What is Homestead Food Production?

- Homestead Food Production equips women and smallholder farmers with the tools and skills to cultivate home gardens and raise small livestock.
- These home gardens are filled with fruits and vegetables carefully selected for their nutritional content and ability to grow well in local conditions. Women also learn to raise small poultry and even fish to provide an extra source of vital nutrients for their families.
- Nutrition education is also provided to teach women the healthiest ways to feed their infants and young children, as well as themselves.
- Participants in some locations are provided additional support and training to enable them to sell their surplus produce at local markets leading to greater economic stability for their families.

The Challenge: Equal Access to Nutrition

- Three out of four people in developing countries live in rural areas and most of them depend on agriculture as a food source.¹
- Smallholder farmers and their families represent one third of the global population.² Many of these farmers are women who live on less than $2 a day and have limited power to make household financial decisions and limited rights to own land.
- Families with limited means cope by eating cheaper, less nutritious food, which can have catastrophic lifelong effects on the survival and health of children, including stunting (when a child has low height for his/her age), developmental delays and a compromised immune system.

HKI Solution

- Homestead Food Production targets women from poor households with young children.
- Helen Keller International (HKI) works with local partners to establish "Village Model Farms" or "Farmer Field Schools" where participants receive hands-on training to improve traditional gardening and farming practices.
- HKI trains health staff and volunteers working in villages who host nutrition education sessions for women, teaching them how to improve nutritional practices within their homes, especially for their infants and young children as well as themselves.
- Homestead Food Production helps many women who participate in the program break through gender barriers by becoming entrepreneurs, respected leaders and role models in their communities.

² International Fund for Agriculture and Development. 2013. Smallholders, food security and the environment. IFAD, Rome.
Results and Impact

- Homestead Food Production has been shown to not only improve access to nutritious foods, but in many cases enable women to obtain authority for decision-making within the household.²

- Several areas where Homestead Food Production is practiced also have seen reductions in night blindness and anemia.³

- According to an assessment of the program, families in Bangladesh who participate in Homestead Food Production produced 135 kg of vegetables, three times as much as non-participating households over a three month period.⁴

- Another analysis demonstrated that the benefits of Homestead Food Production greatly outweighed its costs with an impressive economic rate of return of approximately 160%.⁵

- An analysis of a similar program in Cambodia concluded that for every $1 invested in the program participating families produced nutritious food for their own daily consumption and also earned an extra $1.30 from sale of surplus produce.⁶

Where We Work

- Established in 1988 in Bangladesh, HKI has expanded the Homestead Food Production program to span 12 different countries in Asia and Africa – and the program, which has benefited more than one million households, will reach an additional 300,000 by 2017.

- HKI empowers women and feeds families through our Homestead Food Production programs in:
  - Africa: Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal and Tanzania
  - Asia: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal and Vietnam

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