

EVALUATION REPORT

**On the survey undertaken to assess progress made by VOLENS
and its partners in the implementation of the “Adding value to
sustainable agriculture produce” programme**

January, 2009



**Prepared by
Green Living Movement (GLM)
greenlivingmovement@yahoo.com**

**P.O. Box 38254
Lusaka, Zambia**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Acknowledgements	2
Abbreviations and Acronyms	3
Executive summary	4
1.0 Objectives and terms of reference	5
2.0 Methodology	6
3.0 Limitations	7
4.0 Summary of main findings	7
4.1 Kajiwa Development Coordinating Association (KDCA)	7
4.2 Cluster Agriculture Development Services (CADS)	8
4.3 Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre (FPC)	11
4.4 Centre for Total Transformation (CTT)	12
4.5 Kufunda Learning Village (KLV)	14
4.6 Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT)	15
4.7 Zimbabwe Women's Bureau	17
4.8 Lower Guruve Development Association	18
7.0 Annex 1: List of informants and FGD participants	21
8.0 Annex 2: Guiding Questions	23

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank VOLENS for entrusting the responsibility to undertake the exercise narrated in this report in us and for financial and technical support which made this undertaking possible.

We thank Mr. Rick Jamu for accepting to drive us to the meeting places and project sites during the period of the assessment and for being on hand to interpret for us in cases where our informants could not communicate in English.

We are indebted to VOLENS Partner Organisations (P.O) and the farmers we visited for the valuable information and knowledge they shared with us. Their participation was vital to creating a purpose for the whole exercise. Their perseverance during the long meetings and their willingness to attend to our many questions and requests was an uplifting experience.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CADS	Cluster Agriculture Development Services
CTDT	Community Technology Development Trust
CTT	Centre for Total Transformation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPC	Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre
KDCA	Kajiwa Development Coordinating Association
KLV	Kufunda Learning Village
LGDA	Lower Guruve Development Association
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PO	Partner Organisations
TRADIFFA	Traditional Food From and for Africa
ZWB	Zimbabwe Women's Bureau

Executive summary

The “Adding Value to Sustainable Agriculture Produce” programme was initiated by VOLENS and its partners in April 2008. There are 9 partners in the network. The partner organisations (PO) are essentially indigenous NGOs working with small-scale farmers. The programme seeks to build capacity among NGO staff, volunteers and their beneficiaries (small-scale farmers) in food processing, value addition and marketing so as to enhance household food and income security and alleviate poverty.

This report presents the findings of an evaluation undertaken between 21st and 28th January, 2009 to assess progress made in implementation of the programme, to learn about the challenges encountered and to propose future action.

The assessment established that farmers generally see **potential benefits** in the programme. In the face of persistent food shortages in the country and the economic downturn, the programme comes in handy as it **addresses core issues** which are key to sustainable community livelihoods. The high cost in production of maize and the unpredictable weather patterns have also raised the need for farmers to embrace crop diversification and identify alternative sources of food and income. The instability of the economy has further made it hard for farmers to access basic agriculture inputs such as fertilisers and seed which in many instances are sold in foreign currency to which many farmers have no easy access.

Communication within the membership is a **challenge**. Some people in the organisations did not understand the contractual limitations of VOLENS and contractual obligations of the PO.

The assessment observed that in many instances PO joined the VOLENS network with **too ambitious expectations** which the network could not meet. It was evident that some partners did not fully appreciate the contractual provisions with regard to the form of assistance that VOLENS is able to provide. Some PO expected VOLENS to provide them with funds to meet administrative and personnel costs. Another expectation was that VOLENS would provide PO with funds to conduct trainings and food processing demonstrations in communities and for the acquisition of food processing equipment (*such equipment as fruit processors, oil pressing machines, and solar driers*).

It was noted that the network members were **at varying levels with regard to management and resource mobilisation capacities**, hence their needs to effectively implement the programme varied. While some partners had the capacity to raise funds to implement the programme on the ground, some had neither the human nor the financial resources to do so.

While the desire for many primary programme beneficiaries was evidently to raise income, in practice it was more feasible to initially **direct efforts and focus on household food security and nutrition needs**. It was also acknowledged during the evaluation that farmers often considered markets to mean ‘selling in big towns’ disregarding their own communities.

The other challenge for trickle down at farmer level was that farmer groups in the country have become highly politicised. This situation had made it difficult for farmers who have different political inclinations to work together.

The assessment showed that many PO **lacked creativity and inspirational leadership**. There is need for project facilitators to become more innovative and to think ‘*outside the box*’ and provide leadership and optimism about the interventions.

The evaluation further established that the farmers and project facilitators had acquired substantial amount of knowledge and skills on food processing, but **little effort** in many cases had been made **to put acquired skills into practice**. Marketing was an area that appeared to be a major challenge. In many cases the PO and farmers expected VOLENS to find markets for them.

There were strong feelings among most of the PO on clarity about the **ownership and structure of the network**. The structure was said to be undefined while some PO felt that VOLENS owned the network and they were mere ‘*rubber stamps*’ as key policy decisions were made at the VOLENS office.

Most of the activities undertaken in the last 8 months were said to have been **beneficial and relevant** to the needs of the organisations, except for a few that were said to have been either irrelevant or poorly organised. The “small grains processing training” at ISTT, in Lusaka, Zambia was largely irrelevant, the

TRADIFFA fair in Morogoro, Tanzania was said to have been poorly organised while the “Introduction to Marketing” in Harare was said to have been a mere academic exercise which lacked practical application.

Action Committee Meetings provide a platform for activity review and reflection. This was appreciated by all the PO, though **6 months period between these meetings is too long**. It is proposed that the meetings be held every 3 months.

Over and above the challenges the programme faces and fore mentioned, there is convincing evidence that with a new strategic and demand driven approach to the programme the desired results could be attained.

- Most of the project facilitators and farmers who participated in the evaluation showed greater spirit of commitment to the programme.
- All the informants in PO acknowledge that the project is addressing very important issues which border on food and income security and poverty reduction.
- There were signs from the discussions and field visits that some trained farmers were diversifying their crop production and processing. It was very clear from the field experiences that the knowledge base and capacities among farmers in food processing has been significantly built.
- The network is providing an interactive platform for development actors in Zimbabwe where ideas and experiences are shared. This is a necessary factor at a time Zimbabwe is going through a process of social, economic and political reconstruction.
- There is an opportunity for network members who are technically and financially well-standing to support emerging ones.
- The project is generally more concerned with building local capacities so that project beneficiaries are the ones in the driving seat of development interventions. This is very important for project sustainability and local ownership.

In view of the findings it is recommended that:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Programme emphasis in the initial stage should be established: either on food processing for household food security or on food processing for income security (*marketing*). This will enable the programme to channel more resources to what is achievable.
- Training should be conducted *in-situ (communities)* to increase opportunities for more farmers to benefit. It will also provide women opportunities to participate who are otherwise disadvantaged when trainings are held away from their communities as they are expected to look after their families.
- Training activities must be demand driven (*e.g. processing training for a particular crop should be offered to the farmers producing that particular crop and to PO promoting production of the particular crop*)
- The network must put in place monitoring mechanisms so as to have periodical feedback on the progress being made and challenges being faced so as to ensure timely decisions are made.
- Training programmes must produce farmer-led action plans with implementation time-frames, specific tasks and responsibilities and monitoring mechanism.
- The network must redefine itself structurally and operationally so as to be truly owned by the membership.
- The network must invest in market research (*at different levels*). ‘Market’ may not necessary mean ‘money’.
- Project facilitators must be optimistic and inspirational to the farmers (*they need to learn to think outside the box*)
- VOLENS should consider providing Training for Transformation to project facilitators and community leaders to transform them into inspirational and innovative leaders.
- VOLENS must consider providing referral services to PO (*linking them to other service providers who may be in a position to support sectors that may be outside VOLENS mandate but critical to the success of the programme*)
- The network must develop a simple feedback form to enhance communication between VOLENS and the PO as well as encouraging communication with PO.
- VOLENS/network should consider organisation-specific limitations in the process of identifying training needs as members of the network are at different management and resource mobilization capacity levels. Participatory processes like Participatory Learning and Action could provide a more inclusive approach in the process of identifying organization-specific capacity needs.

- Action Committee Meetings are very useful for planning, knowledge sharing and communication, they should be sustained and making them more regular, say quarterly (*every 3 months*) would make them more effective
- VOLENS should consider providing training to the PO in Resource Mobilisation (*e.g. proposal writing*) to enable them to access resources elsewhere.

1.0 Terms of reference

The following terms of reference were developed for the survey:

- To find out how PO perceive the VOLENS network and its programme and activities of the first 8 months. What are the positives and negatives: the strong/interesting things that could be worked on (even) further and the shortcomings and how those could be improved? (**effectiveness**)
- To find out if there has been any trickle-down of knowledge and skills from the people who participated in the capacity building activities to the rest of the staff and ultimately the primary beneficiaries (farmers). Why (not)? What could be done to improve this? (**impact**)
- To identify ways participation of network members and primary beneficiaries (farmers) in the choice of activities, communication and feedback between VOLENS and the network members can be improved

2.0 Methodology

The assessment exercise assumed a participatory approach. The following tools were applied:

- Key informant interviews (*Organisation and community/beneficiaries*)
- Focus group discussions (*community/beneficiaries*)
- Field visits (*communities, project sites*)
- Direct observations
- Literature review (*reports, brochures, newsletters, documentaries*)

The methods are described in detail below:

2.1 Key informant interviews

The interviews were conducted on special category of informants. They were individuals who were knowledgeable about the partners, organization, the network and the programme either at management or implementation levels. They included management, field staff, and community members/farmers. The assessment team developed a set of questions which were used to guide the semi-structured interviews and discussions.

2.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

These were discussions centred on relevant subjects of the survey. The FGDs were conducted with groups of people at management and farmer levels or with representatives of the two groups.

2.3 Field visits

Field visits were meant to provide an on-the-spot knowledge and first-hand information on the programme activities and implementation progress, especially on skills acquired in food diversification, food processing and marketing. The visits also provided an opportunity to visit production areas, processing sites and

potential buyers and to learn from the primary implementers (farmers) the challenges and limitations they were encountering in the process of implementing the programme, if any.

2.4 Direct observations

It was important to physically cross-check information obtained from the informants. Direct observations helped check out fields, crops, figures, structures and materials as a way of verifying information obtained from interviews and discussions.

2.5 Literature review

Review of literature about the PO was meant to get an understanding of the organisations, their core businesses and development objectives.

3.0 Limitations

The evaluation generally went without major setbacks. The only limitation worth mentioning was the language barrier. The Evaluators did not speak the commonly used language (Shona) hence relied heavily on interpretation.

4.0 Summary of main findings

4.1 Kajiwa Development Coordinating Association

4.1.1 Brief background

Kajiwa Development Coordinating Association (KDCA) was initiated by a group of farmers based in Kawere area in Mutoko district. It was established in 1989. It has a membership of 4,500 farmers of which 85% are women. Members are drawn from six wards. The core business of KDCA is to promote sustainable agricultural practices and conservation of natural resources. Other areas of the organisation's interest include herbal gardening, HIV/AIDS, human rights and recently food processing and value addition. KDCA is governed by a Board which constitutes of elected representatives from the six wards.

The evaluation meeting at KDCA took place on 21st January, 2009 at the KDCA administrative office. It was attended by 3 people (*2 members of staff and 1 female farmer*). See list of informants: annex 2

4.1.2 Expectations from the VOLENS Network

- To acquire skills in food processing and marketing
- To strengthen KDCA capacity in training farmers in sustainable agriculture
- To access funding from VOLENS to support the organisation's administrative costs (especially in the implementation of the programme in communities)

4.1.3 Capacity building and network events attended

- Small grains processing training, ISTT, Zambia
- Sorghum processing look-and-learn visit, LDGA, Mbire, Zimbabwe
- Herbal processing look-and-learn visit, KLV, Zimbabwe
- Fruit and vegetable drying look-and-learn visit, ZWB, Chinamhora, Zimbabwe
- Training in sweet potato and cassava processing, SCC and Agri-BioTech, Zimbabwe
- Training on good nutrition and growing, processing and preparing healthy food, Zimbabwe
- Herbal processing training, Fambidzanai, Zimbabwe
- Tomato processing training, Zim AHEAD, Zimbabwe
- Introduction to marketing, UZ/Dept of Agric Economics, Zimbabwe
- Participation in PELUM's Traditional Food Fair, Morogoro, Tanzania

- Carried out a financial management assessment with assistance from VOLENS

- Participation in a 1-day meeting on development of a joint website and recipe book
- Attendance in the six-monthly review and planning meetings

4.1.4 Achievements/benefits attained

The organization has attended various trainings and fairs supported by VOLENS in Food Processing and marketing as outlined above. Arising from its participation in the training events, KDCA has been able to organize 5 demonstration events for its members. They include:

- i. Sweet potatoes and Cassava Processing – Kawere Ward (*38 farmers participated*)
- ii. Sweet Potatoes and Cassava Processing – Mawanga Ward (*73 farmers participated*)
- iii. Sweet Potatoes and Cassava Processing – Mbuzi 'B' Ward (*56 farmers participated*)
- iv. Tomato Processing – Mbuzi 'B' Ward (*29 farmers participated*)

v. Tomato Processing – Kawere Ward (37 farmers attended)

Many of the farmers who have attended trainings and demonstrations are able to process and add value to their food crops.

4.1.5 Challenges/Constraints

KDCA feels the network must define itself. The structure and ownership is unclear. Membership participation in decision making is low. There was also a feeling by the organization that the network has not clearly defined its interpretation of Sustainable Agriculture as some of the network members do not promote sustainable agriculture. KDCA considers Sustainable Agriculture to mean 'non use of synthetic fertilisers.' In principle KDCA would not be part of a network which does not subscribe to promotion of Sustainable Agriculture practices in the way the organization understands it.

Although many farmers are able to process and add value to various food crops none of them have been able to market any of their processed food. Much of the processing and value addition have been on experimental basis. KDCA attributed this to the poor economic situation in the country. The farmers have no money to buy processing ingredients such as sugar and they also fear that their foods may not sell. Forget Chirumba has attended training in tomato processing and was one of the facilitators at the demonstration event at Kawere Ward. She has a 20m x 20m tomato garden. In the 2008/09 marketing season she produced 20 buckets of tomatoes. She made one 500g bottle of tomato jam which was consumed by her family. She could not make more jam as she feared no one would buy it.

'I didn't think anyone would buy my jam. People have no money, the economy is very bad. There are other more demanding needs people want to spend their little earnings on. I couldn't take the risk so I sold my tomato at Mbare. I made one bottle of tomato jam for my family and everyone liked it'

Forget Chirumba – Mutoko farmer

KDCA feels that there is need to build Monitoring and Evaluation capacities among network members in order to assess the impact of the trainings and to improve communication and feedback between KDCA and VOLENS.

4.1.6 Proposed future interventions

In its continuous efforts to promote the programme, KDCA proposes to undertake the following events in 2009:

- Tomato processing demonstration (*Mbuzi 'A' Ward*)
- Compilation of traditional foods (*contribution to VOLENS recipe book being developed*)
- Establishment of herbal gardens
- Introduce and offer training on sustainable agriculture in two wards (*Nyamukapa and Mawanga*)

4.2 Cluster Agriculture Development Services

4.2.1 Brief Background

Cluster Agriculture Development Services (CADS) was formed in 2002. Its core business is to enhance the capacities of farmers to attain food security and sustainable livelihoods. In pursuance of this objective, the organization works and supports farmers in the following interventions;

- Promoting drought tolerant crops such as cassava, sweetpotatoes, sorghum, rapoko, groundnuts and cowpeas.
- Organisation development through management capacity building, organization registration

- Promoting horticulture
- HIV/AIDS awareness and support services
- Development of market linkages

4.2.2 Expectations from the VOLENS Network

The expectations of CADS from the VOLENS network included the following:

- Capacity building (training) farmers in value addition so that they (farmers) could get profitable returns from their crop
- To be provided with suitable seed variety for crops earmarked for processing (e.g. sweet potatoes)
- To be provided with processing equipment, e.g. vegetable drying machine
- To be linked to profitable markets for processed foods

4.2.3 Network activities attended

CADS has participated in following training programmes organized by VOLENS;

- Small grains processing training, ISTT, Zambia
 - Small-scale food processing short course, Baraka Agriculture College, Kenya
 - Fruit and vegetable drying look-and-learn visit, ZWB, Chinamhora, Zimbabwe
 - Training in sweet potato and cassava processing, SCC and Agri-BioTech, Zimbabwe
 - Training on good nutrition and growing, processing and preparing healthy food, Zimbabwe
 - Tomato processing training, Zim AHEAD, Zimbabwe
 - Introduction to marketing, UZ/Dept of Agric Economics, Zimbabwe
 - Training on 'how to organise fairs?', CRS, Zimbabwe
 - Organisation of the CADS' seed and food fair, Marowe Primary School, UMP, Zimbabwe
 - Presence at CTT's seed and food fair, Dzimwe Training Centre, Chiweshe, Zimbabwe
 - Participation in PELUM's Traditional Food Fair, Morogoro, Tanzania
-
- Participation in a 1-day meeting on development of a joint website and recipe book
 - Attendance in the six-monthly review and planning meetings

4.2.4 Achievements/benefits attained

Some of the trainees have attempted to plant some crops for food processing such as cassava, sweetpotatoes, groundnuts and cowpeas. A few trainees have attempted to process their crops, e.g. they have been making cassava and sweetpotato flour. One of the farmers is making sweet potato fritters; another farmer is processing sweetpotatoes and lemon into juice, using butternut as a colorant and sugar as a sweetener.

Demonstrations on vegetable drying and sweet potato and cassava processing have been conducted by former trainees for other farmers.



Cassava field



Sweet potato field



Homemade juicy: sweet potatoes, butter nut and lemon (L), Cassava and Sweet potato flour (R)

4.2.5 Challenges/constraints

It was observed that despite the rich knowledge participants exhibited at the evaluation meeting there was little initiatives and efforts -except for a few farmers- in experimenting their acquired knowledge. The challenge for the facilitators and the network is to change the farmers' mind sets and inspire them to experiment their new knowledge and skills. The evaluation team also observed that the syndrome of receiving was eating away the farmers' initiatives. Most farmers expect every bit of ingredient for food processing to come from outside without even exhausting local options. This mentality does not promote local initiatives and effectively defeats programme ownership and sustainability.

4.2.6 Proposed future interventions

The following interventions were proposed for the future:

- Trainings should be held in communities so that many farmers will have a chance to acquire the skills

- Community leaders and Agriculture Extension Officers should be considered for trainings so that they can provide guidance (it's up to the PO to select participants. Community leaders, AEOs, teachers, are all very welcome!)
- Develop Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms to enable farmers to undertake self-assessments
- Train farmers in marketing research
- Establish market linkages

4.3 Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre

4.3.1 Brief Background

Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre was established in 1988 to provide training and extension services in sustainable agriculture and land use management. The centre's initial programmes involved providing trainings and establishing demonstration plots in sustainable agriculture and integrated land-use designs. Currently the centre offers training in permaculture designs, organic nutrition gardening, beekeeping, organic herb production, food processing etc. The institution has full training facilities which also provide catering services. The programmes also include livestock production. Fambidzanai provides training and extension services to small scale farmers and the centre's target is to reach out to farmers throughout Zimbabwe. Fambidzanai has three categories of clients: the project partners who are provided with free services as they are funded, clients coming from other institutions (consultation) and individuals who sponsor themselves. On average, Fambidzanai holds thirty (30) training workshops every year and over one thousand farmers directly benefit from the centre as the centre's primary beneficiaries.

The evaluation exercise for Fambidzanai took place with the Director and three other members of staff.

4.3.2 Expectations from the VOLENS Network

Fambidzanai joined the VOLENS partnership in September 2008 and has since been taking part in the activities. When joining the partnership, Fambidzanai had three main expectations from VOLENS:

- Funding for capacity building activities
- Acquire skill in food processing
- An opportunity for networking

4.3.3 Network activities attended

In the three months that Fambidzanai has been in the network, it has participated in four capacity building activities and has also attended the review and planning network meeting. The activities they have taken part in include:

- Soya and tomato processing look-and-learn visit, CTT, Chiweshe, Zimbabwe
- Herbal processing look-and-learn visit, KLV, Zimbabwe
- Training on good nutrition and growing, processing and preparing healthy food, Zimbabwe
- Facilitated the herbal processing training, Fambidzanai, Zimbabwe
- Tomato processing training, Zim AHEAD, Zimbabwe
- Introduction to marketing, UZ/Dept of Agric Economics, Zimbabwe
- Presence at CTT's seed and food fair, Dzimwe Training Centre, Chiweshe, Zimbabwe
- Participation in PELUM's Traditional Food Fair, Morogoro, Tanzania
- Participation in a 1-day meeting on development of a joint website and recipe book
- Attendance in the six-monthly review and planning meetings

4.3.4 Achievements/benefits attained

Although Fambidzanai has only been in the network for three months, the evaluation established that headways have been made to lay the foundation for the trickling down of the built capacities to their target communities. The following activities were conducted after the capacity building trainings:

- Herbal gardening: After the training in herbal processing training, the centre has conducted training to farmers on herbal processing while there has been a revision on the farmers training programmes to include the concept of herbal and nutritional gardening and processing. The centre is also in the process of erecting a shelter for herbal processing demonstrations.

4.3.5 Challenges/Constraints

The economic and social situation being experienced in Zimbabwe has not spared Fambizanai. The centre has a well laid down programme of activities but due to resources which are inadequate, the implementation of these activities has been a big challenge. At the time of the evaluation, the centre had had no power for over a month.

4.3.6 Proposed future interventions

Fambizanai Permaculture Centre plans to continue performing its general activities in which the skills obtained under the VOLENS network will be incorporated. The centre also remains open to contribute its expertise and experience to the network membership. A plan of action has been prepared in which food processing for value addition will be stepped up for both food security and the market. One community in Svosve has already embarked on food processing for domestic consumption and the centre plans to start with the same community for the (export) market. The centre proposed that, in order to provide support for the activities, the network builds capacity in strategic planning, project management and resource mobilization.

4.4 Centre for Total Transformation

4.4.1 Brief Background

CTT is a faith based organization which promotes and supports initiatives that aim at developing people's livelihood capacities and the well-being of society as a whole.

Dzimwe Training Centre (DTC) is one of the projects of CTT. DTC is a multipurpose centre which focuses mainly on providing communities with skills that aim at enhancing food security. The skills and activities undertaken at the centre include the following:

- Sustainable Agriculture
- Food Processing
- Seed multiplication
- Seed banking
- Annual seed fare
- Nutrition and HIV/AIDS awareness
- Small Livestock Management

4.4.2 Expectations from the VOLENS Network

By joining the VOLENS network CTT/DTC had the following expectations:

- To acquire skills on Food processing and value addition which would improve farmers' food and income security
- To acquire marketing and market research skills
- To interact, build relations, share knowledge and experiences with other members of the network

Although some of the expectations have been achieved, especially training in processing and adding value to various food crops, marketing was said to be still a major challenge.

4.4.3 Network activities attended

CTT staff and farmers attended various events under the support from VOLENS. They include:

- Small-scale food processing short course, Baraka Agriculture College, Kenya
 - Sorghum processing look-and-learn visit, LDGA, Mbire, Zimbabwe
 - **Hosted the soya and tomato processing look-and-learn visit, CTT, Chiweshe, Zimbabwe**
 - Training in sweet potato and cassava processing, SCC and Agri-BioTech, Zimbabwe
 - Training on good nutrition and growing, processing and preparing healthy food, Zimbabwe
 - Training on 'how to organise fairs?', CRS, Zimbabwe
 - Presence at CADS' seed and food fair, Marowe Primary School, UMP, Zimbabwe
 - **Organised the CTT's seed and food fair, Dzimwe Training Centre, Chiweshe, Zimbabwe**
 - Participation in PELUM's Traditional Food Fair, Morogoro, Tanzania
- Attendance in the six-monthly review and planning meetings

Selections of participants to these events was based on the following criteria

- Ability to speak English
- Having interest in the subject matter of the training/event
- Potential to train others upon return

Although generally in-situ trainings were preferred as a way of ensuring a wider participation, some farmers felt participating in events in other parts of the country or abroad enabled farmers to understand what was happening around them and enabled them to understand global events which are important to local interventions.

4.4.4 Achievements/benefits attained

- Farmers have become more innovative and are planting more indigenous crops.
- Farmers have appreciated the varied benefits of crop diversification. More farmers have planted cassava and sweet potatoes with the view to process them into valued added foods.
- There has been a trickle-down effect as participants in the capacity building events have in-turn trained other farmers.

'We always thought that cassava was food for Zambians, we associated cassava with poverty, we thought maize was a crop for the elite....Now we realize there is more we can get from cassava, we can make sadza and bread from cassava flour, we can make cassava chips, we can eat cassava leaves as vegetable...we now need cassava more than the Zambians....thanks to the food processing training'

Rosemary Rangwana - (Cassava and sweet potatoes processing training participant)

- The women farmers testified that 3 children whose mothers died at birth had been brought up by feeding them on locally processed Soya milk (*processed from soya beans*).
- The programme has brought about the spirit of cooperation and togetherness among local farmers
- Although it is too early to determine the impact of the programme as some of the crops on which new knowledge has been acquired, like cassava, sweet potatoes have just been planted, there has been observed improvement in nutrition among many local families through processing of available crops like bananas and soya beans and reduction in the level of food shortages experienced in the early part of 2008.

4.4.5 Challenges/Constraints

The farmers at a FGD observed the following constraints in the programme:

- Lack of food processing equipment (*e.g. vegetable driers, fruit processing machines*)
- Inadequate markets and marketing skills (*especially vegetables*)
- There is no planning and monitoring activities, hence it is difficult to measure impact
- The economic situation is unfavourable. Farmers do not have money to buy processing machines and ingredients such as sugar.
- Men are less interested in the programme (*only one man attended the FGD out of 35 participants*)

- Poor communication/feed back with VOLENS (*No internet facility and mobile phone reception is poor at DTC*)
- Transportation (*poor public transport system*)
- Some of the training programmes were less applicable hence became irrelevant

4.4.6 Proposed future interventions

- Promote Banana processing (*farmers have shown a lot of interest*)
- Promote irrigation so that some crops can be grown through-out the year (*EU has installed a water pump at the Training Centre*)
- Promote mushroom growing and processing to improve nutrition (*farmers have shown interest*)

4.5 Kufunda Learning Village

4.5.1 Brief Background

Kufunda Learning Village (KLV) was established in 2002. Its core business is promotion of sustainable farming practices. Specific practices supported by KLV include the following:

- Permaculture
- Herbal growing and processing
- Nutrition
- Water conservation (harvesting and storage)
- Beekeeping and mushroom growing (Food forest practices)
- Organic dry land farming
- Facilitation and Leadership training
- Care for the young
- Ecological sanitation

KLV is working with local communities willing to help themselves and other like-minded institutions.

4.5.2 Expectations from the VOLENS Network

- To access training on simple (*applied*) food processing methods
- To acquire knowledge on how to process and add value to indigenous foods (*vegetables and fruits*)
- To share knowledge and learn from the experiences of other organizations in the network

KLV was grateful to VOLENS and felt that most of the expectations have been attained but there is room for improvement. Some events were found to be irrelevant or inapplicable. The workshop on marketing for instance was described as '*an academic exercise*.' It was proposed that trainings should be held within communities to provide an opportunity for community members to exploit their indigenous knowledge. The general feeling at KLV is that focus should be more on food processing for food security and income security (*marketing*) as a later consideration.

4.5.3 Network activities attended

- Soya and tomato processing look-and-learn visit, CTT, Chiweshe, Zimbabwe
- **Hosted the herbal processing look-and-learn visit, KLV, Zimbabwe**
- Fruit and vegetable drying look-and-learn visit, ZWB, Chinamhora, Zimbabwe
- Training in sweet potato and cassava processing, SCC and Agri-BioTech, Zimbabwe
- Training on good nutrition and growing, processing and preparing healthy food, Zimbabwe
- Tomato processing training, Zim AHEAD, Zimbabwe
- Introduction to marketing, UZ/Dept of Agric Economics, Zimbabwe
- Training on 'how to organise fairs?', CRS, Zimbabwe
- Presence at CADS' seed and food fair, Marowe Primary School, UMP, Zimbabwe

- Presence at CTT's seed and food fair, Dzimwe Training Centre, Chiweshe, Zimbabwe
- Carried out a financial management assessment with assistance from VOLENS
- Participation in a 1-day meeting on development of a joint website and recipe book
- Attendance in the six-monthly review and planning meetings

4.5.4 Achievements/benefits attained

- Participants in the VOLENS organized programmes have in turn trained other community members in food processing.
- One of the trained farmers (*Sofia Nekati*) makes bread from cassava flour while another farmer who participated in a food fair (*Miriam Muranganwa*) makes banana chips and berry drinks.

4.5.5 Challenges/Constraints

- There is no monitoring mechanism hence impact assessment is difficult
- Feedback on field activities to VOLENS is poor
- Most farmers are growing such crops as sweetpotatoes and cassava for the first time hence are lacking seeds

4.5.6 Proposed future interventions

- The network should establish a newsletter as a tool for communication and information exchange
- Organizing community exchange visits
- To introduce competition in food processing during food fairs
- To establish a seed bank for cassava, sweetpotatoes
- Trainees should be provided with starter-up kits (e.g. seed) after the training
- To introduce a farmers' market day where farmers can show-case and sell their produce

4.6 Community Technology Development Trust

4.6.1 Brief Background

CTDT was founded in 1993. It is registered as a Trust. CTDT facilitates the process of domesticating the national obligation to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The CBD empowers communities over custodianship of their generic resources and to protect them through supportive policy and legislative frameworks to enhance conservation and sustainable use. CTDT also facilitates the process of domesticating the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and related international environmental agreements ensuring that farmers have adequate access to generic resources, receive crop improvement and technological development support and participate in the process of formulating corresponding national policies. The Vision of CTDT is *to achieve poverty alleviation and sustainable development of marginalized communities through gender sensitive and people-centred work in the areas of agro biodiversity, food security, technology development, environmental management and related policies using research, capacity building, advocacy and partnerships.*

CTDT works in 6 districts in two provinces (Mashonaland East and West) in the following programme areas:

- Policy and Advocacy
- Protecting Vulnerable Livelihoods
- Integrated Rural Development
- Indigenous Vegetable Production and Processing
- Out-of-School Adolescents Support
- Community Biodiversity Development

CTDT's target beneficiaries include vulnerable households (*working with 18,000 households*), OVCs and People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

4.6.2 Expectations from the VOLENS Network

- To train trainers so as to ensure trickledown effect in skills transfer
- To conduct trainings amongst farmers in the field
- To provide an opportunity to CTDT and other network members for regional exposure
- To provide a platform for interaction and knowledge sharing among network members and farmers

Generally CTDT feels much of the initial expectations have been achieved though there is room for improvement.

4.6.3 Network activities attended

- Small grains processing training, ISTT, Zambia
- Small-scale food processing short course, Baraka Agriculture College, Kenya
- Soya and tomato processing look-and-learn visit, CTT, Chiweshe, Zimbabwe
- Herbal processing look-and-learn visit, KLV, Zimbabwe
- Fruit and vegetable drying look-and-learn visit, ZWB, Chinamhora, Zimbabwe
- Training on good nutrition and growing, processing and preparing healthy food, Zimbabwe
- Herbal processing training, Fambidzanai, Zimbabwe
- Introduction to marketing, UZ/Dept of Agric Economics, Zimbabwe
- Training on 'how to organise fairs?', CRS, Zimbabwe
- Co-hosted the CADS' seed and food fair, Marowe Primary School, UMP, Zimbabwe
- Presence at CTT's seed and food fair, Dzimwe Training Centre, Chiweshe, Zimbabwe

- Carried out a financial management assessment with assistance from VOLENS

- Participation in a 1-day meeting on development of a joint website and recipe book
- Attendance in the six-monthly review and planning meetings

4.6.4 Achievements/benefits attained

- CTDT is developing a manual on "Food Processing for Small-Scale Farmers"
- CTDT Programme and Extension staff who participated in food processing trainings have in turn trained farmers especially on indigenous vegetable drying
- CTDT has linked farmers to potential markets
- CTDT has facilitated development of several school organic gardens
- CTDT has developed a vegetable drying machine which is being experimented in some of its partner Communities



Vegetable drying machine developed by CTDT

- Field Officers are providing back stopping and technical support to farmers though farmers need to engage themselves more
- CTD T regularly communicates with VOLENS/sends feedback on activities being undertaken

4.6.5 Challenges/constraints

- Farmers are less practical (*the network must brainstorm and find approaches that work on transforming farmers mind sets*)

“Farmers must be in the driving seat if any interventions are to achieve desired goals”

Marcilyne Fusire – CTD T Programme Manager

- Political and economic instability (*they have negatively affected the work of the network members – most farmer groups are highly politicised*)
- Farmers find food processing cumbersome without equipment, the programme must consider providing basic processing equipment
- Donor Syndrome: farmers tend to look at themselves as recipients and most projects lack effective exit strategies

4.6.6 Proposed future interventions

- To conduct more food processing trainings in-situ
- To organize exchange visits between successful and non successful farmers as a way of challenging less successful farmers to go *the extra mile*
- To publish a vegetable processing manual
- To engage young people (schools) in various CTD T development interventions

4.7 Zimbabwe Women’s Bureau

4.7.1 Brief Background

Zimbabwe Women’s Bureau is an association of Zimbabwean women working to improve the social and economic status of women in Zimbabwe. The National Secretariat is headed by the National Coordinator working with Board members elected from all the districts in Zimbabwe. Currently, the organization operates in ten districts in Mashonaland East, West, Midlands and Harare. Their programmes include sustainable agriculture, food processing, livestock projects and horticultural production. The main structure of the organisation comprises of the Agriculture Department, the Information Department, the Projects Office and the Field Officers. Of the ten districts that ZWB is working in, it is represented in eight of them by Field Officers who are responsible for facilitating and monitoring of all activities.

The evaluation team was only able to meet and talk to one community member involved in the VOLENS related activity.

4.7.2 Expectations from the VOLENS Network

- Exposure to wide knowledge
- Funding for implementation of activities
- Provision of out-of-pocket allowance during network workshops

4.7.3 Capacity building events participated in

- Small grains processing training, ISTT, Zambia

- Soya and tomato processing look-and-learn visit, CTT, Chiweshe, Zimbabwe
 - Herbal processing look-and-learn visit, KLV, Zimbabwe
 - **Hosted the fruit and vegetable drying look-and-learn visit, ZWB, Chinamhora, Zimbabwe**
 - Training in sweet potato and cassava processing, SCC and Agri-BioTech, Zimbabwe
 - Training on good nutrition and growing, processing and preparing healthy food, Zimbabwe
 - Tomato processing training, Zim AHEAD, Zimbabwe
 - Introduction to marketing, UZ/Dept of Agric Economics, Zimbabwe
 - Training on 'how to organise fairs?', CRS, Zimbabwe
 - Participation in PELUM's Traditional Food Fair, Morogoro, Tanzania
- Carried out a financial management assessment with assistance from VOLENS
 - Carried out an organisational management assessment with assistance from VOLENS
- Participation in a 1-day meeting on development of a joint website and recipe book
 - Attendance in the six-monthly review and planning meetings

4.7.4 Achievements/benefits attained

- Facilitation capacity enhanced for field facilitators
- One community (Chinamhora) trained in herbs and vegetable processing

4.7.5 Challenges/Constraints

Financial resources for facilitating and implementing activities at community level is one major challenge cited for the slow pace in facilitating activities at community level.

The evaluation revealed that due to a number of constraints, there has been very little trickling down of capacities built to the community. The community has also failed to fully utilize the solar drying machines donated to them as they see no economic value in the activity at the moment.

There was also a clear lack of understanding of the contents of the terms of agreement by the project facilitators. The Agriculture Officer and the Information Officer who took part in the evaluation clearly did not know the terms contained in the agreement or the nature of the contract hence expectations from the network or VOLENS were (still) very high.

There also appeared to be a breakdown in communication within the organization as only the Agriculture Officer seems to have information on the activities that have been taking place.

4.7.6 Proposed future interventions

- Enhance the production and processing of fruits and vegetables on a commercial scale.
- The community members want to have more training in food processing and packaging if their aspirations are to materialize.

4.8 Lower Guruve Development Association

4.8.1 Brief Background

Lower Guruve Development Association was registered in 1991 as a community based organisation. The organization's main activities include the promotion of sustainable livelihoods and health programmes. The organization is based in Guruve district but works with communities in outlying districts. The organisation's key activities include the promotion of drought resistant crops, alternative sources of income, and nutrition and herbal production. During periods of severe droughts the organization also engages in relief food distribution. In the alternative sources of income, LDGA runs and promotes livestock health management in which emphasis is on identification and treatment of livestock diseases. During the outbreak of diseases

such as cholera, LDGA provides public health sensitization programmes. The organization also has a business unit which runs a training centre and lodges.

4.8.2 Expectations from the VOLENS Network

- Funding for capacity building activities
- Facilitation of knowledge sharing platforms
- Providing an opportunity for fundraising
- Funding for implementation of network activities

4.8.3 Capacity building events participated in

- Small grains processing training, ISTT, Zambia
- Small-scale food processing short course, Baraka Agriculture College, Kenya
- Hosted the sorghum processing look-and-learn visit, LDGA, Mbire, Zimbabwe
- Soya and tomato processing look-and-learn visit, CTT, Chiweshe, Zimbabwe
- Training in sweet potato and cassava processing, SCC and Agri-BioTech, Zimbabwe
- Training on good nutrition and growing, processing and preparing healthy food, Zimbabwe
- Herbal processing training, Fambidzanai, Zimbabwe
- Tomato processing training, Zim AHEAD, Zimbabwe
- Introduction to marketing, UZ/Dept of Agric Economics, Zimbabwe
- Training on 'how to organise fairs?', CRS, Zimbabwe
- Presence at CTT's seed and food fair, Dzimwe Training Centre, Chiweshe, Zimbabwe

- Carried out a financial management assessment with assistance from VOLENS
- Carried out an organisational management assessment with assistance from VOLENS

- Participation in a 1-day meeting on development of a joint website and recipe book
- Attendance in the six-monthly review and planning meetings

The members who attended the workshops felt that some workshop venues were not conducive for trainings while it was generally agreed that the training activities should be targeted at specific communities so that appropriate trainings would be directed at deserving community members with resources coming from the community.

The participants also advised that the training organizers should also provide workshop reports and relevant training aids as this would help retain the knowledge acquired.

4.8.4 Achievements/benefits attained

- Increased knowledge base has enhanced the organization's facilitation capacity
- Network activities have been mainstreamed into the organisation's main activities
- Training conducted by community members who attended the trainings with other community members.

4.8.5 Challenges/Constraints

- Insufficient funds for implementation of network activities
- Non availability of training aids makes it difficult for the facilitation team to share their skills with community members
- Natural calamities like droughts make it difficult to engage into full time production
- Lack of irrigation facilities hinders winter production
- Training for processing of foods was done using flour which is not available in the community

The participants to the network meetings proposed that as much as VOLENS was refunding transport money to participants who use public transport, they should also pay fuel refunds to those who come to meetings driving

4.8.6 Proposed future interventions

- To mainstream all network activities in the mainline organization activities
- To conduct further trainings in communities
- To continue working on the recipe book with community members

5.0 Appendix 1: List of informants and FGD participants

Organisation	Informants/Participants	Positions
Kajiwa Development Coordinating Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ngoni Chikowe • Kabongwe Chedhu • Emily Matombo • Forget Chirumba 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects Officer • Financial Admin. Officer • Admin. Officer • Farmer
Cluster Agriculture Development Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emily Taruvinga • Mercy Kamwanda • Kudakwashe Makoni • Gladys Chari • Tashinga Nyabonde • Loveness Danga • Sara Tiriboyi • Stephen Muzanda • Bvumba Fanwell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Member • Committee Member
Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson Kawili • Shepard Mudzingwa • Kuda Mudokwane • Lewis Mashingaidze 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden Supervisor • Student • Programme Manager • Director
Lower Guruve Development Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam Murira • Sekai Janga • James Machingura • Livingstone Munetsi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian Programmes Officer • Crop Production Officer • Livestock Production Officer • Accountant
Kufunda Learning Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daiton Swafi • Claudette Lloyd • Lorraine Muwuya • Jackie Cahi • Annah Bendicto • Thokozani Milambo • Andy Mavhangira • Maria Jim • Mirriam Muranganwa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Herbs Production • Administrator • Assistant Administrator • Operations Manager • Farmer • Farmer • Farmer • Farmer • Farmer
Community Technology Development Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marciline Fusire • Emily Taruvinga • Esmat Manhiri 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Manager • Field Officer • Field Officer
Zimbabwe Women's Bureau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gabriel Kufa • Grace Mugebe • Brian Mukondo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agric and Nutrition Officer • Information Officer • Community member
Centre for Total Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idah Gengezha • Rebecca Muhunga • Margaret Guyo • Winnie Nyambaizi • Jennifar Gurumombe • Naume Chiringa • Viola Ruzvidzo • Plaxedes Mashayamombe • Scholastic Matipano • Agness Kasuowa • Tinarwo Kaseka • Hildah Kaseka • Victoria Chigwida • Revayi Karimumanzi • Shebba Mudzamini • Finess Chipunga • Assa Ganya • Lillian Membere 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mavis Tawenga• Beauty Mapondera• Mirriam Mandzvania• Judith Chingwana• Fungisai Katsande• Eminess Katanda• Simanganiso Muzanga• Lillian Chigwana• Mereniah Shambira• Phinisia Mahere• Precious Kaseke• Mevis Shambira• Peggy Chigwanda• Rosemary Rangwani• Annah Maddzuramende• Midia Chirombo	
--	---	--

6.0 Appendix 2: Guiding Questions

1. When was the organization formed/ what is your core business?
2. When and why did you join the VOLENS network?
3. How did you come to know the VOLENS network?
4. What were your expectations when joining the network? Are they being achieved? Justify.
5. What activities has your organization been involved in?
6. How have you been involved?
7. What changes or impacts have occurred as a result of your involvement with the VOLENS network at staff and community levels? Cite examples.
8. How have the activities with the network been chosen? Have they been of relevance to your organization?
9. How are participants to the VOLENS activities chosen?
10. How do the capacities built trickle down to the rest of the organization and community?
11. What has gone well in the network and what has not? To what do you attribute this?
12. If there has been any wrongs what can be done to correct them?
13. Is there anything you feel VOLENS should work on (or improve)?
14. How is the level of stakeholder participation in the programme? (Where does it start and end)
15. What happens after each network activity?