



Send a Cow Heifer Zambia Eastern Province

Joint Learning Review

May to October 2008

Executive Summary

Project Data

Since operations began in 2004, the Send a Cow Heifer Zambia (SACHZ) team has made good progress. In a short period of time an office established was established, staff recruited, relationships with Government agreed, vehicles procured, partners and groups identified and, most import, farmers supported with livestock, training and other resources.

Over a three-year period, the new programme resulted in 529 farmers in 26 groups receiving livestock. The table below gives the numbers provided, including pass-ons.

Table ES 1: SACHZ Livestock Data: 2004-2008

Type of Animal	Number of Projects	Number of Livestock	Average supplied per month	Number of Mortalities	Percent Mortalities
Meat goats	12	1,664	46	233	14%
Dairy goats	3	443	12	103	23%
Dairy cattle	5	162	5	25	15%
Draft cattle	7	164	5	8	5%
Bees	6	-	-	?	Discontinued

The above was achieved with three staff (one vet and two trainers) working under the Programme Manager, and with the assistance of 9 animal husbandry and 2 crop extension workers whose transport costs and field allowances are covered by the project. The annual budget runs at GBP 432,000, being GBP 2,420 per farming household.

Summary of Reported Successes

Organic Farming

- Families were benefiting from the use of manure and have realised good income from the sale of the vegetables and manure.
- They are using the manure in the gardens and also for potholing. They used to buy at K6000 for 3 wheelbarrows now they do not need to.

Leadership and Empowerment

- Leadership skills training helped the leadership know their roles and responsibilities and this has led to the success of the project.
- Families feel empowered simply by the fact that they own livestock, something they never dreamt of.
- Project women are more articulate and they are free to express themselves even in the presence of men unlike their counterparts.

Skills Transfer

- Knowledge and skills acquired by members has helped them change their attitudes and way of doing things.
- Knowledge acquired had made them built confidence in themselves such that non project members hold them in high esteem.
- Trainings received had given opportunities for those members who had never been in school gain knowledge and skills that have resulted in changing attitudes.
- Project members seem more knowledgeable because of the various trainings they have received. They are able to analyse issues better than their friends.

Social Cohesion and Status

- Many families have become responsible as many family ties have been strengthened.
- More relatives visits now because they view beneficiaries as being able to do and of higher social status.
- They have stopped borrowing money so their social status has improved because now people go to them to ask for money.

Social Development

- Bad habits such as drunkenness has been reduced as they had to focus on development (managing goats) in fear of having their goats repossessed if not taken care of.

Wider Benefits

- Non members were able to buy manure for their fields and gardens and they bought vegetables from project members.
- Non members have acquired skills and knowledge on the importance of constructing improved goat structures for their local goats and a lot more groups had requested for trainings from the project members.
- Non-members with local goats have had their breeds improved.
- The community has agreed to castrate the local bucks and just allow the project bucks to mate with local does. They are also happy with the offspring.
- Non project members in the community have benefited from the project through buying of milk.
- Non project beneficiaries are assisted with credits when in need.
- Some community members are happy with the project because they are making money by cutting grass for those with animals at a fee of K2,500 x 50kg volume.
- Project members have been used by others organisations (e.g. Plan) to train their farmers and 3 groups were trained on the construction of goat structures made of bricks and 19 structures were constructed.
- Other Organisations (LWF, World vision) had conducted exposure visits (4 times) with their farmers to the project area to learn and share knowledge and skills on the construction of goat structures and goat management.

Partnership

- Members said that SACHZEP was different from other organisations because of its commitment towards work and this has resulted to projects being successful.

Crop production

- Crop yields have increased by use of manure such that one member confidently said that he used to harvest 2 ox-carts full of maize but now he was getting 5.5 ox-carts of maize and this has helped him improve household food security.

Nutrition

- Consumption of milk has contributed to improved household nutrition.
- Increased availability of milk affordability resulting in more generalised household consumption of milk.

Income, Expenditure and Savings

- Through sales of milk there is improved ability to find money to meet household needs like being able to send children to school, pay for health user fees and buy household goods.
- The use of manure has enabled them to use less of inorganic fertilizers thereby save some money.
- Some members have managed to buy blankets from money realized from milk sales.
- Most of the members who have sold some milk have started IGAs to supplement the household income.

Community Involvement and Support

- Community members have been helping in looking after the animals e.g. if one animal is not housed or given proper feed, the community would inform the leadership of the community to check it out.
- The village leadership has also been supportive of the project.

Draft Power

- People used to carry firewood or water on their heads now they are using the draft power. They are assured of using the animals for cultivating in the forth coming rainy season so they hope to increase their area under cultivation.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LR TEAM

1. GROUP IDENTIFICATION, GROUP AND BENEFICIARY SELECTION

All groups had already been formed. They had their constitutions and structures, including by-laws about membership. Most groups had been visited by other NGOs, who made promises they did not always keep. This made some people reluctant to sign up when SACHZEP made contact.

All groups had a joining fee. Those who could not afford to pay felt bad about this. In some cases people assisted each others to pay the minimal fee. The fee was explained as a commitment fee, to show their commitment to the group.

The numbers allowed to join was fixed in many groups (e.g. 20 to 30), so not everyone could join. They look at the members who want to join and select according to their commitment to community activities (funerals, initiation, etc), attitude to work, relations to others, drinking behavior, etc. The very poor are known to them. Some are poor because they do not have resources, but some are poor because they are not prepared to work. Some families who wanted to join but could not were asked why they didn't form their own group, but said they were discouraged because it would look like they were forming the group out of frustration.

The screening was seen as a form of training as it showed them their weak points.

Existing groups and the Cornerstones (Genuine Need) are sometimes in conflict. The strongest of groups (most likely to succeed) are usually better off. We get attracted to these groups, although they don't really need us. The leadership in the group often have livestock already.

Baselines are collected, but not analysed and used for selection.

Some families go left out not because they had not kept up payments of annual subscription to the group and/or because they did not have money to pay for the LDF. The LDF is animal friendly, but not people friendly, because people get excluded. It is a good practice but problematic. People had trouble paying the LDF in advance (about \$150 about 10% of the value of the animals) because of the timing (demands of farming seasons, livestock structures, etc).

1. Screening should begin at community level, with a mini PRA, to determine the relative level of need.
2. There should be a new pro-active approach parallel to screening applications from existing groups. This approach should result in areas of need (that are accessible) being considered and in new groups being formed.
3. Existing groups will be encouraged to find ways to include those in genuine need who may have been left out at the start.
4. Where new groups are formed, more time will be needed on group formation, capacity building etc.
5. There should be use of different screening tools.
6. We need to be very clear at the start about the criteria regarding livestock ownership. It is especially important that the leadership who have livestock should realize that they will not get animals.
7. Households with significant livestock should not receive livestock, but can benefit from other interventions, such as training, organic farming, etc.
8. The baseline data must be collected and ANALYSED before any group selection is done, before the PSS.
9. The LDF should be maintained, but it needs to be more flexible, so that it can be paid overtime, or in relation to the agric season.
10. More emphasis should be placed at IGAs and Savings and Credit groups in advance, with training, specific to the area (e.g. gardening, field crops, credit) at group level. Individuals can then borrow from the group's savings to pay LDF.

Facts about the Livestock Development Fund (LDF)

- ✓ Established as an insurance fund to replace livestock that die.
- ✓ All households are expected to contribute 10% of the value of the animal. In the case of exotic dairy cows this could be equivalent to as much as \$150, a large amount of money for a family in genuine need.
- ✓ In theory, the LDF should be fully paid up before livestock are provided. In practise livestock are placed before (only 8% of groups have fully paid up members). Staggering of payments is common.
- ✓ In dairy cattle project, the LDF has been used in all projects, but has not been sufficient to replace all lost animals. For example, only 10% of dairy cattle have been replaced in Chipata district; 30% in Katete and 35% in Chadiza.
- ✓ In goat projects, about 30% of dead animals have been replaced using the LDF.
- ✓ In some projects the LDF has been used for drugs, which has depleted it so livestock could not be replaced. In other cases the LDF has been used to start IGAs, leaving little to replace livestock.

2. PREPARATION

Training and other activities can conflict with the farming season. Requirements to do training within specific time frames that are donor driven result in poor scheduling (conflicting with farming

season). The amount of time spent in training (9am – 3pm) was considered by some to be long – too much information at one time, and not enough time for chores. Many groups reported difficulties in obtain material for shed construction (distance, availability, cost – hiring carts – affordability, etc). Many farmers were not happy about the time lapse.

Resource flow was a factor preventing timely placement (donor delays in dispersement). Submission of Financial Reports delays release of funds from the UK, due the lack of Accountant/Finance Assistant in EP and problems HQs.

HZ has only one truck for delivering livestock, which slows down the process. Disease control regulations are stiff (testing, quarantines, etc), causing further delays.

1. Need to explore more local sources for livestock, and look at partnerships with local commercial farmers/ advertising for supplier to create competition and price competitiveness. This will promote local enterprise.
 2. Where livestock cannot be procured locally need to outsource transporters when the HZ truck is busy, and include the additional costs in proposals/project budgets
 3. The issue of Financial reports has been addressed by HQs and should not be an issue in the future.
 4. Capacity building for Admin Assistant to help on Financial reports.
 5. Timely procurement.
- ❖ The question on ability to mobilize resources during screening (screening form) should be rephrased as it dictates a direct answer of 'yes or no'. The focus should be on what resources can be mobilized over what period of time.
 - ❖ Timing of trainings should be adjusted to account for the prevailing labour demands on the family (optimal timing 09 – 13 hrs/ or 14 -17hrs)

3. ASSESSMENT, PLACEMENT AND PACKAGES

Assessment are not formally approached (i.e. farmers are not aware) although an inspection form is used.

1. Farmers should be aware that the inspection is being done (set dates).

DAIRY COWS

Problems have been experienced with exotic dairy cows as they do not adapt easily and are not disease resistant. The zero-grazing approach is difficult because farmers cannot produce enough fodder because of the long dry season (9 months), with no easy means of irrigation; labour and equipment is often not available to cultivate the land.

The cost of maintenance is very high (drugs, supplementary feeding). Results show that just under half the farmers saw the costs being higher than the benefits. Exotic dairy cows have a high water need (80 litres per day) and sources dry up making this difficult to supply in many villages.

The difficulties noted earlier regarding the LDF are related largely to dairy cows. Where bad quality of animals are placed resulting in high mortality, the LDF is not enough to afford the replace all the animals e.g. in one dairy cattle project 8 animals out of 20 died. Even if the LDF was fully paid up, it would only have been enough to replace 2 animals.

The quality of the dairy cows is questionable. Some were too old and have still not calved 2 yrs down the line (farmers who sell do not provide the best). Locally purchases cows have done better than those from elsewhere (could verify they were in-calf heifers, have adapted better).

1. Source exotic dairy animals in EP that have already adapted (good commercial farm exists 15 kms away).
2. Assess capacity of farm/farmer to manage dairy critically.
3. Provide seed and training earlier to ensure fodder establishment.
4. Add water harvesting component.
5. Provide upfront costs of cement/nails, to be recovered by the group through collection of money from milk sales (1 litre/day) to be provided to the POG (incorporated into contracts).
6. Maintain Drug Revolving Fund

DRAFT CATTLE

Two types of draft cattle (heifers) were provided, Boran and mixed. Those who received the mixed were happier because they have not experienced so many health problems (Boran mortality 7/39; mixed 0/47).

1. Provide local heifers and Boran bulls to go with these (1 to 13).

DAIRY GOATS

Problems with breed and poor timing (in the year) resulted in high mortality rates. Some of the goats were old/sick. There was high morbidity in 2 of the 3 groups. Even if farmers had money from the LDF they are not locally available, so could not be replaced. Because of the poor quality there has been poor productivity. Feed has been a problem for the same reasons given for dairy cows (little fodder established). The source of the goats is problematic (difficult to find good goats). The culture of drinking goat milk remains weak.

1. Discontinue for new groups.
2. Maintain existing groups.
3. Keep Pass-ons within the area as experience is gained.
4. Use pass-ons to replace the ones that died.
5. Monitor closely and assess causes of mortality.
6. Treat as Research Action Project

MEAT GOATS

These were obtained outside of EP, mostly mixed, parentage not known. They adapt easily, are productive, easy to feed, hardy and getting water is not a problem. They produce good manure (no weed seeds) and the general management is not difficult. They are considered to be profitable.

1. More of the same.
2. Source locally.

BEEES

Two hives and 1 swarm were provided to households in 6 groups. Many of the bees absconded and the production was low. Farmer did not find a market for the honey. It was found that there is a very high cost-benefit ratio (training, resources, etc) with no benefits. Bee mortality was also high due to insecticides used in cotton farming.

1. Discontinue bees. Look at alternatives as it is not fair to abandon the groups.

General Recommendation: Livestock Package and Timing

1. Provide mixed packages so that we target all genuinely in need people.
2. SACHZEP should assess already existing groups to determine what would be suitable to each beneficiary
3. Select beneficiaries with ability to manage the different livestock being considered

4. Schedule of activities should ensure minimal lapse of time between activities and very sensitive to seasons (i.e. delivery from April-June).
5. Vet kits should be modified to local conditions. Drug quantities should reflect prevalence of diseases.
6. Purchasing should be decentralized.

- ❖ Do Options Study where different uses of the LDF are examined in detail. For example, compare banking, investment in IGAs and placing of livestock with elected farmers.
- ❖ POG animals can be used to replace those animals then the recipients have a task of passing on two animals
- ❖ Classify causes of mortality into natural, negligence/poor management and bad sourcing resulting in bad quality of animals
- ❖ Based on the above develop a criteria of determining who can benefit from POG animals and also those who can not be tasked to do double

4. EXTENSION

There are 5 Extension Workers (EWs) with livestock backgrounds and 3 with crops. Non-livestock extension workers/partners lack expertise in livestock. Only one day of fuel per week is paid for (lump sum equivalent to about 20 litres of fuel, regardless of distance - with dairy cattle EWs getting an additional 800,000 per annum). EWs say this is not enough as they do more than one day. Staff report that farmers often have to pay the EWs for services which should, in theory, be free. **Government does not provide any fuel and does not provide any support for the maintenance of bikes, despite an agreement (MoU) with SACHZEP to do so.**

While the cost of fuel and the work load of EWs has increased many times there has been only one increase, since the start of the project, in the fuel allowance. The bikes are not very reliable because of poor servicing (Govt should do this).

Specialised training in HIV/AIDS, enterprise development, gender, etc, is not being carried out as originally planned. It is poorly defined in terms of activities, schedules, curriculum, capacity. Training needs assessments are needed.

Coordination meetings broke down, as Govt officials no longer attended due because sitting allowance were not paid. Reports are regularly submitted to Government offices but not shared between the relevant officials.

There may be resistance because they are not getting an allowance. EWs do their own workplan, but report in these monthly, indicating what is done for Heifer/SAC.

Crop EWs say they can get support when needed. Staff report that crop EWs are doing well.

Recommendations

1. SAC UK and HZ to advocate at a high level for Government to meet its commitments, as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding.
2. Non-livestock EWs need to be provided with basic training in livestock health.
3. The fuel allowance should be increased so that it is at least equivalent (in real terms) to what it was at the start of the project.
4. The amount should not be uniform, but should rather be based on the actual distances that EWs have to travel.
5. Conduct simple Training Needs Assessments before undertaking training.
6. Plan training according to needs assessment.
7. Develop in-house training capacity so staff and extension workers can undertake more of the specialised training.

8. Budget for outsourcing.
9. Organize Quarterly Coordination meetings involving SACHZEP staff, partners (EWs) and government officials.
10. Budget or sitting allowances to ensure attendance.
11. Copy reports to all relevant officials.

5. PRODUCTION AND MARKETING

Milk production is lower than expected, due largely to feeding problems (covered above). There is a lack of money for farmers to purchase inputs (feed, medicines). Farmers low literacy levels constrains training in this area. Sometimes the knowledge and skills provided are not applied by farmers.

There has been an increase in manure use, most especially amongst the meat goat farmers, who are also the ones selling vegetables more. Vegetables have been grown mostly for home consumption and there is an opportunity to expand this for sale, if marketing challenges can be addressed (diversity, timing, value added, etc).

1. See livestock relevant recommendations already made.
 2. Kitchen gardens are have failed. Production is best in dambos.
 3. Focus should go from promoting manure use to market analysis and training in diversification, with start up packages, with water pumps (treadle pumps).
- ❖ Integrate livestock and crop production in a mutually beneficial manner and include this in the training manual.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Farmers groups have some self monitoring systems, but their record keeping is poor, especially at household level. Many farmers don't complete records as they are illiterate. There are no project specific forms.

Staff produce quarterly reports in HZ format and extra pages are used when needed. The tools were recently reviewed and new ones have been produced. There is systematic and regular monitoring of inputs/outputs and activities (field trip reports, monthly, quarterly, annual reports), plus monthly review and planning meetings. Tools for assessing progress towards achieving impacts are in place, but haven't been use yet (PSRP).

1. Design user friendly, project specific, monitoring tools
 2. Implement PSRP.
 3. Analyse and use Baseline
 4. Use PRA to assess communities
- ❖ Develop a user friendly monthly report template for groups especially where there are no project partners

7. PHASE OUT

There is no clear strategy (Phase Out Strategy Document). There are no clear indicators for Phase Out.

1. Implement the above
2. Share stages/steps and indicators for sustainability and share with project members.
3. Review these, measure and talk about regularly with groups.

4. Ensure activities are in line with the indicators.
5. Review project cycles (3 or 5 yrs....or more?)
6. Link phase out to achievement of phases.

CROSS CUTTING

1. Do not assume that 100% of group members will succeed.
2. 'Recruit' a larger number of groups members than you will eventually need for livestock provision (e.g. 50 vs 20).
3. Define clear steps that have to be achieved for each stage of the project.
4. Monitor progress closely through tests.
5. Eventually provide livestock only to those who make it.

Focus on areas where a larger number of people can be helped. Reaching a larger proportion of the village.