



Agribusiness Volunteer Program

FY2001 Workplan—Southern Africa

1. Summary of progress toward planned results

The goal of the CNFA Southern Africa Agribusiness Volunteer Program is for **small-scale and indigenous farmers to increase their income**. CNFA is working at two levels to achieve this goal:

- *Train the farmers to manage their farms in a more commercially oriented manner.* CNFA volunteers work through farmer associations or co-ops to train the farmers.
- *Strengthen local commercial enterprises that will link the farmers to markets and enable them to buy the inputs, access the services, and market the crops or livestock necessary to sustain commercial production in the long run.* CNFA's primary targets for this kind of training are (a) farmer associations and cooperatives that enable farmers to work together to access markets, and (b) private agribusinesses that serve as local marketing outlets in the rural areas.

CNFA conducted 26 volunteer assignments in FY00, bringing the cumulative total to 80 volunteer assignments since the cooperative agreement began in FY97. Therefore, CNFA is on track to achieve its target of 110 assignments by the end of FY01. The majority of CNFA's assignments continue to be conducted in Zimbabwe (80%) while 14% and 6% were conducted in Mozambique and Zambia, respectively. CNFA was forced to curtail activity in Zimbabwe somewhat during the spring in the face of unrest during the lead-up to the June parliamentary elections. During this period, CNFA postponed or rescheduled many of its volunteer assignments and instituted security precautions for the assignments that were conducted. For example, volunteers were accompanied by staff at all times. Although conditions remain somewhat unsettled (fuel shortages continue to cause major disruption to volunteer movement within Zimbabwe), CNFA has resumed a full schedule of volunteer assignments into Zimbabwe in the last quarter.

During the past year, CNFA volunteers worked with 12 organizations, or groups of businesses, within 7 long-term projects. As a result:

- **6 farmer organizations in Zimbabwe are providing improved services to their members.** These include the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union (ICFU) at the national headquarters office and 2 provincial branch levels, the Seke, Chinamora, Johannadale, Mhende and Valley smallholder grower associations, and the Mount Darwin and Rushinga Oil Pressers Association. These organizations are now better managed,

more financially transparent, and are providing new services such as marketing and political advocacy to their members. This exceeds CNFA's 5-year goal of strengthening 2 farmer organizations.

- **358 smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique learned to improve their farm business management skills or effectively market their crops.** Since FY97, CNFA has trained 2,178 smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe on farm planning and management, marketing, and financial management, exceeding its 5-year goal of training 2,000 farmers.
- **283 women in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique know how to improve their family income** through farming or operating other small businesses. CNFA assistance to women has also focused on helping women organize themselves to form effective marketing groups. Since FY97, CNFA has trained 928 women, exceeding its 5-year goal of 200.
- **109 small business owners in Zimbabwe and Mozambique learned how to better manage their businesses.** Training covered basic financial management, marketing, business planning and strategic management. This exceeds CNFA's 5-year goal of strengthening 100 agribusinesses.

Having graduated its Zimbabwe agrodealers from business management training provided by volunteers, CNFA was able to begin working with new organizations in FY00. These include:

- Mount Darwin and Rushinga Oil Pressers Association (MDROPA) – An association formed in 1999 whose 110 members manufacture sunflower oil and market some of the oil through the association,
- Valley Irrigation Scheme – An association of smallholder farmers who produce vegetables on an irrigation scheme and access markets as a group,
- Newly-formed associations of agrodealers throughout Zimbabwe and the Manica province of Mozambique, and
- The Chongwe branch of the Zambian women in agriculture association.

Additionally, CNFA volunteers developed training materials that national trainers will use to train rural agribusinesses. These include:

- Business management training modules for agrodealers in Mozambique, and
- Business management training modules for rural Zimbabwean tillage businesses.

CNFA also planned to begin assisting two groups of smallholder farmers as part of the Tulumara Organic Program during FY00, but had to delay the start-up of that project due to political disturbances in those areas. CNFA continues to support the ongoing development of the other host organizations it had previously worked with, with the exception of the ITAZ-Lupane project which has been placed on hold until it implements improved financial management practices, and the Murewa Women's Cooperative project which did not request volunteer assistance during FY00, though it plans to in FY01.

2. Summary of Lessons Learned

- *CNFA better targets its services by focusing on specific segments of the agricultural economy, such as agricultural input supply businesses or small scale grower associations.* For example, CNFA has become an expert on the input supply sector in Southern Africa, learning about the opportunities and constraints within the industry through its FtF interventions. Now CNFA can use that information to provide valuable information and contacts to its hosts and volunteers. Additionally, once CNFA becomes familiar with the successes and failures of certain types of hosts, like smallholder grower associations, it can share those experiences with similar associations to help them avoid the same pitfalls or take advantage of particularly promising opportunities.
- *Investing in the preparation of volunteers produces valuable results.* FtF volunteers bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to each assignment, but their effectiveness is limited by their ability to communicate and their accurate discernment of hosts' needs. CNFA has focused on improving volunteer preparedness prior to their assignments by developing a resource library in Harare with over 120 materials, and a resource library in Washington, D.C. with over 80 topic-specific materials which are available to volunteers several weeks before their trip. Once the volunteer arrives in Harare and meets the host, they can use the materials in the Harare resource library to further prepare their training materials. CNFA has begun collecting the training notes of volunteers for distribution to future volunteers as well.
- *In order to document impact, CNFA needs to gather more quantitative information about hosts at regular intervals.* During FY00, CNFA developed and began using a detailed Host Profile.
- *FtF implementers can spread the impact of volunteer assignments by developing local capacity to replicate the volunteer-training.* While FtF implementers learned this lesson years ago as they developed local capacity within associations, CNFA has now been able to apply this lesson to commercial business training programs. CNFA has trained 5 trainers, who teach business skills to clients, who pay \$125 for a 5-module course. In CNFA's experience, FtF volunteers can be effective at standardizing training materials and training local trainers, but additional (non-FtF) funds are necessary to develop the commercial incentive system which is required to make the whole program work, initially and in the long-term. With CNFA's agrodealer program, CNFA was able to use USDA funds to create a credit guarantee fund, which CNFA uses to guarantee the agrodealers who successfully complete the training program.
- *Standardized training materials benefit volunteers and hosts because the materials can be developed to ensure ease of teaching and ease of understanding from the local perspective.* CNFA's agrodealer business management training materials have already been able to accomplish this. CNFA is now in the process of standardizing more of its

training materials considering the range of assignments and hosts it works with.

2. Anticipated Activities

CNFA is planning to conduct 30 volunteer assignments in FY2001 – 18 in Zimbabwe, 6 in Mozambique, 3 in Zambia, and 3 reserved for assignments in association with the Peace Corps in these or other countries. Each volunteer assignment with the projects listed below will contribute to one of the following two objectives.

- A. *Farmer associations and co-ops will help farmers improve their farm management, improve commercially oriented production, and access markets.*
- B. *Agribusinesses will provide farmers with improved access to markets.*

ZIMBABWE

- **Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union (ICFU)**

CNFA will continue to develop the capacity of the Mashonaland East and Matebeleland North branches of ICFU to better serve their members.

Volunteer Allocation: 4

- **Small-Scale Grower Development**

Volunteers will continue providing organizational, business and market development training to the Mhende Irrigation Scheme, Seke Communal Farmers Association, Chinamora Communal Farmers Association and Valley Irrigation Scheme. Additionally, CNFA anticipates working with the smallholder farmer associations within the Tulumara Organic Program and possibly a small-scale honey-producers association in the Mutare/Motoko region of Zimbabwe.

Volunteer Allocation: 6

- **Village Agricultural Dealer (Agrodealer) Associations**

CNFA-trained agrodealers developed associations in 18 regions of Zimbabwe last year so they could access markets and services as a group and network more easily amongst themselves. CNFA volunteers will help develop the institutional capacity of the most promising of these associations.

Volunteer Allocation: 3

- **Agribusiness Development projects**

Zimbabweans continue to develop innovative ways to improve their livelihood through individual and group agribusiness ventures. CNFA will provide business and co-op management training to help develop agribusinesses that manufacture and sell cooking oil (MDROPA), process fruit and vegetables (VPPP), make peanut butter (VPPP), or even operate tillage services for their neighbors (Agmech).

Volunteer Allocation: 5

MOZAMBIQUE

- **Village Agricultural Dealer (Agrodealer) Development**

After standardizing its business management training program for agrodealers in Mozambique during FY00, CNFA volunteers will administer that training, test and revise the materials, and train local Mozambicans to administer the CNFA course on their own, during

FY01. CNFA is actively exploring extending into a second province—Sofala.

Volunteer Allocation: 4

- **Village Agricultural Dealer (Agrodealer) Associations**

CNFA-trained agrodealers helped its agrodealer clients in Manica Province form an association last year so they could access markets and services as a group and network more easily amongst themselves. CNFA volunteers will help develop the institutional capacity of that association, and possibly new associations that are formed during FY01.

Volunteer Allocation: 2

ZAMBIA

- **Zambia Women In Agriculture Association**

CNFA volunteers will help the Lukanga and Chongwe branches of the Zambian Women in Agriculture Association to become more membership driven and effective at serving members' needs.

Volunteer Allocation: 3

PEACE CORPS

CNFA has made extensive effort to stimulate Peace Corps volunteer interest in organizing FtF volunteer assignments in Southern Africa. So far, however, no Peace Corps requests for volunteers have been forthcoming, but CNFA is currently discussing collaboration with Peace Corps in both Zimbabwe and Zambia (see below). For planning purposes, CNFA is assuming it will execute 3 Peace Corps partner assignments during FY01.

2. Progress in adapting the revised FTF indicators

During FY00, CNFA implemented a promising new system for tracking FTF impact on hosts and generating data to fulfill USAID's new reporting requirements. This system is based on detailed Host Profiles prepared at the time training begins (the baseline) and updated annually thereafter. The profiles are proving valuable not only in measuring impact but also in providing outgoing volunteers information about their hosts and helping them prepare better for their assignments. CNFA will make a first run at using data from the profiles in preparing its October 31, 2000 semiannual report and expects to refine this system further next year.

3. Public Outreach

CNFA has confirmed a total of 13 articles and 49 presentations (4,700 total attendance) by Southern Africa volunteers about their assignments during FY00. Thanks to CNFA's interaction with the Farm Bureau, there have been 29 Farm Bureau articles and presentations about the FtF program.

Each of CNFA's publications contains the USAID logo, and most of its letters to volunteers credit USAID as the funding source for this program. To assist in gathering more complete information about outreach, CNFA now includes a handy reporting postcard in volunteers' information packets. Each time the volunteer makes a presentation or gets a story published

about the trip, he/she simply fills out a line on the postcard and mails it back to CNFA.

4. Collaboration with the Peace Corps

CNFA's efforts to complement the work of Peace Corps volunteers in Zimbabwe were seriously undermined by the political disturbances in Zimbabwe this year. Since April, PCVs in Zimbabwe have been consolidated in Zimbabwe's major cities, effectively suspending their work with their hosts. Just prior to Zimbabwe's highly contested parliamentary elections in June, 75% of Zimbabwe's PCVs voluntarily ended their Peace Corps service in Zimbabwe, either returning to the US or transferring to other country programs. Based on CNFA's close relationship with Peace Corps, CNFA was asked to be responsible for one Peace Corps volunteer, Joanna Michler. In June, Ms. Michler began working with CNFA to develop a resource library that would enable FTF volunteers to better prepare for their assignments and enable hosts to access additional information following their volunteer assignments. As a Community Education and Resource Program PCV, Ms. Michler has been a genuine asset to CNFA and continues to work with CNFA on a fulltime basis. CNFA expects that Ms. Michler will be transferred to a permanent position outside of Harare in October since the unrest has receded.

For the coming year, PC Zimbabwe and CNFA are discussing ways to structure a PCV assignment so that the PCV's primary job would be to provide training to CNFA hosts that complements the training provided by FtF volunteers, and vice versa. While this is just in the planning phase, CNFA is excited at the opportunity of working directly with PC in a mutually beneficial manner.

In Zambia, CNFA initiated discussions with the Peace Corps regarding using FTF volunteers to complement PCVs working in the PC Fisheries program. The initial discussions appear promising and CNFA hopes to begin supporting PCVs in Zambia this coming year.

5. Collaboration with USAID Missions

- Zimbabwe: CNFA's efforts to strengthen farmer cooperatives and associations and village agrodealers contributes directly to USAID Zimbabwe's *Economic Opportunity SpO: Access to Economic Opportunity for Disadvantaged Groups Expanded*. The Zimbabwe Mission is currently unable to discuss its objectives or future activities with organizations such as CNFA due to an outstanding RFP which aims to further define these areas. However, CNFA's proposed FY01 workplan does not significantly deviate from CNFA's FY00 strategy which the Zimbabwe Mission enthusiastically supported last year. Therefore, CNFA anticipates that this FY01 workplan will indeed complement the Mission's future programs.
- Mozambique: CNFA's program of strengthening smallholder farmer commercialization aligns closely with USAID Mozambique's *Strategic Objective 1 -- Increase Rural Household Income in Targeted Areas*. The Mission has expressed interest in and support for CNFA's efforts in the past. CNFA was scheduled to consult the Mozambique Mission on

September 26, 2000 regarding this current work plan.

- Zambia: CNFA's pilot program of strengthening commercialization of women farmers shows promise of contributing directly to USAID Zambia's *Strategic Objective 1 – Increase Rural Incomes of Selected Groups*. CNFA will share its one-year evaluation of that project with the Zambia Mission in October. CNFA will then develop the FY01 long-term strategy for the *Zambian Women in Agriculture* project in consultation with the *Zambian Mission*.

6. Anticipated staff changes or additions

The CNFA Agribusiness Volunteer Program office in Harare, Zimbabwe is now staffed by 1 half-time American Program Director, 1 American Assistant Program Director, and 2 Zimbabwean Program Assistants. The CNFA Washington, DC office is staffed by a full-time Program Coordinator for this project. CNFA has promoted Andrea Lima to fill this position effective October 1, 2000. CNFA's Director of Small Enterprise Development also devotes approximately 30% of his time to supervising this project.

CNFA currently has a Mozambican representative whom it employs on an as-needed basis, but has no similar arrangements in Zambia. While it is possible for CNFA's Zimbabwe staff to undertake some degree of project management in Mozambique and Zambia, CNFA believes it is preferable to use host-country nationals as much as possible in order to achieve the best development results. Therefore, CNFA will seek to develop new part-time relationships with one or more Mozambican and Zambian nationals over the coming year.