

Epicenters for Self-Reliance

A sustainable strategy for gender-focused, community-led development in rural Africa.
Created in Africa, by Africans, for Africa.



Start with Women



Mobilize Everyone



Forge Effective
Partnerships

IT TAKES MORE THAN A VILLAGE

Epicenters unite 10,000 to 15,000 people from a cluster of villages, creating a space where communities build the confidence to become leaders — in equal numbers of women and men — of their own development, unlock local capacity for change, and achieve progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.



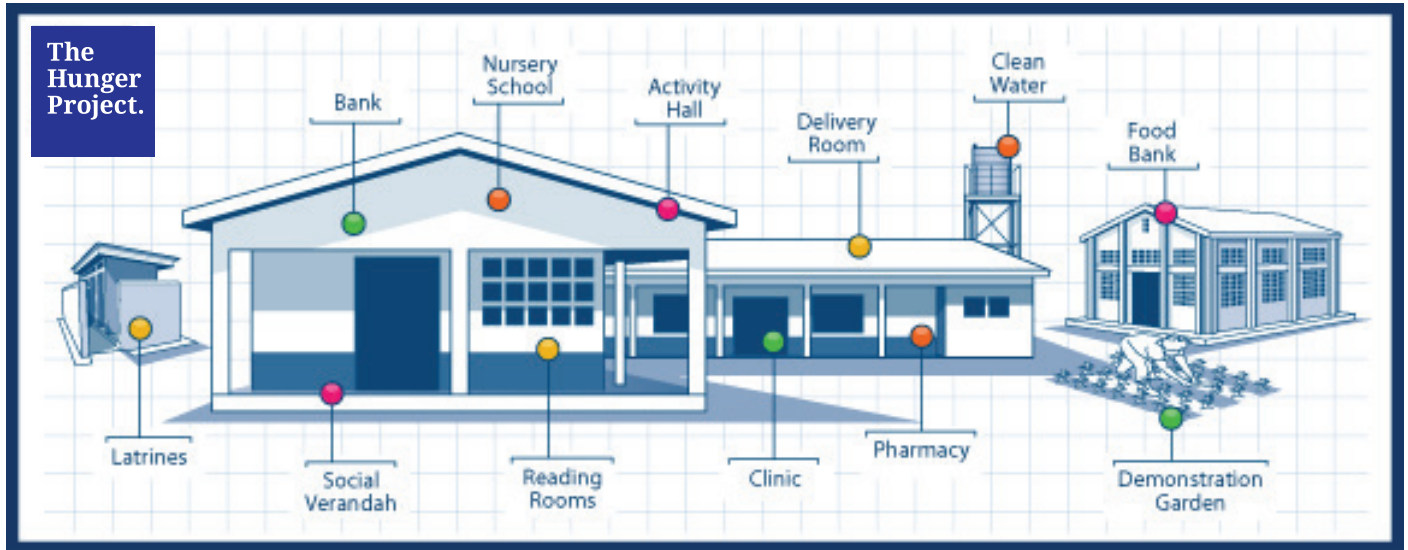
Animator at Iganga Epicenter, Uganda, 2017
Photo Credit: Rebke Klokke

AN EPICENTER'S JOURNEY TO SELF-RELIANCE

- 1) PHASE I: MOBILIZATION**
Communities are mobilized to create a new vision - shifting mindsets away from patriarchy and clientelism. Trained volunteers, or 'animators', work with their communities to achieve this shared vision.
- 2) PHASE II: CONSTRUCTION**
Community members mobilize construction materials and labor to build the epicenter building. This quickly becomes a vibrant center of community action and a symbol of positive change.
- 3) PHASE III: PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**
The community begins making progress in sectors such as health and education with training courses and program activities. This includes training sector-specific animators, who will lead most of the trainings at the epicenter.
- 4) PHASE IV: TRANSITION TO SELF-RELIANCE**
The Hunger Project ends its financial and staff support for the epicenter's programs once the epicenter meets its data-driven targets for self-reliance.

Epicenters for Self-Reliance

The Epicenter Strategy leverages key sectoral programs for the community to address its needs.



- Women's Empowerment**
Women's leadership is key to every aspect of the Epicenter Strategy. Animators are trained to conduct workshops with women and men to promote gender equality, access to micro-finance, legal rights education, reproductive health rights and leadership skills.
- Reducing Poverty**
The Microfinance Program is a savings and credit program to promote women-owned businesses, non-farm business household income, the establishment of Savings and Loans Associations and training in business.
- Climate Resilience**
Each epicenter focuses on maintaining biodiversity, ensuring the sustainable use of resources, and promoting renewable sources of fuel and energy.
- Education & Literacy**
Epicenters run both pre-school and adult education programs to improve all aspects of life in the epicenter communities. Instructors are identified by the community and trained by the government.
- Food Security & Reducing Hunger**
Farmers are trained to improve land productivity and resilience of smallholder farmers through new technologies, techniques and increased access to agricultural tools. Food banks safely store harvests to support communities during lean periods throughout the year.
- Health & Nutrition**
The epicenter health center localizes primary health services and provides a place where women can safely give birth, families receive nutrition counseling, children are immunized and community members have access to medicines, including family planning and antiretroviral therapy.
- Water, Sanitation & Hygiene**
Trained animators increase community awareness of hygienic practices. THP works with the community to build improved sanitation facilities, drill new boreholes, and improve school water and sanitary services access.



Malaria Animator at Majete Epicenter, Malawi, 2018
Photo Credit: Maria Thundu

**In 2019, our
programs reached
16.5 million
people globally.**

CONSORTIA FOR SCALE

No single organization - not even government alone - can end hunger and poverty. Our goal is to build a consortium of organizations that co-create a shared methodology based on the epicenter model, and then mobilize resources to replicate it. This consortium can then advocate for the specific decentralization policy changes needed at the national level to take this method to scale across the country.

Countries that have brought community-led development to scale have done so through consortia of NGOs working in partnership with government, bilateral and multilateral donors.

VISION, COMMITMENT AND ACTION WORKSHOPS

The Hunger Project leverages Vision, Commitment and Action (VCA) Workshops to mobilize epicenter communities. The training emphasizes leadership, creates a vision of the future, and generates commitment and action at the individual and community levels to achieve the sustainable end of hunger and poverty. Change of mindset, stimulated by the VCA Workshops, is the first and most important step to successfully mobilizing the community to take charge of their own development.

DATA FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE.

The Epicenter Strategy uses a participatory approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) that empowers participants in our programs as both collectors and consumers of data. Participatory M&E requires including community voices in monitoring and evaluation and building the capacity of community members to become active partners in this process. Regular data is collected by trained M&E animators and is shared with communities, which promotes transparency and accountability between staff, communities, and investors.

This community-led, informed analysis allows community members to identify their needs, set their own development priorities, and participate in tracking their progress on these goals over time.



Moringa Farmers at Mesqan Epicenter, Ethiopia, 2017
Photo Credit: Johannes Odé

OUR IMPACT IN AFRICA

Our Epicenter Strategy reached 1.2 Million people in 2019 across 9 countries in Africa.

Mid to endline surveys of 47 self-reliant epicenters show:

- 23% decrease in child marriage.
- 33% decrease in the proportion of households with moderate to severe hunger.
- 42% increase in the proportion of female small business owners.
- 23% decrease in the proportion of households living below the poverty line.
- 29% decrease in prevalence of diarrheal disease in children under age 5.

In 2019...

UNLOCKING LOCAL CAPACITY

- 105,382 trained in our Women's Empowerment Program in 1,765 workshops
- 106,999 participants in nutrition training
- 74,704 participants in HIV/AIDS & Gender Inequality Workshops
- 100,870 participants in Food Security Workshops

EDUCATION FOR ALL

- 1,890 animators trained in literacy and education
- 3,528 children enrolled in early education
- 5,102 individuals enrolled in functional adult literacy classes

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Over 151,000 partners accessed health services at epicenter health clinics
- Over 98,600 children were weighed and monitored at epicenter health clinics
- Clinic staff delivered over 54,400 vaccines
- 14,063 women accessed antenatal services close to home, at epicenter clinics
- 8,013 people accessed HIV services at epicenter health clinics
- 14,190 bed nets were distributed to prevent malaria

The
Hunger
Project.

For more information about The Hunger Project's Epicenter Strategy visit www.thp.org/epicenter or www.epicentertoolkit.org for in-depth implementation resources.

Women leaders at Kissamey Epicenter, Benin, 2019



Small business owner, Ghana, 2018

Moringa Animators at Iganga Epicenter, Uganda, 2017
Photo Credit: Rebke Klokke

