

# ***CHIVI FOOD SECURITY PROJECT: A PROCESS APPROACH***

**Thematic Area:** Sustainable Agriculture, Food Safety and Food Security

by

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**Abstract**

ZIMBABWE'S agricultural production is based on three distinct factors. First, the large-scale commercial sector, which occupies the majority of the most favourable zones, is still owned by the white minority. The small-scale commercial farms, largely owned by blacks, are scattered countrywide. The traditional communal sector, which is located in drought prone, low and erratic rainfall areas, is home to about nine million people.

The country is classified into five agro-ecological regions. The communal areas consist of grazing lands, interspersed with individual family plots for crop production. They are characterized by poor soils and low and erratic rainfall, and fall largely into land classification regions 1V and V, land suitable only for semi-extensive livestock production. Chivi district, in Masvingo Province, falls under this category.

Historically, the previous Government, whose agricultural extension and research services focused more on the productive areas, marginalised these communal areas.

As a result, communal areas have either not been effectively supported. Even worse, they have been recipients of uncoordinated soil conservation methods.

The 1991/92 drought, the worst in the last century, severely affected the communal areas – both in terms of crop failure and draught power. Large herds of cattle perished. Drought relief food was distributed to over half of the rural population

The average annual rainfall in Chivi is 530 mm. In every five years, drought occurs for at least three years.

Intermediate Technology Development Group - Southern Africa, has a commitment to help farmers in dryland areas attain food security. It identified Chivi as requiring urgent attention. A Food Security Project was initiated in Ward 21 of Chivi district in February 1991.

ITDG Southern Africa, in liaison with the local government, chose Chivi as the focus for the project. The criteria for selection were food insecurity at household level, high population pressure and little donor involvement and that it represented communal areas.

The project arose out of discussions between senior Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services officials and ITDG, about the need to explore alternative strategies and technologies for agricultural extension in the communal areas. Other objectives are:

- To help farmers' institutions to identify their priority needs and strengthen their capacity
- To work with local institutions to identify and develop technological options, by building on their traditional knowledge;
- To influence government agricultural policies to take into account the production needs of small-scale farmers, such as the communal farmers in Chivi.

The project in this Chomuruvati area undertook a distinct participatory extension approach. Its ambition was to realize the potential of the community to identify and manage their own development. That meant changes from the grassroots through appropriate food security schemes, including testing of alternative and various participatory extension and research approaches to enhance the position of the smallholder farmers.

Giving hungry people free food is only a stop-gap measure. It does not create buffers or strengthen the food security of the communities. What the project aimed to achieve was to have people-centred development.

Despite its remarkable development over the last 22 years, Zimbabwe still has pockets of abject poverty among its 12,5 million people.

Soon after independence in 1980, some donors and development agencies went into the district as “messiahs” to save the poor and the hungry. But they did not understand the needs of the people. The idea of helping people to help themselves was relatively new to the district and the country at large.

The project is therefore characterized by a low-input, participatory extension approach.

Perhaps, the most striking element is that, in stark contrast to most rural development projects in Africa, the project has, by design, no material support to offer: there is no food for work, there are no free inputs, and there is no money for labour to dig conservation works: just technical advice.

The project only facilitates development through helping the community to sustain itself.

ITDG, together with other non-governmental organizations, supports the “farmer first” sustainable agricultural approach. Smallholder farmers are put at the centre of development.

The strategy for working with the community is to help farmers’ institutions to identify their priority needs and strengthen their capacity. The aim, also, is to work with local institutions to identify and develop technologies, by building on their traditional knowledge. Another way is to influence government agricultural policies to take into account the production and marketing needs of smallholder farmers.

ITDG Southern Africa played the role of facilitator – rather than solution provider.

Community participation was a major area of focus in the project. Establishing a dialogue with community groups was an important step in the project as it helped to build trust.

For a long time, development practitioners have regarded the smallholder farmers as being unsophisticated and requiring high-level guidance. Indigenous knowledge has always been regarded as primitive and did not receive due recognition and further development.

The approach of the project has been to make and develop links between farmers and researchers from research stations, to share the results of research more directly with farmers, and to influence the research agenda to make it more responsive to farmers’ needs.

For research to be effective, it needs to be informed by farmers’ priorities and more so, their criteria for success. Farmers are, therefore, researchers in themselves.

On farm trials and demonstrations have been initiated. They have included different crop varieties and techniques such as moisture conservation. Seed fairs were introduced. These are where local produce is displayed and judged as well as field days held on farms and farmer competitions. Farmers, also, have been able to keep their own financial and meeting records.

Activities centred on farmers’ clubs and garden groups. Another important feature of the project was community training. The farmers went on training for transformation courses organized by Silveira House, a Catholic non-governmental organization involved in civic education.

The farming methods are now being shared among farmers and spreading to other districts outside Chivi through forums, seminars and even radio broadcasts- all instigated by the farmers themselves.

Technical and product impact was achieved, both in the garden groups and framers' clubs. There are no laid down recommendations: the approach is to expose farmers to a "recipe" of possible advanced technologies, from a variety of sources, and to encourage the farmers to develop and evolve —or reject them.

The key to the success has been through the people. They are the ones who have retained control over the direction, pace and content of the project.

In many ways, the food security project is breaking new, hard ground, in participatory approaches to rural development and environmental conservation in the country.

There are few projects in the region, which have very little to offer materially, yet so much to give by facilitating community development through the exploitation of abundant potential.

## **Background**

Agriculture makes a significant contribution to the Zimbabwean economy, accounting for 13 per cent of Gross Domestic Product. Production is based on the country's agro-ecological regions.

The Government agricultural extension service, Agritex, has a well-developed network of officers and extension workers scattered countrywide. In the communal areas, the ration of extension workers to households is roughly 1:800 (Mutimba, 1994). Extension advice focuses on high-input agriculture for cash crop production, usually taking the form of recommendations developed at national level. Uptake of Agritex recommendations is usually poor in the communal areas.

The Chivi Food Security Project was initiated in 1990 by ITDG Southern Africa to explore methods of working with local institutions to increase household food security through more responsive agricultural and other extension services. "Participatory" development approaches that encourage farmers to analyse their problems and plan their own projects have been in existence for at least 20 years, nevertheless the existing agricultural extension service in Zimbabwe, although supporting a "bottom up" approach, was far from being participatory. Instead, agricultural techniques, designed in research stations often with richer commercial farmers in mind, were adopted at the national level and pushed by agricultural extension workers onto poor farmers in the communal areas. The uptake of such techniques by these farmers is very low.

Worldwide, the top-down extension services make the mistake of delivering inappropriate messages to the poor majority of farmers. The particular problem in Zimbabwe, however, is that the people farming on the poorest communal lands had arrived there purely as a result of economic pressures, but because of legislation in the colonial era that consigned black people to these areas. This was accompanied by agricultural extension based on the belief that the techniques of the poorer farmers were backward, and should be replaced by the radically different methods of “modern” farming.

### **The Project**

In 1990, ITDG decided to launch a food security programme as part of its work in the country. The organization felt that 10 years after Zimbabwe’s independence, people in many communal areas still faced hunger and acute food shortages. This is particularly so in the remote and often very arid parts of the country, characterized as regions IV and V, where droughts occur frequently.

The project chose an area of poor natural resources, but recognized that even in the driest parts of the country, farmers had survival skills. This means the project aimed at working with them to build on their knowledge and harness their productive potential.

In line with its overall objectives, ITDG sought to identify a community with which to work. As a first step, ITDG commissioned consultants to look at the economic situation in Zimbabwe and help them to identify a district in which most of the major characteristics surrounding communal lands in Zimbabwe today are evident. These are:

- Poor soils, which are unable to sustain any reasonable crop returns without application of fertiliser or manure;
- Inadequate rainfall, with drought in almost three of every five years;

- Land pressure coupled with high population growth;
- Small landholding sizes with some people landless;
- Poor grazing facilities with some people having no draught power; and
- High levels of malnourishment.

Masvingo Province was identified, and Zaka and Chivi districts-within the province, as the two areas where all these factors and more were present (ITDG 1991a). All of these are the characteristics of a typical communal land in Zimbabwe. The idea was that if the project was successfully implemented it could be replicated elsewhere in Zimbabwe.

Out of the two districts, Chivi was selected as the most suitable to work in. It surely suffers from food insecurity' folklore has it that once upon a time a woman from Chivi had nothing for herself and her children to eat, so she boiled some stones and afterwards gave her children the "soup" (***Chembere yekwaChivi yakabika mabwe ikasvuta muto***). This fable illustrates Chivi as an area where there is general poverty and food insecurity in particular.

Average annual rainfall is 530mm, and drought years occur three years in every five. After the start of the project there were drought in 1990-91 and 1997-98. The district's population is around 170 00(1990 figures, Murwira 1991a). The high population density of up to 70 people per square kilometer and a population growth rate of about 3 per cent combine to produce enormous land pressure (Murwira 1994a). Average land holdings are around 1,2ha per farmer and are in decline (ITDG 1991a). Before the 1990-91 drought, less than half the population owned cattle, and some estimate that up to 90 per cent of cattle died during the drought (Mulvany *et. al.*, 1995).

Subsistence agriculture is practiced in Chivi. But, additional income generating activities play a significant role, such as trading in clothes and food, sale of agricultural surplus, gold panning, crafts and pottery production. Further, remittances from family members working in towns are vital for rural families' survival.

## **Entering the Community**

Having identified Chivi as the district in which work was to be initiated, ITDG carried out a survey to make an inventory of all institutions operating in the district. The purpose was to enable ITDG to be familiar with who was working in the district, what kind of work they were doing or had done, and ultimately to ascertain how these institutions could collaborate (or might conflict) with ITDG.

The focus was narrowed to a specific ward. A ward is the second largest unit for community organization in Zimbabwe; it is made up of six villages, the village being the lowest level of community organization. The criteria for selecting the ward were:

- Dry conditions (Region 1V and V)
- Remoteness from large business/administrative centers;
- Farmers growing very few cash crops, subsistence farming being the main means of survival;
- Very little or no NGO activity;
- Underdeveloped infrastructure, e.g. roads, schools, etc.

Ward 21 within Chivi district was ultimately selected as the one that fitted all the criteria above. The area is also known as the Chomuruvati area, the “dark corner”. The selection of Ward 21 was made through discussions with the district administration officials, agricultural extension workers at district level, district councilors, and other key government institutions working in Chivi district.

## **The Process Approach**

The key principles of the participatory process approach included:

- Participation

- Institutional strengthening
- Building on local skills and knowledge
- Facilitation (by ITDG)

Existing approaches for sustainable agriculture practices being heralded by most development agencies have their roots in farmers' age-old knowledge and techniques. The Chivi Food Security is aimed at working with local farmer institutions in identifying priority needs, enhancing food security and influence government agricultural policies on smallholder farmers' production needs.

From the onset, the project sought to place responsibility and power of action on the local people through recognizing the community's "bag" of knowledge in responding to natural calamities such as drought. Often outsiders like NGOs hold a belief that resources poor farmers cannot make right decisions about their lives, and when given the chance they always make "wrong" choices. Decisions are thereby made by the NGO rather than the community itself.

ITDG used "appropriate technologies" which entailed the effective utilization of what is known (traditional/indigenous knowledge) and modern technology. This has formed an important component of ITDG's approach to ensuring food security in Chivi's Ward 21 and in close collaboration with Agritex and other local institutions.

Helping local farmer institutions to identify priority needs and to strengthen their capacity in ensuring food security at household level for the poor has been the main objective in this project. Questions were raised on how to achieve such security in an area that is subjected to a drought for three years out of five.

To achieve a food secure community, the local farmers and ITDG searched for newer and better methods of farming through a participatory process. The process combined indigenous know-how, research capacities of the locals and that of research institutions in order to generate, test and adopt new techniques and practices. Household needs assessment surveys focusing on identifying family concerns and priorities in food security were conducted. Water availability for crop production, animal draught power, farming implements and tools, dry land crop varieties, fencing for vegetables, pests, landlessness and lack of co-operation among villagers were identified as the major concerns. It was found necessary to find out the traditional and current practice or initiatives of tackling the problems in question.

The project facilitated visits to explore ideas from different areas which would be tapped to solve identified problems-this notion is known in Shona as *chitsva chiri murutsoka* (new things are learned through travelling). Representatives from farmers' clubs and garden groups visited adjacent research centers like the Chiredzi and Makoholi Research centers. On return they fed back to the community the technologies they had been exposed to, so as to enable then community to decide what technology could be carried out.

The garden groups chose to try out the tied ridges, infiltration pits and the sub-surface irrigation clay pipes. At present almost all the garden groups have adopted these technologies. The community's pottery skills became handy in the construction of clay pipes. It should be noted that pottery is one of the most common income generating activity in Chivi. This technology has reduced the frequency of watering the gardens, thus indirectly diverting work to other areas. As a result, nearby wards have approached both ITDG staff and government extension workers requesting for access to these technologies. Farmers in ward 21 have even gone further to adjacent wards to train others in using the new appropriate technologies.

Local farmers establish their own informal network for their survival and the exchange of seeds, the community drawing from other areas visited and the farmers decided to hold annual seed fairs. Seed fairs are an extension of the farmers' own informal network. During a seed fair farmers display different seed varieties so as to enable them to make an inventory of the crop being grown where and by whom. At a recent seed fair one farmer had more than 100 seed varieties. This also enables the farmers to know what crops are appropriate for their area. Similar fairs are now being held by vegetable farmers, and provide not only for interaction and exchange of knowledge, but create a sense for the need to preserve seed varieties.

Though the project emphasis is on indigenous knowledge, it does not offer enough protection against cattle and goats straying into gardens. Traditionally, the garden group fenced off their garden by cutting the branches- this activity has to be done yearly and contributes enormously to deforestation. Community members managed to consider the option of wire fencing as a solution to this problem. Two members were sent for training in wire making, as the option to buy proved too expensive. Today, the ward community earns extra income by making fence for other wards, and from protected vegetables.

### **Indigenous Knowledge Systems**

Traditional pest management practices in Chivi constitute the use of indigenous plant materials and inter-cropping. These were used for controlling a variety of pests such as aphids, bugs and grubs. Modern chemical pesticides though used, are not common due to their availability and affordability. Tree ashes of indigenous trees common in the area, and used as firewood, is used to control aphids and cutworms.

### ***Training for Transformation***







In the past, villagers say, Government agricultural extension policies concentrated on successful residents, dubbed "master farmers".

Most smallholder farmers were said to be primitive, and could not receive due recognition and further development.

"Empowerment can encourage self-sufficiency, build confidence among the people, reduces dependency on government and ensures more democracy," said the ITDG Southern Africa's Chivi project officer, Togara Mapingure.

Government agricultural extension workers in Masvingo say extension approaches must change. "The project encourages people to say out their problems, which otherwise they might hide," said a district agricultural extension worker.

" Before, the approach was top to bottom, now it is bottom up," he said.

"In many ways, the new approaches are not very different to what Agritex has been doing all along. But in the past, we had failed to get anything going. The difference was that the project started from basics, exploring the institutional set up, identifying needs without giving an answer and encouraging farmers to do things themselves," said the extension worker.

The main reason for the success of the project so far is simple: active community involvement.

Members of village garden groups made clay pipes for sub surface irrigation, which they had seen at a nearby research station in Chiredzi, a method by which water is delivered straight to the roots of the drought-stricken vegetables

Benefits of the sub-surface irrigation scheme include helping the grassroots people to build on existing skills. Drawing on their existing pottery skills, local women, for example, found these not only easy to make, but that their use has halved the amount of water needed to water their plots. Making clay pipes for irrigation employs familiar techniques and is also easy for others to learn.

In the fields, farmers decided to try techniques, which help preserve moisture and increase soil fertility, such as tied ridges and infiltration pits. Since the project began, they have seen a positive difference in crop yields.

Farmers also make natural pesticides by crushing certain types of cactus with water.

They have deliberately chosen not to use a lot of commercial pesticides because the lack of rains means they do not get fully absorbed and could end up poisoning the plants

The methods are now being shared among farmers and spreading to other districts outside Chivi through forums, seminars and even radio broadcasts - all instigated by the farmers themselves.

Technical and product impact was achieved, both in the garden groups and farmers' clubs. There are no laid down technical recommendations: the approach is to expose farmers to a "recipe" of possible advanced technologies, from a variety of sources, and to encourage the farmers to develop and evolve-or reject them.

The key to the success has been through the people. They are the ones who have retained control over the direction, pace and content of the project.

The food security project is breaking new, hard ground, in participatory extension approaches to rural development and environmental conservation in the country.

Work is already progressing in another area of the district. A similar project has already started in Nyanga district, in Manicaland Province.

Perhaps, the most unique feature of the project is that unlike other rural and/or environmental development programmes in developing countries, it has no material support to offer- just technical advice.

There are few projects in the region, which have very little to offer materially, yet so much to give by facilitating community development through the exploitation of abundant potential.

### **Increasing Impact**

The first phase of the Chivi Food Security Project was based on a participatory technology development (PTD) approach. For over six years, the project successfully worked with Ward 21 and four communities in Chivi to identify their problems, prioritise them and seek solutions while building on their traditional knowledge.

The effectiveness of the PTD approach in enhancing both the technical and management capacity of rural communities to articulate and address their felt needs and problems proved to be an important lesson and experience of phase One of the project. The project then faced the challenge of ensuring that this process, initiated in the district, reached wider to benefit the large smallholder farming community in Zimbabwe and beyond its borders.

The project was aware of this challenge at the beginning and hence worked very closely with Agritex, a government department. Agritex has a wide network of extension and other agricultural support staff throughout the country, which makes them most appropriately placed to institutionalise this process. Also, Agritex trains extension staff and contributes to the overall syllabi of the country's agricultural colleges. The strategy of integrating them as one of the project partners bore fruit as the idea was welcomed and is being incorporated into the work of Agritex.

Other project partners in the province are the ITDG Conservation Tillage (Contil) and the GTZ Community level Planning and Development Project (CLP&D) have also been working to convince Agritex of the need to institutionalise this PTD approach in their work. As a result, the Chivi Food Security Project was invited to facilitate the institutionalization of the approach with Agritex at both provincial and district levels.

Institutionalisation of the PTD approach within Agritex in Masvingo is intended to build a critical mass of evidence for advocating use of the approach within the department nation-wide. Once this happens, it is hoped that this approach will ultimately be incorporated into the curricula of national agricultural colleges. This is not likely to be difficult because, as the potential employer of most of the graduates from these institutions, Agritex contributes 20 percent to the overall curricula of these colleges.

At provincial level, the project collaborates with GTZ's Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDEP) and the CLP&D to develop a trainer's manual on Participatory Extension Approaches (PEA) based on the synthesis of experiences and lessons of the CLP&D, Contil and Chivi Food Security Project. The project also developed a training curriculum for trainers and undertook training of trainers on PEA. Awareness raising workshops on PEA were done for managers of agricultural extension staff in Masvingo Province.

While the developments at provincial level progressed, the project facilitated practical training of agricultural extension workers who worked directly with the grassroots in the PTD approach. The training was designed to spread over a period of three years (from 1998) and was conducted in the whole of Chivi and one agricultural supervisor in neighbouring Mwenezi district. The training focused on re-orienting the mind set of the extension workers to consider smallholder farmers as equal partners in development, and to equip them with facilitation skills for mobilising and encouraging active farmer participation in their own development.

District training was organized in five clusters-four in Chivi and one in Mwenezi district. Each cluster had seven to 11 extension workers, and they identified one community to work with during the training. The Chivi Food Security Project provided theoretical training in each of the key steps of the PTD approach, demonstrated how the steps could be carried out and supervised extension workers as they carried out this process in the field. At the end of the training, extension agents were also encouraged to apply this approach in the wards they were assigned to. Thus, training of the 36 extension agents in Chivi and Mwenezi had the potential of transforming the lives of more than 54 000 households.

At the same time that trainings of extension workers in Chivi and Mwenezi districts were going on, the Chivi Food Security project continued to work with both Ward 21 and ward 4 communities. The two pilot communities generated lessons that were used to further enhance the training. The project facilitated development of the two communities into becoming recognized community-based organisations with the capacity to engage in diverse economic activities and effectively protect and lobby for their basic freedoms and rights. This was achieved through linking them with a wider network of support institutions and strengthening local institutions and leadership by facilitating appropriate training.

In this regard, the Chivi project adopted two complimentary scaling-up strategies: additive and multiplicative. While the project's efforts to strengthen its activities in the two pilot projects could best be described as its additive scaling – up strategy, the project's facilitation of operationalisation of the PTD approach within Agritex formed its multiplicative scaling-up strategy. Experiences from the additive strategy fed in to the multiplicative strategy and that way the two strategies complemented each other.

To date ITDG has embarked on a similar project in Nyanga district, in Manicaland. The same process approach is being utilized in the Nyanga project as in the Chivi project and comparisons of the two would be made.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

The Chivi Food Security Project has been dubbed “an experiment” in the use of alternative approaches to working with smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe. There were some lessons learned and experiences gained, which can be shared with others interested in using participatory approaches:

- **Breaking dependency syndrome**

At the initial stages of the project it was realised that many communities in Zimbabwe are now used to having decisions imposed upon them. They had become accustomed to having things

done for them and also used to asking for and getting handouts from outsiders. Changing these attitudes is one of the most critical areas facing development workers today.

Ward 21, in which this project was initiated and undertaken, was not favoured by the donor/NGO community. As a result, it was not easy to embark on the process approach. But the community did not expect to get handouts as in neighbouring wards and districts. It is true that in the beginning most community members dismissed ITDG, as they were not “offering anything” materially.

The top-down approach, used by many NGOs and government agencies, has eroded the self-confidence of farmers so much that they tend to act like passive recipients and objects of development. Restoring this confidence is a big challenge.

- **Challenging Traditional Approaches**

Another challenge was competing with traditional approaches. The 1992 drought that hit southern Africa, and indeed Zimbabwe, called for emergency measures such as food handouts. Since then, drought relief and supplementary feeding programmes had almost become a norm in many Zimbabwean rural communities. But here was ITDG trying hard not to promote free handouts but self-reliance. The organisation continued to work with the community in a participatory manner but at the same time other organizations and government agencies continued to pour in emergency relief packages.

Methods to enable various organizations to meet and discuss together with the communities how this emergency relief could be dispensed in a way which could not entrench dependency. These methods should enable the communities to participate in not only making decisions about projects, but in implementation as well.

- **Collective Ownership is crucial**

One of the factors that contributed to the success of the Chivi Food Security Project was the involvement of the community at all key stages of the project. All groups were involved in decision-making-traditional leaders, social institution leaders, ordinary group members, resource poor people, and women.

The project learned a lot about leadership in communities. In the Zimbabwean context, many leaders have been known to be too dictatorial in the approaches. At times, people in leadership were viewed not to be the right people to facilitate development. So, development workers must be in a position to discuss issues of leadership within communities so as to create an enabling environment for development.

Also, ITDG learned that creating new structures for a project is externally facilitated could be a problem. It is very critical to assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing structures within communities, and work through them. If there are any gaps, these should be improved for better project implementation.

Community ownership and involvement is very important to the effectiveness of a project. The participating community must be involved in all stages of project implementation up to the evaluation process. But the challenge is how to build confidence among the people so as to enable them to become equal partners in the development process.

- **Demand driven appropriate development**

Ward 21 smallholder farmers have become more and more empowered and have started making demands on other institutions with which they work with, for example the department of Agritex in Masvingo. Due to the process approach, Agritex has sent some of its staff for training.

However, the adoption of new method of working with communities demands a shift in the way things are done. Also, it calls for a major re-orientation of the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation systems.

As the communities in ward 21 get more empowered, the institutions working with them have to be prepared for an eventual change in the balance of power. The external agencies will have to be prepared for demands to be made of them, and for the community to define the nature of their relationship with outside agencies.

It has taken more than 10 years for ITDG to build a meaningful relationship with Ward 21. During this time, a substantial amount of money has been spent in facilitating the work. But, most of the money has really not been for visible items, such as boreholes, dams and roads. If the time that has been spent in discussion groups and workshops by the community were to be expressed in monetary terms, it would surely be a lot of money. However, all the financial costs incurred so far have been outweighed by the results of the participatory approach.

## **Conclusion**

People's participation in development has been promoted for over 20 years, yet it is still common for development projects to be pre-designed, with little more than a token consultation with the intended beneficiaries. With the focus of promoting food security, the Chivi project has helped smallholder farmers in the drought-prone and arid communal lands of Zimbabwe to identify their problems and choose their own solutions to them.

Of major attention to the project is the strengthening existing institutions-local farmers' club and women's garden groups- to ensure the continuity of activities after the departure of the project. Of less critical importance was the involvement of the government agricultural extension service from the start of the project, which has meant that the process approach demonstrated in Chivi district is now being taught to other extension workers and adopted throughout the service.

The background of the farmers illustrates the process taken by the project-needs assessment surveys, institutional surveys, participatory planning, awareness-raising training, and visits to view new technologies and local seed varieties.

The project has been unique internationally in its combination of the participation of local community institutions with the government's commitment to the re-organisation of its agricultural development services. It is now being replicated elsewhere in Zimbabwe. The successful institutionalization of these methods contains lessons and experiences about sustainability in development.

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