



## **IMPROVING FOOD PRODUCTIVITY AND MARKET LINKAGES PROJECT (PHASE 2)**

### **FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**



**PARTNER: COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (CTDO)**

## **Project Synopsis**

The project was to expand an integrated package of interventions aimed at reducing seed and food insecurity, while increasing income generation, in selected areas of Mutoko District, by developing value chains and creating market linkages to increase rural farm incomes.

The project was designed to increase food security and income generating capacity of target communities; strengthen the capacity Asset Building Groups (ABGs); and link farmers with access to inputs, information and strengthen value chains and market linkages.

Production of key crops would be increased, and their value addition promoted. Pilot pen fattening and artificial insemination interventions will be scaled up, resulting in increased market returns. Access to water for irrigation would be increased to enable year-round production of higher value crops and allow for multiple harvests. Work would continue to increase access to quality seed for poor farmers and support existing quality seed certification systems. Farmers would receive support for Internal Savings and Lending activities to increase access to cash in times of stress.

## **Evaluation Key Findings**

- The range of interventions was considered relevant by key informants and communities. Layering, sequencing, and integration of these interventions was a key success of the project.
- Of the 21 listed activities, on average a household was participating in 13. The most common activity was seed assistance followed by agricultural production.
- The introduction of fodder production and preservation activities were welcomed by households.
- The project aligns with Government policy, including the Zimbabwe National Development Strategy (2020). The country seeks to improve self-sufficiency, and most households that were surveyed reported producing food for their own consumption.
- Project outcomes were substantially achieved as planned.
- Project sustainability was achieved through establishing a strong connection between communities and government stakeholders and key activities like the 'pass-on scheme' for livestock and the establishment of asset management committees.
- Community participation brought about strong community ownership of projects and activities and will be able to continue with little outside assistance.
- Cross cutting issues like gender, inclusivity and leaving no one behind were considered during the design and implementation of the project.
- The project targeted the vulnerable and marginalised, involving and benefitting different genders, people with disability and other marginalised people.
- Environmental issues were addressed through a series of environmental management and conservation trainings.

## **Evaluator's Recommendations**

- Add more resilience activities like 'crisis modifier' interventions such as providing a subsidised agriculture production package.
- Projects of this nature, need more resources for training and monitoring. The current project budget was slim and restraining which affected project reach.

- There is need to have technical officers for each thematic area (crop production, livestock production, and ISAL groups).
- Small livestock production and the accompanying pass-on scheme have been noted to be an effective and most relevant intervention which should be scaled up due to its great potential for improving incomes, food, and nutrition security.
- Small dam construction initiatives have potential for up-scaling as they had a great impact of improving access to water for enhanced horticultural production and reducing livestock trekking periods in the lean season.
- The value of grants (USD 100) to ISAL groups could be increased. There is also the need to link groups with microfinance institutions that cater to farmers.
- Empower project participants with the knowledge of the actors in the Irish Potato and NUA 45 beans value chains so they realise the full potential of these key crops.
- Revisit artificial insemination and cattle pen-fattening, which have the potential to positively impact communities in Mutoko.
- Revitalise the market linkage component of the project, which is key to supporting increased agricultural productivity as it gains momentum.
- Increase the publicity of the ICT4D component using the mobile application Kurima Mari, which can go a long way to revamp market linkage components of the project.
- Increase youth participation in the project, which was notably low, including by offering activities that bring youth together such as music, dance, and sport.
- If funds permit, construct more weir dams for irrigation and livestock watering

### **Evaluator's Conclusion**

Construction of the water harvesting facilities has resulted in the availability of productive water and lengthened the time communities were accessing water. There was improved community access to water but due to the ever-increasing high demand, these water sources were not able to sustain supply throughout the year. There were reports that some farmers were able to have second harvests using water from the dams.

Food and nutrition security was enhanced because of the project, but due to the seasonality of water availability, some of the communities were still negatively impacted during the lean season. Farmers were issued with subsidised seeds for Irish potatoes and NUA 45 beans. The pass-on scheme was also used to avail seeds to other households that were having challenges accessing seeds and improved livestock breeds. This had an impact on crops and livestock. Some farmers reported selling their own produce and having income for the household. A majority also reported increased access to food production as they were able to produce their own food. ISALs were also key to project success, as communities were able to reinvest in agricultural production with proceeds from ISALs. ISALs also generated savings that were used to fund other IGAs and as a result some households reported increased income and ability to buy own food. The project's interlinked activities and interventions had a positive outcome on a household's ability to be self-sufficient, and experience enhanced food and nutrition security.