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TranZDVC Bulletin

The newsletter for the Transforming Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain for the Future (TranZDVC) project



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Year 2020: TranZDVC Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities

The year 2020 was the second year of implementation of the TranZDVC project. Though the project was negatively affected by the effects of the 2019 drought, the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent national lockdowns, it managed to achieve most of its key objectives despite delays in some areas, especially procurements.

Even though the external operating environment continued to pose several uncertainties related to instability of the exchange rates, the foreign currency auction system seemed to have stabilised the exchange rate to some extent. Continued shifts in fiscal and monetary policy presented a very unpredictable working environment. However, significant progress was achieved during 2020.

In our January-December 2020 interim report, just released, we highlight that the successful importation of 200 in-calf dairy heifers from South Africa and distribution to 42 beneficiaries through five large scale processors namely, Dairibord Zimbabwe Limited (70 heifers, distributed to seven males and nine females), Dendairy (50 heifers, distributed to six males, seven females), Prodairy (45 heifers, distributed to four males, two females and two joint applications), Kefalos (25 heifers, distributed to five males, two females) and Nestle Zimbabwe (10 heifers, distributed to one joint application and one female) on a 1:1 match.

The project managed to sign contracts and procure productive assets for the following number of matching grant facility (MGF) beneficiaries: nine in Window One (40,000 Euro on a one:one match), 24 in Window Two (10,000 Euro on a 70:30 match) and 128 in Window Three (2,000 Euro on 70:30 match). Based on the Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) recommendations, the project created a Window Four (10,000 Euro on 70:30 match) for medium-scale farmers in which eight beneficiaries were awarded.



The Matching Grants Facility (MGF) has enabled dairy enterprises to invest in productive assets and infrastructure. John Crawford from Portlet Farm in Makonde district in Mashonaland West Province showing the solar system acquired through MGF and installed at the Farm to power milk cooling tanks.

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Year 2020: TranZDVC Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities

Root causes of Dairy Value Chain (DVC) underperformance were established through continued interactions with the dairy stakeholders during the reporting period. The interactions were, however, limited by Covid-19, resulting in most of the meetings being done virtually. The factors were the small national herd size, breed/genetics, stock feed, hyper inflationary environment, milk production costs, and poor infrastructure in the dairy value chain.

Milk Collection Centres (MCCs) quality manuals and operational manuals were finalised and operationalised. Business plans for MCCs, milk integrators, small scale dairy processors, dairy hubs, and an independent dairy laboratory were developed and presented to the Technical Assistance to the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (TA-ZAGP) and the European Union Delegation (EUD) for approval and subsequent operationalisation. Of the existing 35 MCCs, 17 were capacitated on strategic plans and 25 were trained in business plan development and use. A total of 33 MCCs were trained in business proposal development and governance.

Additional key highlights for 2020 were the development of a dairy sector performance and monitoring database which was pre-launched in December 2020 during the project's annual review and planning meeting. The national official launch is scheduled for the end of April 2021. The dairy database was set up at Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement's Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Department along with other existing information systems within the ministry.

The database was then programmed to integrate into the Ministry's National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework as a one stop platform.

Cumulatively, a total of 3,998 new dairy farmers (against a 2022 target of 4,000 new dairy farmers) were mobilised and registered of which 36% were females and 64% males. Of the total mobilised and registered farmers, 13% are youths. A total of 258 youth and gender equality champions (132 males and 126 females and 39 (15%) youths) were identified against a target of 120.

While taking stock and celebrating our many successes, we are aware that there are still major challenges to be overcome. We will achieve our targets if the government, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and dairy farmers work together for a common goal. We now seek to extend our impact for dairy farming in Zimbabwe by learning from past and current work, case studies, trying new ideas, technologies and approaches. We wish to thank our donors for their vital support and assistance during the past two years. We are proud and pleased that our partners are as engaged, committed and excited as we are. We will keep you informed of all the project activities within the project in future issues of this publication.

Dr. Edson Chifamba, Project Coordinator



A total of 33 MCCs were trained in business proposal development and governance.



Unlocking Women and Youth Potential in the Dairy Value Chain



Women and youth participation in the TranZDVC project has increased after their empowerment to actively participate in technical dairy farming activities, thanks to the project's integrative and transformative approach to women and youth inclusion in dairy farming.

This underscores the effectiveness of TranZDVC's gender integration strategy, which is helping women and youth reach their full potential and become drivers of dairy farming production and productivity. The project facilitates access to credit and finance which is often a key barrier to women's participation in the agriculture sector, by especially targeting female dairy farmers through specifically designed Matching Grants Facility (MGF).

The Project Monitoring and Evaluation activities of the project established that the proportion of women with decent jobs in the dairy industry increased to 47% in 2020 from 39.5% in 2019. This was as a result of gender sensitisation interventions. Women were taking up jobs such as Milk Collection Centres (MCC) chairpersons, quality controllers, bookkeepers, and extension officers during 2020. There was an increase in women with decent jobs (a decent job is a job that is not entirely manual) at processor level, up from 5% recorded in baseline year of 2019 to 10% in 2020.

However, this was 2% short of the 2020 target which aimed to have 12% of women having decent jobs in this category of enterprises.

The proportion of youth with decent jobs increased to 27% in 2020 from 23% at farm level in 2019. The jobs ranged from MCC process operators, quality controllers, drivers and bookkeepers. This trend is attributed to the project's focused engagements with men and women in the dairy sector by having their youth (mostly their children) take active roles in these enterprises as a stepped approach in creating a succession plan.

TranZDVC's performance assessment recorded an increase from 28% in 2019 to 50% in 2020 of productive assets such as solar boreholes, packaging equipment and silage cutters, co-owned by women and men. This is attributed to the project's intensified gender trainings which started with identification of gender equality champions.



TranZDVC has increased women participation in dairy production as they have been empowered to actively participate in technical dairy farming activities.

The project engaged and worked closely with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development and Ministry of Youth, Sport, Arts, and Recreation, on the criterion used in gender champion selection. So far, 258 Gender Equality Champions (132 males and 126 females and 39 (15%) youths) were identified and trained from all operational districts, although some trainings were suspended due to COVID-19 regulations. This was against a target of 120 Gender Equality Champions.

Overall, the gender trainings had positive results as evidenced by the increase in Window Three Matching Grant Facility joint application, and the increased participation of women in trainings and assets ownership.



Group-based Savings and Lending Schemes: “Recipe” for Effective Dairying

The TranZDVC project has since its establishment in 2019, promoted a culture of savings through internal savings and lending groups (ISALs) to enable farmers to adequately prepare for dairy agricultural seasons through timely procurement of inputs. In 2020, TranZDVC gave training and technical assistance to 149 groups. Groups are constituted of 1,350 farmers, with 945 being females and 405 are males. These farmers received training and technical assistance on record keeping, constitution making, leadership, group procurement and good governance; and on retaining the value of their savings in an inflationary environment.

Gender disparities are explained by the historical traits of the model, commonly known as “Round” built on trust and immediate community where women gathered every month to contribute money meant to buy groceries or household utilities at the end of each year.

This model evolved over years, merged with financial literacy modules, and later targeted as an appropriate business model by development practitioners for rural societies.

To this date, females identify themselves more with the now ISAL model than their male counterparts. Performance assessment indicates that monthly saving meetings for ISALs had been immensely affected by the inflationary environment and it is feared some groups may ‘die natural deaths’.

Most groups are unable to match because of the Covid19 induced challenges. The project also pursued the development of an ISALS mobile application (App) which is anticipated to significantly improve ISALS efficiency and effectiveness. The trials for the App are currently underway.



ICT innovations in practice. ISALS mobile application testing and piloting in Zimuto, Masvingo province.



Information Dissemination for Wealth Creation

Dairy development in Zimbabwe is constrained by multi-faceted, production system specific constraints related to genotype, diseases and parasites, limited feed resources and feeding systems. Low level of management, climate, land tenure, poor soil fertility, access to services and inputs, low adoption of improved technologies, marketing, and limited access to energy are also contributing factors to smallholder dairy production constraints.

Root causes of the dairy value chain underperformance were established and validated during 2020 through open days such as the project's Farmer of the Year events, virtual Zimbabwe International Agricultural Show, TV and radio talk-shows and phone-in programmes like the Economic Forum and the Star FM's (radio) talking farming forums.

Given the Covid-19 regulations where large gatherings and meetings were restricted, the project used innovative ways to interact with farmers and related stakeholders for continued exchange of knowledge and learning. These innovative ways included meeting smaller groups physically and having virtual meetings. Some of the identified root causes included but are not limited to, national herd size, breed/genetics, feed cost, and dairy infrastructure, unfair milk pricing and unstable economic environment.

To mitigate these challenges and exploit the untapped potential, it is important to critically analyse dairy production and processing constraints and devise pertinent and practical strategies to alleviate the problems and improve dairy production in the country. These are the key focus areas for the project to rectify as it gears towards wealth creation. Out of the planned four validation meetings which were meant to be physical, the project managed to validate findings using the various media.

From January-December, 2020, the role of multi-stakeholders' participation and information sharing in bridging communication and trust among partners, has been welcomed by most participants.

PROJECT IN PICTURES



Bridging the knowledge gap. Study circle in progress in Boroma Ward 13 in Masvingo province.



TranZDVC has partnered Mobility for Africa to provide solar powered tricycles for dairy farmers, milk aggregators and MCCs. Four tricycles were donated to Chipinge farmers as phase I of the roll out.