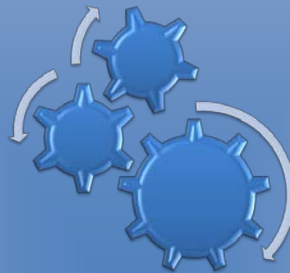


# Great Minds Investments Private Limited

## END OF PROGRAMME EVALUATION CAFOD's Livelihoods Programme in Zimbabwe (LPZ)



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

The Livelihoods Programme in Zimbabwe (LPZ) was a four year programme implemented by the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) in a consortium with 5 implementing partners. The programme was implemented from August 2004 to March 2008 in 8 districts of Zimbabwe. The **goal** of the programme was to *reduce the impact of poverty, enhance dignity and increase participation* and the **overall objective** of the programme over the 4 year duration was to *reduce the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and extreme poverty through stabilisation of food security and protecting the livelihoods of 37,000 vulnerable households in selected wards of the eight targeted districts*. An End of Programme evaluation was commissioned by CAFOD and was carried out by a team of external consultants with assistance from CAFOD and implementing partner staff.

The **objectives** of this End of Programme Review were to: Assess the extent to which the project achieved its purpose and delivered on intended outputs; Review the targeting process for beneficiaries; Assess physical achievement in programme implementation, and conduct a detailed case study of key successful interventions such as conservation farming and the elephant pump pilot project.

### Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was carried out by an independent team of five consultants from Great Minds, each with expertise on the different components of LPZ. In each district the independent consultants were assisted by six staff members from CAFOD and implementing partners. The evaluation team split into two after pilot testing the tools in Manyame district and visited all the 8 districts. In each district, two wards were randomly selected and in each ward two villages were also randomly selected for data collection. Information was gathered through documentary review, key informant interviews, Focus Group Discussions and structured interviews with randomly selected individual beneficiaries participating in each of the three components of LPZ. Observations, collection of MSC stories and case studies were included in the data gathering process. Quantitative data was processed using SPSS while content analysis was done on qualitative data.

### Main Findings of the Evaluation

#### Implementation approach

As a livelihoods programme, LPZ was guided by a participatory ethos and an integrated approach which sought to encourage community and stakeholder participation in the implementation process and enable targeted beneficiaries to draw complementary benefits from different but inter-related activities. The inextricably intertwined three main components of LPZ were Agriculture and Food Security support, Water and Sanitation and HIV/AIDS and HBC. The complementarity of the different components of the programme and the fact that poor households could and did participate across a whole range of LPZ interventions meant that benefits from one component were supported by benefits from the other, thereby addressing different needs of poor households at the same time. Overall, LPZ managed to surpass its target of **37,000** households by reaching out to a total of **37,350** vulnerable and poor households during the 4 years of implementation.

#### Operating Environment

LPZ was implemented during a time when Zimbabwe was going through its worst ever socio-economic crisis, characterised by hyper-inflation and shortages of all types of commodities including fuel, food and foreign currency. An unstable pre and post election political environment compounded the crisis and constrained the operating space for NGOs having an overall negative impact on the implementation process of all livelihood programmes. In particular, procurement of

programme materials faced many challenges and resulted in disruptions in service delivery. Similarly as inflation eroded budgets, targets had to be revised downwards.

### **Achievement of project development objectives**

#### *Agricultural Inputs and Support*

LPZ distributed seed and fertilizer to an average of 13,686 and 16,742 households respectively over the 4 year programme period. The distribution of agricultural inputs and the introduction of CA resulted in substantial increased harvests. For example in Binga, CA plots on average yielded 2 to 3 times more per hectare compared to non CA plots. Interviews with beneficiaries established that households practicing in CA increased to nearly 90% in 2009/10 and found that the majority of these households were practicing CA because they considered it a good farming method that brought good yields. The majority of respondents regarded the benefits of CA to be high yields and moisture conservation. Gardens, both household and community, were established across all the 8 districts and benefited nearly 3,000 households with a diversity of nutritional vegetables. LPZ also reached over 2,500 households with livestock through direct and 'pass on' distributions. Beneficiaries reported that owning livestock had enhanced their status and provided a source of milk, meat and manure. Training in processing and utilisation of natural products enabled targeted households to harvest and process baobab pulp, Mopani worms, honey, marula and indigenous vegetables. For example in Matobo, Manyame and Binga more than 2,000 kgs of indigenous vegetables were processed.

Just over 40% of respondents reported that the agricultural and food security support programme had "significantly" changed their lives whilst another 40% believed that their lives had "greatly" changed. Only 15% believed their lives had not changed despite participating in the interventions. The evaluation concluded that although not all targets had been reached under this component of LPZ (Agricultural and Food Security Support), the programme had had a general positive impact in improving the livelihoods of those households reached.

#### *Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)*

Focus group discussions established that health and hygiene awareness was generally high across all districts with the exception of Binga where it continued to be low. As an example, more than 80% were correctly disposing of their waste material. A total of 3,000 latrines were constructed across all districts during the duration of the programme, increasing sanitation coverage by 5% across all districts, with greatest increase in Mangwe (11%) and least in Nyanga (2%). The target for increased sanitation coverage had been 20% and partners attributed the non achievement to challenges in sourcing the necessary materials, inconsistent flow of funds and the difficult and complex operating environment.

Community access to clean, safe water increased by more than 20% from the baseline figure and by the end of programme more than half of the households across the 8 districts were accessing clean water from boreholes and elephant pumps which LPZ had installed, repaired or rehabilitated. Communities were capacitated through training in Community Based Management (CBM) of water points and nearly 75% of respondents noted that their water point committees were functional and were being supported by community members.

#### *Home Based Care (HBC) and HIV*

Beneficiaries of the HBC programme acknowledged they could probably be dead had it not been for the HBC interventions. In terms of post-test and psycho-social support to affected families, the programme on average achieved 85% food distribution to the targeted households reaching more than 25,000 beneficiaries. Nearly 75% of registered clients reported improved health and more than 80% of chronically ill household members reported that they were no longer bed-ridden but were

“up and about” because of the HBC support. More than 80% of respondents rated the HBC service to be good, very good or excellent.

### **Appropriateness**

LPZ was perceived to be both appropriate and relevant by stakeholders and beneficiary communities as it sought to address identified needs such as food insecurity, impacts of HIV/AIDS and lack of adequate water and sanitation facilities. However, the major concern raised by stakeholders and beneficiaries was that some of LPZ interventions were thinly spread on the ground which resulted in minimal impact.

### **Participation**

Stakeholder participation varied from district to district, depending on the dynamism of the implementing partner. In some districts stakeholders were satisfied with their level of participation while in others they felt that they had not been fully involved and interaction and feedback from the IPs had been irregular. Communities participated in the selection of beneficiaries, CBM and in livestock committees, and contributed labour and materials for the construction of latrines, elephant pumps and gardens. Latrine builders, pump mechanics and HBC facilitators were trained. Community participation in monitoring was limited in some districts resulting in a lack of accountability for some inputs such as cement.

### **Targeting**

Stakeholders were generally satisfied with the targeting process and nearly 90% of respondents reported that they were happy with the targeting process. There were however suggestions that in future targeting should not focus on the same people all the time, notably the case of the poor but able bodied, since this leads to promoting dependency and “laziness”.

### **Capacity strengthening**

Partners’ capacities were strengthened through regular monitoring, meetings and workshops and on-going visits by CAFOD support staff. CAFOD supported partners with no Boards or improperly constituted Boards to appoint and reconstitute their Boards in line with donor expectations. A major challenge in LPZ’s integrated approach was the need for rapid capacity building of consortium partners since, prior to participating in LPZ, some partners had specific areas of focus and little experience in implementing a wide array of livelihood activities. This challenge was met and partner capacity building and support became an integral part of the consortium’s growth through the 4 year implementation period.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability of the LPZ livelihood activities depends almost completely on the level of injection of funds required. Interventions that are based mainly on knowledge transfer, such as palliative care, CA practices, garden management and CBM of water sources, are likely to continue in the short to long-term, but components which require material and financial support, for example latrines, are unlikely to be sustainable without external support.

### **Lessons Learnt**

- An integrated approach, where beneficiaries draw complementary benefits from different interventions, brings maximum benefits to poor and vulnerable households;
- A beneficiary selection process that involves community participation is more acceptable to the stakeholders and communities;

- A clear exit strategy that is communicated to all stakeholders is essential in fostering sustainability and community preparedness to withdrawal of external support;
- Taking on board implementing partners to implement activities outside their traditional areas of focus requires intensive capacity building and monitoring to achieve real results;
- Programme implementation under a difficult socio-economic and political environment requires flexibility and decentralisation of decision making to enable IPs to quickly adjust to changing circumstances;
- A robust M&E system is essential to monitor programme implementation and to inform programme direction;
- Meaningful impact occurs when programme inputs and activities are not thinly spread on the ground;
- Programme impact, ownership and sustainability can be achieved through stakeholder involvement and participation in programme activities at all levels;
- Interventions linked to economic activity that brings income to households are likely to be sustainable in the medium and long-term;
- A study to explore the dynamics focusing on strategies aimed at the retention of volunteer care givers and male involvement in volunteer care work would provide insights into the recruitment, selection and management of volunteers against the backdrop of current challenges;
- There is need for a study to determine the existing local community social safety nets and to explore ways of strengthening such local initiatives to enhance long-term sustainability of the initiatives.

## Conclusions

The following were the main conclusions of the evaluation regarding progress towards Goal and Purpose of LPZ.

- ***Progress towards Goal***

The **overall goal** of the programme was to *reduce the impact of poverty, enhance dignity and increase participation*. Although the programme was implemented under a difficult environment characterised by droughts, economic meltdown and political instability, the interventions did have the overall effect of mitigating the impacts of poverty. Without interventions such as CA, HBC and food distribution the external shocks on the beneficiaries would have had a much greater negative impact on the livelihoods of the targeted beneficiaries. Dignity was restored through the HBC programme which helped in the de-stigmatisation of HIV and AIDS and improved health. Food security was improved as was the asset base. The participatory ethos of the programme enhanced community participation in managing own resources and in mobilising resources needed for the implementation of the different components of the programme. To a greater extent, LPZ contributed well towards its overall goal.

- ***Progress towards purpose***

The purpose of the programme was to strengthen the *capacity of 37,000 vulnerable households to secure their livelihoods in selected wards of eight targeted districts*. LPZ managed to surpass the overall target via the different interventions. There is evidence that those beneficiaries reached by the programme have had their capacities strengthened, for example by adoption of CA as a new farming technology resulting in increased productivity. Participation in WASH and HBC has exposed

beneficiaries to training programmes that enhance their livelihoods patterns. LPZ thus made commendable strides towards the attainment of its purpose.

### **Recommendations**

- Orient project implementers on the inter-relatedness of the different components of an integrated livelihoods programme so that some activities are not given priority at the expense of other equally important activities;
- Involve communities meaningfully in developing a targeting framework for the beneficiary selection process;
- There is need to develop a clear exit strategy that is well communicated to the stakeholders and beneficiaries right from the beginning of the implementation process;
- To ensure that M&E systems are effective a supportive budget needs to be put in place to ensure all planned monitoring activities are carried out;
- For more visible impact, there is need to focus on fewer wards and put more resources in each ward rather than spreading too thinly on the ground;
- There is need for a clear involvement strategy of stakeholders, especially at district level, to enhance strategic partnerships as well as sustainability of interventions;
- As a livelihoods programme and to enhance sustainability, LPZ needs to link its interventions to activities that generate income for the beneficiaries;
- To strengthen its holistic approach, LPZ needs to look at the needs of OVCs such as education, psychosocial support and ART for those that are infected with HIV;
- There is need for training manuals and systems at IP level to be aligned to national strategies and manuals so that the activities can complement national efforts;
- There is need to experiment with new models, such as the “Compassionate Communities” model, of empowering communities to identify problems and provide solutions using their own initiatives and solutions.