

## ZAVSAP

**Zimbabwe - Adding value to sustainable agriculture produce**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Action Committee Meeting**  
**Agriculture House – 4 March 2009**

### **Participants** (see also [attendance list](#) in attachment)

Regis Maindidze	-	CADEC
Lillian Machivenyika	-	CADS
Marcy Fusire	-	CTDT
Gift Shambira	-	CTT
Tellmore Macherenje	-	KDCA
Daiton Swafi	-	KLV
Livingstone Munetsi	-	LGDA
Mavis Chitsiku	-	ZWB
Nosizi Mashingaidze	-	FPC
Wilfred Miga	-	FPC
Caroline Jacquet	-	Programme Facilitator, VOLENS
Luk Raeymaekers	-	Organisational Building and Management, VOLENS
Vital Muremanyundo	-	Financial Management, VOLENS
Thomas Pouppez	-	Communications, VOLENS
Memory Mlambo	-	Administrative Assistant, VOLENS (minutes)

### **Agenda**

<b>time</b>	<b>topic</b>	<b>presenter</b>
9.00 – 9.15	Welcome, self-introductions and programme for the day	Lillian Machivenyika, CADS + all
9.15 – 9.45	Overview of the Oct 2008-February 2009 activities + financial report for year 1	Caroline Jacquet, VOLENS
9.45 – 11.00	Presentation and discussion of the year 1 external evaluation (by Green Living Movement, Zambia): CLARIFICATIONS & ACTION POLICIES – STATEMENTS GAME & RECOMMENDATIONS	Luk Raeymaekers, VOLENS and Caroline
11.00 – 11.15	Tea-break	
11.15 – 12.30	Evaluation (contd) + budget 2009 + planning format activities for March-December 2009	
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch	
13.30 – 14.00	Overview of the organisational building and management; financial management and resource mobilisation; documentation and publications activities	Luk, Vital Muremanyundo and Thomas Pouppez, VOLENS
14.00 – 14.30	Scheduling of the “networking activities”: 4 <sup>th</sup> ACM, publications (recipe book, ZAVSAP website, movie clips), joint food fair, joint proposals, cross-cutting issue	Thomas, Caroline and Luk
14.30 – 15.00	AOB, wrap-up and way ahead	Caroline

### **1. Welcome and programme for the day**

## **4. Year 1 External Evaluation by Green Living Movement, Zambia**

- 4.1 Caroline and Luk gave the background for this external evaluation: in December 2008 VOLENS felt that they had been doing quite a lot of things but were not sure if they were on the right track: were there not too many activities? Were the activities relevant to the PO? What was happening after a training? VOLENS was not getting a lot of feedback, hence the decision to do an external evaluation of the programme to get accurate views.

Two people from Green Living Movement, a Zambian NGO with extensive knowledge in Agriculture and with whom VOLENS had worked previously, were hired. VOLENS had a initial meeting with them, before sending them out to go and interview the PO. VOLENS in particular wanted information on the following questions: Are the network and its activities relevant to the needs of the PO and beneficiaries?, Is the programme having an impact in the field?, and How can communication, input and feedback between VOLENS and PO be improved?

Green Living Movement met every PO except CADEC and they produced a draft report, a copy of which has been given to every PO. The final report will be emailed to everyone as soon as it is received from GLM.

### **4.2 Terms of Agreement**

From the findings of the evaluation it became clear there were some issues that just needed clarification; other issues should be discussed, recommendations made and a way forward mapped.

Too ambitious, unfulfilled expectations mentioned, meant that the Terms of Agreement signed by all PO (except FPC, not yet) had to be re-explained. Caroline extracted some items from the MoU that needed reiteration.

Caroline took the participants through these contractual obligations and limitations (see document [MoU VOLENS-PO – contractual obligations and limitations](#)) and all the POs felt that it was clear. VOLENS also indicated that PO were always welcome to offer suggestions on how the existing Terms of Agreement could be improved.

Some PO were of the view that it will be better for them to link their own programmes with VOLENS activities to make it easier to implement/trickle-down and avoid overstretching themselves.

PO generally felt that trickle-down trainings were difficult because of lack of resources. It was suggested that the network could try and find ways of raising funds specifically for trickle-down trainings.

## **5. Discussion of Evaluation Report Findings**

- 5.1 Luk then took the participants through the issues that required discussion and highlighted that the evaluation was built around three topics: the network, trainings, and impact after trainings. For each part, he had come up with 5 statements. Participants were asked to agree or disagree with the statements and come up with some recommendations and a way forward.

### **Network**

**1. Participation in and ownership of the network by members is low. Key decisions are made by VOLENS. “Members are mere rubber stampers”.**

- No: - PO are actively involved and have ownership.  
- PO identify their own needs  
- PO can decide to take part in activities or not  
- Evaluation allowed PO to express their feelings and ideas  
- PO are involved throughout the process: from planning, where they decide on the activities to the implementation

- Recomm: - improve the internal communication (within PO)  
- introduce VOLENS with all staff members  
- have the first ACM of the year no later than February, so VOLENS activities can be integrated in the organisations’ action plans

**2. ACMs should be held more regularly (more than 2 times a year).**

**3. ACMs should take place at members’ offices on a rotational basis.**

- Yes: - to improve communication between VOLENS and PO  
- to be able to quickly re-orient and fine-tune

- 6 months in between ACMs is long, especially when things go wrong
- a way to monitor activities in the field; a way for PO to give feedback

No: - time-consuming

- it would squeeze the budget

- PO need time after activities to trickle-down, monitor and assess

Way forward: it was agreed that ACMs will be held 3 times a year: (1) Jan-Feb, (2) May-June, and (3) in Oct, at the PO's offices. To not overstretch the budget too much, 2 ACMs should be held at PO with offices in Harare. For 2009, a 2<sup>nd</sup> ACM will thus be organised in June, at CADEC in Chinhoyi and a 3<sup>rd</sup> one in October at FPC in Mount Hampden.

#### **4. Communication between network members and VOLENS office must improve.**

Yes, from PO to VOLENS. It's often a problem of no network coverage and no airtime

Yes, for feedback

Recomm:

- draft a reporting or evaluation form
- invite VOLENS to PO activities
- communicate with VOLENS as much as possible

#### **5. Structure and operations/mandate of network is not clear to network members.**

To most members it is clear.

Some were unsure though about who decides on new members and when the membership is enough. It was clarified that there are some pre-conditions: an organisation wanting to join has to be a local NGO, have agriculture as its core business and operate in the Mashonaland Provinces. An organisation can apply for membership through the VOLENS secretariat. If the preconditions are fulfilled and a added-value could be brought, the organisation will be invited to put its case across at the next ACM, where PO will vote. The budget should of course always be kept in mind, as more PO will not mean an increase in the budget! It will be the same cake, but cut into smaller pieces per PO. It was pointed out also that it might not be necessary for an organisation to join the network, just because it is interested in one particular training.

### **Training activities**

#### **6. Training activities should only focus on food processing for food security and forget about marketing.**

- No: - income-generation also important
- marketing could bring sustainability

Are the markets there? Yes!

Is there money for food products? Yes!

#### **7. PO staff and farmers should only be trained in processing crops that**

- **PO are promoting**
- **farmers are producing**

For farmers: yes, they should only come for training in processing of crops they grow.

For staff, PO were more divided. Some agreed, as PO might not have the budgets necessary to introduce new crops in communities after having attended a training. Other said staff should be allowed to come to training in processing of new crops, as it might be crops they'd want to venture in in the near future.

Recomm: intention to introduce new crops should somehow be reflected in strategic and action plans.

#### **8. Training activities in food processing should take place in-situ (and not in Harare), at the PO's office or training centre or in the villages.**

- Yes: - it would allow more farmers to participate
- it would allow a better mix of project staff (fewer) and farmers (more)
  - it would ensure the training is definitely relevant for the area
  - organisations and their beneficiaries would define the trainings they are interested in
  - PO operating in the same areas could still combine trainings for their farmers

Recomm: PO come up with a list of trainings for 2009 for their staff and beneficiaries, detailing venue, etc (see document [Proposed activities per PO March-Dec 2009](#))

#### **9. Majority of training activities last year were irrelevant and lacked practical application.**

No

The "Introduction to marketing" training did lack practical application though, but that was due to:

- The facilitator, who was lecturing and not facilitating
- Most PO do not have marketing staff, so the participants might also not have been the right ones

The "Small grains processing" training at ISTT in Zambia was considered rather irrelevant, because the level was too low for participants

Also, it could be that the choice of participants sometimes made a training less interesting: due to a lack of planning, PO sometimes sent the wrong participants (just to send someone).

- Recomm:
- VOLENS activities should be integrated in the PO's plans of action
  - VOLENS activities should be planned jointly with the other activities for PO, hence the need to have the 1<sup>st</sup> ACM of the year no later than Feb
  - PO should decide on their VOLENS activities (as discussed above)

**10. VOLENS (and its facilitators) provide adequate and relevant training aids and materials to PO staff/farmers at the end of each training event.**

Yes

**Impact in the field**

**11. PO have adequate human, financial and material resources to conduct training to farmers in the field after having attended a VOLENS training intervention.**

Yes for CADEC, CTDT and KLV

Other PO: yes/no

The suggestion to only have low-input, low-tech trainings was rejected unanimously.

- Recomm:
- incorporate food processing trainings in existing, planned trainings
  - network could mobilise extra resources, for the trickle-down training needs of PO. If beneficiaries would need extra resources for utensils and equipment, it would be up to the individual PO to raise extra funds for those.
  - set up a subcommittee of PO for resource mobilisation. A subcommittee to develop concept notes and joint proposals to fundraise for the network was selected comprising of CTT, KLV, ZWB and KDCA, plus the secretariat. Anyone outside the subcommittee is of course free to come up with ideas. The secretariat will call a first meeting, to discuss the draft concept note that was developed by PO during the Resource Mobilisation course (3-5 Feb, see report sent on 10 Feb), and other ideas raised (food processing equipment, publication of recipe book, etc)

**12. PO staff have adequate skills, creativity and commitment to promote application of food processing activities among their farmers in the field.**

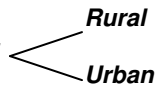
PO felt that their staff's commitment and facilitation and leadership skills were all right, but that refresher courses in soft-skills might be useful.

**13. Training in situ will allow more (female) farmers to attend training and so increase the impact in the field.**

It is true that men are less interested in food processing and that in-situ training will allow a bigger participation of women. Especially if extra care is taken to invite more women.

The mistake should not be made to invite women only though: it is important to sensitise men as their support is crucial.

**14. Network should invest more in market research at different levels:**

- **Money market** 
- **Barter trade**

The PO were not really interested in barter trade. They feel people might have temporarily resorted to barter trade as a solution to the economic environment in Zimbabwe and the cash shortages. But they do not believe that Zimbabweans would opt for barter trade if there are other options.

They did agree though that when it comes to marketing, it is important to "think outside the box".

**15. PO and/or their farmers keep clear written records of trainings in food processing by PO staff**

- ***of food processing activities in the field by the farmers***  
yes, though M&E might need improvement. It is very important to have inventories of PO and farmers' activities.

#### **General**

**16. *VOLENS activities are an extra burden/work load on us. They are not fully integrated in the organisation's plan of action.***

- No, not if:
- VOLENS planning can be done early in the year (early ACM) so PO can marry all activities
  - PO only go for complementary trainings, that fit with their action plans

6. **2009 Budget**

7. **Proposed activities for March-December 2009**

8. **Overview of Organisational Building and Management (Luk)**

9. **Financial Management (Vital)**

10. **Documentation and Publications (Thomas)**

11. **Date for the next Action Committee Meeting**

12. **Joint food fair**

13. **Joint proposals**

14. **Any other business**