

Discover Newsletter for colleagues in Africa

June 2022

Part 1: Food security when prices are sky high



Dear Friends and colleagues,

First droughts and torrential rains associated with the climate crisis, and then COVID, have made daily survival more challenging. Now the Russian invasion in Ukraine has made matters

considerably worse throughout the entire world. The increased cost of energy and therefore of transport has itself caused prices to rise. The reduced output of grain and vegetable oil from Ukraine is creating international shortages.

What do we learn from this? Firstly, that war is madness! War causes death, destruction, poverty and hunger. Everything you do in your communities to resolve conflicts and to live in peace makes a massive contribution to improving health and welfare.

Secondly, you, your family and your community must strive to be as self-reliant in food production as possible.

I make a few suggestions. Please add more of your own!



Group discussions, resolving conflicts and making decisions together are essential aspects of community development. It is democracy in practice. The picture shows Robert Bwambale with members of one of his school discover clubs.

1. Diversify your

diet. Do not be dependent on one staple food such as maize or rice. There are many good, traditional vegetables that I have mentioned before.

2. Develop a network of expertise in the community. It is not possible for everyone to cultivate everything! Perhaps some community members produce excellent sweet potatoes, another produces goat's milk, another has a fishpond, another grows excellent fruit (jackfruit or pineapples), another produces eggs etc. Then you can arrange to rely on each other and exchange products.

3. Practice agroforestry, so that your produce from your land is maximised and you have some protection against drought and flooding.

Please read part 2 of this June newsletter very carefully, which will come in a second email. It is written by a very competent American agriculturalist, who has a lot of experience in Africa. Follow his advice, and you should always have food!



Makabuli Yusuf collects seeds from 12 communities around Mount Elgon in Uganda. They are sorted and then used in community nurseries. Here melia seeds are washed after being soaked in water overnight.

4. Construct a solar drier and dry foods when they are plentiful – for example mangoes, jackfruits or cassava.
5. Soap has also leapt up in price. Make your own and teach your communities to do so.
6. Even seedlings are more expensive! Plant and care for trees. But do not rely on buying seedlings. Choose the trees you wish to grow, and then go out and collect seeds from those trees, or grow new trees from cuttings. Nelson Moyo and his team in Malawi grew 7000 seedlings in this way, most of which were indigenous, and then planted them out in the community.
7. Then you need pots. You do not need plastic – simply use newspaper, toilet roll centres or banana leaves. This video shows how to make pots out of newspaper:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGfMRACEgw>

With best wishes to you and your communities in these challenging times,
Keith Lindsey and the Discover Team