



Activity Progress Consolidated Report

Sustainable Intensification of Market based Agriculture (SIMBA)

ZWE 1077

Gokwe South District

Month [&Year] : December 2016

Ward(s) : Chisina 1, 2, 3&4, Nemangwe 3, 4&5, Njelele 1, 2&3, Ngomeni, Sayi, Jiri 1&2

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1 BACKGROUND

This was a short and busy month. Significant rains were received across the district and the crops are beginning to grow well. The Chisinas had the highest rainfall by mid-December of 200mm while Njeleles received an average of 89mm.

Farmers are busy controlling weeds through different methods to ensure that they prevent the losses that may be caused by weed pressure during the early stages of crop. Most households seem to be on the last grain stocks which are supposed to take them to the first week of January. However, those that banked their maize are most likely withdraw it next month.

The marketing linkage aspect in SIMBA project has allowed farmers to have a wide range of crops to grow in their fields for nutrition and cash unlike in the yester years where cotton was solely grown as the cash crop. Crops that are being grown for tomatoes, cash chilli, sesame, mung bean, cowpeas, sorghum and water melons.

Indigenous vegetables are now in great quantity due to the rains being received. Some farmers are also busy with summer tomatoes production so that they supply the market during the January and February tomatoes lean period.

As the year was winding up, monitoring activities of all interventions took centre stage.

ACTIVITIES OF THE MONTH

- **Project Monitoring**



2 ACTIVITIES DONE

2.1 CA Monitoring

CA farmers have been busy planting on their plots. Germination is at different stages for different farmers and areas. For those that planted early, germination is good and their crop is almost at knee length. Weeding is the major operation on different crops at different growth stages. Farmers who understood the use of herbicides are using them and are very happy with the effective control. Farmers are being encouraged to scout for stalk borer and control the pest early before it spreads as this may reduce the expected yield.



Njelele:Maize under basins on one of the CA plots farmers



Pumpkins on basins on one of the farmers



The photographs show conservation farming fields in Ngomeni, the first at Murangi in Ngomeni east cluster and the second at Msindo in Jabula. The crops are doing well.



A farmer in Chisina 2 monitoring his crop

2.2 Pigeon pea trees production

During the disbursement of pigeon pea farmers were receiving basic tips on how they are going to plant the crops that is spacing, nutritional requirements, pests and disease management as well as the advantages associated with the inclusion of agro-forestry in the conservation plots. One such training was conducted at Gwenungu in Chisina 2. Pigeon pea seeds were planted by most of the farmers who received them during the previous month. The seedlings are growing quite well and farmers were asked to share seedlings with those who did not receive them.



Pigeon pea plants growing under basins



2.4 Chillies pre-planting training

Pre-planting training to the interested chillie farmers in Njelele 1 and 2 was done on the 11th of December at Mugoli Mubvumbi’s garden in Machakata cluster. The training was facilitated by one of the SIMBA farmers, Mr. Innocent Chifamba from Chisina 1 ward. Twenty-two farmers managed to attend the training thus, 15 from Njelele 1 and 7 from Njelele 2. Soon after the training the farmers received the seeds for their plots. 960g of seeds were distributed to 22 farmers’ equivalent to 2.5 ha. Farmers were encouraged to construct some raised nursery beds to establish their nurseries.

Chilli production was also extended to Ngomeni and Jiri 2 wards. A training was done at Mazhara garden in Ngomeni on the nursery management requirements. The training was also facilitated by Mr. Innocent Chifamba. The training was targeting selected garden members who were selected on merit of adequate water. The following topics were discussed:

- Preparation of a nursery bed
- Seed sowing in the nursery
- Seedling management
- Hardening off
- Transplanting
- Management in the field
- Harvesting.

Four nursery beds were prepared by the participants and were planted. After the training some seed was distributed amongst the gardens for sowing in their respective nurseries. The table below gives a summary of the gardens participating in Chilli production.

Ward	Farmer groups	Area (ha)	Number of farmers		
			Males	Females	Total
Jiri 2	Makondo garden	1	2	76	78
	Kuwirirana garden	0.5	14	8	22
	Chitenderano garden	0.5	16	2	18
	Marimasimbe garden	1	24	5	29
Ngomeni	Chitambira garden	1	5	5	10
	Musasa garden	1	3	1	4



	Mazhara garden	0.5	4	10	14
	Zvidozvevanhu	0.5	3	14	17
	Tozvidao	0.2	6	10	16
Total		6.2 Ha	77	130	207



The photographs show participants at Mazhara garden preparing nursery beds which were later used to sow chilli seeds being facilitated by Mr. innocent Chifamba from Chisina and participants now watering the nursery beds.





The photograph shows participants during chilli production discussion after seed sowing in Mazhara garden in Ngomeni ward. The nursery beds have been planted and mulched.

The pictures below show the participants during the training at Machakata



Chifamba talking to the farmers



Farmers participating in planting demonstrations

2.5 Orange fleshed sweet potatoes vines distribution

Seven varieties of the orange fleshed sweet potatoes were distributed to few farmers across the Njelele wards since the vines were not enough to cover all interested farmers and all areas. The vines have been planted and they are growing well for multiplication

The table below indicates the number of farmers that got the vines across the 3 wards

Ward	Number of farmers
Njelele 1	42
Njelele 2	30
Njelele 3	33
Total	105

2.6 ROSCAs

The month of December was characterized by share-out. Data collection also took place during the month of December. However not all groups are shared –out this year. A full cycle should run for an average of 9-12 months before share-out. The consultant encouraged ROSCA group members to do the share-out during November – December period so that they prepare their new 2017 cycle beginning of 2017. Since 2016 was characterized by trainings. Share-out allows members to share profits on their savings, review internal rules, revisit



issues that cannot be changed during the cycle/ share-out value, interest rate and membership, assess leadership performance. Farmers now understand zero or no tolerance to arrears (of savings and loans) to promote a saving culture among members, so as to allow fast accumulation of funds, minimise risks of losing members' money through defaulters. Most members testified that they were not given enough time for self - selection during the registration period thus they agreed to self -select themselves before they commence cycle 2.



Preview of Cycle 1 share out in Ngomeni ward

3. Challenges and solutions

3.1 Problems

- In conservation farming mulching and mulching materials remains the major challenge to most farmers in the whole Chisina area.
- Despite the trainings that were done in every ward on ROSCAs, some groups had challenges in meeting the minimum requirements like number of members per group. Some even failed to keep up with the minimum saving amount. This affected performance of such groups



- Other groups just shared some \$20.00 which they used for the input vouchers and did not charge interest on the money given to the members. The money should have been borrowed as loans and charged interest.
- There was a problem of a worm that was destroying maize plants as they were emerging.
- Constitution in place and being followed.

3.2 Solutions undertaken

- Farmers are being encouraged to use live mulch in their plots and are being encouraged to stock crop stover after harvesting and or properly fence to avoid livestock entering fields.
- Members were advised to form groups that have adequate numbers as groups with members less than the minimum number of 15 have a risk of not reaping the expected benefits.
- Members were also advised that whatever cash they take from their savings it has to be charged interest.
- Some farmers were already experimenting with the chemicals as they mixed Carbaryl, Lambda and Acetmark to control the worm and it was effective. However, the worm has since disappeared.

ACTIVITIES FOR THE FOLLOWING MONTH

PLANNED ACTIVITIES
ROSCA monitoring
CF monitoring
Grain Withdrawal Monitoring
Demo plots monitoring