Health and Welfare, their children are safe at the crèche and get medical services.

In interviews respondents participating in the food security project also stated that they are currently happy about the food security project. They now own the project because they too can decide on what to plant and when to plant, as they have the knowledge and ideas. They are not taught each and every thing as they were before the project started. The respondents are only given some advice and they are happy that the training they got from the officials of the Department of Agriculture was good and that they had been willing to learn. That is the reason why they can now stand on their own.



3.10.15 How much do the women get and what do they use the money for? (A27, 28, 29; B24, 25)

This question was asked to determine the income of the women participating in the project and whether the money can provide for their families.

All respondents participating in the project indicated that they get R180,00 per month from the Department of Health and Welfare. They also indicated that they will receive this money as long as the project can sustain itself. There is no one who earns more than others; even the group leader gets the same amount. The money the respondents get from the project is mostly used for paying school fees, buying groceries (maize meal, vegetables, cooking oil, bath and washing soap, candles and paraffin).

However, it remains an open question whether the project will be able to sustain itself after the first three years have passed and government funding is not made available any more.

In interviews spokespersons indicated that with the money they get from the project, they are able to pay school fees for their children, to buy food and meet some of the basic needs of their families. The spokespersons stated that they get fresh vegetables at a lower cost and they like that

because vegetables are good for their health. They even indicated that, through the project, they now know what is good for their health and that of family members, as they are visited by the nurses from the Department of Health and Welfare from Bochum and Pietersburg. The respondents are given advice on their health, how to look after themselves and their families.

In interviews, in terms of the expenditure patterns of the project, the officials and participants said that people taking part in the project are doing very well, as money was spent on allowances for the women participating in the project, diesel for the pump engine and on seedlings. After each and every quarter, the people submit a report on the funds and the statements and books are taken to an auditor who examines the financial records (Mothapo 1998: Pers.com.), as was also indicated as a project criterion (see Section 1.4.1).

3.10.16 Problems encountered in the project and how these problems are solved (A30, 31; B26, 27)

Four respondents participating in the project claimed that they do not have problems within the project and even among themselves, as everything seems to be running very well. Thirty-three respondents indicated, however, that they do encounter problems, that is, women disagreeing and

not being co-operative. The problems are solved by gathering, sitting together and discussing the issues. The problems are, however, primarily of a personal nature, as no respondent indicated that they had problems with officials.

In interviews the people taking part in the food security project also indicated that officials from both the departments (Agriculture and Health and Welfare) and the women participating in the project work together because both groups know the problems encountered and the progress made. They meet and discuss whatever does not make them feel happy or satisfied. The officials from the provincial Department of Health and Welfare, with the help of the participants and the villagers, have chosen a new management committee, consisting of project participants and members of the local community who know the needs of the community regarding the project (Manamela 1998: Pers.com.).

3.10.17 What is the family's staple food and are they satisfied with it?

If not, what else would they prefer? (B33, 34, 35, 35.1, 35.2, 35.3, 35.4)

This question was asked to find out what the staple food of the people is and whether it is nutritious or not.

All the respondents mentioned that their families eat maize meal each and every day, some twice a day and some thrice a day and therefore porridge is referred to as their staple food.

The respondents mentioned that some of the families are satisfied with the food they get, while some families are not satisfied, as they want more. The respondents stated that children are happy to eat vegetables, as they are healthy and no longer eat maize meal only.

3.10.18: How much money do respondents roughly use and are they happy with the amount and the food they buy? (B36, 37,38)

The question was asked to find out whether the money participants get covers their basic needs and whether they are happy with what they buy.

Eight respondents mentioned that they need more money than they get from the project. Twenty-nine are happy with the amount of food they buy, because before the introduction of the project they had nothing (that is, they had no money and could not buy vegetables at low cost). The respondents stated that they are satisfied because the money covers important daily basic needs.

It is clear that the project does make a difference in terms of living

standards for participants. In that sense the project is a large benefit to them and their families.

In interviews women taking part in the food security project also indicated that, even if they cannot afford all the things they would like, they are currently moving up in life because they now have things that they never thought could belong to them, like healthy food. They mentioned that people from other villages are even looking at them now as human beings and as women, which is why their number at the project is declining, because some have got married.

3.10.19 What are monthly household requirements? (B31, 32)

The question was asked to find out whether the respondents regard the vegetables acquired from the project as part of their monthly requirements. The respondents stated that their monthly requirements include buying maize-meal, vegetables, other groceries, such as washing and bath soap, candles, paraffin, cooking oil and sugar.

The respondents stated that the money they get from the project does not cover all their monthly requirements, but that it did make a large contribution.

3.10.20 What problems do participants experience when buying food and how do they solve these problems? (B39, 40)

The participants responded that when buying food they encountered some problems. They have money shortages and they are forced to open accounts at local shops to solve the problem, so that they can buy what they most need for the month. The money they get does not accommodate all their needs, and opening these accounts does not necessarily solve their problems, although it limits the problems temporarily.

The fact that the women have access to cash through their monthly payments has created a situation whereby they can get credit from local store keepers. As store keepers know that the women have an income, they are also more prepared to give credit. This, however, creates a situation where some women working on the project build up large debts at different stores and, while they might benefit from the project, they actually find themselves in other difficulties when they fail to pay all their accounts.

3.11 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Babina-Chuene Women's Multi-purpose Project at the Vergelegen village in the Bochum district is designed to assist rural women in alleviating poverty and **malnutrition** as well as diseases caused by

malnutrition found in the study areas. It empowers women to enhance their skills and economic productivity.

Women were chosen to be empowered because they are central to family life and are often those members of society that suffer most and are the poorest. Women are the ones who bear the responsibility for the family's needs. Many women are heads of families; and most such families are poor because there is no source of income, as employment opportunities are not available, except far away, in distant towns.

Through the project, women are involved in decision-making. Children are also a focus in the project in terms of childhood development.

The Department of Health and Welfare funded the food security project at the Vergelegen village from 1997 to 2000. There were also donations from SASKO (three containers) and TRANSNET (materials). The Department of Agriculture trains women on the processes of planting and harvesting and empowers the people to supervise the project to ensure that quality is attained, although at pronounced irregular intervals.

The Provincial Department of Welfare visits and monitors the food security project twice a month, ensuring that the project is on target, meets the requirements and that the criteria of the programme are met properly. The

officials from the Department of Health and Welfare work directly with women participating in the project.

Women participating in the Babina-Chuene Women's Multi-purpose Project do horticultural work. The project is a vegetable garden, which was introduced in 1996 and implemented in 1997, as was also indicated by the officials from the Department of Health and Welfare.

The planning process of the project involved the local people, *dintona* and the officials, but the women (that is the people who are participating) in the project were not involved in the planning or selection stages. The criteria used for selection were that the women should be single with children under the age of five, poor and not working.

The spokespersons indicated that with the help of the project, their lives had improved, as their children no longer suffer from diseases related to malnutrition and their families have access to low cost vegetables.

In terms of support from the community, most (34) of the respondents stated that the community as a whole gives them support, by encouraging them, while only three stated that they do not receive support at all. The officials indicated that they give support (encourage and give help when needed) to women so that they can feel at home when they are at the

project and not like strangers.

Most (26) of the respondents to Questionnaire B (those who participate in the food security project) stated that, before the implementation of the project, they were doing nothing, while eleven mentioned that they were working for local farmers. All respondents indicated that the project keeps them busy and gives them a living. At the project, the respondents indicated that they plant vegetables and maintain the vegetable garden. The respondents are given training on how to prepare the land, on seed planting processes, on irrigation and on harvesting.

The Babina-Chuene Women's Multi-purpose Project was funded for three years, from August 1997 to July 2000. When the funding process ends, the project should be able to sustain itself. If it does not sustain itself, it means it will 'die'. The women participating in the food security project received a monthly income of R180. If the project is not sustained, they will not be getting money any longer.

Participants of the food security project do not see any real problems with the project, other than personal squabbles and complaints that R180 per month is not enough remuneration. It would seem that the participants are satisfied with their involvement in the project.

When people are no longer hungry or living in poverty, they can fight diseases and; people become more secure, which leads to self-determination: a healthy person has freedom of thought and conscience (CSIR 1994:11).

Achieving food security for households and individuals is largely about helping people to establish secure and sustainable development. That is why the food security project in the study area has been implemented to help the villagers to get fresh vegetables and give single women with children under the age of five job opportunities and skills. Helping people to manage food stocks means helping them to develop livelihood strategies, making them less vulnerable to shocks and natural disasters.

Achieving food security in the Babina-Chuene Women's Multi-purpose Project is a big step towards food sufficiency from the vegetable garden for the families of people who are in need of food. For the women taking part in the food security project, it means that their families and the families of people from neighbouring villages who are in need of food, such as fresh and healthy vegetables, can obtain that resource.

Against the background of the findings set out above, the strengths and weaknesses of the project are evaluated in Chapter Four.