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Shurugwi Partners

Chikato Orphans & Women's Economic and Social Safety Project

Funded by Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

(Activity Number 22671 / PKP 11 – 05 – ODA)

Grant Amount: €25,000

End of Project Narrative Report (01 August 2011 – 31 July 2012)



"You can either fail as individuals or work together and develop as a community."

- Leon Hartwell –



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1. Operational Environment

The physical, socio – cultural, economic and political environment was generally conducive for the project to be fully implemented. Being located in the semi – arid Natural Region 3, the Chikato community is under the threat of drought induced by low and erratic rainfall leading to hunger, water problems, income challenges and environmental degradation. The erosion of household economic assets during the previous economic crisis period was also a critical factor that was considered in targeting the primary beneficiaries of the project interventions. Most households have no disposable income and economic assets to help them initiate their self reliance income generating activities. The local authorities and political environment remained calm and conducive for the project implementation. This can be largely attributed to the fact that the project was needy driven and remained relevant to the development cooperation between the government of Zimbabwe, local communities and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

2. Situation before the Project

The Mutsiba, Pandehuni and Mashiri villages covered by project interventions were facing critical water problems that heightened income, food security, community health, environmental and social safety challenges. Women and children who constitute more than three quarters of the population of the area were highly vulnerable to socio – economic shock including inflation, drought induced food insecurity and poverty. The Chikato community in general lead a natural resources based livelihoods, hence the lack of access to clean and adequate water for both vegetable production and domestic purposes was the major drawback for local development. The following pictures show the unprotected source of water and the unproductive vegetable garden used to sustain Mutsiba village households.



Mrs. Chigudu's garden without water source.



Unprotected water source used by Mutsiba Village.



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3. Preparatory Activities

Preparatory meetings were held to facilitate the smooth and effective coordinated implementation of the Chikato Orphans and Women's Social Safety Project. A district stakeholder orientation meeting was conducted after the Shurugwi Partners and the Kingdom of the Netherlands signed the grant contract. The Social Services Department took the lead to introduce Shurugwi Partners to other key stakeholders including the District Administrator, Public Services Departments and Ministry of Health and Child Welfare. A date was set for introducing and welcoming Shurugwi Partners to the District Child Protection Committee. After rolling out the Chikato project to the District Child Protection Committee, the stakeholders appreciated the important role played by both the Royal Netherlands Embassy and Shurugwi Partners in the partnership aimed to end rural poverty among the most vulnerable groups of the community. Shurugwi Partners was also requested to assist the Social Services Department to complete the OVC village registers for the ward 7. The organization also agreed to team up with the local ward structures to initiate the Ward 7 Child Protection Committee as a complementary effort to the District Child Protection Committee.

A community orientation and project rollout session was conducted. The members of the community who were present include the Ward Development Committee chaired by the ward Councillor, the traditional leaders including the Chief's representative, the village heads and all the villagers from the Chikato catchment area were represented. The project beneficiaries from Pandehuni, Mutsiba village 1 & 2 and Mashiri village were also present. The project beneficiaries expressed their happiness and appreciation to the Royal Netherlands Embassy for approving their project. In his speech, the project Mobilizer Mr. Clever Mawire highlighted that the targeted villages are some of the marginalized and underdeveloped communities that were the recipients of food hand outs as a result of hunger and poverty. The development assistance that mainly targets women and children was also rated as a giant step towards protecting the vulnerable groups through economic empowerment and self reliance acclivities.

3.1 Provision of Resources

Shurugwi Partners worked with the drafted project action plan to allocate resources to different activities as required in different times. Among the most critical resources that were made available to the community was the borehole water development, fencing and garden seeds to kick start vegetable production and provision of clean and adequate water



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for irrigation and domestic use. The following pictures show some of the resources provided to the local community to enable them fully implement the project according to their needs.



Newly developed project borehole.



Fencing materials provided.

4. Progress against targets

4.1 Community garden development

The traditional leaders including the Village Head officially handed over the area that was identified for the project in the previous years. The hand over was done to the garden project committee that was already in place. Land clearance, pegging and fencing was done after the water survey and borehole water development was carried out as on the slides.



Women captured during land clearance.



Fencing of the garden during September 2011

Through the community's collective efforts, land tillage was done using some individual households' draught-power and equipments. There was a clear division of labour at this stage. The healthy and fit members of the project were involved in levelling the ground and



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pegging the area, whilst the sick and the elderly members were assigned lighter duties like sharpening and treating the pegging sticks.

The following slides indicate the section where bed preparations were completed.



Land preparation and bed pegging stage in October 2011.

Various vegetable crops were planted with the assistance of hybrid seeds purchased using the grant allocation. The butternut was the first crop planted followed by English Giant rape and *rodade* tomatoes. This was the first crop selection which was based on the appropriate cropping calendar that was agreed upon through community based planning approaches.

The following pictures show the vegetable crops grown.



Butternuts before harvesting.



Butternuts after harvesting and ready for market.



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Field Officer monitoring the rape vegetable.



Women harvesting rape vegetable for consumption

The whole project was selling rape worth US\$95 per week over the period of 4 months between October 2011 and January 2012. This brought a positive change and an improvement in the income and food security of the orphans, vulnerable children, women and the people living with HIV/AIDS targeted by the project.

An average of US\$135 was generated per household from tomatoes sale between January and March 2012. Different stages of the tomato crop grown in the Mutsiba garden are shown in the pictures below.



Women harvesting the tomatoes.



Tomatoes grading and selling.

Crops including butternuts, rape and tomatoes helped to generate sustainable income for the beneficiaries who were failing to raise US\$1 for paying the cost of grinding cereals to form mealie-meal before the start of the project.

Currently, the farmers selected the third crops that coincide with the appropriate cropping calendar as well as their dietary and income needs. After harvesting the second butternut



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crop, carrots and rape, they decided to plant cabbages, king onions, peas, sugar beans, giant rape and Chinese cabbage as on the following slides.



Cabbage crop in the garden.



Young girl eating carrots during harvesting.

Onion and peas are very important crops that can survive from extremely low temperatures that affect the areas. This helps to balance both the nutritional requirements and income needs of beneficiaries targeted. The following pictures show onions and peas in the garden.



King onion near maturity stage.



Mulched: Peas at early germination stages

The following chart illustrates the cropping calendar and the varieties of vegetables grown in the community garden.



Cropping Calendar and Crops grown in the garden

Month Crop	Oct 2011	Nov 2011	Dec 2011	Jan 2012	Feb 2012	Mar 2012	Apr 2012	May 2012	Jun 2012	Jul 2012
Butternut										
Tomatoes										
Giant Rape										
Peas										
Cabbage										
Carrot										
Onion										
Irish Potato										
Sugar Beans										
Chinese Cabbage										

4.2 Improving water and sanitation

One new borehole in Mutsiba village was developed by the project to provide clean and adequate domestic and irrigation water for households that were relying on unprotected water sources from shallow wells and Tugwane River. Some of the community members were travelling for more than 2 kilometres to the shopping areas to fetch water at the borehole developed in the early 1990s. Currently, the new borehole is saving three villages with a daily average of 65 households fetching at least 40 litres of water for domestic purposes. The development of the borehole water unlocked agricultural development and income generation. Besides fulfilling domestic water requirements, project borehole is also providing a total of 9,600 litres of water for Mutsiba garden irrigation per week. There is more pressure on the new borehole since the area has few developed water points. The construction of a 2,400 litres capacity water trough answered water management and sustainability issues within the project. The following slides show water development.



Water development for irrigation



Domestic water requirements fulfilled.



4.3 Small livestock provision

The provision of indigenous chickens and goats to people living with HIV/AIDS, households with vulnerable children and orphans and those led by women provided the means for economic development and social safety nets against shocks. There was a recorded increase in the number of women controlling economic assets for livelihoods in the project area. The small livestock component assisted 100 households with 2 goats and 2 chicken received for breeding and pass on. The project distributes 200 indigenous chickens and 178 goats to the beneficiaries targeted. The following pictures show the distribution of indigenous chickens and goats in Mutsiba village.



Women and children receiving indigenous poultry.



Beneficiaries receiving goats.

4.4 Skills Development in Small livestock and vegetable production

4.4.1 Small Livestock training activities

Shurugwi Partners in partnership with AGRITEX cascaded various training activities. The Housing, Care and Feeding of small livestock was the first training that empowered the beneficiaries with various skills in shelter construction to prevent the attack of animals by diseases. Diseases and Pest control and Breeding Management training sessions were conducted latter to enable the farmers to be aware of the common diseases and pests that can negatively impact their livestock production. From the training activities, a community led Small livestock Committee was formed by the beneficiaries to enable effective implementation of the project. A team responsible for vaccinating the goats and chickens in times of diseases was set up. The provision of these committees was welcomed by most stakeholders since it is one of the strategies to ensure local communities have full control and management of their own development project. The following housing types were the outputs from the training activity.



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Brick and thatched goat housing



Raised from ground poles and thatched goat housing

4.4.2 General Project Management training activities

The workshop was attended by all the garden beneficiaries from Mutsiba village. The major objective was to equip the garden project management committee with skills and strategies for garden and other projects management. The roles, qualities and responsibilities of committee members were discussed during the constitution drafting process. Other issues covered include the crops and cropping calendars, leadership types, selection of sub committees including the infrastructure maintenance and marketing committees. Issues including pesticide use, precautions and regulations, full ownership of the garden project by the community and disputes and their resolutions were also discussed.

4.4.3 Vegetable Production and Marketing Training Activities

Other training activities conducted were soil and water conservation and market linkages that played a critical role in the rehabilitation of the eroded area of the garden and linking produce to markets respectively. The following pictures illustrate the farmers during the process of rehabilitation of eroded area.



Beneficiaries rehabilitating the land.

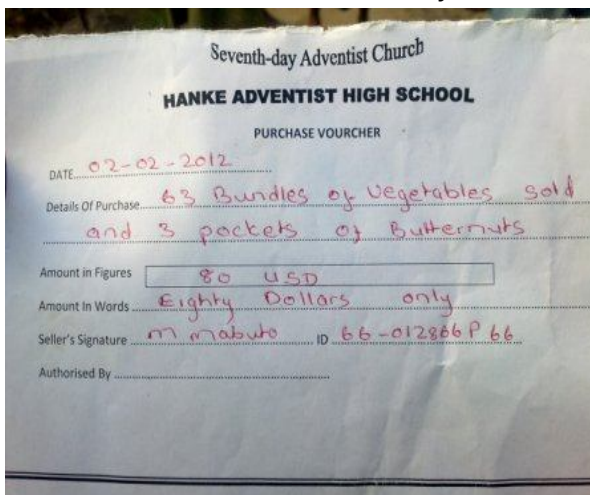


F.O. and the Chairperson in rehabilitation process

The farmers managed to link to local schools markets and villages and raised more income for their households. The slides below highlight some of the markets accessed by farmers.



Butternuts from the garden being sold in local shop.



Recorded transaction of US\$80.00 in one day

Shurugwi Partners also cascaded the crop produce management, lead farmers, commodity association and the garden income management training activities which were also instrumental in enabling the beneficiaries to make independent and informed decision in vegetable production and income management. The slides below capture the training and excitement with community members in developing current skills in project management.



Topic of the day displayed on the board.



Singing and dancing motivates them.



4.5 Internal Savings and Lending

A gap in rural financial services was identified as one of the major factors deepening the impact of poverty in the Chikato area. The project trained the Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) methodology for encouraging the development of self reliance projects through saving income from vegetable sales. Every month, different groups of savings club members with a total enrolment of 90 households' representatives mainly dominated by project beneficiaries save their money in a group fund. One or more members access the loan from the group savings at a very small interest rate depending on the size of the group fund. Various projects from buying and selling clothes were initiated. Some members borrow the money to cover the costs of school fees for children and latter pay the money back with interest. The most successful groups are those from Mutsiba garden project that has sustainable source of income from vegetable sales. The groups with largest savings funds include Blessings group, First Rural Bank group, Budiriro group and Batanai group that saved more than US\$600.00 in their clubs. After the savings have grown, the Select Plan and Manage (SPM) an IGA and Cluster Facilitator (CF) training were conducted to compliment business skills and local management of savings groups for their sustainability. The following slides show the progress made in ISAL intervention.



Pandehuni women's savings group.



Grandmother craft mates to raise money savings club

4.6 HIV/AIDS, Gender Mainstreaming and other cross cutting issues

The project took advantage of the existence of government structures including the trained Village Health Workers to complement outreach in terms of HIV/AIDS and gender sensitization. In every ward meeting development meeting, the team was responsible for sensitization and campaign reaching more than 480 decision making households members of the community. This promoted a calm working environment even in the project with HIV/AIDS positive beneficiaries of different age groups. There were no discriminatory practices noted on the grounds of gender and HIV/AIDS.



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5. Experiences, Lessons Learned and Best Practices

5.1 Stakeholder Coordination

Effective coordination and collaboration of efforts with different stakeholders ensured the success of the Chikato project. We have worked closely together with our funding partner (Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands), Caritas Gweru, government line ministries and departments including Social Services department, Agritex, Ministry of Education, the District Administrator's Office, Tongogara Rural District Council, Ministry of Health and many more. It is through this partnership that we have realised the importance of one another in developing the grassroots community where the people in most needy of our services remain desperate and vulnerable without our support.



- Leon Hartwell's advised to the community, "You can either fail as an individual or work together and develop as a community"
- "...development is initiated by local community..." Bro. Blazio Mabobo, Caritas Gweru Coordinator encouraged the beneficiaries to remain active in addressing their needs.
- Cllr. Pfebeni thanking the Mutsiba garden beneficiaries for working hard and in unity.
- Agritex Officer, Soliderity Bushe facilitating farming as a business during the workshop.



5.2 Community Contribution

The role played by community contribution was not underestimated in the project. During the technical appraisal stage of the project, the community highlighted their preparedness to contribute significantly to the development of the project with labour and locally available resources. Some of the contributions made by the community include the provision of fencing poles since the project had budgeted for a few treated corner post poles. The community also mobilized locally available resources to construct the project shed used for meetings and as grading shed for produce. The following pictures illustrate the fencing poles and community project shed constructed respectively.



Pascal and the farmer who brought the pole



The whole community gather in the shed during EKN's visit

Construction of the 2 squat-holes pit latrine toilet is currently underway through the community's collective efforts. The project members moulded their bricks together and bought their cement for toilet construction. After realising the needs to employ responsible pesticide use, the contributed US\$1 each and bought a knapsack sprayer. The community gained capacity to organize itself and contribute to their needs. Now they are motivated and we are confident they can continue without external assistance.

5.3 Integrating small livestock and vegetable production

Organic farming can be best practiced through the crop and livestock integration as in the Mutsiba garden. It promotes the production of health food without application of expensive



synthetic fertilizers. Others call it “*Farming God’s Way*” and with this old grandmother working in the garden to ensure provision of enough nutritious food and income for her family and grandchildren, the system has a bearing on her bank of indigenous knowledge. The following picture shows Mrs. Ziyambe using goat manure to improve soil fertility.



Application of nutrients – rich goat manure to the beds

5.4 Sustainable income through market linkages

Access to markets and market information was an important element of income generation in the community garden. The training and participation of local community in gathering market information and conducting market surveys created sustainable income generation opportunities within their local communities. The farmers new the market requirements and responded to market needs accordingly. The following picture illustrates garden farmers after weighing and packaging their butternuts for delivery to local boarding schools.



Women pose for a photo - Butternuts packed & ready for delivery to schools

5.5 Increasing benefits through climate compatible development

The garden farmers have realised the importance of mulching including reducing water demands by crops due reduced evaporation and improvement in the structure of the soil through decomposition of organic matter used as mulch. This created a win – win situation for farmers through suppressing weed growth and ensure there is enough soil moisture and nutrients required by the plants. The following slide shows farmers mulching their cabbage.



Women in the process of mulching



Butternut crop mulched early to reduce water loss due to evaporation

6. Stories of Change

6.1 Small livestock building vulnerable households' economic resilience

Through monitoring, evaluation and excitement reports, we have successfully made follow ups on sentinel households that were earmarked for assessing the improvement in social safety mechanisms and economic assets. These are households that did not own goats and many chickens as a result of vulnerability to income challenges. Among these households include Mrs. Chinoona who did not have any sustainable source of income. She attended all the project meetings and complimented her knowledge on small livestock production. She builds an up to standard, goat and chickens housing. She received her 2 indigenous chickens in December 2011 and took care of them using the knowledge gained in training. In June 2012, she could not hide the excitement when one of her chicken hatched 12 chicks which she is raising. The population of her chickens grew from 5 in November 2011 to 7 in December 2011 and currently it multiplied to 19. Her neighbour, Mrs Jambi was also allocated two indigenous chickens in December 2011 and one of the chickens hatched 16 chicks in June. Unfortunately, 2 of the chicks fell into the bowl of water and died. She testified that she learnt lesson and will never let that loss happen again. The following are the pictures of the two women captured during a monitoring home visit in June 2012.



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Chicken are multiplying faster to cushion these vulnerable households from economic shocks

6.2 Garden produce constituting part of every meal and nutrition

Vegetables from the garden constitute more than 40 percent of every meal. During the butternut harvesting season, they constitute 90 percent of breakfast, adding important nutrients to people living with HIV/AIDS and the vulnerable children. It has become a norm



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that in every season, there are some leaf vegetables for household consumption. Going to the garden is an interesting activity for the children since they know at the end of the day they can pick some carrots to eat whilst assisting their parents and guardians to water the vegetables.

7. Exit Strategy and Sustainability of the Project

The project implementation team has set an effective exit strategy that ensures sustainability of the project after the end of funding period. Different committees including garden committee, infrastructure committee, marketing committee and small livestock committee were set up and are responsible for independent coordination of activities. A strong link between the garden and the markets was created and this ensures continued uptake of produce and generate income for households. Skills training including ISAL activities will provide future resources including finance for buying seeds and repairs.

8. Conclusion

Few challenges were encountered which include unstable prices and other overlooked costs like transportation of project material. We would like to thank our funding partner, EKN for approving the requests for shifting some budget lines to speed up project implementation. The Chikato Orphans & Women's Economic & Social Safety Project is an excellent example of a good partnership between the Government of Zimbabwe, Shurugwi Partners and the Netherlands.

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09 July 2012

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09 July 2012