

Pilot Project Impact Assessment

March 2022



**FOOD FOR
THE HUNGRY**

thrive

PLANTING HOPE.
HARVESTING CHANGE.

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Executive Summary

One of the most significant challenges today is hidden hunger, a lack of micronutrients, vitamins, and minerals essential to overall health. Over two billion people suffer from hidden hunger. In March 2021 Thrive for Good and Food for the Hungry Canada (FHC) joined efforts and launched a pilot project to support four countries in Africa and Asia.

Through the partnership, both sides committed to providing training and equipping communities to grow Life Gardens: organic gardens dense with highly nutritious crops and medicinal plants. The partnership would enhance, optimize and strengthen FHC's *Model Farmer* approach by infusing a deep focus on nutrition and biointensive farming. In addition, the partnership would serve as the first 'beta' test to validate Thrive for Good's 'proof of concept' for the newly launched online training recently created.

Towards the end of the pilot project and after the majority of objectives and activities had been accomplished, Thrive for Good conducted an impact assessment. The assessment was completed with 120 community members considering a project sample to verify the initiative's impact. As part of the assessment, a survey was oriented to get feedback on the effectiveness of the training provided through the online platform and the benefit in the communities with the new "Life Gardens."



Considering the partnership objectives and survey feedback from participants, multiple key findings can be identified:

- Online Training and Partnership
 - The Thrive Institute online training is an effective tool to expand quickly and efficiently within a partnership with established communities.
 - Partnerships are an effective way to scale organizational impact and spread nutrition knowledge.
- Growing Health Champions and Training
 - Thrive's online training courses are easy to navigate and impact the learner's life by understanding the relevance of nutrition
 - The Growing Health Champions have new attitudes and understanding about agriculture and deep soil preparation and changed their old gardening style
- Community members and Lifestyle

- It is an increased belief in natural medicine's benefits that impact community members' health
- The families are eating healthier with diversity in their diets and making extra income with the surplus of the gardens

Everyone deserves the opportunity to grow strong and flourish, having the correct nutrition. The pilot project between Thrive for Good and FHC shows how combined efforts through partnerships can make an immense impact to end malnutrition in our lifetime.

The partnership expanded to four countries that were identified with serious micronutrient deficiencies.

Ultimately, the partnership impacted more than 5,000 community members that are now empowered to have healthy, nutritious food from the Life Gardens.

Upon project completion, 98% of those community members indicated they are now aware of vegetable consumption and the effects of inadequate nutrition. In addition, 99% improved their agriculture techniques and soil productivity, and 93% recognize the importance of Life Gardens to feed their families in the long term.



Partnership Overview

Since 2010 Thrive for Good has been training and equipping communities with hidden hunger to grow Life Gardens: organic gardens dense with highly nutritious crops and medicinal plants. Thrive empowers people with the knowledge and skills to produce nutritious, healthy, and life-giving vegetables.

Food for the Hungry Canada (FHC), a Christian non-profit organization dedicated to ending poverty, integrates a holistic approach to development. They include priorities such as agriculture, education, health, and gender equality to impact people's lives.

A twelve-month pilot program between FHC and Thrive was established to implement Thrive's method of bio-intensive agriculture through Life Gardens. Four countries ranked by the 2020 Global Hunger Index with serious micronutrient deficiencies were selected (Rwanda, Uganda, Cambodia, and Ethiopia; see Annex I). The program was designed to be executed in communities where FHC has already built strong relationships facilitating the spread of knowledge to more people.

Through the partnership, the pilot partnership set out to:

- prove the various aspects of the training and student/user experience to improve the newly launched online Thrive Institute;
- create over 40 new Life Gardens to feed the communities, achieve food security, and promote sustainable, nutritious agriculture;
- and also consent to spread a new nutrition understanding by training at least 20 Growing Health Champions (GHC) in charge of teaching about nutrition, medicinal plants and income generation.

This pilot project is assessed with a final impact survey conducted in February 2022, one month before the end of the pilot project. The objective of the Impact Assessment is to evaluate the impact of the activities undertaken in all the countries and determine the effectiveness of training and equipping FHC communities to grow Life Gardens. Gardens that are organic dense with highly nutritious crops and medicinal plants. Two feedback loops are also considered to complement the findings.

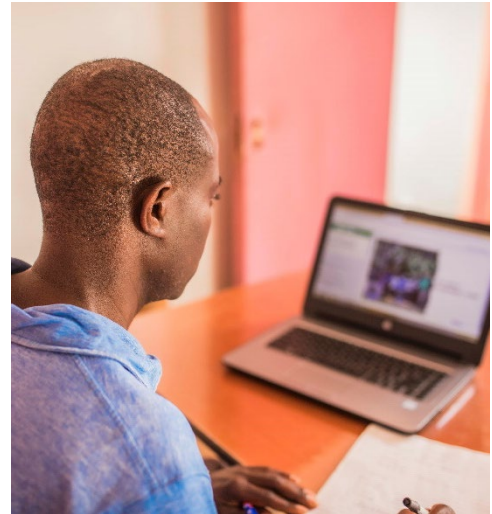
The first feedback loop (survey) was undertaken in July 2021 at the beginning of the project when each GHC completed their online course. Information was gathered about the experience and knowledge of the online training. After creating the first gardens, a follow-up feedback loop was conducted in August 2021. The data was collected through interviews using the Thrive for Good model for Feedback loops.

The partnership shows how a combined effort could lead to a win-win situation that provides sustainable development toward reducing hidden hunger in different countries. The main challenge faced during the execution was the COVID 19 pandemic, where the global food system was altered, exacerbating the inequalities and impacting the most vulnerable communities.

Both partners made an effort to continue with the activities despite the enormous challenge presented by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, facing country lockdowns, isolation, and the impossibility to reach rural members and gather them for workshops. The commitment of both partners to continue the program and feed the communities during those hard times of quarantine was the engine that kept the momentum going.

During this time, Thrive provided;

- The Thrive Institute¹,
- the methodology to increase the nutrition of gardens,
- online coaching with qualified and experienced trainers through WhatsApp groups and workplace platform,
- monthly reporting of garden progress and data verification,
- live Salesforce dashboard reporting a variety of metrics as;
 - the number of projects,
 - garden quality score,
 - quantity of meals produced
 - value of the food per month



Equally, FHC provided:

- contact with the communities who were benefited with gardens,
- resources and coordination to create the Life Gardens
- support to select the GHC that carried on the activities.
- communities served as the test model to improve the platform and the monthly reporting system that Thrive coordinates.

This report presents the final results of the impact survey, how the initiative has influenced the community members, the benefits in the areas, and some results of the project execution. The first section will explain the methodology, parameters, and considerations of the feedback loops and impact survey. In addition, it will showcase select data gathered through the feedback loops. The second section shows the summary of Thrive's partner impact dashboard, facilitated through Salesforce, and the evaluation process during the pilot project. The third part shows the findings and analysis of the impact survey results, considering a rigorous method from an international organization to assess the relevance of initiatives worldwide.

Impact Survey Results

In order to establish and identify the impact of the program in Cambodia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Ethiopia, two primary outcomes were set to measure:

- a) The effectiveness of the online training, coaching, and support and if it provided the necessary knowledge and tools to build and sustain Life Gardens
- b) If the creation of Life Gardens increases nutritious food, promotes a healthy lifestyle, and helps to generate an income.

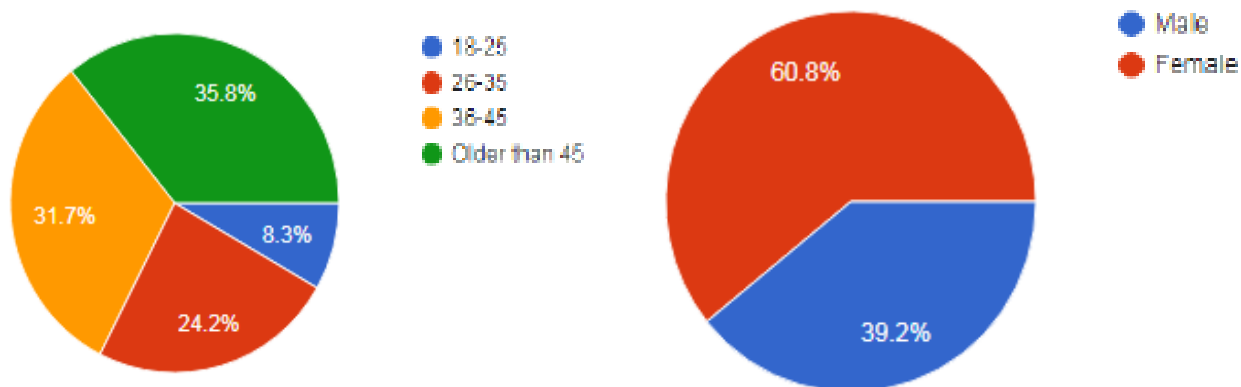
The success indicators and targets at the beginning of the pilot project were:

- a) Complete activities and provide support for twelve months.
- b) Select a minimum of 3 countries between Bangladesh, Cambodia, Rwanda, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Burundi.
- c) Train over 4,000 community members empowering to benefit from Life Gardens
- d) Increase the awareness with more than 65% of constituents of vegetable consumption and the importance of good and inadequate nutrition.
- e) Improve the agriculture techniques and soil productivity with more than 65% of the constituents.
- f) More than 80% of constituents recognize the importance of Life Gardens and need to sustain them to feed their families and community members.

A) Impact Assessment Strategy

In the assessment, 120 of 4,939 constituents were surveyed. The survey collects information on how people changed their minds towards nutrition, bio-intensive agriculture techniques, and Life Gardens' benefits to tackling hidden hunger. This sample was composed of 25% participants from Rwanda, 21% participants from Uganda, 28% from Cambodia, and 25% from Ethiopia.

Of the 120 surveyed participants, 60% were female. The age range was: 8.3% between 18 - 25 years old, 24.2% between 26 - 35 years old, 31.7% between 36 - 45 years old, and the majority 35.8% above 45 years old.



B) Data Processing & Analysis

First Feedback loop - Growing Health Champions

The Thrive for Good online training course comprises four modules: Organic Gardening, Nutrition, Natural Medicine, and Income Generation. In this pilot project, 24 Growing Health Champions completed the course. They answered questionnaires after each module, giving their opinion of the training, the knowledge acquired, and the platform's experience.

The survey findings show the experience to navigate within the learning platform has an average rate of 8.04 (i.e. 1 is very hard and 10 is easy to navigate)

- The courses impacted the learner's life in various ways by understanding topics such as; the relevance of plants for daily consumption reasons to get more healthy food. Awareness of the need to eat more greens, reduce sugar oil, and salt consumption, and carefully watch what they eat. Food diversification in their diets and the relevance of eliminating junk food and adding more greens to a daily diet also increased the belief in the benefits of natural medicine after perceiving the result in their bodies with fewer illnesses.
- They learned about agriculture and deep soil preparation, how to change the old gardening style, new attitudes, and knowledge towards agriculture. In addition, different and unique techniques to grow vegetables, protect the soil from adding nutrients, and get healthy soils and plants not using fertilizers were also taught. Lastly, members were trained to feed the soil for good yields, manage pests with companion plants, build fences, and the basics of income generation.



Second Feedback loop - Coordinators / leaders

In this feedback loop, ten people were interviewed via zoom. Interviews included four coordinators from FHC, three coordinators from Thrive, and three FHC Growing Health Champions that took the online course and trained the communities on how to build Life Gardens. The interview covered various topics and questions around the visible impact of champions trained, the course implementation, its effects on the communities, and the value-added of the partnership.

Feedback regarding four main topics was received; online training, areas of partnership improvement, benefits of the partnership, and challenges faced during the pilot implementation.

- *Online training*; The bio-agriculture module increased the GHC understanding of soil fertility and its benefits. The nutrition module helped the communities to change their food view, and it modified their eating habits to add more variety of vegetables and greens. The income generation module gave them a new way to approach agriculture. One part is consumed, and the other is used for trade. The natural medicine module opened the community's creativity to search for new medicinal plants available in their locations.
- *Areas of partnership improvement*: Thrive could give more guidance at the beginning of the project on topics like creating budgets, the qualifications of GH champions, and the steps required to coordinate the next stage for the creation of Life Gardens. In the case of FHC, the procurement process represented a serious challenge to start and continue the projects due to delays. In general, on-site practical learning and demonstrations could help the communities better understand creating Life Gardens.
- *Benefits of the partnership*. Thrive's trainers see this partnership as a way to expand fast and easily with communities already established and organized. If the partner already knows the communities, it is easier to coordinate activities and manage the people to generate a more significant impact. FHC coordinators and GHC expressed their interest in continuing the partnership beyond the pilot program to expand the benefits of Thrive's method to other communities. They see that the members of the communities are eating more balanced plates, are more conscious about nutrition, and in some cases, some members are generating an income from selling the vegetables. This last point has been fundamental to sustaining families during the pandemic.
- *Challenges in the pilot program*. The biggest challenge presented in this partnership was the pandemic restrictions that delayed the activities and canceled the gatherings. Some other difficulties were; the internet access in some areas and the poor knowledge on how to use some devices or technology to access the online training. Another challenge was Ethiopia and Cambodia's need to translate the material into the local language regarding the course. In addition, especially in Cambodia, the East African accent in the training platform was difficult for participants to understand.



Pilot Project Overview

During the pilot project, Thrive conducted a series of evaluations to keep track of the activities and the gardens' progress. Three types of evaluations were conducted regularly:

Monitoring (Monthly)

Each month the FHC growing health champions conducted a digital report on each community's Life Garden, and this information fed the live dashboard in Salesforce.

Evaluation (Quarter)

Every quarter the FHC Growing Health Champions recorded a 1-minute video showing the garden and sent it to the M&E responsible at Thrive.

Evaluation (Annual)

One month before the end of the pilot project, Thrive conducted an impact assessment of a sample of the community members who participated in the project.

The following images show the data retrieved from the Salesforce dashboard elaborated for Food for the Hungry that helped to assess the pilot project progress in each stage.

As shown in the dashboards below the final partnership project outcomes were:

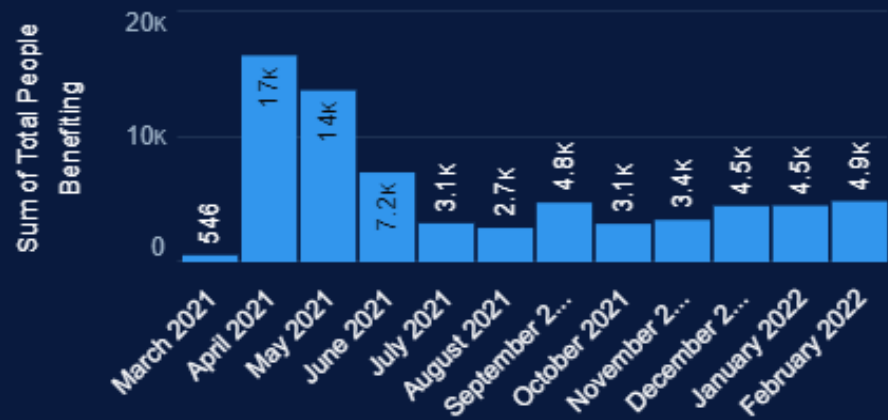
- 47 Life Gardens
- Total community members impacted close to 5,000
- The Life Gardens generate over 74,000 meals per month,
- \$28,000 USD per month, which sums to \$330,000 per year is generated through the Life Gardens

This data and the responses of the constituents participating in the sample make it clear that the sustainability of the gardens in the long term becomes crucial.

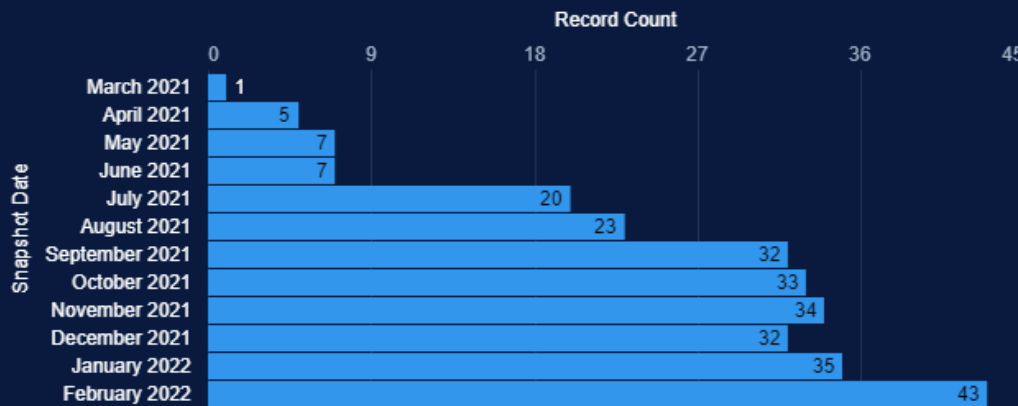
The community members see value in continuing with the gardens in the coming years; to feed their families, fight malnutrition and illnesses caused by the low consumption of vegetables, and continue an excellent lifestyle to keep their family healthy and protected from diseases. Also, to have enough vegetables with a high density of nutrients available at home to eat daily, eliminate the consumption of chemicals and fertilizers and reduce the family's cost from buying food in other places. At the same time, the creation of Life Gardens benefits families as a source of income.



Total People Benefitting (Monthly) (GPS)



MoM Total Active Projects



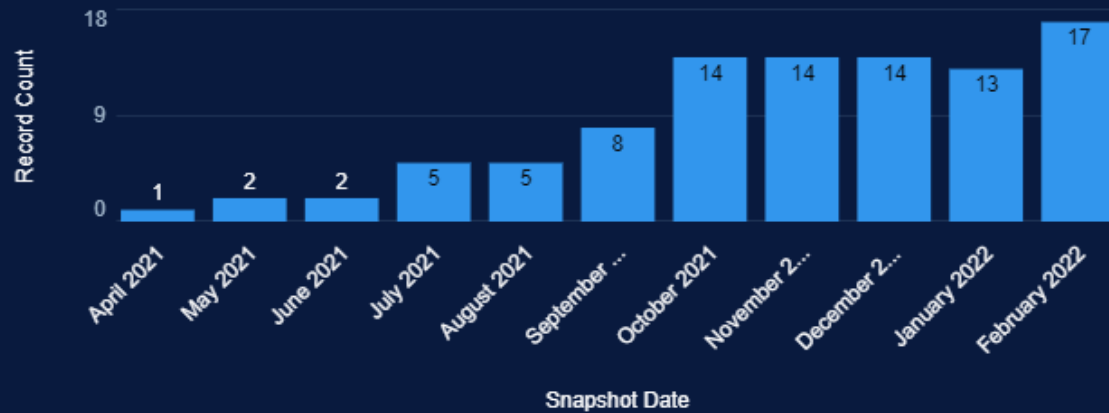
[View Report \(MoM Total Active Projects\)](#)

YoY Total Active Projects



[View Report \(YoY Total Active Projects\)](#)

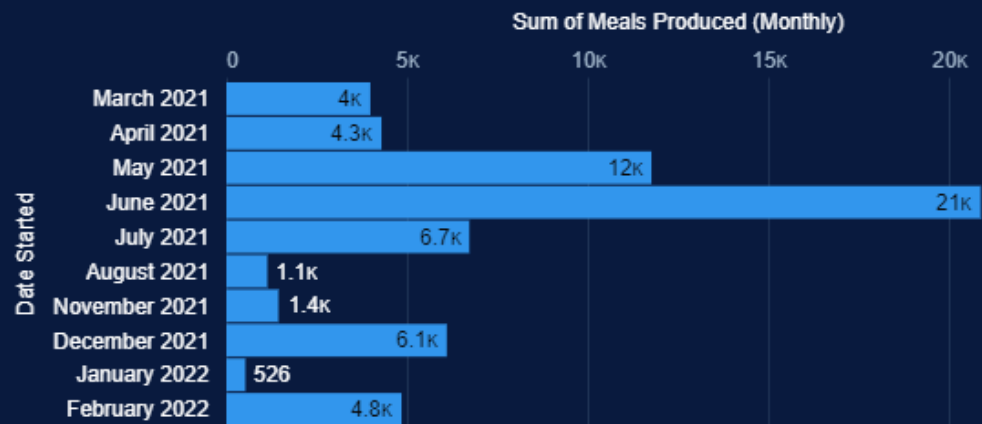
Projects Generating Income by Month



[View Report \(Generating Income - MoM\)](#)

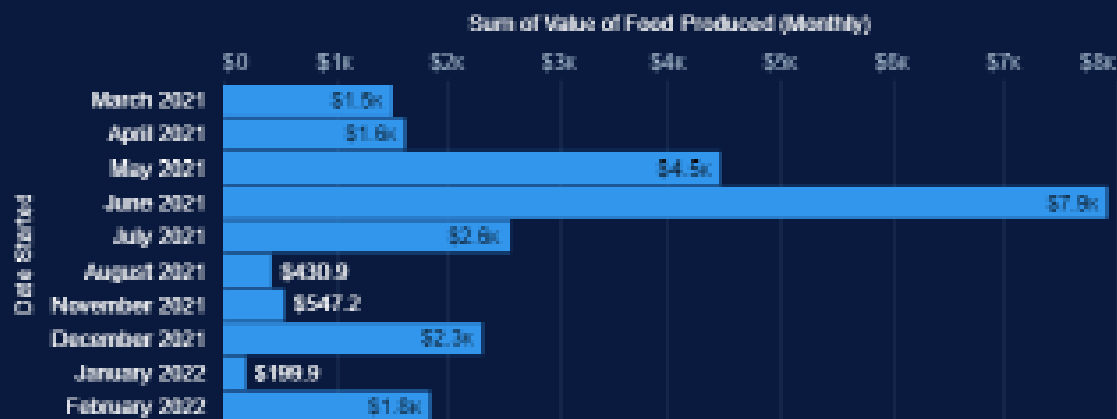


Total Meals Produced per Month



[View Report \(Value of Food Produced \(Monthly\)\)](#)

Value of Food Produced per Month



[View Report \(Value of Food Produced \(Monthly\)\)](#)

Findings & Analysis

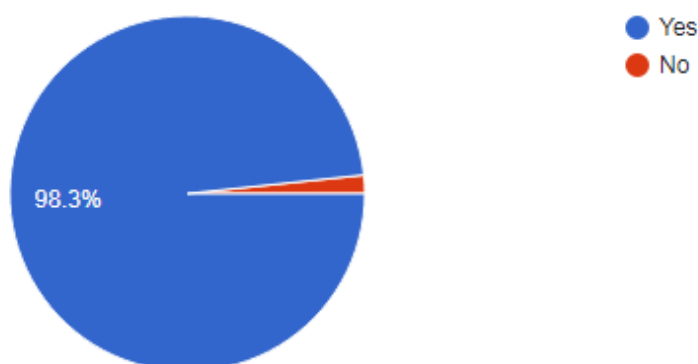
A) Impact

From this sample, approximately 35% did not consume highly nutritious greens and vegetables more than three times per week before establishing Thrive's Life Gardens. In addition, 51% did not know about medicinal plants and their benefits. Furthermore, 98% learned the importance of nutrition within the communities and how poor or good nutrition affects their body and health.

The vast majority of constituents, 98%, believe that creating Life Gardens provides them with a healthier life. Some of them explain that this is the consumption of more vitamins, a balanced diet, and strengthening the immune system. Having access to vegetables close to their home to eat reduces incidences of illnesses. The medicinal plants are eliminating some sores, and they see the benefit of the consumption of vegetables without chemicals in their bodies. The Life Gardens provide more varieties of vegetables than the kitchen gardens and the opportunity to sell and increase their income.

Do you think that the creation of gardens is providing you a healthier lifestyle?

120 responses



Testimony,

Belina is a project member who took the training from the GH champion. She says that her family members are improving their feeding culture by eating the vegetables from the gardens. The kids have a balanced diet and are improving their health status. Additionally, she sells beetroots for USD 10, carrots for USD 5, and head cabbage for consumption. She praised God for his work.... **Belina Shifera, Ethiopia**

B) Relevance

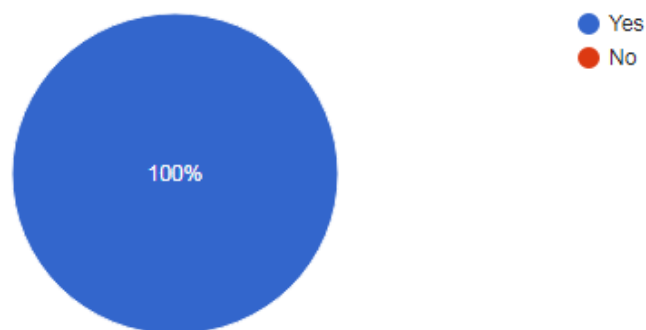
It was confirmed that this approach helped the communities to understand the relevance of nutrition and tackle hidden hunger. In addition, the partnership provided them with tools to nourish their families and helped generate income to sustain their families. The initiative helps

92% of the community's members with the challenges of buying food to feed their families and provides an income from vegetables to 79%.

As the following graphic shows, all 120 of the participants believe that it is essential for the community to increase their consumption of vegetables. The reason for this is that; they can fight malnutrition and keep a healthy body. The vegetables are high in nutrients fundamental to having a healthy body. Their community members will grow healthier, and with more energy, they will avoid hidden hunger and reduce illnesses. The diversity in the consumption of vegetables improves skin and body health and food security within their families.

Do you think it is important for the community to increase the consumption of vegetables?

120 responses



Testimony

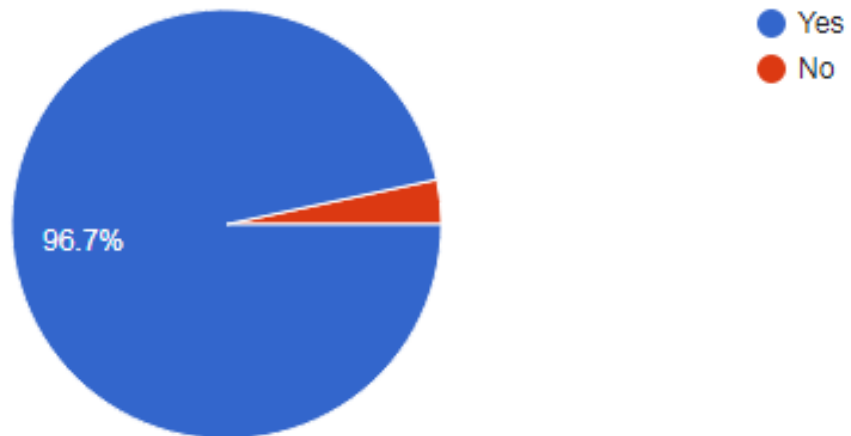
*Stanley has been facing joint pain for the last six months, and we introduced her to artemisia tea. He took artemisia tea for two days, and now she is doing great; the joints are better, and she has no signs of pain again; thanks, Thrive for good for the knowledge. **Stanley Wangalwa, Uganda***

C) Coherence

The survey included several questions exploring the logic and consistency of the program to the community's needs. Essentially, was the establishment of Life Gardens addressing community needs. 96% of the community members are fed with the gardens; this will substantially increase the ingestion of micronutrients rich in vitamins and minerals. The results also show that 97% have seen a difference in the soil and its ability to produce more food from the garden; more families have food in less land space.

Is the garden helping to feed members in your community?

120 responses



Testimony

*"I am pleased to join the Thrive Project, five day-workshop aligned to actual practice. Some members and I have grown and got many yields such as glory morning, spinach, eggplants, bok choy etc. We are now using more natural fertilizers in all those vegetables. We have shared those in groups, older people, and even monks. Additionally, my family can eat those healthier vegetables so that we rarely get illnesses. Lastly, I will continue growing more natural vegetable and medicine plants." life gardener **Mrs. Nhoung Lap, Cambodia***

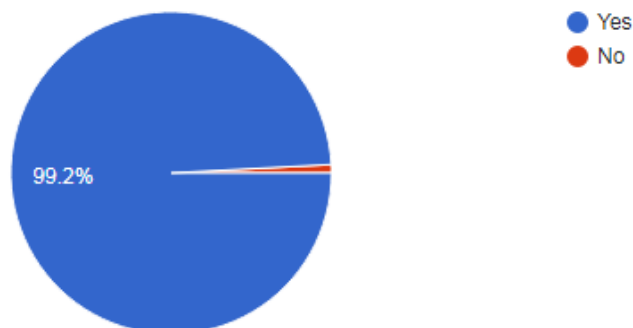
D) Effectiveness

The main objective of the pilot project is to train and equip communities with sufficient tools to learn how to create a Life Garden, provide nutritious food and tackle hidden hunger. The effectiveness is visible through the 98% of respondents who believe they have sufficient knowledge to start a new garden within their community.

As the graphic shows below, 99% noticed a difference between the old agriculture and farming techniques compared to the ones they learned and applied in the gardens. This comes with a desire to continue with the project recognizing the importance of good nutrition within their community, and that is a way to protect their families with a balanced diet. They are already starting new gardens and helping their neighbors to have their own.

Have you noticed a difference in the old agriculture and farming techniques compared to the new techniques applied with the gardens?

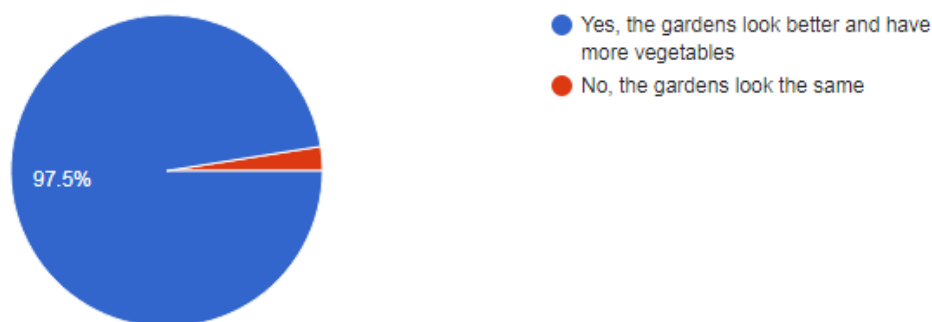
120 responses



Moreover, around 97% can notice the difference in land fertility and production. So they are using the garden to feed their families.

Have you seen a difference in the soil and its ability to produce more food from a garden?

120 responses



Testimony

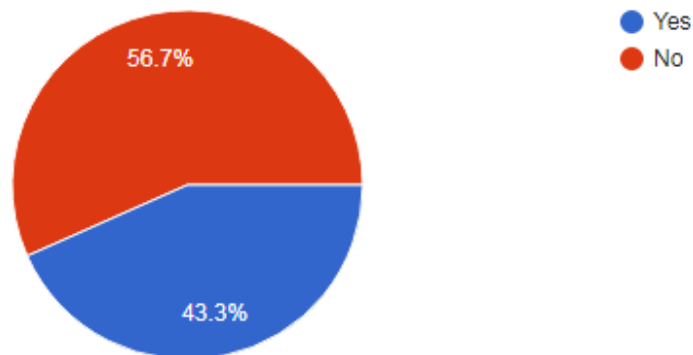
*It was my first time learning how to build kitchen gardens. But now we have kitchen gardens well planted with vegetables and eggplants. We have enough, and we sell the surplus. **Mama Sarah Kakai. Uganda.***

E) Efficiency

The project's resources were used to deliver the training to the communities and buy seeds and tools to build the gardens. Around 99% understand biointensive gardens, nutrition, medicinal plants, and income generation and take care of the practice area's gardens. Thrive teaches table banking to keep the gardens through time, where the community members organize, sell vegetables, save money, and buy seeds. Currently, just 43% of community members are table banking and saving funds.

Are you Table Banking and using saved money to keep the garden going each month?

120 responses



Testimony

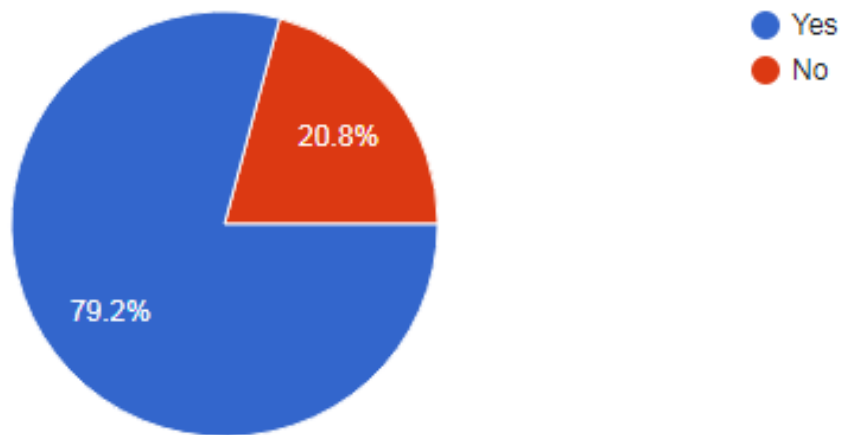
*Consessa is 55 years old and a mother of 9 children. She could not find a way to feed their children and pay the requirements in the family, and therefore she was ashamed to have many children with no food at home. Emotionally and physically, she was affected, which caused her to be under daily pressure about her family's future living conditions after being involved in this project as a volunteer from FH Rwanda and a farmer representative at a community level. The life gardens helped her entire family to have a balanced diet as they adopted the culture of vegetable consumption as the primary source of vitamins and minerals to protect them against different diseases. **Consessa Nyiramakuba, Rwanda***

F) Sustainability

It is essential to keep a balanced diet and healthy habits for an extended period. Therefore the sustainability of the gardens becomes crucial to keep healthy communities. When the participants were asked about the relevance of looking after the gardens, 93% recognized that it is essential even when the partnership is over. Income generation reinforces the project's sustainability due to the sale of vegetables. For instance, 79% of the participants in the survey are already generating income, as the graphic shows. In this scenario, 91% believe and plan to keep the garden for two years.

Is the garden providing you any income from the sale of vegetables?

120 responses



Testimony

*I often get pain in my bones as I move my legs or back. After I trained in life gardening, I realized the benefit of natural medicine that can treat my sickness as a moringa leaf. I started to plant it in my garden, and I ate the moringa leaf as serving food for my family. I realized that my body gets healthier as my legs, back and bones. Now, I feel good and happy. I will keep planting and eating this medicine plan. **Mr. Pae Chan, Cambodia***



Key Learnings

Throughout the partnership, Thrive collected key information on 'key learnings' through established feedback loops, learner reports, and the impact assessment survey.

Key learnings will be used to enhance future partnerships and potentially serve to increase the impact and effectiveness of an expander partnership between Thrive for Good and FHC.

These learnings include:

- Combining in-person and online training with a hybrid method delivers maximum impact where a trainer can support practical activities.
- Thrive will provide more templates to make the project understanding easier and also on how to implement it.
- Make emphasis on the relevance for the GHC to have smartphones and access to the internet.
- At the beginning of the partnership, translate critical documents into the local language.
- Ensure that goals are established, and all stakeholders are aligned prior to launching the project.
- Consider the purchase of the internet when constructing the budget.
- There is a need to have an M&E from the partner's side to organize the GHC and submit reports.
- Establish mechanisms to give access to the data collected every month either to Program directors or coordinators leading the GHC
- Provide at the beginning of the partnership a calendar of evaluations and submission of reports. Consider holidays for reporting.
- Some GHC will require practical training in the use of devices.
- In selecting the GHC, consider the capacity and time available for the project.
- Improve the reporting not to repeat questions every month that should be evaluated every quarter.
- Consider a Coordinator or Master trainer responsible for managing the partnership and program expansion.
- Consider providing paper notes so the community members can review them.
- Make practical videos of a 5-day workshop to know the materials used, the setting, and practical details of how to execute it. People understand better by watching examples.

Conclusions & Program Expansion

Implementing the Pilot Project within the Covid 19 pandemic was a challenge. Still, the results showed that when partners work together, the opportunities to change lives increase, and the obstacles are minimized.



The partnership allowed nearly 5,000 community members to have healthy, nutritious food from the Life Gardens when the objective was 4,000; together the partners impacted four countries with serious micronutrient deficiencies. The results were far superior from the baseline established as indicators of success.

Now, 98% of the stakeholders are aware of vegetable consumption and the effects of inadequate nutrition from the 65% parameter established.

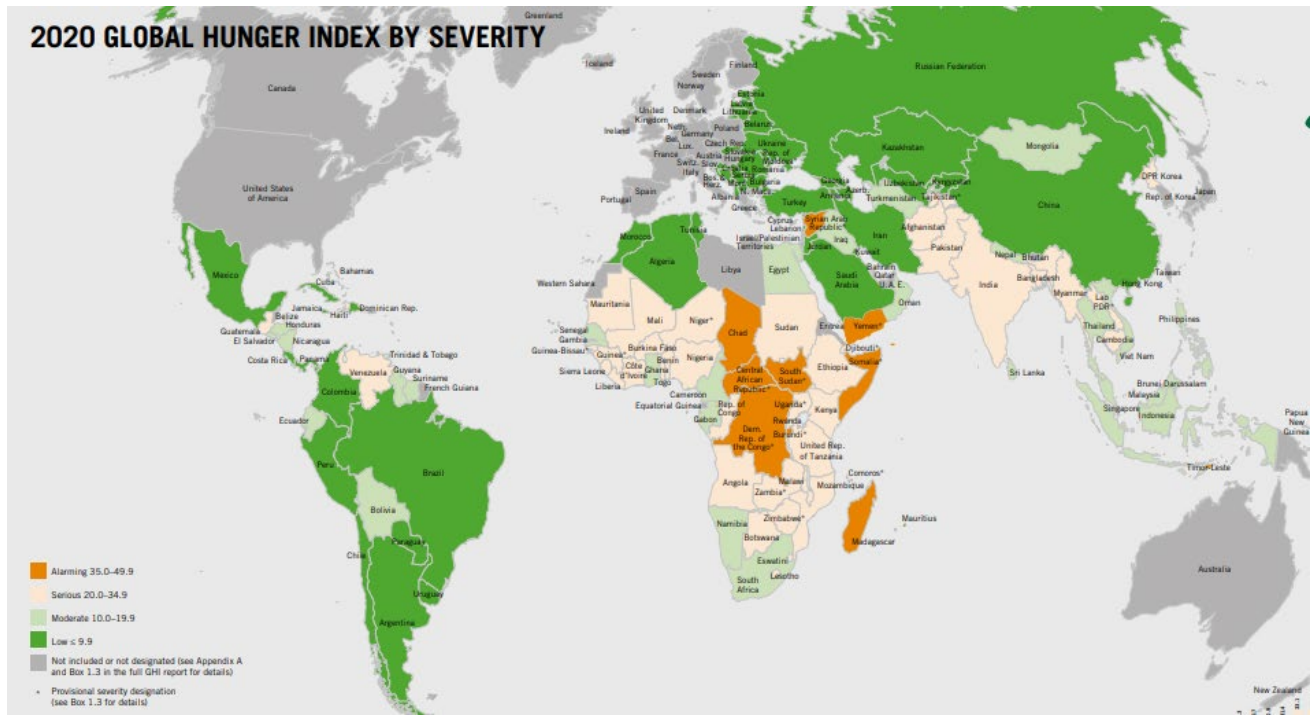
Around 99% of community members improved their agriculture techniques, and soil productivity over the 65% the partnership was aiming for.

Moreover, 93% of constituents recognize the importance of Life Gardens and the need to sustain them to feed their families and community members over the 80% parameter established as an indicator of success.

The testimonies from the FH communities are the most explicit example of the impact of this initiative and how it is transforming people's lives (see Annex II). With these impact results, overall partnership results and key learnings, it is safe to assume that the impact could be scaled to a much broader stakeholder group and set of countries.

Annexes

Annex I Global Index Hunger by Severity 2020.



Annex II
Additional Testimonies

Tadesse is one of the individuals organized under the Thrive for Good project. He took the 5-day workshop and confirmed that the training provides practice on the farmer's plot of land; he believes that the training is unique. Tadesse has never faced such training even though he has participated in the different agricultural training. He said he used to be trained by development agents on agricultural topics in the school.

His testimony mainly emphasizes hidden hunger. He thought that the maize and sorghum were sufficient feedings for the family. After the training, he understood that all the families demanded other life-giving foods and a balanced diet.

Tadesse Gudina also told us that he cascaded the training to his family members, and all his children are working with him to produce the vegetables. The project provided him with vegetable seeds and farm tools to support his family's work on vegetable production. He trained and harvested the vegetables for consumption, and the remaining ones are for sale. After the harvest, they started consuming the vegetables. Bona, his sponsored kid, told us that he always claps his hand when he finds the vegetable feedstuff on his dish. He said the vegetables are lovely.

Gudina told us that their feeding habits have changed. Vegetables became his main diet in the family, and also he is selling carrots for \$5. He transported the vegetable to the market every week and started developing an income for the family. Finally, he said he had brought behavioural and attitudinal changes due to the project. His final word was that food is medicine. He found that his family's health status improved as the usual food component of the household became vegetables.

*Thus, Gudina said that he got a balanced diet, developed a healthy family, rehabilitated the damaged land, which has lost fertility for a longer duration. **Gudina Tadesse Project Director Ethiopia***

*Before, I practiced the old technique is to get a low income, but after I had learned new agriculture techniques, I had more income and good health from eating vegetables. Thank you so much for training our group and me. **Mr. Yin Chhit, Cambodia***

*I am so pleased to hear about online courses that capacitate us and help us work hard. The more I learn, the more I contribute to community development and improve the livelihood of the targeted communities. I will keep in touch with you to learn more. Last year we did a lot. We organized 11 groups and improved vegetable seeds and farm tools after training. Everything that we did was fruitful. The members of communities benefited from the project. The farmers were selling onion and garlic to the local market. They developed income for the family. Organic food preparation became highly practiced in the area. Due to security problems, we stacked for a few months, and now we have resumed. We will organize more groups in the future, and we will return to you with good news. Thank you so much, and God bless you. **Abera Shagrdi - Project Manager, Ethiopia***

*I am very excited and pleased to join the Thrive Project, a 5-Day Workshop aligned to actual practice. Members and I have learned a lot of new techniques from the Thrive Project, like double-digging, making garden beds, making keyhole gardens and more. Before the training, I practiced old techniques and generated a low income. After the training, I learned new techniques to generate a higher income gained confidence and good health from eating more vegetables. Thank you so much for training our group and me and teaching us new techniques. My knowledge has grown, and I learned more than before. **Mr. Tol Tin - Life Garden Leader, Cambodia***