

Seed Fairs in DRC

Tearfund's DMT Programme



Photo: Richard Hanson/Tearfund

As part of Tearfund's commitment to beneficiary accountability, and in order to encourage growth in the local economy, Tearfund recently organised several seed fairs as a distribution initiative. The process involved the identification of suitable vendors, mobilisation and training of beneficiaries, checking the quality of seeds and organising the market itself. This was done by Tearfund and partner agronomists and animators.

During the seed fairs, local seed producers and traders brought and sold their seeds to beneficiaries.

Sellers and seed stocks were monitored by a team, which included Tearfund staff as well as the Ministry of Agriculture's Technical Inspector, to check seed quality.

Beneficiary names were verified and registered before they entered the market, and each person was given a voucher for seeds (worth \$22.70), along with a hoe and a machete. Women, particularly those who were pregnant or breastfeeding, were given priority access to the fair.

The average amount of seed purchased by each beneficiary during the seed fair was 30kg. This is higher than the amount given in standard distributions because of the reduced cost of logistics and bargaining that was made possible by buying through a seed fair. This novel approach to distribution also provided new beneficiaries with the opportunity to choose for themselves their preferred seeds for the season ahead.

Impact on beneficiaries

In an encouraging sign of the success of this food security programme, many of the vendors were beneficiaries from the first year of the project who were selling their surplus produce.

The successful implementation of the seed fairs won the backing of the Ministry of Agriculture for Tearfund's work. The deputy Minister of Agriculture attended the fairs and gave his approval to the quality of seed distributed. Local media also came to report the event, and gave beneficiaries the opportunity to speak.

After the seed distribution, a monitoring and evaluation exercise showed that 100% of beneficiaries were happy with the seed distributed.