

CITIZENS NETWORK FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

AGRIBUSINESS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

*Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development
Under the Worldwide Farmer-to-Farmer Program
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**Report on Activities during the First Half of FY 2001
(October 1, 2000-March 31, 2001)**

April 30, 2001

I. Program Goal

The goal of the CNFA Southern Africa Agribusiness Volunteer Program is that **small-scale and indigenous farmers increase the commercialization of their farming operations and thereby increase their income**. CNFA is working at two levels to accomplish this goal:

- *Train the farmers to manage their farms in a more commercially oriented manner.* CNFA volunteers work through farmer associations or coops 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 links in the rural areas.

II. Program Overview

During the past six months, the CNFA Southern Africa Agribusiness Volunteer Program completed 8 volunteer assignments.

Impact monitoring and evaluation system: In a departure from CNFA's previous project design and evaluation system that relied heavily on narrative indications of impact, CNFA has developed a new system that demonstrates results through both quantitative and qualitative indicators. This system, developed to parallel and support the USAID Farmer-to-Farmer Indicator tables, also serves as an important management tool used by CNFA field offices to monitor host organization progress. The results of this monitoring enable CNFA to make decisions on future programming and allocation of volunteer resources for individual host organizations.

The centerpiece of the new system is the **Host Profile (HP)**, a detailed, individualized compilation of host organization information relevant to the specific training being provided. The HP is updated annually and documents quantitatively changes in specific host organization indicators of progress.

One major goal of the new CNFA *Integrated Project Design and Evaluation System (IPDES)* is to generate statistics on how many people's lives have been improved by CNFA training. This is of course no easy task. CNFA does not and will never have resources to collect data on every person to whom it provides training.

IPDES will, however, do the next best thing. By preparing a baseline *Host Profile* of CNFA's beneficiary groups prior to initiating training and then updating that Profile annually thereafter, it will provide concrete documentation of the progress being made by those groups. And CNFA is working with each group individually to identify indicators that will provide at least indirect confirmation of impact on individual members of the group for inclusion in the Profile. In the

case of a farmers marketing cooperative, for example, we may use data from the coop on increases in volume of sales and number of coop members participating to estimate the number of people benefiting from our training. In the case of a village farm store development project, we may collect data on the volume of farm input sales by the store and, by making an estimate of the average volume of inputs used by farmers in that area, generate a reasonably reliable estimate of the increase in the number of farmers served from one year to the next.

Section C of this report discusses the results obtained in the first several Profile updates conducted by our field offices and our progress towards developing documentation on CNFA's success in improving in people's lives. CNFA plans to complete Profile updates for all of its projects and discuss them in the next (Fall 2001) semiannual report.

In addition to the HP, changes to the IPDES system include:

- *Revision of the LTSS, SOW, VIA and LTIA formats.* To more accurately describe the role of the new documents:
 - The Long Term Strategy Statement (LTSS) has been reshaped as the Project Strategy (PS), and the Volunteer Impact Assessment VIA is now the Volunteer Assignment Report (VAR).
 - In addition, the Long Term Impact Assessment (LTIA), now known as the Project Impact Assessment (PIA) is developed in tandem with the Host Profile, provides a narrative analysis of the data contained in the HP, and asks the field office to draw conclusions about the usefulness of continued program work with an individual host.
- *Reduction in workload for field office personnel:* While conversion to a new system is not easy, field office staff are now fully trained in its use, and are beginning to realize the value of the new system as both a management tool, and as a simpler means of tracking impact. Rather than extensive gathering and cataloguing of narrative information from host organizations, the HP provides a guide that quickly shows a change in indicators being tracked. Staff are then able to focus on those areas of change, making the interview process more efficient and useful for the staff member and host.

Database development: CNFA has nearly completed construction of a custom volunteer database that will enhance recruiting and reporting on volunteers. Development will begin shortly on a custom project database that will integrate with the new volunteer database, providing a powerful tool for managing and evaluating individual assignments and overall programming.

Personnel changes: Svetlana Crasnitchi, formerly employed in the CNFA Moldova office, has joined CNFA DC's office as a Program Assistant for the Agribusiness Volunteer Program.

III. Program Implementation and Impacts

CNFA conducted 8 volunteer assignments in Southern Africa during the first half of FY2001, with 5 in Zimbabwe, 1 in Mozambique, 2 in Zambia, including 1 in partnership with Peace

Corps. CNFA plans to conduct a total of 30 volunteer assignments this year as projected in the FY01 work plan. With some of its projects having graduated in FY00 (Zimbabwe Agrodealer Development Projects and the Johannadale Irrigation Scheme Project), and more scheduled to graduate in FY01, CNFA initiated several new projects during this reporting period. In Zimbabwe, CNFA initiated a project with the Small Scale Beekeepers Association of Zimbabwe (SBAZ). In Mozambique, CNFA expanded its agrodealer development project to new groups of shopkeepers in the Manica as well as Sofala Provinces. In Zambia, CNFA designed a new project to support Peace Corps Volunteers within PC Zambia's Rural Aquaculture Program (RAP). CNFA also evaluated its two graduated Zimbabwe Agrodealer Development Projects during this reporting period (*see attached PIAs and HPs*).

In Zimbabwe, CNFA volunteers:

- helped the Indigenous Commercial Farmer's Union (ICFU) begin developing their own internal training system so the training CNFA has provided to the Mashonaland East and Matebeleland North branches can be extended to the other branches by ICFU itself.
- helped the leaders of the Mhende Irrigation Scheme and Small Scale Beekeepers Association of Zimbabwe (SBAZ), develop the skills they need to make their associations successful.
- helped the smallholder farmer members of the Seke Farmers Association improve their farm business management skills.

In Mozambique, a CNFA volunteer:

- conducted the first Agrodealer Business Management Training module (first in a series of four developed by a CNFA volunteer last year) for a second group of agrodealers recently organized within the Manica province.

In Zambia, CNFA volunteers:

- furthered CNFA's efforts to help the women who are members of the Lukanga and Chongwe branches of the Zambia Women in Agriculture Association (ZWA) so they can effectively work together to access markets and improve their productivity. Although Swartzwalder's assignment went as planned, the hosts have been slow to implement the recommendations made by the volunteers, leading CNFA to reevaluate the potential of the ZWA project. CNFA currently believes that grassroots development is critical to the success of the project but has yet to get the full support of the ZWA national leadership to pursue this course with the women.
- conducted an assignment as part of CNFA's new partnership with Peace Corps Zambia focused on developing the leadership and organizational management skills of the farm associations who receive technical aquaculture training from Peace Corps Volunteers.

All of the volunteer assignments conducted during this reporting period accomplished their immediate objectives and CNFA is now monitoring the hosts' implementation of the volunteers' recommendations and training.

A. Objectives

CNFA has two programmatic objectives for FY01:

1. Farmer associations and coops will help farmers improve their farm management, improve commercially oriented production, and access markets; and
2. Agribusinesses will provide farmers with improved access to markets.

B. Program Development and Impacts:

Consistent with USAID Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation instructions and with resource limitations, CNFA has developed an impact data gathering system that produces data on an annual basis, at the end of the fiscal year. CNFA's fall semiannual report will provide a comprehensive assessment of its projects and impacts. In this mid-year report, CNFA will review Project Impact Assessments on a *sample* of its projects and analyze the information they contain and how it will feed into the USAID Indicator Tables.

CNFA evaluated the impact of two of its graduated projects this period, the Murewa and Gokwe Agrodealer Development Projects (*see attached PIAs and HPs*). In both project impact assessments, CNFA concluded that the projects have been successful at developing the business management skills of rural shopkeepers, called agrodealers. Of the agrodealers surveyed in both regions, 100% are now keeping business records and 60% develop profit and loss statements (*Management Practices, Financial Records/Management Section of HPs*). Around 75% of the agrodealers have also developed business and marketing plans and use them to help manage and expand their businesses (*Management Practices, Planning and Marketing Sections of HPs*). Consequently, they sold approximately 62% more agricultural inputs to smallholder farmers this year than in previous years (*Business Activities, Agricultural Inputs Section, What volume of seed, fertilizer and chemicals did you sell this year? – in HPs*). For the Murewa Agrodealer Development Project, **15 of 18 tracked impact indicators showed clear positive results**, and **13 of 16 were positive for the Gokwe project**, contributing to all 5 USAID Indicator Tables.

As a result of agrodealers' expanded business operations, the smallholder farmers who are customers of those agrodealers benefited by having improved access to agricultural inputs, thereby increasing their agricultural productivity, farm income and household food security (*Benefits for farmer-customers section of HPs*).

Moreover, CNFA has also effectively rolled out the model developed in the Murewa and Gokwe pilot projects by standardizing the training materials developed by volunteers, certifying local trainers to conduct the training, and facilitating the commercialization of the training program so the local trainers can operate on a 100% commercial basis. Zimbabwean trainers started conducting the agrodealer training program in late 1999 and have since then trained 500 agrodealers throughout Zimbabwe (*Expansion of Training Model section of HPs*). In Murewa,

agrodealers supply 541 farmers on average while in Gokwe they supply 2433 farmers (*Business Activities, Agricultural Inputs Section: How many farmers do you estimate you supplied inputs to this year? – in HPs*). Consequently, CNFA estimates that the rolled-out version on these pilot projects has the potential to benefit over 700,000 smallholder farmers throughout Zimbabwe by increasing their access to agricultural inputs and therefore their farm productivity.

The impact of the Murewa and Gokwe Agrodealer Development projects contribute to USAID's Impact Indicator Tables V through IX (refer to the right-hand column within the impact table in each project impact assessment). Without its new project impact assessment format, CNFA would have only had the tools to report both projects' primary areas of impact (Table V - hosts with improved business operations). With CNFA's new impact assessment tools, CNFA was also able to begin to measure, track and report host impact data within multiple secondary indicator areas including improving hosts' organizational capacity, services to membership/employees, financial services, and use or protection of the environment. CNFA sees this as a major improvement and believes that the scope of impact captured for each project has been greatly enhanced and has enabled CNFA to make more informed project selection and management decisions.

C. Issues and Problems

The economic and political climate in Zimbabwe continues to decline. The government's ongoing policy of currency controls continues to cause shortages of imported products such as fuel, spare vehicle parts, raw materials for manufacturing, certain food and medical products, and nearly all other imported products. Additionally, inflation is projected at 60% for a third year and Zimbabweans' buying power has been significantly eroded. Coupled with that are the security problems caused by the unruly and unpredictable war veterans association who have physically threatened certain types of businesses and led to an estimated 90% reduction in tourism rates. Consequently, businesses are beginning to downsize, file for bankruptcy, or stop operations while there is still something to salvage. Some of the more prominent businesses to recently leave Zimbabwe include Coca Cola and the Subway Restaurant Franchise. These developments are leading to higher levels of unemployment and increased poverty. Interestingly, they are also leading people to place a greater emphasis on their own agricultural productivity for improved household food security since formal-sector employment opportunities are shrinking.

The USAID Mission in Zimbabwe had been scheduled to "graduate" Zimbabwe and end its operations there this year. However, the Mission has now developed a new country strategy that includes a US 12.5 million dollar project in FY2001 targeted at assisting Zimbabwe's informal sector and rural poor. Additional projects are also in the planning phase to mitigate Zimbabwe's large HIV/AIDS problem and the tremendous number of orphans it is creating annually.

D. Administration, Personnel, and Financial

No issues.

E. Lessons Learned

CNFA is continuing to learn how to effectively use its new impact monitoring system and will be applying the lessons learned during the preparation of the Gokwe and Murewa Agrodealer Development Project Impact Assessments to the preparation of the assessments for all of its other projects for the annual report in October 2001.

F. Partnership Activities

CNFA developed two new partnership activities during the first half of FY01. In Zambia, CNFA and the Peace Corps' Rural Aquaculture Program (RAP) developed a new project where CNFA volunteers will provide organizational development training to Peace Corps volunteers and their hosts. CNFA conducted its first volunteer assignment within this new project in March 2001. PC Zambia has commented that *"based on this initial success, this activity and assistance will have a significant impact on our work and these farmers. This capacity building, and this approach, is exactly what the project needs at this stage. It's really great to see it happening. Our sincerest vote of appreciation to the FtF program and CNFA for offering us this assistance. It's most appropriate."*

In Mozambique's Sofala province, CNFA has begun a promising partnership with Sementes de Moçambique (SEMOC), the largest seed distributor in Mozambique. The Sofala distributorship of SEMOC has a proactive sales strategy in Mozambique of having field representatives identify retailers who will sell SEMOC seed products in Mozambique's rural areas, as opposed to the more traditional strategy of having clients make the trip to the large city to purchase seeds. SEMOC recently identified 20 agrodealers in the Sofala Province who could most benefit from business management training. These agrodealers have now initiated a 4-module CNFA training course on business management. CNFA and SEMOC anticipate that the Sofala agrodealers' management practices and sales/profit levels will improve as a result, much as the Murewa and Gokwe agrodealers' businesses improved in Zimbabwe.

G. Volunteer Assignments During Reporting Period

ZIMBABWE VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT OCTOBER-MARCH

Objective	Project	Volunteer	State	Volunteer Dates	# of Previous Assignments on Project	Value of Volunteer Time
Farmer associations and coops will help farmers improve their farm management, improve commercially oriented production, and access market	MEFVGA	Frank Townsend	SC	10/16-11/4	0	\$8,700.00
	Mhende IS	Boyd Wolff	PA	12/3-12/20	1	\$8,300.00
	ICFU	Andrew Cleveland	IN	3/15-4/5	0	\$2675.35
	ICFU	Don Huber	UT	1/29-2/19	0	\$7,789.29
	SBAZ	Bob Cole	NC	2/19-3/10	0	\$1900.00
TOTAL	5	5			1	\$29,364.64

MOZAMBIQUE VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT OCTOBER-MARCH

Objective	Project	Volunteer	State	Volunteer Dates	# of Previous Assignments on Project	Value of Volunteer Time
Agribusiness will provide farmers with improved access to markets	Manica Ads	Warren Schauer	MI	10/15-11/18	0	\$3,985.71
TOTAL	1	1			0	\$3,985.71

ZAMBIA VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT OCTOBER-MARCH

Objective	Project	Volunteer	State	Volunteer Dates	# of Previous Assignments on Project	Value of Volunteer Time
Farmer associations and coops will help farmers improve their farm management, improve commercially oriented production, and access market	ZWA	Louise Swartzwalder	MD	10/16-11/4	1	\$2,925.71
	RAP Fisheries	Dan Buker	CA	3/26-4/21	0	\$3,750.00
TOTAL	2	2			1	\$6675.71

IV. Volunteer Statistics for First Half FY01

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Zimbabwe

Total Volunteers 5
Repeat Volunteers 1
Total Women Volunteers 0
Year to Date Volunteers 5

Mozambique

Total Volunteers 1
Repeat Volunteers 0
Total Women Volunteers 0
Year to Date Volunteers 1

Zambia

Total Volunteers 2
Repeat Volunteers 1
Total Women Volunteers 1
Year to Date Volunteers 2

Total number of volunteers:8

Male	7
Female	1
Total Repeat Volunteers	2
First Time Volunteers	6

V. Public Outreach

CNFA requests that its volunteers contribute at least eight hours to public outreach activities upon completion of their assignments. Activities include articles in newspapers and trade magazines, public presentations, television and radio interviews. So far this year, CNFA NIS volunteers have reported 24 outreach activities. Please see attachment for details.

VI. Expenditures

Line Item expenditures for the quarter under review are:

Line Item Category	Cumulative Expenditures	First Half of FY 2001
Direct Labor		
Fridge Benefits		
Travel & Per Diem		
Other Direct Costs		
Indirect Costs		
TOTAL		

Attachments:

- Murewa Agrodealer Development Project Impact Assessment and summary Host Profile
- Gokwe Agrodealer Development Project Impact Assessment and summary Host Profile
- Press generated by volunteers