

TRANSFORMING SOUTHERN AFRICA

One village at a time.



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

World Food Programme Southern Africa Region
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Foreword

As the gap between rural and urban communities widens, opportunities, infrastructure, and development discrepancies become even more apparent. Many young people are migrating from rural to urban areas for a better life.

WFP has introduced the Rapid Rural Transformation (RRT) intervention in four villages in the Anosy and Androy regions of Madagascar. The initiative aims to help rural communities fulfil their basic food requirements by implementing agricultural initiatives and ensuring that they participate in food value chains. It is water, energy, and food interventions that allows for the modernisation of food systems. WFP leverages its traditional activities intended to support human capital and increase resilience while also implementing new approaches, such as providing infrastructure and services and promoting innovation, to increase agricultural productivity and livelihood diversification, particularly for youth and women in rural areas.

“It can be scaled up, expanded and customised to suit rural contexts”

WFP collaborated with the government, donors, and community members to install solar energy hubs and equipment in four rural villages in Madagascar. The objective was to strengthen the community's ability to withstand climate shocks. The hubs offer green energy,

water, and digital technology, benefiting the community in numerous ways. For instance, women no longer must travel long distances to fetch water, learners can study using digital technology, and entrepreneurs can improve their income opportunities.

The Rapid Rural Transformation can be scaled up, expanded, and customised to suit rural contexts. This is why we plan to roll it out to countries in the region, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Namibia, Angola, and others. With the collaborative effort of all stakeholders, this initiative aims to ensure that no individual, family, or community is left behind.

I want to express my gratitude to the partners and governments who have contributed to the success of the Rapid Rural Transformation intervention, in particular the government of Madagascar, for embracing this concept and ensuring it becomes a success.

It is my pleasure to introduce you to this publication, and we hope that as you read on, you will be inspired to contribute and collaborate with us. Together, we will pave the way towards a more equitable, resilient, and thriving future for all.

Sincerely,

Menghestab Haile,
Regional Director,
WFP Southern Africa Region

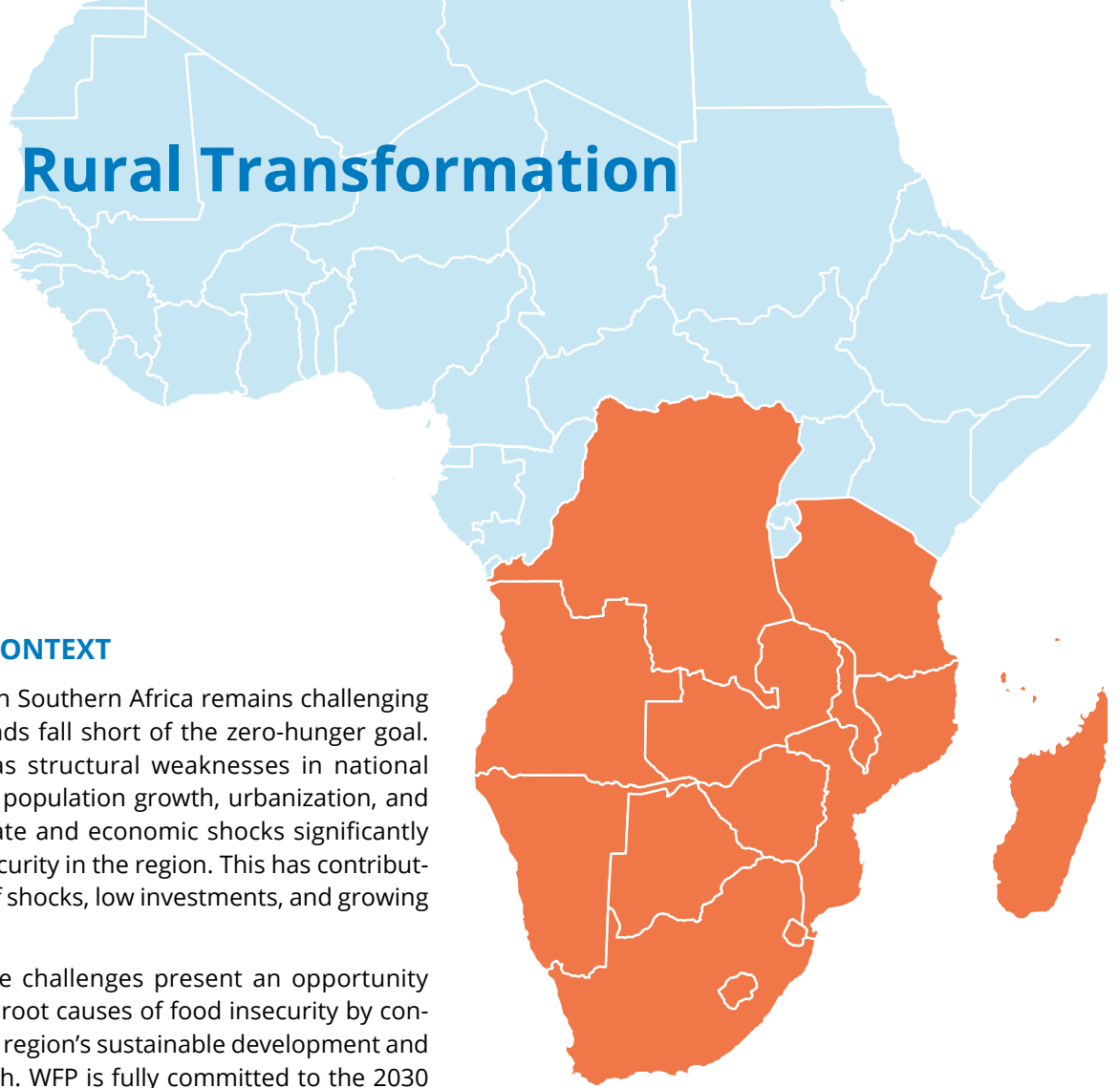






CHANGE

Rapid Rural Transformation (RRT)



REGIONAL CONTEXT

Food security in Southern Africa remains challenging as current trends fall short of the zero-hunger goal. Factors such as structural weaknesses in national systems, rapid population growth, urbanization, and recurring climate and economic shocks significantly impact food security in the region. This has contributed to a spiral of shocks, low investments, and growing vulnerabilities.

However, these challenges present an opportunity to address the root causes of food insecurity by contributing to the region's sustainable development and inclusive growth. WFP is fully committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



WHAT IS THE RAPID RURAL TRANSFORMATION (RRT)?

The Rapid Rural Transformation (RRT) is an innovative intervention that combines electricity, water, and food to assist communities in meeting their basic needs. It aims to stimulate development through agricultural transformation, broadening livelihood options for women and youth, and providing access to water, health, sanitation, education, and information and communications technology (ICT) services.

It is an integrated service approach that stimulates grassroots development while addressing rural communities' most pressing needs. Solar-powered hubs are set up to provide remote communities with modularized/scalable services used as a platform to drive adaptive growth and development in rural areas.



ACTION





ELECTRICITY

WHO ARE THE PARTNERS IN RRT?

The RRT has adopted an all-encompassing public-private partnership model among the governments, community members, the private sector, donors, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Further, the intervention provide local engineering and construction firms with business opportunities.

FIVE THEMATIC AREAS OF THE RAPID RURAL TRANSFORMATION



Local food production for local consumption



Post-harvest loss management



Land and soil degradation reversal



Youth and women opportunities – land access to youth and women



Local procurement for local social safety nets programmes (school meals, hospitals.)

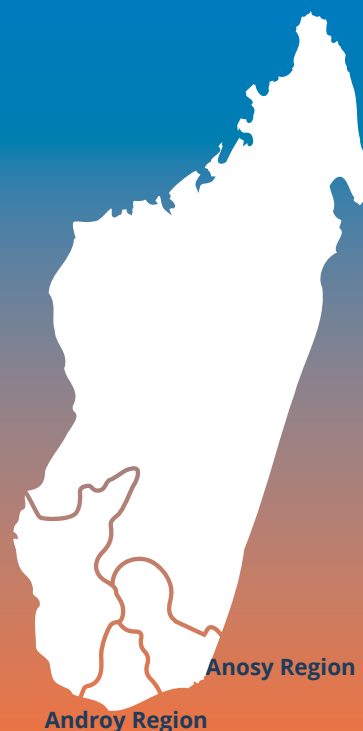


Transforming villages in Madagascar

Madagascar is the fifth largest island in the globe, located in the Indian Ocean off the southern African coast. Despite the vast natural resources, the almost 30 million inhabitants continue to experience one of the highest levels of poverty in the world. The Rapid Rural Transformation programme began in four sites in southern Madagascar, two in the Androy Region's Ambovombe and Tsihombe Districts, and two in the Anosy Region's Amboasary District.

- Madagascar is 179 out of 193 in terms of Human Capital Development Index
- It is fifth poorest nation in the world.
- Population in Androy Region: 903,376
- Populations in Anosy Region: 809,313

Credit: Madagascar Country Brief





WHAT IS THE APPROACH?

The approach is to establish hubs of modularised/scalable packages of services through off-grid, sustainable green energy solutions. The 25-kWh solar-powered kits provide the community with sustainable energy, water for potable use and irrigation, power equipment for healthcare, broaden entrepreneurship opportunities, enable internet connection for digitalised learning through smart classrooms, and develop agricultural and fishery value chains.

Early results in Madagascar

The Rapid Rural Transformation initiative has achieved early success in providing access to running water and electricity in four remote villages in Madagascar's Androy and Anosy regions since January 2023. As a result, community members can now use a variety of electric appliances and equipment, including welding machines, sewing machines, cooking machines, hairdressing equipment, and freezers, which has created new income opportunities for the youth.



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MADAGASCAR?

The government of Madagascar supports with technical capacity while the private sector provides the know-how on energy transformation and maintenance of the hubs.

The RRT intervention has provided running water and electricity to four remote villages in Madagascar's Androy and Anosy regions since January 2023

WHAT ARE SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES?

In line with the recommendation from Madagascar's Rural Electrification Agency (ADER), the long-term is to handover the Rapid Rural Transformation kits to local operators and hire a local engineering company. This will ensure the correct management and maintenance of the technical systems. The operators will commercialize some of the activities to obtain a minimum revenue to pay for ordinary maintenance activities and replacement of spare parts. The operators will also be allowed to develop additional activities together with the local population, after ensuring that there is enough energy capacity available, and without compromising the functionality of the system. Capacity building is also currently underway with the community, both for the use of existing tools and for the identification of new possible productive uses of electricity that can improve food security in the area or create new income opportunities.

WATER

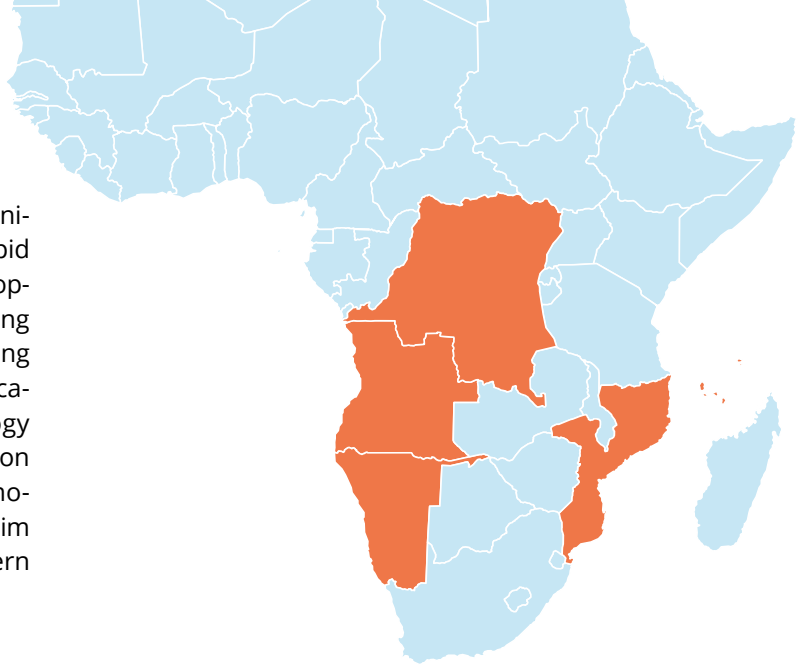




FOOD

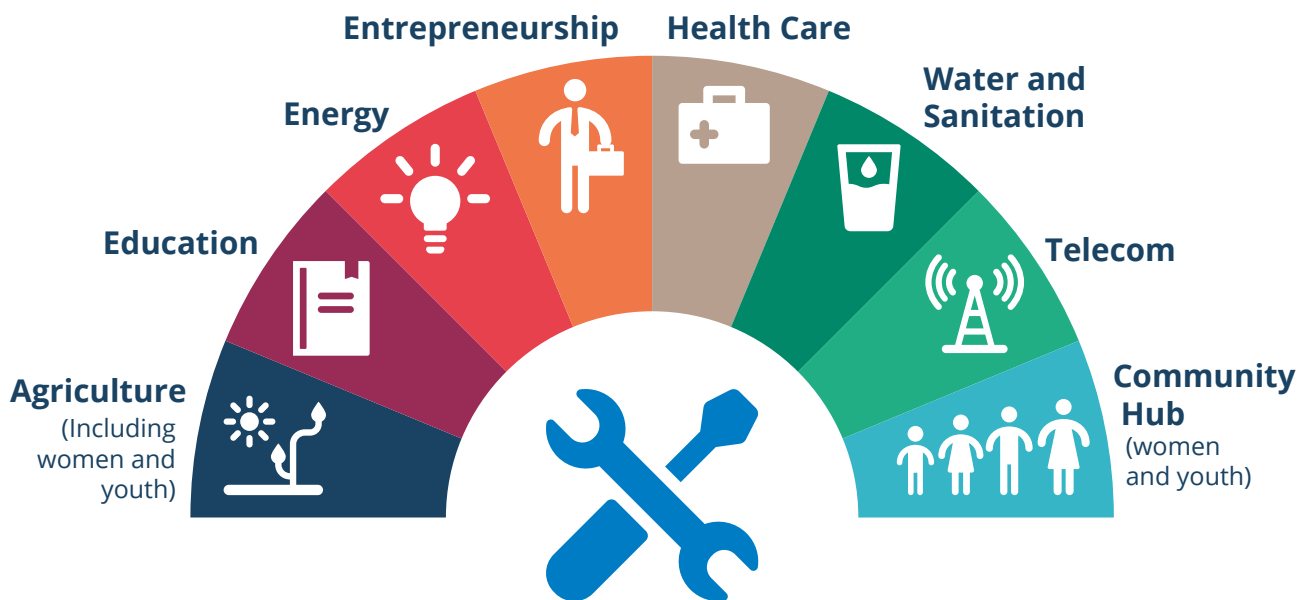
WHAT IS THE IMPLEMENTATION MODEL?

The 25-kWh solar powered kits provide the communities with modularized and scalable services. The Rapid Rural Transformation is stimulating economic development through agricultural transformation, broadening livelihood options for women and youth, and providing access to water improved healthcare options, education, information, and communications technology (ICT), and improved service delivery. The intervention is currently being expanded into Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and Namibia. The aim is to expand to more rural communities in Southern Africa region.



TRANSFORMATIVE SOLUTIONS

- **Agriculture:** Smallholder farmers, including women and youth, have the opportunity to take part in food value chains within the agriculture industry.
- **Education:** The Rapid Rural Transformation (RRT) programme aims to provide access to digital learning tools that can improve the literacy and numeracy skills of learners living in remote villages. This programme aims to overcome the limitations in infrastructure and resources that often prevent learning in rural areas. The RRT intends to close the educational gap and empower learners in rural communities by facilitating connectivity and providing essential resources.
- **Energy:** The goal is to ensure communities have access to reliable and sustainable energy sources.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Improve the chances for entrepreneurs and artisans to generate income.
- **Health Care:** It helps pregnant women and children access primary healthcare.
- **Water And Sanitation:** It is tailored to make water more easily accessible and reduce the daily burden of collecting it on women and children.
- **Telecom:** It offers access to the internet, digital education, and online financial services.
- **Women:** It improves sanitation practises for menstruating, pregnant, and breastfeeding women and girls and upholds their dignity. Additionally, it enhances personal safety and security by providing adequate lighting and reducing the need to travel through unsafe locations to collect water.
- **Youth:** It provides soft and hard skills training that are easily accessible to create income opportunities for the youth.



EDUCATION





FUTURE

MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

The rural kits are currently managed by regional authorities and a community governing committee and allow various partners to set up integrated community services such as digital classrooms for children, training centres for women and youth on food production, and enhanced agricultural output through solar-powered drip irrigation. Capacity-building plans are underway to train community members in using existing tools and identifying possible productive uses of electricity that can improve food security and enhance livelihood.



NEXT STEPS

WFP is expanding the Rapid Rural Transformation initiative to other countries in the region, intending to reach more rural communities.

A baseline study of the intervention and plans is underway to conduct a midterm review by 2023 to assess its long-term impact and value for rural communities in the Southern Africa region.

RAPID RURAL TRANSFORMATION:

Hydroponics

Essential hydroponics accessories have been delivered to the sites, and planting in the hydroponics system will commence after stakeholders receive comprehensive training. Crop gardens have been established through successful hydroponics and drip irrigation systems. The beneficiaries have carefully chosen their crop varieties based on market preferences and prices for the drip systems. As a safety measure, cactus trees have been planted at the garden sites to prevent damage by stray animals and vandalism. Pests are closely monitored and managed to ensure healthy growth.



Kiosks

The contractor completed the RRT kiosks' construction, ensuring they were finished in time for the concluded USA World Food Programme assessment mission. These stores serve as a hub for various project-related activities, and plans are underway to expand their utilization. Further, the UN agencies, such as WHO and FAO, are exploring the possibility of using these kiosks for their rural activities, further maximizing their impact. The private sector continues to express interest to collaborate with discussions to support rural communities access to clean and sustainable energy. These stores are connected to the solar hub, ensuring a reliable and environmentally friendly power supply.

Multi-cereal milling machines

Successfully set up cereal milling machines at RRT kit sites. This vital service allows community members to have their grains milled at a reasonable price. This project has effectively relieved women from the burdensome and time-consuming traditional milling methods by providing access to modern milling technology. The introduction of these machines has consequently alleviated the pressure on women, empowering them to allocate more time to crucial tasks and fostering a healthier work-life balance. Moreover, the project's contribution to reducing gender disparities is noteworthy. By introducing these milling machines, the project has taken a significant step towards breaking harmful practices and creating a more equitable environment. The machines have improved the efficiency of grain processing and, more importantly, have uplifted the lives of women and families in the communities.



UPDATE ON THE STATUS.



Income generation activities and skill development

The solar hubs have become catalysts for change, empowering individuals and enabling them to shape their futures. Individuals have been able to participate in programs such as metal welding, carpentry, cactus juice blending, hair salons, and sewing clothes. These activities have provided avenues for income generation and enabled participants to acquire new skills and expand their expertise in diverse fields.

Internet connection

The internet connectivity provided by Starlink has successfully linked all rural communities, marking a great achievement. With this access, individuals can now benefit from the endless possibilities the internet offers, including improved communication, data sharing, and educational opportunities that were once unattainable. The internet has revolutionized the lives of rural residents, breaking through barriers that previously held them back and offering them hope for an even brighter future.



Water access for irrigation and drinking

The RRT has been instrumental in providing access to water for irrigation purposes in community gardens. In collaboration with UNICEF, they have successfully obtained soft water to support the hydroponics garden at Anjamahavelo school, <<<where>>>. This has opened up incredible opportunities for the school, particularly with the national school feeding program. The hydroponics garden can now grow fresh produce and supply nutritious food to students. By utilizing the soft water resource, this garden can thrive, further supporting the goal of providing healthy meals to the students. This development is a significant step forward in ensuring sustainable agricultural practices and enhancing food security in the community through knowledge and skill transfer.



Photo credits:

WFP/Tsiory Andriantsoarana

WFP/Madagascar Country Office

World Food Programme

Regional Office for Southern Africa

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