



## **Evaluating the effectiveness, impact and relevance of Christian Care's Conservation Farming project supported by Act for Peace 2019-2022**

May 2022

### **Funding and disclaimer**

This publication has been funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The views expressed in this publication are the author's alone and are not necessarily the views of the Australian Government.

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## **ACROYNMS**

CC	Christian Care
CF	Conservation Farming
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FGD	Focus group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
HHS	Household Survey
ISAL	Internal savings and lending
KII	Key informant interview
PWD	Person with Disability
VFU	Victim Friendly Unit
ZimVAC	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police
ZWL	Zimbabwe Dollar

## **1.0 Executive summary**

### **1.1 Background of the project**

Christian Care with the support of Act for Peace has been implementing the Conservation Farming project since 2012 in the Masvingo Province. Between 2017 and 2020 the project received management support from the Zimbabwe Council of Churches with Christian Care once again taking back management of the project in 2020. The project aims to improve the food security and livelihoods of farmers in Masvingo Province and to mitigate against the impacts of climate change.

### **1.2 Evaluation purpose and methodology**

The project evaluation covering the period July 2019 - May 2022 was commissioned by Act for Peace in collaboration with Christian Care. The purpose of the evaluation is (i) to assess the effectiveness, impact and relevance of the Act for Peace funded projects over the past three years and (ii) to reflect on and collate learning and good practice to inform continuous improvement for future programming for Christian Care and Act for Peace.

The evaluators reviewed project documents from Christian Care and Act for Peace. These included approved grants, annual reports, mid term evaluation report, a baseline survey and M&E plans. These enabled the evaluation team to design quantitative and qualitative data collection tools.

A household survey questionnaire was administered to 175 households, (106 female & 69 male) in Wards 30, 32, 3 and 4 of Zaka District and Wards 26 & 27 of Chivi District. The evaluation team interviewed 13 key informants from Government Ministries and departments. A total of 14 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held comprising eight gender mixed FGDs, two FGDs with PWDs and four women only FGDs. The evaluators observed two conservation farming fields including one with small livestock production, one Person with Disability poultry project and two nutrition gardens. The evaluation team had a debriefing meeting with the Christian Care where they presented overall feedback of the evaluation process, preliminary findings, impact, lessons learnt and recommendations.

## **1.3 Main findings**

### **1.3.1 Key challenges in executing outcomes**

Focus Group participants, Key informants and the household survey revealed some of these key challenges

- HH respondents, 67% in Zaka and 78% in Chivi cited poor weather conditions as the main challenge affecting all their on farm activities. Other farm related challenges include limited access to seeds, lack of information on markets, limited agriculture skills and knowledge as well as inability to manage pest outbreaks. PWDs and women raised concerns that work related to CF and nutrition gardens activities is physically demanding.
- Some farmers are weaned off for example at the end of year one (nutrition gardens/apiculture) and they fail to demonstrate the attainment of objectives for the remainder of the two year period.
- Small Livestock production is affected by disease outbreaks and low prices offered by buyers. Local and some external buyers are under valuing small livestock and this is worsened by the fact that farmers operate as individuals and they tend to accept whatever price they are offered.
- Whilst there is joint effort to address GBV and child rights violations, some among stakeholders are protective of discriminatory practices. The trained community members are capable of raising awareness but fall short in offering counselling skills or linking abuse survivors to referral services.

- During the Covid 19 lockdown period, monitoring declined as there was limited transport and gathering bans. CC being a critical service provider was allowed to continue its work. Agriculture advisory services were affected as government extension workers were working from home. This affected the extent to which Government departments could advise and provide treatment for small livestock. Sales from income focused activities supported by CC declined during the lock down.
- There is generally poor record keeping among project participants especially on projects related to outcomes three and four which speak to increased incomes. This makes it difficult for the farmers to confidently state that there is increased income as the input, transport and in some cases labour costs are not factored in.

### 1.3.2 Impact Main Findings

The six wards evaluated in Chivi and Zaka are in the drought prone regions four and five marked by low rainfall, high temperatures and a history of food assistance to households. Christian Care has been responding to food insecurity issues for more than 10years and have now included a climate change component in the project. This project's approach of minimising donor dependency and increasing communities coping opportunities through supply of start up inputs and imparting on and off farm soft and hard skills is proving to be a success.

There is positive appreciation of women and PWDs who are sometimes viewed as a burden to families and discriminated against. The successful results from this project's activities are leading to an improved perception of women and PWDs. Through this project, women and PWDs are contributing to household incomes and food diversity especially as a result of conservation farming and small livestock production. In a way the project's empowerment component is challenging patriarchy norms as women and PWDs are gradually being appreciated through their contribution to food security and household incomes.

Through sales from Conservation Farming (CF) yields, small livestock production and gardens, women are now in a position to acquire household assets and sell them to meet food needs and pay for some of the expenses at household level.

The Christian Care Project through its distribution of small livestock and small grains for example is covering a gap that normally would leave women and PWD vulnerable to food insecurity. There is now a pronounced visible role of women in development. The project is deliberately targeting women and PWDs with Conservation Farming knowledge and practices now ingrained to continue beyond the Christian Care project period. The household survey points to the fact that women now occupy 75% of leadership positions in the projects.

Communities especially women, children and PWDs are enjoying the benefits of food diversity as they now access different types of vegetables from the nutrition gardens. As a result of small livestock production, families are now consuming different types of meats and eggs in their diet. This project has equipped communities, with relevant skills, economic support and appropriate technology that are countering some of the negative effects of climate change.

The project has been particularly successful in offering increased livelihood options for women resulting in positive appreciation of women. The HH survey results indicate that the level of self confidence among women has increased. The increased awareness of protection and safeguarding is leading to a safer environment for children, women and PWDs.

Conclusion: Conservation Farming has widely been adopted and significantly by women who make up the bulk of residents in the project area. The improved production of small grains and maize is enabling households to meet their food requirements and dietary diversity is now possible from nutrition garden produce as well as small livestock.

There is improved appreciation of women and PWDs in communities buoyed by their successful contribution to household incomes and food security. This appreciation is further enhanced by the increased number of women who are taking on leadership roles in their community.

### 1.3.3 Effectiveness

Chivi and Zaka continue to face erratic rainfall patterns. This was so for the 2019-2020 season. The situation improved in the 2020-2021 season. During the evaluation consultations, farmers indicated that they are likely to reap less in 2021-2022 as a result of a long dry spell this season.

Despite these hardships, Conservation Farming has greatly aided households supported by the project to improve their food self-sufficiency though below the targets set. In FY20 project cycle farmers were harvesting three by 50kgs bags of Maize which covered a period of three months. This increased with farmers harvesting a mean of 16 by 50kgs of maize satisfying food needs and leaving excess for sale or storage. A 2021 endline survey indicated that the mean yield for sorghum was 1.8Mt per hectare and 1.5Mt per hectare for pearl millet from a baseline yield of 0.2Mt per hectare. An average family of four utilising 11kgs of maize a month now has food self sufficient for close to a whole year. The HH respondents indicated that they now have household incomes ranging from US\$14.56 up to \$209.43 from the various projects supported by Christian Care. Farmers have increased the number of small livestock that they possess. FGD participants and key informants highlighted that the safety and protection of women, children and PWDs has improved a lot as a result of the safeguarding training provided by Christian Care. Some perpetrators have been reported to authorities and trained community leaders are offering counselling to abuse survivors. The formation of safety protection community groups is enabling awareness raising on safety issues for children, PWDs and children

Conclusion: Coming from many years of state and NGO assisted food security provisions, farmers are experiencing that CF and livelihoods projects if implemented according to guidelines have the capacity to transform their food security and income generating opportunities. Farmers have diversified sources of nutrition through small grains production and small livestock production. ISALs and apiculture have not achieved the intended levels of success mainly because of the hyper inflationary environment as well as farmers lacking key skills to mitigate the arising challenges.

### 1.3.4 Relevance

This project is rightfully aligned to the local context through its support for food security and livelihood interventions. 97% of the HH survey respondents concurred that the project is relevant for them. It targets vulnerable groups such as women and PWDs by addressing areas that have negatively impacted them. The small grain production and small livestock production activities for example are activities which women and PWD can undertake with minimal physical labour conditions and are less capital intensive. The Zimbabwe Vulnerability Capacity Assessment, (ZimVac 2020 p168) report outlines that Households in Chivi and Zaka are prone to shocks and stressors. Chivi households were mainly affected by prolonged mid-season dry spell (87.5%) and drought (67.5%). These conditions are a recurring feature in Chivi. Households in Zaka experienced prolonged (92%) experienced destruction of their crops from pests and (73.5%) suffered from prolonged mid-season dry spell. The ZimVac report (2020) noted that households in the Masvingo province continue to rely on government and NGO food assistance programmes. This project's support for livelihood activities is contributing to achieving self-sustenance at household level and economic empowerment of women and PWDs who were sometimes excluded in development processes.

Conclusion: Seasonal weather changes and shifting rainfall patterns in the Masvingo Province are becoming more common. Therefore, Christian Care's role towards strengthening resilience and managing risks is very relevant. The work towards imparting CF skills to farmers is commendable as it is responding to increasing food security possibilities for farmers. The CF approach has got buy in from Government departments and this works to the advantage of Christian Care as there is support for implementation and monitoring. The project's small grain production and small livestock is a positive response to the needs of women and PWDs. This target group is being empowered to overcome negative stereotypes about them.

## **1.5 Key Priority Recommendations**

### **1.5.1 to Act for Peace**

1. Consider supporting a project component for the duration of an entire multi-year project in order to assess its impact comprehensively. For example, nutrition gardens could be supported with seed packs in the first year and in year two and three, the project is focusing on supporting elements of increased production, markets and value chain. ISALs were funded and then dropped as an example. These components are complimentary if food security results are to be achieved.
2. Continue with your partner capacity building support. It is becoming apparent that Climate change is causing resource based conflicts (over land use, ownership and access and control of water). It may be worth it to already equip Christian Care staff with specific resource based conflict skills.

### **1.5.2 To Partner**

1. Using identified issues from the assessments CC has carried out so far, assess its networks in the province and at national level to leverage on funding opportunities, ride on learning and collaboration opportunities as well as enable women and PWDs to have a wide option of referrals.
2. With the rising extreme weather conditions over the years, CC should consider offering conflict resolution skills to community leaders, government officials as they have the inevitable task of managing scarce resources.
3. In the context analysis carried out at the beginning of the project CC noted the movement of household heads to neighbouring countries in search of economic opportunities. Due to the xenophobic attacks in South Africa, the International Office of Migration (IOM) is offering a package of 50 chicks and a poultry feed to enable returnees to income generating projects. CC could consider the needs of returnees and perhaps bring them onboard the comprehensive food security, income generation and protection services that CC provides.
4. Strengthen M&E documentation at CC and community level to ensure consistent collection of data that allows comparison analysis within each outcome over the project period.

### **1.5.3 to the program/project.**

1. Explore cost effective technologies under CF and nutrition gardens that mitigate physical challenges faced by PWDs and elderly participants. Consider providing fencing materials, drilling solar powered water systems to ease on labour for PWDs and the elderly. At small livestock distribution time, consider increasing the number of small livestock given to PWDs to enable them to increase their incomes and meet domestic needs.

2. Consider training recommendations from groups (duration, follow up support, psychosocial & trauma healing for protection & GBV cases, drug & substance abuse) Protection of women assets obtained from projects through wills and inheritance services. Review ISAL approaches (challenges and approaches).
3. The project needs to be holistic in nature. It has to focus on an individual and make sure that they improve on food security and increasing income. If someone is doing CF, they should be in ISALs and also be given small livestock so that the household becomes effectively empowered.
4. It might be too early to wean off farmers after one implementing year. CC may consider taking its project participants on board throughout the project life span for effective monitoring and sustainability.

## 2.0 Introduction

Christian Care with the support of Act for Peace has been implementing the Conservation Farming project since 2012 in the Masvingo Province. Between 2017 and 2020 the project received management support from the Zimbabwe Council of Churches with Christian Care once again taking back management of the project in 2020. The project aims to improve the food security and livelihoods of farmers in Masvingo Province and to mitigate against the impacts of climate change. Since 2019, the project has increasingly placed emphasis on disability and inclusion. The project has been undertaken in Chiredzi, Chivi, Mwenezi and Zaka districts of Masvingo Province. The project outcomes have changed annually but the following themes have remained common throughout the evaluation period i.e. climate resilient livelihoods and food security, Disability and gender inclusion and Protection. The evaluation was carried out in Wards 3,4, 30 and 32 of Zaka District and Wards 26 and 27 of Chivi District.

### 2.1 Evaluation Report Intended Users

The intended users of the project evaluation report are Christian Care staff, Act for Peace project staff and the following stakeholders, the Government of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement, Department of Agriculture, Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX), Department of Social Development, Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, Ministry of Youth, Local government, Chivi, Chiredzi, Mwenezi and Zaka districts, Rural District Councils and other agencies in the National Food and nutrition Cluster. Christian Care is responsible for the utilisation of the evaluation results and follow up, including communicating key findings to communities and stakeholders.

### 2.2 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The project evaluation was commissioned by Act for Peace in collaboration with Christian Care

- i. To assess the effectiveness, impact and relevance of the Act for Peace funded projects between 2019 and 2021.
- ii. To reflect on and collate learning and good practice to inform continuous improvement for future programming for Christian Care and Act for Peace.

### 2.3 Methodology

The evaluators received 2019-2021 project documents from Christian Care and Act for Peace. These included approved grants, annual reports, mid term evaluation report, a baseline survey and M&E plans. These enabled the evaluation team to design quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. A household survey questionnaire was administered to 175 households across six wards (106 female and 69 male). The evaluation team interviewed 13 key informants from Government Ministries and departments. A total of 14 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held comprising 8 mixed FGDs 2 FGDs with PWDs and 4 women only FGDs. The evaluators observed two conservation farming fields including one with small livestock production, one Person with Disability poultry project and two nutrition gardens. The evaluation team had a debriefing meeting with the Christian Care staff where they presented overall feedback of the evaluation process, preliminary findings, impact, lessons learnt and recommendations.

### 2.4 Evaluation constraints

There has been high staff turnover in Christian Care's M&E department during the period being evaluated. Some of the project information was obtained from project narrative reports but more analytical information could have been obtained if there was a database capturing outcomes over the project period.

### **3.0 Context**

During the project implementation period, project participants were affected by a lot of social, economic and climate related challenges. Cyclone El Nino induced droughts resulted in depressed harvests in the 2019-2020 agriculture season. Since 2019, farmers have been facing economic challenges including liquidity constraints and pricing of commodities in foreign currency which affects their ability to purchase inputs and fluctuation of input prices. A new currency the real time gross settlement (RTGS) was introduced in 2019. This currency was not well received leading to a wide variance between the currency and foreign currencies. In March 2020, the Government announced the outbreak of Covid 19 and enforced a 21 day national lockdown to curb the spread of the Corona virus. The outbreak came at a time when the economic challenges facing communities were already severe. The lockdown saw an increase in sexual and gender based violence cases. The Social Development Direct (Dec, 2020) reports that during the first 11 days of the Lockdown in Zimbabwe, the national GBV Hotline run by Musasa project registered 764 reported cases of GBV compared to the 500-600 cases a month reported prior to COVID 19.

In FY21 the country experienced an economic decline with 5.5 million and 2.2 million urban people in need of food assistance (Christian Care). Tropical Cyclone Idai led to floods and strong winds resulting in destruction of crops, livestock and infrastructure. A FY20 and FY21 context analysis by Christian Care noted that according to the Zimbabwe Humanitarian Needs overview provided by the National Food Security cluster, an estimated 3.4 million people in rural areas were projected to face crisis at the peak of the lean season Jan to March 2021 (OCHA 31 Dec 2020). 70% of the farmers were affected by drought and climate change. The Government of Zimbabwe adopted the climate smart Agriculture policy to enhance food security.

### **4.0 Findings**

#### **4.1 Impact: What difference does the intervention make?**

The six wards which were evaluated in Chivi and Zaka are in the drought prone regions four and five marked by low rainfall, high temperatures and a history of food assistance to households. Christian Care has been responding to food insecurity issues for more than 10 years and have now included a climate change component in the project. This project's approach of minimising dependency and increasing coping opportunities through supply of start up inputs and imparting soft and hard skills is proving to be a success. Christian Care project interventions cover both on farm and off farm activities thus creating a buffer should one coping strategy fail in that particular season. Through a consultative community and stakeholders participants' selection criteria the project is managing to ensure that women, people with disabilities and children are not excluded in development. The presentation of project Impacts is presented in light of food insecurity, volatile economic conditions, covid 19, relocation of men in search of economic opportunities, leaving female headed households vulnerable to social and economic challenges. Though there is no theory of change per se in the known format, discussions with Christian Care staff and stakeholders during the evaluation pointed to the fact that the project had a higher project goal of improved food security and increased capacity to mitigate against the impacts of climate change. Pathways towards achieving this impact is delivered through reducing risk, ensuring reserves, promoting good agro practices, seeking produce markets and enabling diversified livelihoods.

#### **4.2 What were the key positive and negative impacts of the project?**

This project through directly supporting women to participate in Conservation Farming (CF), small livestock production, small grains production, ISALS and nutrition gardens is contributing towards positive perception of women and PWDs. Through this project women are contributors to family incomes and food diversity especially as a result of conservation farming and small livestock production. In a way the project is challenging patriarchy tendencies as women and PWDs are gradually being valued through their contribution to food security and household incomes.

Through sales from Conservation Farming (CF) fields, small livestock production and gardens, women are now in a position to acquire domestic assets and sell them to meet food needs and pay for some of the expenses at household level. Generally, there are barriers against women involvement in economic and livelihood activities. For instance, the Department of Social Welfare offers collateral based loans to PWDs and women. However, the loan conditions are beyond their reach. The Christian Care Project through its distribution of small livestock and small grains for example is covering a gap that normally would leave women and PWD vulnerable to food insecurity. There is now a pronounced visible role of women in development. The household survey points to the fact that women occupy 75% of leadership positions in the projects. Women are leading as champions in the promotion of Conservation Farming, campaigning against gender based violence, promoting Child protection and championing the inclusion of PWDs in the communities.

The household survey notes that there is increased awareness on protection and safeguarding children, women and PWD are experiencing a safer environment. 98% Male and 93% female responded that the safety of children has improved. 97% Male and 99% Female responded that the safety of PWDs has improved whilst 98% male and 93% female felt that their own safety has improved. Communities, especially women, children and PWDs are enjoying the benefits of food diversity. Participants previously had a set diet which would be followed due to lack of food alternatives. Nutrition gardens are offering all year round food needs and poultry products are available for families.

This project has equipped communities, with relevant skills, economic support and appropriate technology that are countering improving resilience.

The promotion of good agro practices is contributing towards Christian Care (CC) project participants being better stewards of the environment. The AGRITEX key informants remarked that as a result of Christian Care's Conservation Farming trainings, more and more farmers are practicing sustainable farming methods that enable better production, care for the environment, are less labour intensive and in some cases doing well in the absence of cattle which died during previous drought periods and are traditionally male controlled.

The project has been particularly successful in offering increased livelihood options for women resulting in positive appreciation of women. 92% of the HH female respondents and 83% male respondents acknowledged that women's participation in CC projects has increased. As noted in the household survey, 80% of the female respondents indicated that their level of self confidence has increased. Significantly women are purchasing household utensils, contributing to their families health and education costs and reducing household food insecurity. 88% of the HH female respondents and 86% male respondents acknowledged that women's situation in the project area has improved. A female community member remarked that 'Households participating in the Christian Care projects are able to keep children in school even if full school fees are not paid on time. Parents approach school authorities with partial fees and the children are allowed in class because school authorities are certain that CC project participants will pay from project activities.'

The level of PWDs participation in CC projects has increased with 78% female and 84% male respondents articulating this view in the HH survey. This participation has led to the improved situation for PWD which was acknowledged by 72% female and 84% male HH respondents.

#### 4.3 Were there any unexpected outcomes and/or consequences as a result of the project? What were they?

Communities are self organising themselves to assist vulnerable members of their community. They offer this assistance through products that come from the CC supported nutrition gardens and CF fields. In Ward 32 of Zaka, the nutrition garden members noted that households headed by the elderly and PWDs cannot come and physically do manual work in the gardens. So, they occasionally distribute vegetables,

tomatoes and carrots from CC supported nutrition gardens to vulnerable family thus contributing towards their family food diversity.

In Chivi Ward 27, during a Focus Group Discussion, women trained under the project narrated how they are demonstrating the 'Humwe concept' (unity or togetherness) towards the elderly and PWDs by setting aside time where they jointly prepare CF fields for PWDs and the elderly as well as carry out minor household repairs and maintenance. At the time of the evaluation, participants had just donated 10 bags of maize to a widow in Ward 27.

After having undergone child protection training, some participants in Ward 3 of Zaka went around to schools and churches disseminating information that contributes towards child abuse. One of them is that a visitor can sleep overnight and share a room with children of the opposite sex. This creates an environment where abuse can be perpetrated. Awareness raising by CC trained child protection participants has led to some families in Chivi ward 27 building a separate room for visitors.

Whilst positive impacts have been achieved by the project, the Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL), Nutrition and apiculture components are struggling to contribute towards improved income impact. The country's economic outlook has been gloomy during the project implementation period mainly as a result of rising inflation. The big casualty of this situation is the ISAL component. The default repayment rate is high among members resulting in non-continuation of the schemes. FGD participants in Zaka ward 30 and Chivi ward 26 told of group conflicts that are arising as ISAL members default on repayments. In Chivi, Ward 27, the apiculture participants are challenged as they cannot produce reasonable quantities of honey to enable significant sales. They are also unable to produce quality honey as expected by the market. In Chivi ward 26, Nutrition Garden potential is limited due to sales mainly to local markets and they are yet to process and package vegetables at a large scale.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Development in Zaka and Chivi noted that effort to bring youths on board into the project is facing challenges as youth are not attracted to CF because of the assumed physical work and the longer period they have to wait for the harvest returns. They remarked that youth are interested in activities that bring quick returns such as fish Farming.

4.4 To what extent do target groups enjoy greater safety, justice and dignity as a result of reduced protection risks?

- Is this different / equitable for different groups within the project including based on sex, dis/ability and nationality / ethnicity of refugee?

The project has taken a two pronged approach towards improving communities safety especially women, children and PWDs. Firstly, trainings on gender based violence (GBV) and protection have been conducted throughout the two districts. This has enabled information on types, causes and effects of GBV to be known by a majority of community members. Furthermore, communities now know where to report violations.

Focus Group participants highlighted the fact that there are now fewer children of PWDs not attending school. This is a result of PWDs being able to pay fees a result of PWDs participation in small livestock production and conservation farming implemented by Christian Care. The participants also remarked that since they started getting income from CC project activities, other households and families have changed their attitudes towards PWDs. There is now positive perception of PWDs.

In the HH survey, respondents were asked if the GBV and protection training offered by Christian Care has had any impact on the safety of children, the safety of people with disability and on their own safety.

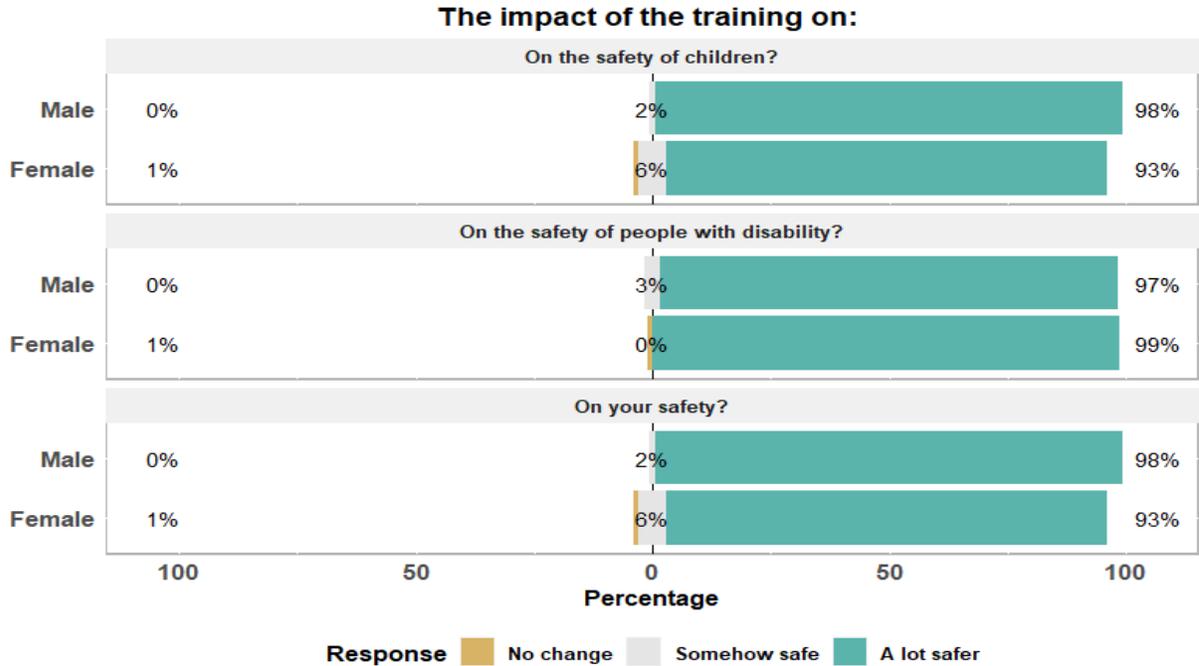


Figure 1: Impact of safety and protection training

HH respondents acknowledged that child protection and sexual and gender based violence training received is effectively helping them to secure protection against harassment and abuse in the community. 98% male and 99% female felt that the training received has led to improved safety of children. Over 90% responded that the training is contributing towards the safety of PWDs in the community and 98% male and 93% female feel a lot safer as a result of the training.

## 5.0 Effectiveness: Has the intervention achieved its objectives?

To what extent has the project achieved its project outcomes and to what extent are these changes equitable across sex, age, nationality / ethnicity of refugee, and disability? Were appropriate interventions used to reach different groups within the project?

5.1.1 FY20 Outcome 1: Vulnerable households in 4 districts of Masvingo Province have sufficient food to feed their families through Conservation Farming.

Conservation Farming has greatly aided households supported by the project to improve their food self-sufficiency though below the targets set. Under the Christian Care project, farmers received conservation farming training, seed inputs and planted maize, sorghum, pearl millet and cowpeas.

During the FY20 project period, the highest yield was recorded from cow peas with farmers harvesting 1.5Mt/hectare against a baseline of 0.15Mt/hectare. Farmers growing sorghum and millet got yields 100% above the baseline. The least increase (17.5%) was recorded by maize farmers.

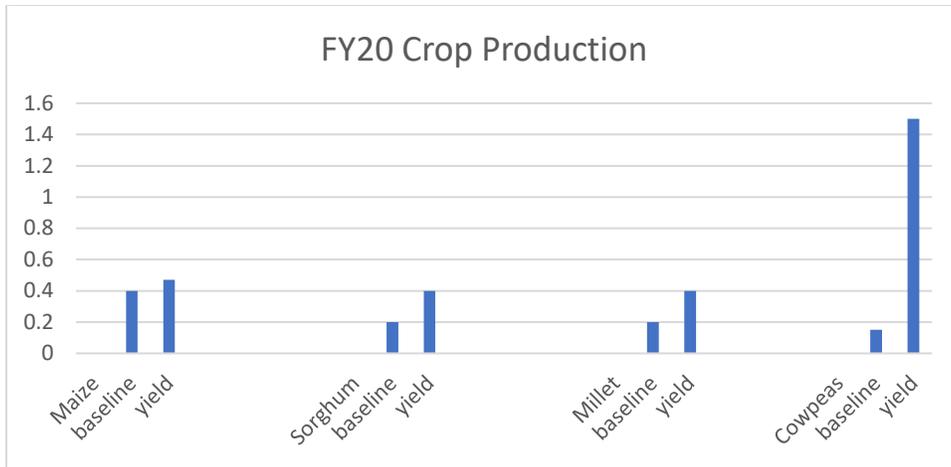


Figure 2: FY20 crop production

Household survey findings indicate that across the entire project period, female farmers are harvesting crop yields at nearly the same levels as male farmers. The highest yield was obtained from maize and the least from cow peas.

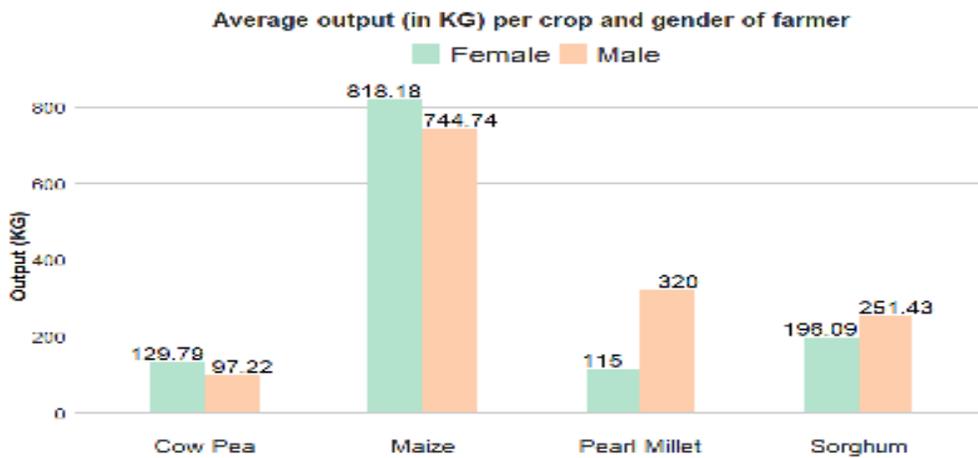


Figure 3: Average crop output

The endline survey revealed that CF farmers harvested better yields which could last them for 6 months from April to September 2020 while conventional farmers' crop yields had already been exhausted in July 2020.

5.1.2 FY21 Outcome 1: Increased yields for major small grains (Sorghum and Pearl Millet) for 600 first year farmers.

600 first year sorghum and pearl millet farmers achieved yields above the baseline figures with farmers harvesting 1.8mt/ha and 1.5Mt/ha.

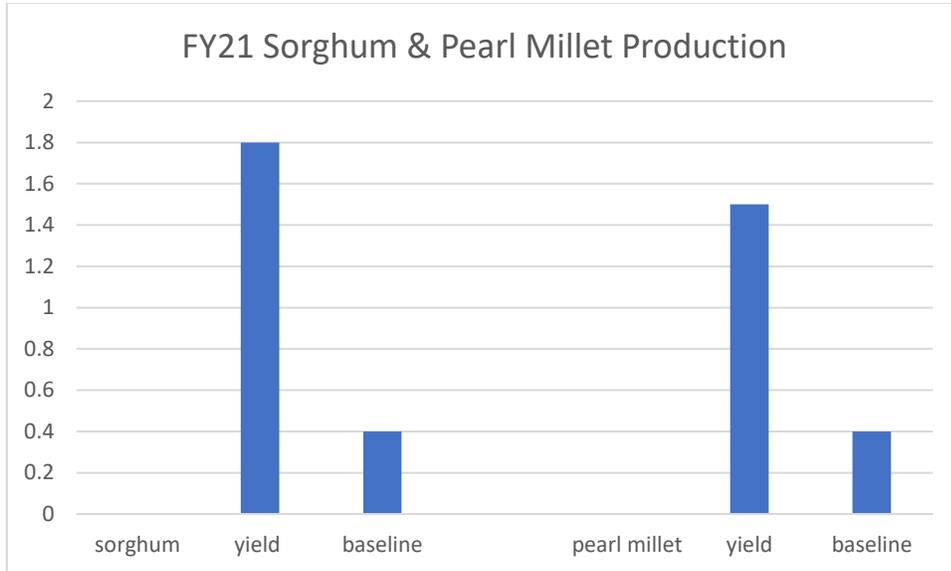


Figure 4. 2020-2021 crop output

The endline survey established that the farmers harvested an average of 9x 50kg bags of sorghum grain and 7x 50kg bags of Pearl Millet on an average planted area of 0.25 hectares. The total estimated quantity of harvested sorghum grain is 270 Mt of sorghum and 210Mt of Pearl Millet.

In the surveyed districts, Chivi farmers harvested 1.2Mt/ha of sorghum and 0.8Mt/ha of millets. Farmers in Zaka harvested 1.4Mt/ha of sorghum and 1Mt/ha of millet. These yields were all above the baseline figures. A contributory factor towards this success is the training that CC provided as well as inputs which were delivered in time for the first rains. Agritex officials commended Christian Care project participants for complying with CF principles. A field observation to two CF plots confirmed farmers compliance.

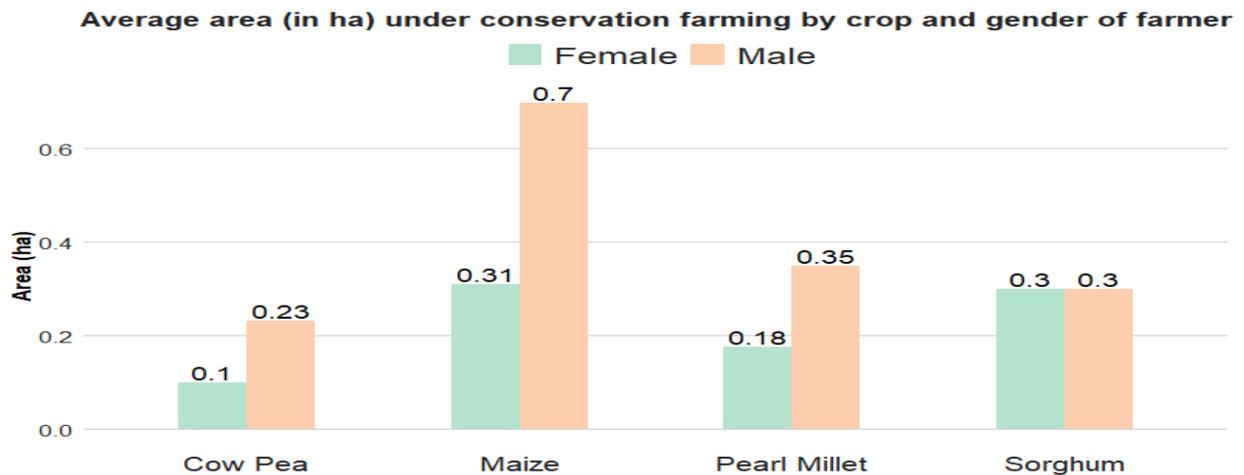


Figure 5: Area under crops by gender

The HH survey revealed that for most crops, male farmers put more land under cow peas, maize and pearl millet. Male and female farmers have the same area under sorghum cultivation.

5.2.1 FY20 Outcome 2: Communities are more equitable and experience greater community cohesion, cooperation and food security.

The level of community cohesion has significantly improved as a result of the project. The leadership trainings conducted has resulted in 5% increase in women participation in decision making and community leadership in project committees and ISAL groups. The HH survey indicated that 75% of women in Chivi and Zaka hold leadership positions in Christian Care supported projects.

Sex and Gender Based Violence 561 women were trained in community leadership and decision making as planned. Due to demand for the training, a total of 196 men also attended. The project trained mostly women in leadership and decision making but men were included. During the FGD discussions, participants applauded this approach as it demystifies what gender is all about especially for men.

In FY20 176 women were in leadership positions in project committees leading to them influencing key decision making. In Ward 32, women who make up the majority of ISAL members saw improved management of the project through registration of their constitution and having their ISAL officially registered with the Ministry of Gender and Women's Affairs.

50.4% women, 36.5% men, 9% girls, 3.9% boys and 3% PWDs participated in Sexual and Gender Based training and reporting channels. Consequently, there was a 20% increase in GBV cases reports from an average of 24 per quarter to an average of 29 cases as the community were sensitised on GBV case management and reporting channels. Key informants from the department of social welfare in Zaka and Chivi concurred that GBV cases have declined as a result of the training given to communities and their leaders. In Chivi the department has a telephone number where they receive GBV reports from communities. The cases are then referred to the police's Victim Friendly Unit (VFU).

5.2.2 FY21 and FY22 Outcome 2: Improved household food security and income through small livestock production

In order to improve food security and income, Christian Care provided chickens, turkeys, rabbits and goats to households. The approach taken involved training participants first before distribution of the small livestock. In FY20, 64.2% female, 32.6% male and 3.17% PWDs participants were trained in small livestock production and value chain.

The household survey respondents (Fig.6 below) indicated that they now own an increased number of small livestock that can be sold to get cash. From the HH survey, women owned an average of 12 chickens, four goats, 11 rabbits and eight turkeys. So, for instance if a woman were to sell all her chickens according to this survey, she would get  $12 \times \$6 = \$72$ .

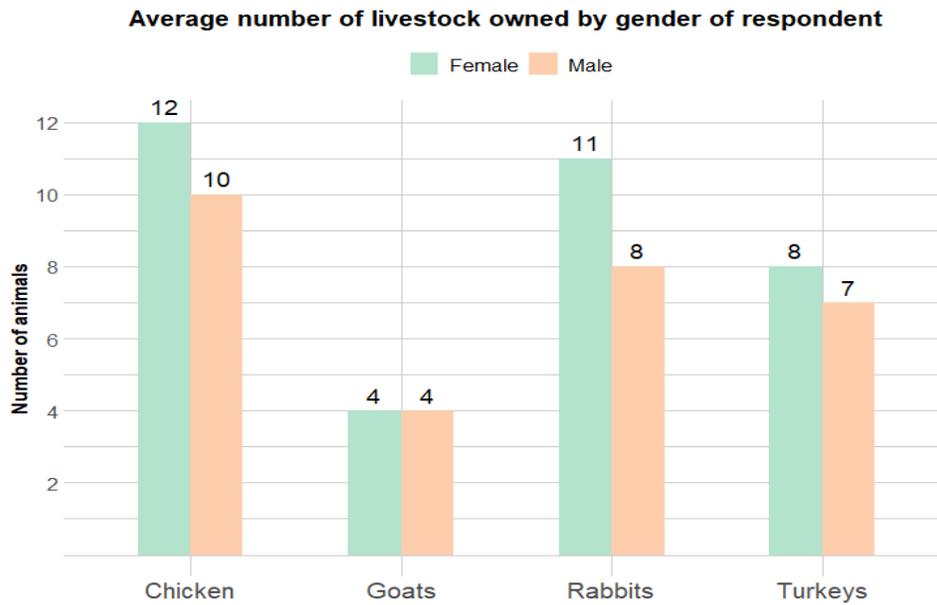
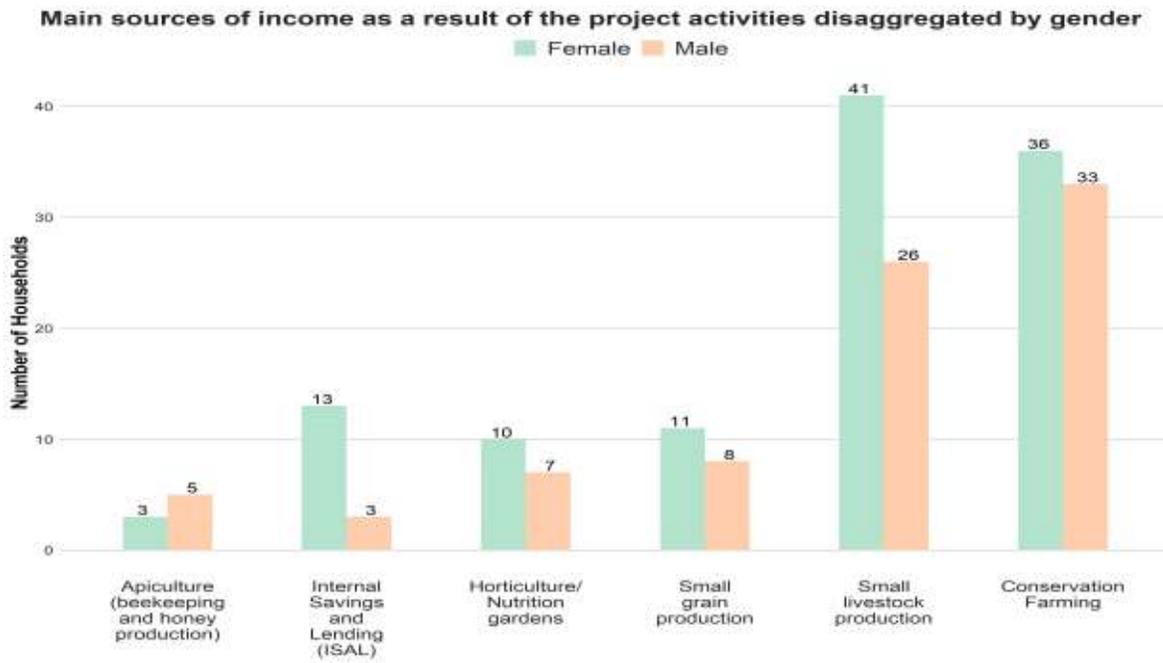


Figure 6: small livestock owned by gender

According to the HH survey (Fig. 7 below) Female participants indicated small livestock contributes the highest income to their households followed by conservation farming crops. The same pattern prevails for male members.



Source: Household Survey Data, 2022

Figure 7: Income from project activities

In FY21, the CC endline survey indicated that food availability increased by 500% from an average of three months at baseline to 16 months. An Agritex key informant in Zaka noted that Christian Care led CF activities have improved HH food security from three to seven months. 54% (1,224 poor women and men) out of the total 2,267 reported increased incomes at the endline survey.

### 5.3.1 FY20 Outcome 3: Improved community resilience through increased income earning opportunities at community and household level.

The FGD participants indicated that they now have diversified sources of income as a result of the project. This is enabling them to improved their food diversity as they now have grains, poultry and vegetables available to them. The FGD participants mentioned that they are now using income derived from project to pay for school fees, purchase pesticides, fertilisers and seek medical treatment at public health institutions.

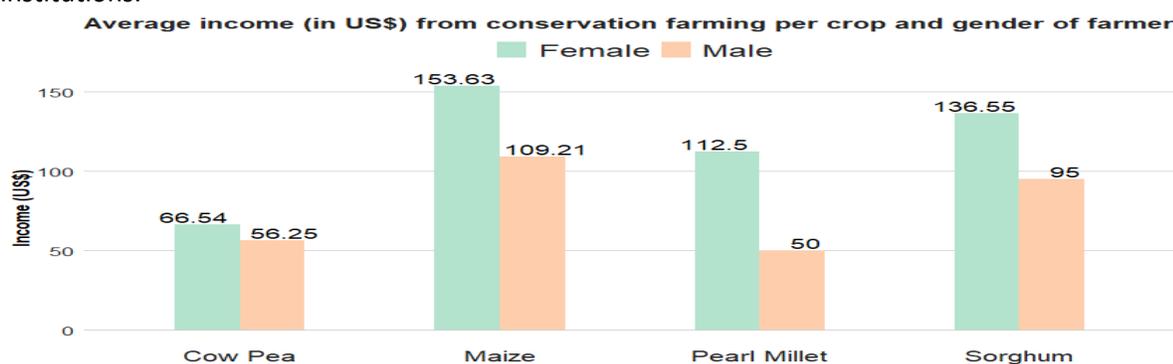


Figure 8: Income from Conservation Farming

The Female farmers HH respondents indicated that on average they now obtain US\$153.63 from maize production, US\$136.55 from sorghum production, US\$112.50 from pearl millet and US\$66.64 from cow peas production.

Household participants in Chivi and Zaka were asked to indicate incomes they received in the period preceding the evaluation. Clarification was sought during the FGD and participants clarified incomes are derived at different points during the annual production cycle and there are products like horticulture that have small returns but can be sold repeatedly during the year.

Activity	Female USD	Male USD
ISAL	209.43	200
Conservation Farming	202.38	114.48
Small grain production	118.50	45.48
Small Livestock Production	105.95	79.86
Apiculture	56.67	42.00
Horticulture	14.56	152.00

Figure 9: Farmers Income Figures

The FY20 Household income figures from an endline survey, indicate that farmers received highest income from small livestock production, followed by small grains and the least from ISAL (operations affected by hyperinflation environment)

Activity	Baseline (ZWL)	Actual (ZWL)
ISAL	17	92
Small grains	312	585
Small livestock production	132	737

### 5.3.2 FY21 and FY22 Outcome 3: Increased participation of PWD in small livestock production

Christian Care’s inclusive approach to development has seen the organisation deliberately targeting People with Disabilities. The evaluators saw PWD registers in two wards visited comprising their names, ages and type of disability. Key areas of Christian Care have been registration of PWDs, training and supply of inputs. This approach has seen PWD participation in small livestock production but at a lower level in comparison with the able bodied project participants.

During FY21, 123 PWD farmers received training in small livestock production and animal husbandry. 174 PWDs were registered to receive small livestock. PWDs received 140 breeding goats and 100 breeding turkeys. The project offered small livestock value chain training in Chivi and Zaka districts which were attended by 64.2% female, 32.6% male and 3.17% PWDs participants. 20% of the small livestock farmers (174 PWD out of 870) benefited from livestock production.

In FY22 5 Male and 7 female PWDS were trained in poultry whilst 34male PWDs and 45 female PWDs were trained in goats, turkeys and rabbit production.

### 5.4.1 FY20 Outcome 4: Child protection is effectively mainstreamed into Food security and livelihoods activities.

Christian Care staff received training on Child Protection and in turn the staff facilitated community-based child protection trainings for communities, their leaders and government department staff members in all four Districts. This has led to effective mainstreaming of child protection issues in food security and livelihood activities. The training reached 1,125 participants comprising of 663 women, 462 men, 19 girls and 40 boys including 10 women, 2 men, 1 girl and 1 boy with disabilities.

An average of 35 child protection cases were reported by Community Child Care Workers per quarter and these were referred to the Social Welfare department for further follow up. This translates to about 24% increase in reported child protection cases from an average of 28 cases per quarter to 35 cases.

### 5.4.2 FY21 and FY22 Outcome 4: Increased capacity of women to improve household food security and income through horticulture.

This outcome has made an impact in offering diversified diets for women and their families. FGD participants mentioned that they no longer rely on one vegetable type but are now growing five types of vegetables. In pursuit of this outcome, Christian Care trained 418 women participants in market gardening activities, 276 women including 3 PWDs received training in the post-harvest training. CC distributed vegetable input packs and an input pack made up of vegetable seeds, pest management kit and bean seed. Twelve nutrition gardens received 2 solar driers and packaging and branding materials. 60% of the respondents of the endline survey reported improved nutrition attributable to the food security projects. The HH survey respondents indicated that horticulture contributes 10% to their household income.

### 5.5.1 FY21 and FY22 Outcome 5: Increased resilience to food insecurity through food preservation and income generation.

The project distributed packaging and branding materials to 12 nutrition gardens as well as distributed 24 solar driers. CC distributed vegetable input packs and an input pack made up of vegetable seeds, pest management kit and bean seed. Post harvest training was attended by 338 farmers (62 men, 276 women including 3 PWD).

In FY21, farmers managed to package and preserve 2,9Mt dried beans, 1.38Mt Onion, 1005 x 100g dried vegetable packs and 1,380Mt fresh tomatoes. This outcome has made an impact in offering diversified diets for women and their families. FGD participants mentioned that they no longer rely on one vegetable type.

### 5.6.1 FY22 Outcome 6: Target beneficiaries benefit from increased Protection through improved safeguarding and training.

Christina Care staff benefited from Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA). They have been able to infuse this knowledge in their programming as well as cascading the training to communities and government departments. Household Survey participants (Fig 10 below) indicated the Christian Care offered them child protection, leadership and decision making as well as sexual and gender based violence training. The majority of participants were women and findings from the FGD discussions and Key informant interviews also reveal that women are in the forefront of ensuring child protection and speaking against gender based violence.

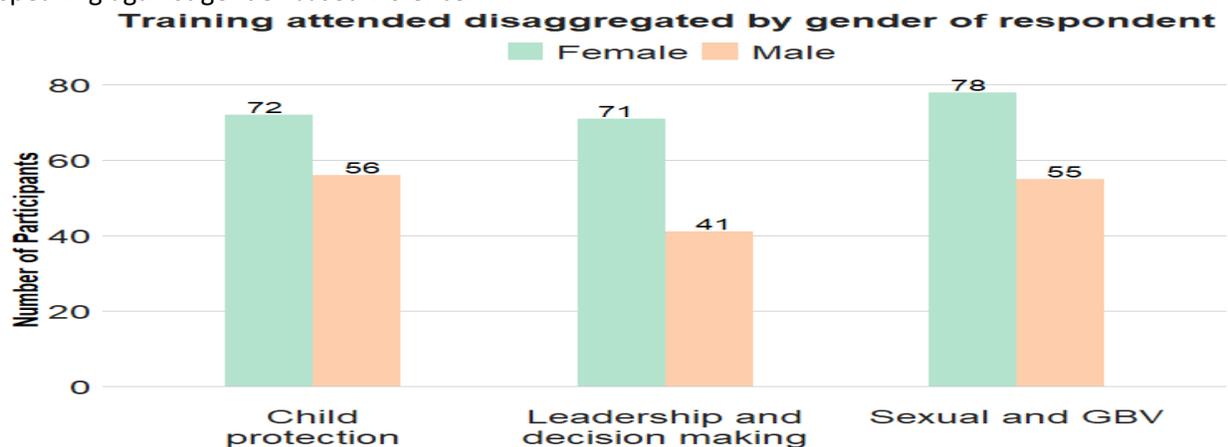


Figure 10: Safeguarding Training Participants

## 6.0 What key lessons and findings can be documented (taking into account any constraints and opportunities identified) and applied to design and implementation of similar future projects?

The key lessons and challenges as well as mitigatory measures are derived from Key Informant interviews, Household Survey, Focus Group Discussion and secondary literature.

- Covid 19 movement related restrictions meant that project monitoring was restricted both for Christian Care staff and Government Department officials. The Ministry of Community Development, Department of Social Welfare, Agritex and Veterinary Department respondents concurred that Covid 19 affected the planned monitoring and support thereby disadvantaging farmers.
- The Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development noted that Christian Care is doing great work around Gender based violence, awareness raising and training. A key lesson they noted is that gender challenges should be addressed comprehensively. This means that GBV survivors for example should not only be able to report violations. The next steps will be for them to receive counselling, treatment and trauma healing at the lowest level i.e. Ward level.
- Agritex and Veterinary Department staff impart technical information and training to farmers. They remarked that the time allocated for training is usually short and it compromises the quality of training subsequently limits participants ability to put theory into action.
- Focus Group Discussion participants noted that there are other NGOs that operate in their Districts. For example, in Zaka there is an organisation called Sister to Sister which promotes female counselling. In Chivi, Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA) is implementing a markets and value addition project working with communal farmers to produce groundnuts for the export market. Coordination between Christian Care and these other NGOs can enable farmers to be linked to market and other social opportunities.
- There will be times when Christian Care and farmers are not agreeing on project implementation. For example, AGRITEX and FGD participants pointed out that there was resistance to new small grain varieties that Christian Care introduced based on relevant studies conducted. Farmers requested that maize be restored in the seed input packs. Through an amicable dialogue process, maize seeds were distributed to farmers.

#### 6.1 What were the key challenges in executing outcomes, and how responsive was the project in adapting to and overcoming them?

- During the Covid 19 lockdown period, monitoring declined as there was limited transport and gathering bans. CC being a critical service provider was allowed to continue its work. There was of course a health risk for staff and participants when they gathered. CC ensured that Covid 19 protocols were observed, providing personal protective equipment to all participants. CC ran Covid 19 awareness campaigns on hygiene and handwashing.
- Agriculture advisory services were affected as government extension workers were working from home. This affected the extent to which Government departments could advise and provide treatment for small livestock. CC and stakeholders need to think through a community advisory support model in the face of pandemics or any other disaster that may arise in future. The Veterinary department suggested that CC could train 'para vets' i.e. identified locals who can be a conduit for information and where possible equip these locals with basic kits and vaccines. In addition, establish a call helpline for farmers.
- Sales from income focused activities supported by CC declined during the lock down. The department of social welfare for instance supported the vulnerable with 50kg bag of maize and cooking oil. In the face of pandemics or emergencies, there is need for short term support remedies to support communities until they recover to continue with their usual activities.
- There is generally poor record keeping among project participants especially on projects related to outcomes three and four which speak to increased incomes. This makes it difficult for the

farmers to confidently state that there is increased income as the input, transport and in some cases labour costs are not factored in. Ministry of Women's Affairs mentioned that there was a point where business management training was offered however due to challenges with resources in Government, there has not been follow up.

- Some of the training such as post harvest management and pest control training are good but there is also need to consider cost effective technologies as well as research on alternative pest control options. (Indigenous knowledge systems)
- Whilst there is joint effort to address GBV and child rights violations, some among stakeholders are protective of discriminatory practices. There is need for gender and PWD champions to take up issues.
- Local and some external buyers are under valuing small livestock. Farmers operate as individuals and they tend to accept whatever price they are offered. Organising farmers into groups could be one way to counter this exploitation.
- The CC project through the Environmental Management Agency is discouraging tree mounted bee hives. For the Apiculture project, the Kenyan top bar hive needs modification to suit local needs. Participants noted that the top cover lets in rain and this disturbs the bees colony. In the meantime, they resort to tree mounted bee hives.

6.2 How well did the project address protection, gender and inclusion including for girls, boys, women and men in vulnerable circumstances?

- How well did the project address the differing needs of girls and boys, women and men, elderly, adolescents, and persons with disability?
- What particular good practices or challenges have arisen in working with vulnerable or marginalized groups of people?

The project facilitated several child protection trainings. These were attended by the children, parents and school authorities. As a result, there is increased awareness raising on child protection through the efforts of trained participants and the ward councillors who use occasions such as funerals and food/inputs distribution gatherings to remind parents and guardians of their responsibilities over children. The child protection training for school authorities led to the formation of a functional child protection committee at Danda Primary and Secondary, ward 3 of Zaka. As a result of training received from CC, In Zaka Ward 32 the trained participants are encouraging parents to build separate rooms for boys and girls to minimise abuse at family level. This has already happened at some homesteads. In Ward 3 of Zaka, there is a ripple effect from child protection training. Participants have been able to train others, raise awareness in churches and schools. In one instance they referred a GBV survivor to mother's shelter in Gutu.

In order to ensure inclusion of PWDs in Christian Care projects, PWDs concerns are being included when there is registration of food and inputs supplies. In addition, PWDs are included in the panel that selects recipients of government and CC assistance. Though not widespread, there are one or two examples of Inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Examples were given of Danda and Chimedza Schools where children in wheel chairs and stroke survivors attend the same classes with able bodied children.

One of the emerging good practices that worked during the covid 19 movement restriction period was that instead of bringing PWDs to a central venue increase cluster meetings, CC and stakeholders reached out to PWDs in their locality. This maybe expensive but it addresses PWDs mobility challenges and CC gets to know the needs directly from PWDs.

Another good practice is the collaboration with departments such as EMA, department of social Welfare and Agritex. Due to personnel and funding limitations, CC has limited capacity (finance & personnel) to attend to all issues in the districts. Therefore, working alongside Government departments promotes sustainability.

6.3 What barriers still exist that prevent vulnerable or marginalised groups of people from accessing project activities and services (particularly persons with disability)?

- PWDs participation in activities such as nutrition gardens is hampered by their inability to carry out physical work such as drawing water.
- Though the discrimination incidence have declined, FGD participants noted that there are still religious and traditional leaders' practices that discriminate PWDs.
- Advisory services are not yet tailor made to PWDs needs. Interaction between PWDs and service providers is hampered by communication and furthermore, the service providers do not get a chance to interact directly with the PWDs but work through PWDs assistants.
- Carers at times fail to accompany them to the training workshops due to competing tasks at home and also due to attitudinal barriers.
- The covid 19 pandemic exposed some of the challenges PWDs face. In terms of protection and prevention messaging, this did not take cognisance of sign language and braille for example thus leaving PWD behind. The Department of Social Welfare noted that during covid 19 lockdown PWDs had difficulties coming to their office to get medical assistance letters. There was no transport and the staff were working from home. Those referred to specialist treatment in Harare could not do so as there were travel restrictions during that time.

6.4 What type of opportunities, if any, are there for the project to be more inclusive, equitable and accountable to target populations, including through community consultations mechanisms and referral services?

98% of the household respondents acknowledged that they were adequately consulted during the project development phase. 89% female and 98% male feel that project staff is responsive when challenges arise during project implementation. Christian Care holds quarterly community engagement platforms where communities and stakeholders have a chance to input into the project direction. The inclusion of maize in the packs offered to farmers during 2020-2021 season is a result of feedback from such consultation processes. Christian Care carefully sourced chicks for handing over to communities taking into account learnt when previous batches of chicks in 2019 were affected by high mortality rate.

6.5 How accountable is the project to the community it serves? What opportunities for consultation and feedback exist for the community?

Evaluation respondents acknowledges that Christian Care is accountable to its stakeholders. 98% of the household survey respondents affirmed this. Consultation and feedback is through stakeholders, consultation and project reviews that CC convenes. Government departments explained how Christian Care does not go into the field without informing respective departments. Sometimes the officials accompany Christian Care staff or they are just given permission to go ahead with activities. Government Departments acknowledged that Christian Care also attends council meetings and NGO sector coordination meetings where they provide project updates to stakeholders. During the FGD, respondents indicated that they are aware of a cell phone number available to report any project anomalies or dissatisfaction or abuse. The Department of Social Welfare indicated that they have a number which

communities can raise complaints against any NGO operating in their area. If the complaint affects Christian Care, they are made aware. So far, no issues have been reported from the communities.

## **7.0 Relevance: The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to project participants' global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.**

In response to relevance of project objectives, Key Informant interviewees remarked that the project is highly relevant considering challenges faced by the farmers which includes climate change leading to unpredictable rainfall patterns, limited access to agricultural inputs and limited knowledge on good agricultural practices. For instance, Zaka District Ward 32 lies in Natural Farming Region Four which is naturally dry. Therefore, Conservation farming is considered a relevant farming system for the districts. AGRITEX officials noted the Christian Care CF agro practices are enabling farmers to gradually move away from the use of synthetics (fertilizers and chemicals) for soil fertility management and pest and diseases control which are now widely facing criticism due to the residual effects caused by these chemicals. In light of this Christian Care's project can embrace organic farming and agroecology practices. 97% of HH survey respondents acknowledged that the project is addressing their needs.

The Department of Social Welfare appreciated the safeguarding, protection and GBV training intervention that the project offered. They expressed that it is relevant in raising the level of awareness among communities, traditional leaders. In the process of project implementation, they noted that there is need to infuse trauma healing and counselling training in the package. The Ministry of Gender and Women's Affairs recognised the relevance of the project in offering women opportunities to participate in economic empowerment activities mainly in agriculture and small livestock production. This is improving their ability to contribute towards meeting costs for their households as well as raising their self esteem.

The Department of Veterinary Services noted that farmers have lost cattle due to poor climatic conditions. Therefore, the introduction of small livestock through the project is quite relevant to meet farmers income and food security needs. Their observation which has since been addressed by the project is that the type of small livestock (goats, chickens) have to be suited to the local environment so as to reduce the mortality rate. Whilst the mix of project objectives are addressing food security needs, AGRITEX officials noted there is no formal organisation of markets and farmers get exploited by buyers. In the FGD farmers remarked that food processing and value addition is a weak element in their project. They suffer post harvest loss, crops are affected by weight loss due to spoilage and their crops suffer from quality and nutritional loss.

### **7.1 To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid?**

FGD respondents and Key informants contributed their ideas into the context analysis which was used to weigh the extent of the project's objectives to their situation. The Household Survey revealed that the project's objectives are encouraging women participation and representation in its initiatives. 75% of women now occupy positions of responsibility within the projects. This has been particularly so as Christian Care consciously ensured that gender is a key priority across all its objectives and activities. Furthermore, men and PWDs are included in child protection and gender based violence trainings and activities.

Recognising that households in the project area continuously face food insecurity, Conservation Farming objectives remain valid as demonstrated by the number of farmers who have been enrolled yearly into the CF programme. The average yield is now close to a tonne per farmer and farmers have moved into a state where they now have surplus that can be sold for income. Other activities such as small livestock production, apiculture and nutrition gardens are valid in light of the income contribution they make towards households income. (Fig 9)

7.2 Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?

According to government department key informants, project activities supported by Christian Care are creating an enabling environment for PWDs, women and children to participate and directly alter factors that negatively affect their existence. The women only and PWDs Focus Group Respondents felt to a large extent that the project is addressing their economic and social needs. For instance, the small livestock production activities are empowering them to become economically independent and ensure food security in their households. In addition, farmers revealed that other alternatives such as apiculture, ISALS and nutrition gardens are covering up their income needs.

The project's on and off farm training imparts necessary knowledge to the farmers. The satisfaction with training activities provided by Christian Care is very high standing at Conservation Farming 79,4%, Small Livestock Production 76% and Pest Management Control at 65%. Focus Group Discussion farmers demonstrated that they understand and observe the three main principles of CF, which are mulching, minimum soil disturbance and crop rotation. Farmers are experiencing improved yields as a result of Conservation Farming training provided, provision of inputs and monitoring support by AGRITEX officials. In a Zaka Ward 32 FGD participants remarked that on average, yields increased from three bags to half a tonne per household under the CC supported project.

The project activities are contributing to the breaking down of gender and disability barriers through income generating activities, leading to women and PWDs contributing income at household level. Specifically, nutrition gardens and small livestock production are providing alternative income source. ISAL still remains relevant as a measure to mitigate food insecurity. FGD participants noted that ISALS are being affected by the hyper inflationary environment and a high default rate by participants. In terms of mitigation, the participants suggested that this may mean adaptation of each ISAL group to suit local needs. This may mean using stable currencies such as the US dollar and South African Rand, consider barter trade and purchasing each other agriculture implements or inputs (seeds, fertiliser) which are long lasting than handing over cash to an individual who may abuse it.

7.3 Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended impacts and effects?

Christian Care's activities and output aim to contribute towards improved food security and community capacity to mitigate against the impacts of climate change. Christian Care carries out a number of trainings and research activities on an annual basis. Above 70% of Household Survey respondents found the trainings (conservation farming, animal husbandry and post harvest handling) as being very relevant. This is contributing towards the improvement of food security situation for farmers. Market linkages, apiculture and ISALS trainings were rated low. Key informants and FGD participants attributed this to the need to make the content practical and relevant to their context. They also felt that the inputs provided by CC meet the needs of children, women and PWDs. The activities cover capacity building that enables farmers' adoption of new knowledge relevant to addressing food security, protection of marginalised communities. Training in child protection, SGBV ensures that CC supported activities do not lead to negative impacts. For instance, FGD participants allayed concerns that project's women economic empowerment would lead to conflicts between men and women in the households. Instead, they indicated that the income that women are now bringing is appreciated by men as it lessens the financial burden men face as household heads.

7.4 Was the needs assessment and design relevant to the context?

The needs assessment carried out by Christian Care at the beginning of the project and along the way remain relevant. As in 2019, farmers are still facing cash shortages, cereal prices fluctuate to the detriment of farmers, the drought conditions persist, pests are destroying crop and livestock diseases persist. The

gender analysis that CC carried out recognised that women and girls are affected more as compared to men and boys regarding resource distribution, opportunities and power in communities. The context analysis as explained through FGDs and Key Informants shows that climatic conditions continue to deteriorate thus affecting food security for most households. There are however issues that have come along the way for example Cyclone Idai (2019) and Covid 19(2020) which have a bearing on how the project can be adjusted. At the project inception, the analysis highlighted issue of family disintegration as men from the province were leaving their families behind in search of economic opportunities in neighbouring countries. These are now returning and it has implications for the work that CC is doing around women empowerment. The intervention design to provide small grains and small livestock to women and PWDs is effectively addressing food security and income needs of farmers. An AGRITEX key informant remarked that the Christian Care activities are improving farmers resilience and offering positive coping mechanisms.

Christian Care is investing in research and learning processes that are assisting the shaping of a responsive project approach. Project adjustments were made after the “Increasing food security for Zimbabwean subsistence farmers through Conservation Farming Program” baseline was produced. One such example is the research on possible challenges that prevents PWD from participating in the CF project carried out by CC and a local University. It strengthened CC’s approach of PWD inclusion in projects. Publications such as ‘conservation farming and small livestock production handbook for farmers in the southern region of Zimbabwe’ are a response to scale up small livestock production. The Mid Term evaluation carried out in 2019 proffered a number of recommendations which Christian Care has implemented to some extent.

#### 7.5 Are activities appropriate to meet priority needs? Should similar activities be continued or stopped?

Focus Group participants and Key Informants supported the carrying on of the current set of activities as they are appropriate for their environment. None of the respondents suggested any dropping of current activities. They however suggested modification to ISALS, nutrition gardens and small grains as detailed in section 4 of this report. 97% of the HH survey respondents felt that the project activities are addressing their needs. 49% female and 57 male responded that they are facing set back because of limited finance and resource support for income generating and economic empowerment projects. FGD participants remarked that some community members who were apprehensive about conservation farming are now showing indications of wanting to practice CF after noting the success of Christian Care supported farmers. An AGRITEX key informant remarked that Christian Care’s provision of inputs (cereal, pulses and fertilisers) is making it attractive for farmers to adopt CF. FGD participants noted PWDs and the elderly are that activities requiring manual work in nutrition gardens and CF. Encourage group work to curb labour constraints as most targeted farmers are aged. Over 90% of male and female respondents affirmed that child protection, sexual and gender based violence trainings and activities are appropriate to their needs. They noted the rising incidents of child marriages and proposed that Faith and Traditional leaders be sensitised to the dangers of allowing or supporting early child marriages. The Government Ministries respondents noted that CC project is multi-dimensional in nature as they address development, child protection and gender in a wholesome approach. The increasing demand for enrolment in small grains, small livestock production and CF demonstrates that CC project activities are appropriate to farmers priority needs. CC is only in 8 wards out of 34 in Zaka and 4 out of 32 wards in Chivi. Thus, CC is meeting only fraction of community needs. Christian should continue its current set of activities as they are meeting the needs of communities in Chivi and Zaka district. The choice of distributing small livestock to women and PWDs should continue as it is less capital and labour intensive. small livestock can be left free to roam. Their short breeding periods enables replacement and income at specific periods. FGD participants noted women economic empowerment activities should continue. However, empowerment

gains for women can easily be eroded in the event of their death. There are still some community members who practice the tradition of taking away possessions of the deceased family member especially women. This will leave the husband and the children vulnerable. Women in the FGDs felt that since they are contributing towards the acquisition of family assets from the project activities, they will benefit from Wills and Inheritance trainings to protect their families in the event of death.

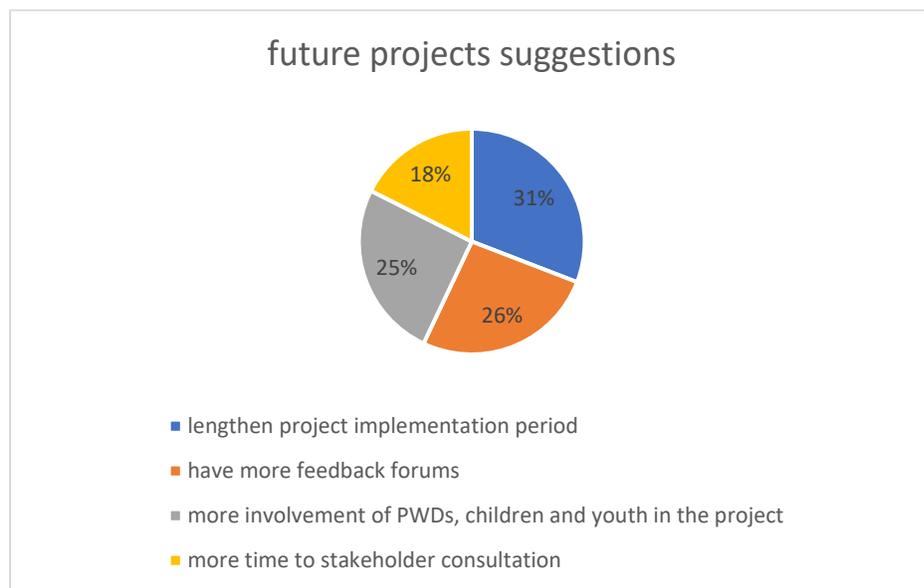


Figure 11: Future project implementation suggestions

## 8.0 Conclusions

### 8.1 Impact

Conservation Farming has widely been adopted and significantly by women who make up the bulk of residents in communal areas. This has seen an increase in production. The improved production of small grains and maize is enabling households to meet their food requirements and dietary diversity is now possible from nutrition garden produce as well as small livestock.

There is improved appreciation of women and PWDs in communities buoyed by their successful contribution to household incomes and food security. This appreciation is further enhanced by the increased number of women who are taking on leadership roles in their community.

Households are diversifying the food sources as a result of small grain production, small livestock and nutrition gardens. The impact of the project is further demonstrated by households that now have multiple sources of income to meet their domestic needs.

### 8.2 Relevance

The project activities are very relevant to the needs of communities in the area. The number of project participants has been increasing yearly demonstrating its relevance to communities. The project has been sensitive to the needs of women and PWDs by providing them with inputs for small grain and small livestock production. The project's objectives dove tail with the Government's thrust of promoting

improved food security through conservation farming. The imparting of CF skills to farmers is commendable as it is responding to farmers current and likely future needs. The CF approach has got buy in from Government departments and this works to the advantage of Christian Care as the organisation faces little hurdles in project implementation.

### 8.3 Effectiveness

Coming from many years of state and NGO assisted food security provisions, farmers are experiencing that CF and livelihoods projects if implemented according to guidelines have the capacity to transform their lives. The community respondents pointed out that there struggle less to send their children to school, are able to pay for their basic health costs and make home improvements from the income realised from the project.

In light of challenges, the project channelled a substantial amount of its resources towards improving the food security situation of women and PWDs. The improved yields noted in this report are an indication of successful implementation.

As shared by AGRITEX officials, Farmers are complying with CF agricultural practices thereby enabling better crop production and protection of the environment.

Incomes from nutrition gardens, ISALS, Apiculture and small livestock remain depressed as a result of the hyperinflation environment and other market forces.

The HH survey acknowledges that headway has been made to include PWDs and women in the project with safety and protection now recognised as key in project implementation.

## 9.0 Recommendations

### 9.1 to Act for Peace

1. In light of continued negative effects of climate change, continue to support vulnerable communities in Masvingo Province especially with conservation farming skills and inputs. If funds permit, expand to Wards where CC has not worked before.
2. Consider supporting a project component for the entire project period in order to assess its impact comprehensively. For example, nutrition gardens could be supported with seed packs in the first year and in year two and three, the project is focusing on supporting elements of increased production, markets and value chain. ISALS were funded and then dropped as an example. These components are complimentary if food security results are to be achieved.
3. The Zimbabwe context is ever evolving, AfP should continue with a flexible support approach within limits of course on how CC can be supported should the context change at national and provincial change.
4. Continue with your partner capacity building support. It is becoming apparent that Climate change is causing resource based conflicts (over land use, ownership and access and control of water). It may be worth it to already equip Christian Care staff with specific resource based conflict skills.

### 9.2 To Partner

1. Using identified issues from the assessments CC has carried out so far, assess its networks in the province and at national level to leverage on funding opportunities, ride on learning and collaboration opportunities as well as enable women and PWDs to have a wide option of referrals.
2. Poor health of women who form the majority of the farmers in the districts can reverse the results that CC is achieving with the farmers. Therefore, thought could be given towards raising women's awareness around testing and treatment for HIV and AIDS, cervical cancer as

well as Tuberculosis. There are NGOs like the Organisation for Public Health Interventions and Development (OPHID) and JF Kapnek who are carrying out health programmes in the Masvingo province. CC can engage these organisations as referral medical service providers to women farmers.

3. With the rising extreme weather conditions over the years, CC should consider offering conflict resolution skills to community leaders, government officials as they have the inevitable task of managing scarce resources.
4. The covid 19 lockdown saw an increase in juvenile delinquency and drug and substance abuse as children were not in schools. From the focus group discussions parents raised concern over this emerging issue. These activities could be included in CC projects.
5. In the context analysis carried out at the beginning of the project CC noted the movement of household heads to neighbouring countries in search of economic opportunities. Due to the xenophobic attacks in South Africa, the International Office of Migration (IOM) is offering a package of 50 chicks and a poultry feed to enable returnees to income generating projects. CC could consider the needs of returnees and perhaps bring them onboard the comprehensive food security, income generation and protection services that CC provides.
6. Strengthen M&E documentation at CC and community level to ensure consistent collection of data that allows comparison analysis within each outcome over the project period.

### 9.3 to the program/project

1. Explore cost effective technologies under CF and nutrition gardens that mitigate physical challenges faced by PWDs and elderly participants. Consider providing fencing materials, drilling solar powered water systems to ease on labour for PWDs and the elderly. At small livestock distribution time, consider increasing the number of small livestock given to PWDs to enable them to increase their incomes and meet domestic needs.
2. Consider training recommendations from groups (duration, follow up support, psychosocial & trauma healing for protection & GBV cases, drug & substance abuse) Protection of women assets obtained from projects through wills and inheritance services. Review ISAL approaches (challenges and approaches).
3. The project needs to be holistic in nature. It has to focus on an individual and make sure that they improve on food security and increasing income. If someone is doing CF, they should be in ISALs and also be given small livestock so that the household becomes effectively empowered.
4. It might be too early to wean off farmers after one implementing year. CC may consider taking its project participants on board throughout the project life span for effective monitoring and sustainability.
5. Financial literacy could be part of the additional skills for ISAL members. This includes loans management training, providing start up capital or a revolving fund in a stable currency.
6. Consider providing government extension workers and animators with fuel support or a reasonable amount for public transport fare to carry out some tasks which CC staff may not be able to undertake.
7. Nutrition gardens experience dry month. Consider rain harvesting for nutrition gardens. If resources permit, consider other support like borehole drilling and providing solar powered water pumps for nutrition gardens.