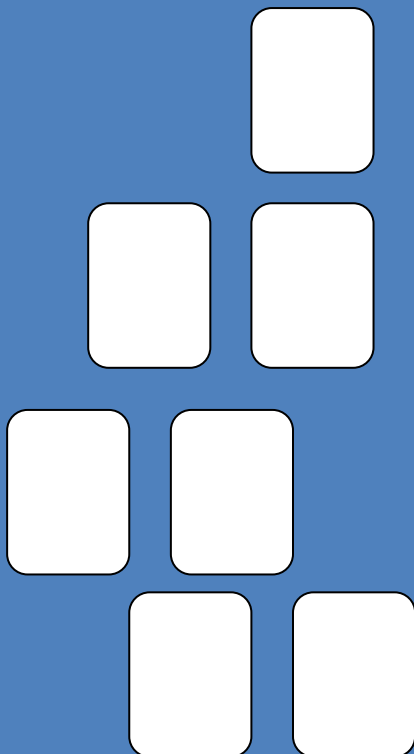


# MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES

Zimbabwe Emergency Drought Mitigation  
Operation for Livestock Project

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## Introduction

Livestock, particularly cattle are a key driver of local economies for smallholder communities found in the semi-arid regions of Zimbabwe. They are important for provision of cash, draught power, manure and meat. It is estimated that between 70 and 86% of the rural population in the southern districts of Zimbabwe own livestock (cattle goats and sheep), with an estimated 70% owning cattle (Tawonezwi, 2005). Small ruminants and donkeys also play a significant role in the livelihoods of people and attainment of food security in the smallholder farming communities.

In recent years, droughts have become a common problem facing the smallholder farmers. Often farmers suffer severe livestock losses as their cattle die due to lack of grazing and water during periods of drought. In 2012 approximately 9000 herds of cattle succumbed to drought in Matabeleland South Province alone (MoAMID, 2012).

The situation was worsened by lack of suitable market arrangements to avail bought-in feed to the communal farmers. Because of distance, the agro dealers who stock livestock feed sell it at prices ranging between US\$20-US\$25 per bag, a price beyond the reach of many farmers. In distant urban areas the prices range between US\$12.50 and US\$13.00

## Background

During the 2012/13 agriculture season SNV was contracted by FAO to implement a Livestock Drought Mitigation Project after a devastating long dry rainfall spell in Matabeleland South. The drought affected the veld and availability of water especially for livestock.



Starving cattle in Matabeleland South

SNV was contracted by FAO through a project that sought to avail survival stock feed to livestock farmers under a 100% factory price recovery model. This project had a significant impact in terms of setting institutional and market based arrangements to preserve livestock assets in Mangwe and Matobo districts. A total of 1,526 farming households and more than 27,000 cattle accessed stock feed from Agrodealers closer to their homes.

An evaluation conducted in June 2013 reported a marked decrease in livestock poverty deaths to zero deaths by May 2013. A total of 1,384.55 metric tonnes of

stock feed was sold during the phase. The proceeds from the sales were channeled to community revolving funds. By the end of the project a total of US\$98,196.91 in Matobo and US\$106,897.00 Mangwe district had been mobilized.

The project ended in June 2013 but SNV continued to provide support to the District Livestock Development Committees in Matobo and Mangwe districts. The successes associated with Phase 1 of the project warranted an up-scaling and consolidation of initiatives establishment in the districts. At the same time some issue remained including:

- Persistent droughts remain a threat to the survival of livestock in the two districts.
- The SNV supported agro-dealers still requires more capacity building.
- There is need for further building the capacity of DLDCs on governance, financial management (including revolving Fund management), prioritization and implementation of district livestock development plans.
- There is need to increase agro-dealer coverage within the districts.

This gave birth to the Second Phase of the drought mitigation project which is the focus of this evaluation. The second phase started in November 2013 and ran until the end of May 2014. This report presents some of the findings of the evaluation. The evaluation procedure involved collecting qualitative data through the Most Significant Change Technique (MSC) and quantitative data from AHMCs and Agrodealers.

### **The Zimbabwe Emergency Drought Mitigation Operation for Livestock (Phase 2)**

The ZEDMOFL was a 6 months emergency program whose objective was to: Contribute to the protection of livestock (cattle) assets for sustaining and improving livelihoods of vulnerable rural farming households in the drought affected southern regions of Zimbabwe

The project had three main outputs:

1. Access to animal feed ensured.
2. Sustainable sub-district DMCs (DLDC) established and
3. Ensure access to feed-lotting facilities.

The project was implemented in Mangwe and Matobo districts of Matebeleland South province, Zimbabwe

### **The Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique**

Rick Davies is accredited for pioneering work on the MSC technique. This invention was out of the challenges mainstream monitoring and evaluation practitioners were encountering in complex participatory rural development programs. Davies (1996) developed the technique as a means of monitoring changes in a development aid project in Bangladesh.

The MSC approach is a participatory monitoring system not indicators based. It involves analyzing actual events so as to draw meaning out of them and improve project/programme planning. The method enables the identification of change, how

change happens and why. MSC can also play a more central part in the evaluation process as a means of identifying and aggregating the views of different stakeholders on a large scale.

The MSC fall within the discourse of Evolutionary Epistemology where the MSC process is seen as "an attempt to design a structured social process that embodied the three elements of the evolutionary algorithm: variation, selection and retention, reiterated through time. The entities subject to selection were events, and the associated interpretations of these events." (R Davies and J Dart 2005). District officers selectively identified what they saw as significant changes. These changes (and interpretations of them) were then retained through being documented and communicated to others further up the organizational hierarchy. At the higher level the changes were subjected to further selection, and then the retention of the most significant of all these significant changes. The SC stories that survived through this iterated process were those that fit the project the best, in terms of its models, implementation approach and objectives as described above.

The MSC system involves the collection of MSC stories from project beneficiaries and staff directly involved in the projects. The stories capture changes in the lives of beneficiaries. The stories are collected through asking simple questions like:

1. "In your own opinion, what is the most significant change that took place in your life/life in the past 6 months"?
2. "Why do you consider this to be the most significant change "
3. "Why do you think this change is very significant"

SNV chose the MSC process to evaluate the ZEDMOFL project.

### **MSC Domains**

The evaluation used the following criterion that involves broad domains that the project intended to make an impact on as a standard for evaluating the impact of the project:

1. Protecting livelihoods through livestock asset protection i.e.
  - Save animals from death (Survival Feed)
  - Maintaining or increasing asset value (through feedlotting)
2. Capacity building
  - Increased knowledge and service delivery (both extensionists and farmers)
3. Leveraged value chain nodes:
  - Increased business for Agrodealers
  - Increased opportunities for youths, employees etc.
4. Enduring institutions
  - Agrodealer association
  - LDCs
  - AHMCs
  - Farmer Associations

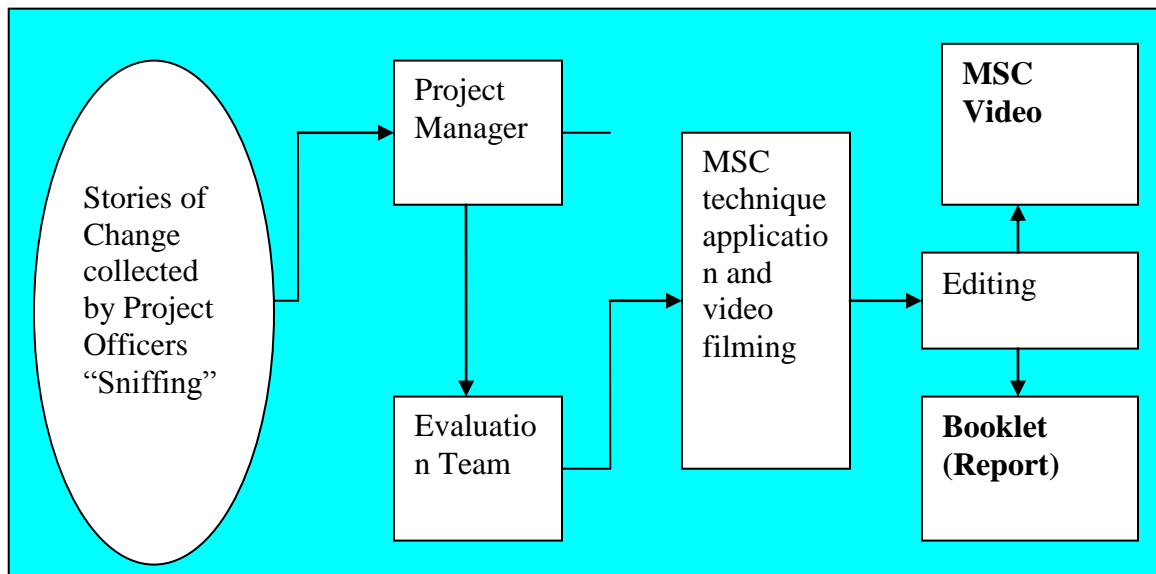
These domains were the themes around which the stories were collected and assessed.

## Story Collection

District project staff identified project participants with change stories. This was done during workshops, meetings or such forums where the officer can ask the group if anyone wants to testify of the changes that happened in their own or friend's life. The stories are noted and in the officer may ask for the details of the case later. The officer then notified the project manager for onward transmission to the Evaluation Team. The project manager then communicated the stories to the evaluation team who then visited the story teller and recorded the story using both a video camera and a voice recorder in the last month (May 2014) of the project life. A wide variety of stories were collected from Traditional leaders, AGRITEX officers, LDC and AHMC leaders and farmers.

## Story Selection

The stories selection was through an iterative process which included the hierarchical levels of the organization. District staff had the first opportunity to select a story based on their own subjective assessment of the significance of the story. The Project manager becomes the second level of assessment and the Evaluation Team became the final level of assessment. The selected stories were also verified (ground "truthed") through site visits. This was important for verifying the authenticity and accuracy of the stories and even to gather more details about the phenomenon



**Figure 1 MSC Process**

## The Most Significant Change Stories

### Domain 1: Protecting livelihoods through livestock asset protection.

#### Mr. Decent Moyo (Maphisa- Matobo Farmer)



2012 and 2013 were difficult years for us. There was no grass in the veld at all. In 2012, I migrated my herd of cattle to Fig-tree (about 100km) for Relief Grazing. In February 2013 there was still no grass in the veld but I had to return my cattle. Relief grazing is a risky business. You can lose the cattle through thefts, dishonest herdsmen or the migration trek might be too much for the frail cattle that they can die on the way. Between February and May I lost 2 cows. Towards the end of May, I heard about the SNV survival stock feed project and I quickly joined it. I bought stock feed for my 40 herds of cattle, and started feeding them 4 bags per day until October 2013 when the veld improved due to the onset of the rain season.

One of the most significant changes that happened to me is that the calving rate of my cattle has improved. In 2012 I had 9 calves, in 2013 I had 10 calves but in 2014 it nearly doubled to 19 calves. I strongly attribute this change to the availability of survival feed. I have noticed that my bull performs better now because it is healthy even the calves that are being born now are healthy and they mature faster.

The feeding routine ensures that the cattle are closer to me. Now I can easily detect sicknesses and any missing cattle. Previously they were bush cattle but now they are tame!

**Mr. Philemon Moyo (Madabe- Mangwe Farmer)**



I have a herd of 15 cattle. Before the survival feeding project I used to send my cattle for relief grazing but I would lose some of my cattle. In 2012 three pregnant cows were stolen in the relief grazing pastures and four died due to starvation. But since I started buying survival feed I do not have to send my cattle very far away. This means that I do not lose any to theft and this year none of my cattle died due to starvation but instead I had five calves! The most significant change in my life is that now I have peace of mind. My cattle are healthy and the herd is growing and I always have them close to me.



**Ms. Wedzani Tshuma (Ngwanyana Farmer)**



I am a widow. In early 2013 my cow was very weak and I feared I will lose it. It was just lying down and would not rise to go and graze. I bought two bags of stock feed and started feeding it. It recovered and that's when I realized the importance of stockfeed. That changed my perception and now I am convinced that survival feeding is a good livestock management technique.

**Mr. Edson Moyo (Treasurer Hadlana-Matobo Feedlot)**



*Edson Moyo in green work-suit*

I am the treasurer for the Haldane Feedlot Committee. We used to send our cattle to the abattoirs in any state but after training we realized that it would be better to pen feed them before taking to the abattoir. At Hadlana we have a dip tank and a Windmill powered borehole, so we thought it could be a good site to build a feedlot. We applied for US\$5,000.00 from the Matobo District Livestock Development committee. Through their Revolving fund they gave us the loan. We bought water pipes, storage tanks and the fencing wire and community contributed the fencing poles. We then constructed the feedlot. I inducted 25 cattle into the feedlot and sold 20 for a total of US\$21,000.00.

The most significant thing that happened to me in the last 9 months is that for the first time in many years we celebrated Christmas in a special way. I had money to spoil my grandchildren and the extended family was very happy. Right now I am in the process of drilling a borehole for domestic use at my homestead. This project has taken me places I had never been to. I went to Beit-bridge on a look and learn visit. During the opening of the Bakwayi Feedlot, I was interviewed by the press and I came out in a local newspaper Southern Eye (<http://www.southerneye.co.zw/2013/11/07/pen-feeding-panacea-climate-change-matobo/>)!

## Domain 2: Capacity building

**Mrs. Sinikiwe Ndlovu (Madabe-Mangwe Agro-dealer)**



When the stockfeed project started, there was a community meeting where I was selected to receive and sell stockfeed on behalf of the community. The Mangwe Rural District Council endorsed my selection because I have been an Agro-dealer running a small shop that sells seeds and agricultural implements for several years in Madabe. In November 2013 I attended the Warehousing Training facilitated by SNV where we learnt among other things Record keeping and warehouse management. The community allowed me to use the Community Warehouse and I would pay them US\$0.50 from the US\$1.50 commission per bag sold.

I value my participation in this project so much because now I can do bookkeeping. The project broadened my knowledge base. The knowledge I gained in this project is even helping me at my Agro-shop. I now can also give advice to farmers on feeding regimes and other livestock matters.



**Mr. Reason Nkomazana (Bakwayi- Matobo Farmer)**



I am the former chairperson of the SNV supported Bakwayi Feedlot. I learnt a lot during my tenure as chairperson and I have used the knowledge I got to start my own private feedlot. I got animal husbandry and marketing skills (I got contacts with marketing hubs). I learnt about feedlot construction and management and that cattle are supposed to be fed so as to improve their value. There is a difference between a cow that is pen fed and one you take from the veld.

At Bakwayi feedlot I inducted two cattle and I sold them for a net profit of US\$1180.00. If I had sold both of them straight from the veld they would not have fetched more than US\$800.00. The income I got from selling the cows I paid US\$700.00 school fees for my daughter who is at Minda High School and other household needs. I invested the surplus I had in the construction of my private feedlot. The private feedlot is the most significant thing that has happened in my life. It is liberating and the light at the end of the tunnel is getting nearer.

**Dr Cain Shokora (Matobo District Veterinary Doctor)**



I am the district veterinary doctor with the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS). DVS sits as an ex-officio member in the District Livestock Development Committee and I am a member of the Project Management Unit within the DLDC. We give technical advice and services to the DLDC. Within the ZEDMOfl project, DVS had a specific component we were contributing to, which is the Animal Disease Control. Under this component we were vaccinating against two diseases: Foot and Mouth and Anthrax within the 40km radius from the Botswana border.

The most significant change I have noticed over the last year is the change in the farmer's mind-set. Previously farmers were not pen feeding their cattle even in the face of the worst drought. Now farmers understand the concept of supplementary feeding and farming as a business. This year we have not recorded even a single cattle poverty death which could be a result of a combination of the good rainy season and the farmers adopting supplementary feeding techniques.

### Domain 3: Leveraged value chain nodes

**Mr. Ncube (Councilor-Mangwe Ward 14)**



I am the elected Councilor for Mangwe Ward 14. Ward 14 is a very dry place. The rainfall is very unreliable and inconsistent. The rain season is only two months and on average we get about 200ml per annum. This kind of rainfall means we can only do livestock and not much crop production. Not all livestock classes are appropriate in this ward. We mainly keep cattle because smaller livestock like goats are vulnerable to hyena attacks. However, our pastures are not very good consequently we have seen a large number of cattle dying. Those that survive are sold at a ridiculously low price for example a 400kg beast can go for as low as US\$150.00-US\$200.00. Cattle markets were very far away, a farmer would travel 20km to the nearest selling pens. This meant that even if prices were low the farmer would be forced to just sell their cattle than return back home with them.

The project facilitated the construction of the community feedlot. This feedlot is the most significant development in this community. This is because now we own a market nearer to our homesteads. This will attract various buyers and service providers to our ward. It will also curb illegal cattle sales and rustling.



**Sylvester Ncube (Crossroads Agrodealer)**



I own Lindikhaya Enterprises Pvt Ltd which runs Simunye Grocery and Hardware Stores at Crossroads in Mangwe district. I attended the ZEDMOFL inception meetings where SNV was raising awareness on drought mitigation strategies. They talked about the use of survival and fattening feed. I saw business sense in selling stockfeed. I then quickly identified farmers who were interested in pen feeding. I started organizing direct deliveries to these farmers. By the end of April 2014 I had managed to sell 978.9 metric tonnes of stock feed. This translates to US\$137,046.00. The commission I got from selling the stock feed amounted to US\$29,367.00 and the balance went to the Mangwe District Revolving Fund.

The most significant change in my life has been the booming of my business. I am now realizing higher turnovers and my shop is well stocked with diverse products including veterinary medicines, stockfeed, building materials, household utensils and groceries.

## Domain 4: Enduring institutions

### **Trevor Moyo (Treasurer-Matobo District Livestock Development Committee)**



I am a livestock farmer and I was elected Treasurer of the District Management Committee in 2012. I am responsible for all financial transactions and the overall management of the District Revolving Fund with advice from SNV and the Project Management Unit.

Before the project, cattle marketing and selling were chaotic. Farmers had no voice because there was no institution that was responsible for our interests. For example local butcheries were the only market available and the butchery owners would short-change us since they knew we had nowhere else to go. Agro-dealers could charge any amount they wanted for stockfeed. But the formation of the District Livestock Development Committee has led to several changes.

The livestock farmer is now respected; the DLDC is renting a big warehouse with fully furnished offices and employing two local people. We have bought some assets including a computer, generator and a motorbike. We have also bought a weighing Scale for weighing cattle at the farm gate and not at the abattoir. This will lower the chances of the farmer being short-changed by the buyers. To date the DLDC has loaned five communities a total of US\$14600.00 to build five feedlots. This has significantly transformed the image of the livestock farmer in the district. Even National Foods (a stock feed supplier) wants to do business with us.



**Mr. Isaac Ngwenya (Private Feedlot Co-Owner – Cross Roads- Mangwe)**



My young brother and I built this feedlot. We have invited 15 other smallholder farmers at Crossroads to do pen-feeding together with us. We used to buy stockfeed in Bulawayo which is about 250km away. Buying feed from Bulawayo was very expensive mainly because of the transport costs. However, when the project began, one local agrodealer (Simunye Stores) started selling stock feed at US\$7.00. Since we were ordering stockfeed in large quantities, he organized for direct deliveries to our feedlot.

The most significant change for us has been that we have halved the cost for running our enterprise. This had led to an improvement in profits. Now we are buying and fattening more cattle in the feedlot for resale.

## **Conclusion**

The stories collected during the evaluation of the ZEDMOfL project show a considerable change in knowledge, skills, attitudes practices and livelihood asserts of the Mangwe and Matobo districts. The changes are at two main levels that is the household and the community level.

At the household level we have witnessed a change in attitudes and knowledge especial with farmers adopting supplementary feeding as a livestock management practice. This translated for some farmers to increases in household livestock assets and incomes. The new phenomenon of developing private feedlots is an indication of the wide acceptability of the pen feeding concept. However, it would be important to check the reason why some farmers prefer private feedlots as opposed to communal ones. It would be also important to analyses the viability and sustainability of private versus communal feedlots and promote the most viable ones.

At the community level we have seen an increase in productive asserts like feedlots. The feedlots play multiple roles including being a marketing hub, a veterinary service center as well as a social enterprise. They are an important catalyst for changing attitudes and beliefs.

While quantitative techniques will provide more descriptive analysis of the trends within the communities, the MSC technique has been able to capture the ambience of impacts of the project as well as the feelings of the project beneficiaries. The MSC technique has a general bias towards positive changes. However, during field work the story collectors did not meet any serious instances of adverse effects of the project.

## ANNEX 1: The MSC Interview Guide

### **Introduction**

- Greet the interviewee in the appropriate way.
- Introduce yourself and any other staff members you are with.
- Ask for consent to interview and record (textually/visually/verbally)

### **The interview**

- "In your own opinion, what is the most significant change that took place in your life/life in the past 9 months"?
- "Why do you consider this to be the most significant change "
- "Why do you think this change is very significant"

#### Probing

- How does this become a significant change to you?
- How did SNV contribute to this change? Etc.

**ANNEX 2: MSC Participants**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Role</b>
Farai Tavesure	SNV Mangwe Project Officer	Story Collector
Temba Manjiva	SNV Matobo Project Officer	Story Collector
Minenhle Ngwenya	SNV Project Manager	Story Selector
Sandisiwe. D. Dube	SNV Project Intern	Story Selector and Interviewer
Peter Moyo	Videographer (Ingwe Studios)	Story Recorder
Dowsen Sango	SNV M&E Adviser	Story Selector and interviewer

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