

Development aid that works

The Fact sheets and drawings of
Connect International



“Development aid that works, by enabling and facilitating self help groups to learn themselves and undertake action to improve their lives.”

Connect International works together with local partner organizations in developing countries to assist poor people, organized in Village Action Groups (VAG’s), to realize structural improvements in their health, well being and welfare largely themselves.

“People do everything which they can reasonably do themselves”

“You really see communities change, because of the use of fact sheets”

(VAG-leader Neema Lazaro from Tanzania)



SMART solutions

Connect International reaches a million poor people in rural areas in Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique, with self help projects, such as construction of schools, drinking water points, latrines, agriculture and improvement of village organizations and self help groups.

We have developed solutions for things poor people desperately need, such as low cost facilities for drinking water and irrigation (such as the Rope pump shown above), toilets, cooking, agriculture etc. The solutions are affordable, function well and are easy and cheap to maintain by people themselves.

This folder is about the work we and our local partner organizations do to train and guide self help groups in communities we work with (which we call Village Action Groups or VAG’s) to discuss and learn about subjects of importance to them and undertake action. The subjects include for instance the prevention of basic diseases, improvement of household and personal hygiene, improvement of agriculture, setting up small businesses, and so on.



Fact sheets and drawings

Helping people to learn how to improve their health, well-being and welfare. That is what the fact sheets and drawings do. The picture above shows one of many fact sheets of our community development program. The fact sheets cover a wide range of topics.

The fact sheets have been tested extensively by VAG members, VAG leaders, community coaches and staff of our partner organizations in Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia.

Already one million poor people benefit from the fact sheets.

But the fact sheets and drawings can benefit many more poor people. Therefore we send this folder to your organization, as we hope your organization will become interested to use the fact sheets. In that way more poor people can learn in an interactive and accessible way how to improve their lives and undertake successful action to do so.

“The fact sheets connect to the daily lives of the VAG members”

(VAG-leader Timothy Kipembele from Zambia)



Village Action Groups

Village Action Groups (VAG's) are groups of representatives of 15 to 25 rural households. They meet weekly to discuss one subject using a fact sheet and its drawing. They go through a fixed program during the first year after which they decide themselves each meeting on the subject to discuss and learn about.

Each VAG elects one or two leaders who are trained how to use the fact sheets to raise discussing among the VAG members and discover that together they have a lot of knowledge and can learn from each other.

The fact sheets contain many questions, often referring to the drawings shown by the VAG leader to the group. The groups are supported where needed to take action and obtain further information if required.

The fact sheets can be used by professional staff and by self help groups trained on how to use them.



Fact sheet subjects

The following subjects are currently covered:

- Diseases (malaria, HIV/AIDS, diarrhea, etc.)
- Family (family hygiene, dental hygiene, safe motherhood, etc.)
- Water and sanitation (water contamination, filters, toilets, etc.)
- Agriculture (fertilizers, pesticides, potholing, erosion control, etc.)
- Livestock (cowsheds, pigs, chicken, goats, etc.)
- Housing (kitchen, roof, floor, walls, compound, etc.)
- Economy (loans, revolving funds, management, bookkeeping, weaving, etc.)
- Human rights (basic rights, child rights, domestic violence, etc.)

Organizations that need fact sheet about subjects we do not yet cover can request Connect International to develop it. The work is done by our expert volunteers together with our partner organizations and possibly also with your organization

CONNECT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPS THE FACT SHEETS YOU NEED FOR FREE



How to produce your fact sheets

Download the fact sheets from our website:

<http://www.connectinternational.nl/english/smartmodules/smart-dev/fact-sheets>

Keep a regular eye on it as we produce new fact sheets regularly. If you wish to adapt the texts or translate them in a local language please request us for the fact sheet Word files.

The drawings can be requested from us in high quality files and can best be printed as plastified posters of A2 (ideally, so people can really see the drawings well) or A3 format. This is rather expensive but will produce posters that can survive a long time in a village. With large orders the price may be reduced substantially. Alternatively you can purchase a machine for laminating posters yourself.

Your organization can assist the villages you collaborate with to set up fact sheet and drawing libraries.

Your donors may be interested to finance you to produce fact sheets and drawings and assist the villages and self help groups you work with to use them.

Family Planning

Preparation:

- In this factsheet, the members will learn some basic knowledge of family planning. After this meeting, the members should understand what family planning is and why family planning is important.
- This factsheet is composed of a debate and a discussion. First, let the members debate for 5–10 minutes and then discuss the questions with the members.
- The VAG leader should know where people can get more information and advice about family planning, for example the clinic.
- The VAG leader should read through the factsheet before the meeting and make sure he/ she understands the content.

Exercise: Debate.

Drawing 1: a big family



Drawing 2: a small family



Show the members the two drawings of a father and mother and their children.

Do you prefer a big or small family?

Divide members into two groups and let these debate for about 5 to 10 minutes, where one group is in favour of a big family and the other of a small family. Let them discuss the reasons why people prefer a big family, or a small family. You may use a flipchart to note down the points the members have discussed. Below are some examples of the arguments that might come up.

Reasons why people prefer a big family:

- It is our way of life. When you come from a big family, you want the same for yourself.
- Your future is more secure. When you have a lot of children, they can take care of you when you grow old.

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