PRESS RELEASE from THE FACE-TO-FACE PROJECT (www.facetoface.org) 2020.04.16

Face-to-Face Malawi Covid-19 Victory Garden Response: LAUNCH
Preparing Rural Communities in Malawi for the Coronavirus

As its government announces a nationwide lockdown, rural Malawi is extremely vulnerable to Covid-19 because of its density of people, social patterns that encourage close contact, prevalence of comorbid conditions, and lack of an adequate healthcare system. With rising number of coronavirus cases and deaths, Malawi villagers need immediate help to prepare for a crisis.

From April 16, 2020, Face-to-Face is mobilizing 300 facilitators to teach 80,000 villagers to protect themselves from Covid-19, help them strengthen short-term and long-term food security through home victory gardens, and distribute soap and masks.

Anticipating prolonged hardships from Covid-19’s global economic fallout, Face-to-Face’s Response prepares villagers to keep the virus out of their communities and persevere through ensuing long shortages of food, supplies, and income.

Malawi Project cost: $48,125 Partners: Women Together (www.womentogetherglobal.com)

Face-to-Face Cambodia Covid-19 Victory Garden Response: LAUNCH
Preparing Rural Communities in Cambodia for the Coronavirus

Like Malawi, Cambodia is also very vulnerable to Covid-19.

From April 15, 2020, Face-to-Face is mobilizing 19 facilitators to teach 2,250 villagers in 500 families to protect themselves from Covid-19, help them strengthen short-term and long-term food security through victory gardens, and distribute soap and masks.

These families, who live in Cambodia’s rural Pursat Province, will then pass on their knowledge of both Covid-19 and victory gardens to their friends, families, and neighbors.

Cambodia Project cost: $5,115 Partner: Sustainable Cambodia (www.sustainablecambodia.org)
## MALAWI: OVERVIEW OF THE RESPONSE

**Mission**  
Preparing 80,000 people in rural Malawi for a Covid-19 outbreak and long-term hardship due to the fallout of Covid-19’s effect on world economies.

**Location**  
14 Traditional Authority Districts (TA) in Central and Southern Malawi (TAs Tsabango, Chadza, Chimutu, Mazengera, Chiseka, Malili, Masumankhunda, Mkhumba, Mkanda, Kaledzera, Jenala, Kaduya)

**Time Period**  
April 16, 2020 through July 15, 2020 (4 months)

**Response**  
282 facilitators grouped in 82 teams

**Team**  
11 field officers  
7 F2F Malawi staff, 2 F2F USA staff, 2 F2F Board Members

**Budget**  
$48,125 (USD)

**Goals**
1. Giving 20,000 families, representing 80,000 people, the knowledge to protect themselves from Covid-19
2. Providing 20,000 families with soap and masks
3. Promoting victory gardens as a way for people to practice physical isolation
4. Helping people sustain and improve their existing victory gardens to strengthen family food security
5. Getting villagers to understand victory gardens as a low-risk strategy that will help them persevere through long-term hardships brought on by Covid-19’s impact on local, national, and global economies
6. Harnessing the authority of 359 group village headmen and their subordinate village chiefs to spearhead the activities in this Response in their respective communities
7. Ensure that existing victory gardens are not abandoned if Malawi’s economy takes a sharp turn for the worse, prompting villagers to leave home in search of work or aid

**Activities**  
Covid-19 workshops for staff, facilitators, group village headmen and village chiefs  
Mask-making, by local tailors  
Soap-making, by local villagers  
Mask and soap distribution, by facilitator teams, to 20,000 households  
Victory garden workshops, held with Covid-19 workshops  
Victory garden monitoring

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*Location of the 14 Traditional Authority Districts where the Response takes place*
THE SITUATION

A Dangerous Situation
As Covid-19 devastates the world, Malawi waits without a master plan to counter what could happen if the virus were to take hold in the country. Malawi has a high density of people, social patterns that encourage close contact, the prevalence of comorbid conditions such as TB, HIV, malaria, and malnutrition, and a lack of a functioning healthcare system. All of these factors will increase the impact of Covid-19.

The Best Defense is Preparation
As nearby South Africa reaches 2,500 cases as of April 14, 2020, Malawi is bracing for a long battle against Covid-19. By far the best defense that Malawi can offer against Covid-19 is to be prepared. Cutting through rumors and false information that dominate its media, Malawi needs a way to educate its rural population on how they can prevent the virus from gaining a significant foothold in their communities.

THE RESPONSE

Mobilizing a Network of Facilitators
Face-to-Face’s successful victory garden campaign, started in 2016, can quickly mobilize its network of 82 teams of 282 garden facilitators, and 11 on-the-ground field officers to teach villagers to prepare themselves for Covid-19. These teams have already established direct relationships with 359 group village headmen and their subordinate village chiefs in 14 Traditional Authority (TA) districts in central and southern Malawi.

The first goal will be to ensure that the group village headmen and their subordinate chiefs give their pledge of support and engagement to the Response. They will be asked to lead by example, practicing social distancing, hand washing, and wearing masks.

Community Workshops on Covid-19 and Victory Gardens
After thorough training of staff, who then train facilitators and field officers, Face-to-Face will oversee a series of community workshops that introduce villagers to Covid-19 and make sure they understand the importance of victory gardens in this time of coronavirus.

These public town hall meetings teach villagers how to practice physical distancing, not touching one’s face, hand washing, and mask use. The meetings also discuss ways to improve and sustain one’s gardens, so that their gardens are ready for the upcoming dry season (with its usual challenge of lack of water) and combine short-term and long-term plantings to ensure a steady food supply throughout the year.

The workshops first target the 20,000 families who already have victory gardens, along with village executive committees and other community leaders. It is crucial that existing victory gardens be sustained through this crisis as a vital resource and positive example. It is also key that villagers experience...
increasingly larger benefits from their gardens, especially if Malawi’s economy starts to collapse and people begin leaving home in search of work or aid.

**Soap Making and Distribution**

We anticipate a soap shortage in rural Malawi communities, especially with the government imposed travel lockdown starting from April 18.

Face-to-Face is partnering with Women Together (WT), an organization that facilitates women teaching other women, to quickly produce 80,000 bars of soap by the end of April. As soon as soap allotments are finished by WT, F2F will take them into the field. WT personnel will also undergo F2F’s Covid-19/victory garden trainings, so as to spread this knowledge in their respective communities.

The facilitator teams, in cooperation with chiefs, are responsible for distributing the soap to 20,000 families, making sure people understand how and when to wash hands, and safe practices when at a water pump or borehole.

**Mask Making and Distribution**

We are certain that there will be a shortage of masks in Malawi, with little hope of restocking.

The Response will approach local tailors in each of the 10 Traditional Authority districts and ask them to follow very simple patterns to produce 80,000 cloth masks; we anticipate we will distribute 4 masks per family, probably at the same time the soap is distributed. The cloth masks can be washed in warm, soapy water, enabling their re-use.

**THE RELEVANCE OF VICTORY GARDENS**

Home victory gardens are a powerful, sensible strategy for villagers to use in the face of Covid-19, with many repercussions on local, national, and world economies. Here’s why:

- The gardens keep people at home. There is less need for them to go to the markets, especially those that are in more urban areas. The gardens make it easier for people to practice self-isolation and physical distancing.
- Families can access nutritious, clean food, which is always a challenge in Malawi. Family health improves when they have a victory garden.

We anticipate Malawi will face numerous challenges due to decreases in funding, in aid, in foreign business activities in the country, in the many supplies brought into the country, and in disruptions in transportation of goods and services. These will all make life more difficult for the villagers, the majority of whom live hand to mouth. As villagers face increasing difficulties that stem from Covid-19’s impact on world, national, and local economies, the gardens provide both food and a source of income to families.

Importantly, the gardens are low-risk; they are resilient to adverse weather and natural challenges, they require no money to create or maintain, and they can be quickly rebuilt if they happen to be damaged or destroyed. For families with debt and no income, the gardens can help them survive.
## SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Target Area</strong></th>
<th>10</th>
<th># of Traditional Authority districts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>359</td>
<td># of Group Village Headmen communities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td># of households in the above 359 communities</td>
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<td>280,000</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Beneficiaries</strong></th>
<th>20,000</th>
<th># of families directly benefitting from the Response</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>approx. # of people in the above 20,000 families</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Response Team</strong></th>
<th>282</th>
<th># of facilitators, grouped in 82 teams</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td># of field officers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td># of staff and board members</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Budget</strong></th>
<th>$500</th>
<th>flip charts, printing costs, water dispensers, minutes and data</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>Facilitator &amp; field officer stipends (covered by existing funding)</td>
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<td>$14,650</td>
<td>Facilitators &amp; field officer incentives ($50/p x 293pp)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$21,000</td>
<td>Production &amp; distribution for 80,000 masks @ $0.25/mask</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$7,600</td>
<td>Production &amp; distribution for 80,000 soap bars @ 7 cents/bar</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous, 10% of expenses</td>
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<td>$48,125</td>
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![Magret Bwanali and family in their victory garden, Phalombe district](image.png)
CAMBODIA: OVERVIEW OF THE RESPONSE

Mission  Preparing 2,250 people in rural Cambodia for a Covid-19 outbreak and long-term hardship due to the fallout of Covid-19’s effect on world economies

Location  16 villages in 6 communes in Pursat Province
          Villages: Anlong Hab, Beung Chuk, Chumron Seam, Dong Ey, Dongkeap Kdam, Dong Rong, Kbal Romeas, Oroka, Plov Krobey, Prek Takong, Prey Omal, Roleap, Sdok Chum, Spean, Toul Krous, Toul Makak

Time Period  April 16, 2020 through July 15, 2020 (4 months)

Response  17 facilitators
Team  2 Sustainable Cambodia/F2F Cambodia staff, 2 F2F USA staff

Budget  $5,115 (USD)

Goals  1. Giving 500 families, representing 2,250 people, the knowledge to protect themselves from Covid-19
       2. Providing 500 families with soap and masks
       3. Promoting victory gardens as a way for people to practice physical isolation
       4. Helping people sustain and improve their existing victory gardens to strengthen family food security
       5. Getting villagers to understand victory gardens as a low-risk strategy that will help them persevere through long-term hardships brought on by Covid-19’s impact on local, national, and global economies
       6. Harnessing the authority 6 commune chiefs and their team of important community leaders to spearhead the activities in this Response in their respective communities
       7. Ensure that existing victory gardens are not abandoned if Cambodia’s local economy takes a sharp turn for the worse, prompting villagers to leave home in search of work

Activities  Covid-19 workshops for staff, facilitators, and commune chiefs and other important community leaders
            Mask-making, by local tailors
            Soap-making, by local villagers
            Mask and soap distribution, by facilitator teams, to 500 households
            Victory garden workshops, held with Covid-19 workshops
            Victory garden monitoring

Location of the 16 villages where the Response takes place
THE SITUATION, THE RESPONSE, & THE RELEVANCE OF VICTORY GARDENS

Please refer to these sections in the Malawi Response, as the situation, response, and relevance are very similar to what is happening in Cambodia.

SUMMARY

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<td>1</td>
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Mask made by sewing students at Sustainable Cambodia

Khun Nim and husband in their victory garden, Pursat Province