



Zimbabwe Oilseeds & Staple Foods Project

August 1989 — March 2000

The Zimbabwe Oils project was EnterpriseWorks' first replication of the Tanzania Oils Project. In its early years, the Zimbabwe project focused on training small-scale manufacturers in the production of various ram press models that EnterpriseWorks had developed in Tanzania. In addition to providing assistance in quality control, marketing, and distribution, the project trained buyers in the use of the press and gave rural artisans instruction in how to repair them. Later, a more commercial approach to press distribution was adopted: subsidies to press manufacturers were reduced, and private sector shops and sales agents increasingly handled press sales.

In its final phase, the project focused on a new approach to press production, involving partnerships between EnterpriseWorks and two Zimbabwean companies: RAM Pvt. Ltd., a newly-founded commercial entity owned jointly by EnterpriseWorks and Shamen Engineering; and ZOPP Pvt. Ltd. In the context of the partnership, RAM mass-manufactures the ram press and other technologies, while ZOPP markets the products as a domestic and export wholesaler. The project has expanded its mandate to move beyond oilseeds and include staple food crops and market gardening. As a result, other agro-processing technologies such as maize mills, peanut butter mills, and treadle pumps were introduced. Project services for these other technologies included assistance in testing, maintenance, and repair. Training programs, ranging from agronomy to micro-enterprise development, were offered to educate small-scale farmers about agro-processing and marketing. Partnerships with various NGOs, governmental agencies, and private sector companies were forged in order to ensure sustainability far beyond the life of the project.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Designed and test the new mass-produced ram press model.
- Consolidated the separation of development activities from the commercial marketing of products.
- Developed marketing channels for ZOPP Pvt. Ltd. in Zimbabwe and neighboring countries.
- Diversified product lines for manufacturing and distribution.
- Assisted in increasing the sales of ram presses, peanut butter mills, treadle pumps and

Economic Participants
15,093 --- in 2001

Enterprises Assisted
8,495 --- in 2001

Total Monetary Benefits
\$2,016,864 --- in 2001

Cumulative TMB
\$9,053,099

Project Budget
\$1,481,565

Primary Funders
USAID
WK Kellogg Foundation
CIDA
Food Industry Crusade
Against Hunger

sunflower planting seed.

LESSONS LEARNED

The RAM-32 oilseed press is one of the most important products developed by EnterpriseWorks for mass production in recent years. It is lighter, cheaper, and easier to operate than previous press models and is highly standardized, making it easy to produce and repair. During 1998, the RAM-32's first year in the field, certain design flaws became evident, including problems with the binding, snapping of the piston eye, bending of the base frame, and separation of the cage bars. After modifications were made to strengthen these weak points, ATZ then put the RAM-32 through extensive trials, processing an average of 4,000 kg of sunflower seed with each device tested. During the six-month testing period, manufacturing of the RAM-32 was suspended. In order to meet market demands, however, RAM Pvt. Ltd. continued to manufacture its older BP-30 model. The RAM-32 finally passed its rigorous product testing, and commercial production of the press resumed in February 1999. While the development phase of RAM-32 production was successful, a large volume of presses were needed to be produced and sold for the project to recover the costs incurred in the researching, tooling, and testing of the product.

The project's success came from diversifying its product line, especially with the introduction of the peanut mill. Small-scale producers participating in this project identified a number of technological bottlenecks in their enterprises, and in 1998 ATZ tested a number of new products developed to meet their needs, including stick planters/seeder, steelyard weighing scales, and both motorized and manual peanut butter mills. The original targets for the peanut butter enterprises, hybrid sunflower seed usage, and the total income beneficiaries of the project, were all exceeded by its end. In total, the 425 created peanut butter mills generated a total annual income of \$87,804.

The project's marketing channels' expansion boosted sales. ATZ continually trained additional stockists including several village stockists who could only stock and sell improved sunflower planting seed. Close to 100 private sector stockists sold the ram press in Zimbabwe. ATZ supported field demonstrations exposing technologies to potential ram press and peanut mill buyers. In 1999, the project's business management seminars and supplementary training for equipment owners attracted 343 participants.

Publications promoted better farming practices. The project developed a series of materials to promote good farming practices. Publications were produced and distributed on land preparation and planting; weed, pest and disease control; harvest and storage; and sunflower processing and marketing. Similar publications were prepared for peanuts.

NGOs have an essential role in new technology development. Because the private sector does not have a strong economic incentive to do research that can benefit low-income producers, NGOs continue to play a vital role in developing new technologies for micro-enterprises. Private companies often find it difficult to prevent others from copying the results of their work without compensation and also face high transaction costs and risks when making and promoting new products. NGOs such as EnterpriseWorks, which are expressly designed to take on these risks, are well positioned to develop new technologies that can be disseminated widely for maximum benefit.

Mass manufacture of ram presses facilitates the growth of oilseed processing. Since the bulk of the economic benefits of the ram press go to press users and oilseed farmers, rather than

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the manufacturers and their employees, oils projects in Tanzania, Uganda, and Mozambique have now shifted their focus from multiple small-scale press manufacturers to the more efficient and cost-effective strategy of mass-manufacturing of the press. Small-scale local manufacturers will continue to produce other technologies that have simple designs and are less vulnerable to variations in locally available materials - making them more cost-effective for local manufacturers to produce and less likely to require training or ongoing project assistance.