

TOR and call for Expressions for Interest – Strategic Think Piece on Food Justice and the Rights of Women Smallholder Farmers

Oxfam-Canada – March 2012

Background

Zimbabwe is at a very problematic and yet very exciting period in its history. In the current climate, Civil Society Organisations are struggling to find answers to multi-layered national questions. They are also struggling to (re)define their roles, their relationships with one another and more importantly with the State. Familiar methods and approaches to development and human rights work have been seriously challenged in the last decade, leaving some with no clear vision and strategic focus. In addition, the context has made it almost impossible for organizations and movements to design and implement long term development programs. To a large extent, most programs are short term, poverty alleviation (rather than eradication) focused, and in many cases more reactive to the situation rather than agenda setting. At the same time the types, quantities and focus of funding available left little room for longer term, innovative, and ambitious programs.

Oxfam Canada is commissioning what we are calling *strategic think pieces* of writing on three key themes;

- Women's rights and gender equality
- Securing Rights in the context of HIV & AIDS
- Food justice and the rights of women smallholder farmers

What is a strategic think piece?

A strategic think piece is a paper which lays out what the current lay of the land is on a given topic. It outlines what the key issues of the day are. Why these issues are topical and what are the key drivers of this situation. It goes further to analyse what the current program interventions are; who are the key players; what they are doing and how they are doing it. It analyses whether these are the most strategic interventions in the short, medium and in particular long term. The piece tries to provide various options for the future, suggesting stronger ways in which an agency and its partners can play a role in addressing the selected issues. The purpose of the paper is to provoke discussion and debate. It asks the hard questions and provides some ugly truths as well. At the same time, it should not be so didactic as to polarize conversations. A strategic think piece is NOT a classic NGO strategic plan. Nor is it a "project plan", or worse, an academic treatise on what is wrong with the world at large! At its core, a strategic think piece is an illuminating piece of work which helps shape strategic planning, and at a later stage program design as well as resource mobilization. The think piece is rooted in a very strong evidence base, providing current data and most recent facts and analysis on what is happening where. A strategic think piece questions current thinking, ways of doing things, and challenges current (political) discourse. It is a tool, a means to get us towards a desired end. In this case, the end being a strong political rationale for what it is we will be doing and how we will be doing it in Zimbabwe as Oxfam Canada, together with our partners. Therefore, ultimately a strategic think piece should help us design programs that are built on a solid collectively shared understanding and critical analysis.

Background to the strategic think piece on Food Justice and the Rights of Women Smallholder Farmers

It would appear that despite all the hoopla about land redistribution very little has changed for the majority of poor and excluded farmers, most of whom are rural women, trying to eke out a living and get food from very poor soils, in the driest regions of the country. While focus has been on the resettled farmers in both the A1 and A2 schemes, little attention has been given to the former Tribal Trust Lands, (politely referred to as Communal lands), since the mid 1990s. Yet this is the sector that ‘employs’ the majority of rural women (and men), and from whence they derive whatever food they can get.

Globally, Oxfam is implementing a campaign on ‘Food Justice in a Resource – Constrained World’, identified as GROW, over a period of 4 years from June 2011. This campaign is being supported by most Oxfam affiliates globally in different countries. The campaign seeks to ensure that poor women and men claim power in the way the world manages land, water and climate change, so that they can grow or buy enough food to eat – now and in the future. The global campaign seeks to tackle the 3 major challenges of sustainable production, equity and resilience to achieve food justice. The sustainability issues are centred around the question of how 9 billion people can be fed by 2050 without wrecking the planet. The analysis around resilience issues focuses on the need to scale-up our ability to collectively manage risks at the international level, and build resilience to shocks at the national level. The need to address the appalling inequalities that plague the food system from farm to fork, starting with the 1 billion people that go to bed hungry each night, requires as much attention as the other issues. There is currently a working group made up of civil society organizations designing the GROW campaign in Zimbabwe. GROW however will be just one component of a wider program.

Oxfam in Zimbabwe¹ is in the process of completing its Joint Country Analysis and Strategy, (hereafter JCA & JCS formerly known as the JCAS). Within the JCS Sustainable Livelihoods is one the six thematic areas, (aka Country Programs). The objective of this country program as defined in the draft JCS is:

To ensure that rural and urban communities have access to sustainable economic opportunities and are empowered to assert their rights to social protection, equitable access and control of productive resources and sustainable natural resource management.

The intended outcomes are:

1. Increased access and control over productive resources by the most marginalized and excluded groups (land, water, seed/inputs, and capital) and increased capacity of smallholder farmers to produce food and increase their incomes;
2. Stronger market regulation and protection of rights of smallholder farmers and urban poor (food prices, access to food, etc.);
3. Enhanced capacity of the poorest and most marginalized communities and households to adapt to climate change and survive other shocks and disasters
4. Private sector respects the rights of the poor and marginalized and supports a pro-poor development agenda.

¹ Oxfam in Zimbabwe refers to the 3 Oxfams operating in Zimbabwe under a new Single Management Structure (SMS). These are; Oxfam-Great Britain (OGB), Oxfam-Canada (OC), and Oxfam- Novib, (ON).

The key strategies to achieve these objectives include:

- Policy advocacy at national, regional and international levels for smallholder farmers' and women farmers' rights
- Support the poor (rural and urban) to increase their capital base through production and marketing
- Support affected communities (rural and urban) to adapt to climate change realities and 'cyclic' shocks
- Strengthen the voice, capacity and power of movements and organizations of rights holders to influence decision making processes at all levels, holding the private sector and corporate as well as duty bearers accountable
- Coordinate local CSOs to design and implement the GROW campaign in the Zimbabwean context.

At the same time, Oxfam Canada will, during 2012, submit a global funding proposal to the Canadian Agency for International Development (CIDA), under its recent call for proposals from NGOs working on Food Security. In its food security strategy, CIDA has stated that;

- ***Particular emphasis will be placed on ensuring that rural women small-scale farmers have equal opportunities to contribute to increasing food security.***

Oxfam-Canada has identified Women's rights and gender equality as its core area of competence and focus within the SMS world. Thus, in the context of the Zimbabwe Joint Country strategy as well as this think piece Oxfam-Canada is interested in gathering evidence and knowledge upon which to build a strong program framework that will feed into the global program OC will submit to CIDA in mid-2012. Further, this strategic think piece will provide OC and Oxfam in Zimbabwe with solid information upon which to build relationships with prospective partners and communities.

Specific TOR for the Strategic think piece on Food justice and the rights of women smallholder farmers

Oxfam Canada seeks to engage (a) consultant/s to produce 10 to 15 pages (maximum), think piece, deepening the analysis in this TOR (above), and answering the questions in this TOR (see below). The paper will be written in clear, simple, (but not simplistic), yet engaging language. The consultant, will be expected to then translate this into a power point presentation (maximum 10 slides), and present this at an Oxfam blue-skies conversation to be held in the second week of May 2012, in Harare Zimbabwe. This will be the opportunity for the consultant to engage Oxfam staff and partners in debate and discussion on the issues in their think piece. The below are some of the key questions to be answered. Please note these are not in order of priority. The consultant is also expected to deepen the analysis in the contextual analysis provided above.

1. Beyond land reform

- Do we still need land reform? What else needs to happen to create justice, equity and equality? Provide facts, figures on where land reform is at, how much it has benefitted smallholder farmers, particularly the poor, excluded, and poor women specifically?
- What are the best ways to “Increase access and control over productive resources by the most marginalized and excluded groups, (land, water, seeds, inputs, capital)”, as defined in the Oxfam Joint country strategy? What should be the specific priorities here? What would that look like?
- What should be the policy influencing agenda in pushing for the rights of smallholder farmers? What opportunities and space do we see for civil society?
- Now that the hoopla around land reform is dying down, what vision should/do we (as RIGHTS focused), civil society have for Zimbabwe when it comes to smallholder farmers? What is the attractive future we would like to see focused on food and agriculture?
- Indeed who do we mean by smallholder farmers? Can we describe, paint a picture of them? Where are they? What are the defining characteristics of smallholder farmers? Factor in; sex, age, race, geographic spread, and other factors. Cite the most current statistical data.
- What are smallholder farmers’ own visions and interests farming? Is it for food security? Export? Sustainable agriculture? Provide examples of what smallholder and women farmers are saying.
- What are some of the most strategic ways to ensure, “stronger market regulation and protection of the rights of smallholder farmers?”
- What are some of the good examples we know – from what is happening already?
- Who are the key civil society actors in this sector? Describe their strengths, weaknesses? What are the opportunities for Oxfam?
- Where should donors invest resources in the agriculture and food sector?

2. Food justice

- Who is the food insecure in Zimbabwe today? Sex, age, ethnicity, geographic zones etc?
- Are the issues of food security more to do with food production? Or is it more about access, distribution? Where should the emphasis lie?
- Is food insecurity a rural or urban phenomenon? What kind of interventions would be strategic in the next five years?

- What are the key national, regional and international factors impacting food security in Zimbabwe? What are the likely trends in the next five years?
- Where should donors invest resources in food justice programs?
- What should government be doing to ensure food security among the groups identified above both from a policy as well as practical support angle?

3. Climate change

- What are smallholder farmers' understandings of climate change? Its causes, consequences and implications? What are they already doing to adapt? Provide some examples which illustrate farmers' existing knowledge
- What challenges does climate change pose to smallholder farmers' ability to grow food? What are the gender dimensions?
- What policy and practical interventions are already underway for climate adaptation? Give examples where we have them.
- What other shocks and disasters are likely to affect smallholder farmers and what are the strategic ways to "build resilience"?
- What programs and policy changes would be helpful in supporting smallholder and women farmers adapt to climate change?

4. Smallholder farmer movements and women's participation

- How are smallholder farmers currently organized in Zimbabwe?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the movement/s?
- What is the level and quality of women's participation in the movement/s? Women's leadership?
- What interventions would be strategic to strengthen women smallholder farmers' organizing, participation, organization and leadership?

5. Women smallholder farmers

Relate all of the above to the Oxfam Canada program framework on Women smallholder farmers (October 2011), and in that context provide suggestions on how this would work in the Zimbabwean context. (attach document).

- What would be strategic for Oxfam to do in Zimbabwe?
- With which women smallholder farmers? Link to 1 above.
- In which geographic areas?
- Who would be the possible partners?
- Who could be strategic partners?
- What would be the link between this work and the Women's rights standalone theme?
- How would this intersect with the HIV & AIDS theme?