Final Report:
Evaluation of DanChurchAid Zambia Food Security Programme
(2006-2010)
January
Executive Summary

Background:
1. This final evaluation report is based on DanChurchAid Zambia’s Food Security (PT3) Programme carried out from January 2006 to December 2010. The programme was mainly implemented in Southern and Eastern Provinces (and to a limited extent in Central and Lusaka Provinces) through local partner organizations.
2. The overall purpose of the evaluation was to provide DCA and its partners and other stakeholders learning from evidence based information about the program to improve the projects and feed into the process of developing the successor programme.
3. The overall objective of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which the objectives of the current programme have been attained and make recommendations on considerations that could be made to better achieve the outcomes of the successor programme.

Programme context:
4. A programme approach was adopted as part of DCA global strategy. This allows DCA to contribute to capacity building of local partner organizations while promoting cooperation among them. Also because the partners are closer to the communities, they are able to ensure beneficiary participation in defining project priorities, and this can be more sustainable beyond DCA’s support.
5. The Partner Platform that has emerged out of DCA intervention has initiated a process whereby partner organizations share experiences and deliberate on matters beyond programme objectives.
6. The programme intervention areas and programme objectives were found to be still relevant to address the food insecurity issues which affect the target group both in the physical and political environment within which the programme operates because of socio-economic indicators existing in these areas.

Findings:
7. Rights holders have been broadly imparted with knowledge regarding their human right to food, land and equitable treatment, and increasing awareness was evident. However, not all rights holders have attained the desired capacity to fully claim their rights. This signals the need to continue with this programme.
8. Some implementing partners were originally not all aware of the rights based approach and hence DCA facilitated the enhancement of capacity among partner organizations to use this approach to promote sustainable agriculture and advocate against structural barriers to food security.
9. Since the programme hinges on the right to food using the rights based approach, partners need to be continuously capacitated on this innovative approach to development to enable them adequately empower the rights holders and duty bearers on their duties and responsibilities.
10. Food security and nutritional status of vulnerable rural poor in the target areas has been improved through increased adoption of sustainable production methods including conservation farming and agro-forestry that suit their environmental circumstances, crop diversification and increasing use of horticultural crops in the dry season. The use of the dry season meant that these beneficiaries were producing food throughout the year.

11. Irrigation of gardens is still largely from shallow wells using watering cans and this is labor intensive although in some areas treadle pumps have been introduced with success. Such should be replicated in programme areas in order to address the challenges faced especially by vulnerable beneficiaries such as people living with HIV/AIDS and female headed households.

12. Crop yields have increased owing to the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and increased knowledge of the beneficiaries. However, these gains can be capitalized on through improved post-harvest techniques beyond mere grain bins and drying of vegetables. Fermentation and food product diversification are viable options.

13. These increased crop yields have led to an increase in household incomes as well as disposable cash. As a result, many beneficiaries reported affluence in terms of being able to purchase household goods, livestock, farming implements, groceries, clothes and paying their children's school fees.

14. A culture of savings is gradually evolving in some communities where purchase of livestock can be viewed as a de facto village banking system since it can be sold or bartered for the required goods and services in times of need.

15. There was a sense that awareness had been raised enough to begin to change the culture of providing food and nutrition first to the male as per tradition, but now to ensure that the sick and children were priority to be fed nutritious meals. No indication was observed for women of child bearing age on this account.

16. The capacity of the target group to claim and uphold their right to food was measured through increased ownership, and or access to the factor of production – land. It was observed that an increasing number of beneficiaries have access to and ownership of land.

17. In many areas women have been able to gain recognition and more access to land in their own right as members of families. For instance there is increasing protection of widows' right to land whereby they are not displaced from the parcel of land owned with the late husband.

18. The Chiefs and headmen have been made aware of their responsibility as duty bearers and it was observed that tremendous progress has been made for both rights holders and duty bearers to seek better ways to administer land matters with innovative approaches being initiated like the issuance of the Traditional Land Holding Certificate by traditional leaders. These traditional leaders are now lobbying for the recognition of this certificate by government on par with the title deeds that government issues on leasehold land.

19. The partners have gained a lot of confidence from both duty bearers and rights holders so much so that they are now requested to arbitrate on land conflicts by both parties. In response, the partners have encouraged the setting up of Community Committees to help further decentralize the resolution of these issues with fairness and expediency.

**Lessons Learnt:**

20. The formation of the Partner Platform by DCA has served as a catalyst to enhance exchange of information and commitment and thereby meets DCA's facilitative role. This Platform has also provided an avenue for training of partners on new issues and approaches.

21. Sustainability of the programme can be viewed from many angles. These include the establishment of district and community level structures which will go on after the partners have exited these communities; seed multiplication systems and livestock “pass-on the gift”
concept that will continue providing these communities with means of production, and collaboration with government institutions. The knowledge that the rights holders acquire will also remain with them always while the involvement of traditional leaders can lead to evolution of cultural and traditional systems which will ensure continuity.

22. With improved incomes comes the risk of HIV and AIDS as people are influenced by their potential to afford anything, including multiple sexual partners and venture into polygamous marriages. This concern has been addressed through awareness among the beneficiaries and caring for the sick, and discussing the pandemic more openly so that both the infected and affected work together and support each other.

23. As a result of the above, communities have become more socially empowered with women speaking out on their own confidently and men respecting their views.

24. The complexities introduced by different organizational cultures and challenges were sometimes evident in the programme monitoring and evaluation process, such as late submission of reports by some partners. However steps were taken to make this more systematic based upon the log-frames of their respective projects.

25. There have been Programme responses to climate change through bringing this issue to the top of partner organizations agenda, facilitating trainings and the formation of the Zambia Civil Society Climate Change Network. At field level interventions have been instituted mostly in terms of crop diversification and promotion of sustainable farming methods.

26. A lot of synergies within and without the programme have been noted between Partners; Partners/DCA and government ministries, other NGOs and international organizations; between DCA programmes (PT1, PT3 and PT4); and between DCA and other stakeholders like Diakonia, the Finnish Embassy and GTZ.

27. The length of some projects does not correspond to the time required for the realization of results in the kind of issues the programme deals with (farming practices, cultural and policy issues).

Recommendations: DCA and Partners:
(i) Both DCA and partners should realize that high staff turnover impacts negatively on the effectiveness of the programme and that they should consider to provide some form of incentives and morale to reduce this costly trend.

(ii) Partners should take into consideration the needs at the grassroots level in activity implementation, as well as the sequencing and timeliness of these so that rights holders’ confidence is increasingly built. Activities out of sequence are sometimes misconstrued to be not of priority to them.

(iii) The Partners Platform should ensure that the different level of development and capacities amongst the partners, and inconsistencies by partners’ representatives attending the platform do not create a challenge in their interactions and commitment to the shared ideals of the platform.

(iv) The Partners Platform should consider undertaking joint and more visible advocacy publicity strategies that address common challenges they face in addressing issues which affect food security such as those mentioned under external factors. This will attract more attention from the policy makers.

(v) In order for DCA to effectively monitor all programme areas, it may be necessary to encourage implementing partners to adopt a gradual geographical spread of areas receiving DCA support.

(vi) The monitoring and evaluation systems and reporting at all levels should be synchronized with the programme logical framework to allow for improved results measurement while all projects should be evaluated to improve on programming.

(vii) Partners should ensure that financial systems (guidelines and procedures) are documented for continuity focusing on institutional capacity building.

(viii) DCA, through its partners, should ensure that local level staff benefit from the facilitative role and institutional capacity building activities it provides for improved programme impact.

Future programming:

(ix) The length of partner projects should be synchronized with the time required for the realization of results in the kinds of issues the programme deals with.

(x) The Programme should further strengthen the claiming of rights by improving its work on justiciability

(xi) The Programme needs to widen climate change adaptation (and possibly mitigation) measures beyond what is currently being done.

(xii) The Programme should consider incorporating DRR strategies. To make this effective, they should increase linkages to early warning systems.

(xiii) The programme should consider having institutionalized strategic linkages to research institutions and other resources rather than have one off engagements (exchange visits, study tours, etc) or ad hoc arrangements.

(xiv) When implementing microfinance projects, careful consideration should be taken in the selection of the types of products to embark on and procedures to put in place to ensure results.