



E-SLIP



ENHANCED SMALLHOLDER LIVESTOCK INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

**CHANGING RURAL
HOUSEHOLDS-10
LESSONS FROM
E-SLIP**



Supporting Rural Development



Investing in rural people

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Field visit by IFAD Mission team and ESLIP Program Office

FOREWORD



The Enhanced Smallholder Livestock Investment Programme (E-SLIP) is a programme which is currently being implemented by the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, targeting key livestock systems of smallholder producers in selected provinces and districts, through sustainable animal disease control and sustainable livestock production systems, with a strong focus on districts experiencing a high incidence of endemic livestock diseases, and the ultimate goal of reducing poverty for poor rural smallholders.

E-SLIP has been expanding and building upon the interventions of the Smallholder Livestock Investment Programme (SLIP) since 2015. These interventions have been implemented through co-financing from the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), the Government of the Republic of Zambia, and beneficiaries.

The Programme also collaborated closely with the World Bank's Livestock Development and Animal Health Project (LDAHP) and the African Development Bank's Livestock Infrastructure Support Project (LISP) during the implementation of its activities.

E-SLIP focused on controlling East Coast Fever (ECF) and Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) under its Animal Disease Control Sustainably Improved component. Through the Animal Disease Control component, the Programme facilitated the curbing of one of the worst outbreaks of CBPP that was experienced in Kazungula district of Southern Province in 2008.

As a result of the East Coast Fever interventions, Zambia is now self-sufficient in the production of Chitongo stabilate - the vaccine that is used to immunize calves against the ECF strain that is dominant in Southern province.

Successes are also being made in being self-sufficient in the production of Katete stabilate which is designed for the ECF strain that is dominant in Eastern province while trials have been conducted for the Isoka stabilate that

has been developed to immunize calves against the strain that is dominant in cattle in Muchinga and Northern provinces.

Furthermore, through its Livestock Production and Productivity component the Programme targeted women and youth as its majority beneficiaries with an aim to reduce the gender gap in livestock ownership. Under the pro-poor stocking and restocking sub-component 14,000 female-headed households and 5,000 youths in rural areas received livestock packages which improved their household incomes and nutrition.

These packages were supplemented with forage and pasture seed trainings as well as seed packages to enable farmers improve their animal nutrition practices.

After more than 10 years of implementing these various interventions, it is important to take stock and reflect on the experiences and lessons learned and the impact that has been made on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries.

This booklet aims to inform government, policy makers, researchers and the wider public about recent developments and approaches in sustainable rural development, and in particular about E-SLIP's efforts to improve rural poor household incomes through livestock health, production and productivity in Zambia.

We as E-SLIP are pleased to share this compilation of different lessons learned which highlight E-SLIP's goals, challenges, and outcomes in supporting the government's efforts to improve the lives of smallholder farmers and in contributing to smallholder agricultural development.



Dr. Gregory M. Mululuma

Program Coordinator

Enhanced Smallholder Livestock
Investment Programme



INTRODUCTION



The primary objective of the Enhanced Smallholder Livestock Investment Programme (E-SLIP) has been to enhance the livelihoods of impoverished rural households. E-SLIP achieved this by building upon the lessons learned from its predecessor - the Smallholder Livestock Investment Programme (SLIP) - which successfully brought about positive changes in the lives of rural farming communities.

E-SLIP has been implemented by the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock with financial support from the Government of the Republic of Zambia, the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID). Therefore, the programme was able to implement a range of interventions in the livestock sub-sector across all provinces of Zambia.

Drawing from the experiences gained through SLIP, E-SLIP has continued to address challenging livestock diseases such as East Coast Fever (ECF) and Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP), which have had a detrimental impact on the cattle populations of rural communities. The programme has been facilitating subsidized annual ECF immunizations and enabling rural farmers to access disease control measures.

In the Kazungula district of Southern Zambia, the devastating effects of CBPP still invoke painful memories for farmers. However, they acknowledge and appreciate the efforts made by the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in collaboration with E-SLIP, to combat the disease and restore their cattle populations.

Over the years, many farmers have shared stories of how their household incomes have improved as a result of improved livestock management skills they have acquired. E-SLIP has played a crucial role in providing training to farmers, not only in disease control management but also in livestock production as well as; forage and pasture production and utilization. These trainings have empowered farmers with the knowledge and skills needed to enhance livestock productivity amidst the challenges of climate change while ensuring the sustainability of E-SLIP's interventions. With a focus on women and youth, E-SLIP has successfully empowered numerous rural families with livestock under its stocking and restocking component.

The knowledge gathered through farmers' testimonies has been enriching and it is a pleasure to share the lessons that can be drawn from their experiences.

A stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Natasha'.

Natasha Mhangano

Knowledge Management Manager

ESLIP'S TRAINING STRATEGY UNLEASHES POTENTIAL OF LIVESTOCK FARMERS

By Dorcus Kabuya



Farmers received training in both livestock management and human nutrition

The Enhanced Smallholder Livestock Investment Programme (ESLIP) launched with the ambitious goal of transforming the fortunes of smallholder livestock farmers, recognised early on that the key to lasting change lies in the hands of those closest to the land.

In a departure from conventional training models, ESLIP has strategically chosen to train one member per household, recognising that this approach not only maximises the richness of the programme but also ensures that every household is equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in livestock management.

While traditional training models often cast a wide net, ESLIP's visionary approach hones in on one member within each household approach, creating a ripple effect of knowledge, empowerment and agricultural success. This unique methodology is proving to be a game-changer, unleashing the untapped livestock potential within communities and fostering a new era of empowerment. The rationale behind this approach is rooted in the understanding that training one member per household creates a multiplier effect within communities. By focusing on knowledge transfer to a single individual, ESLIP aims to empower that person to become a catalyst for change within their household and, by extension, their community.

One of the early success stories of ESLIP's household-centric training model is the Sojini family. Hellen Kawendo Sojini, designated as the household's trainee and livestock facilitator, underwent an intensive programme covering various aspects of livestock management, including nutrition, healthcare, and sustainable farming practices. Armed with this newfound expertise, Mrs. Sojini has become a beacon of change within her family.

“The training empowered me to take charge of our livestock in ways I never thought possible,” Emily shared. “But what is even more rewarding is being able to share this knowledge with my family. We’ve seen a significant improvement in the health and productivity of our livestock, and it is all thanks to ESLIP’s innovative approach.”

Mrs. Sojini emphasised that the shift from cooperative training to individual empowerment created a sense of ownership in each livestock farmer adding that with ownership came accountability, and individuals were now invested in the success of their dairy farming project.

Another livestock farmer at the forefront of this transformative strategy is Elina Katanekwa. “I never imagined the impact that this training would have on our lives,” Mrs. Katanekwa shared. “Not only did it enhance our livestock practices, but it also opened doors for additional income opportunities from milk sales. I feel a sense of responsibility to share what I have learned with my family and neighbours.”

ESLIP’s strategy ensures that there is a designated focal point person in each household who acts as a knowledge hub, disseminating information and implementing best practices learned from the programme.

Trainees like Mrs. Sojini and Mrs. Katanekwa are not only equipped with knowledge but are also encouraged to become ambassadors within their communities, sharing insights and best practices with neighbours and friends.

Sharon Mutale, a Livestock Assistant overseeing the implementation of ESLIP emphasised the effectiveness of household-centric training approach. “We are not just training individuals; we are empowering change agents within communities. By focusing on one member per household, we ensure a more targeted and sustainable transfer of knowledge.”

This targeted approach not only maximises the reach of the programme but also positions households to become self-sufficient in managing their livestock effectively.

“Farmers who have undergone the household-centric training reported to have had improved livestock health, increased productivity and a heightened sense of confidence in their ability to manage agricultural ventures like livestock production,” Ms. Mutale underscored.

Ms. Mutale urged other agricultural development programmes targeting to impact change in the communities to consider adopting similar methodologies, recognising the potential for creating lasting change at the grassroots level.

The strategic decision to invest in the knowledge and skills of one individual per household is proving to be a visionary approach that is not only transforming lives but also sowing the seeds for a more vibrant and sustainable agricultural future.

ON-FARM PASTURE PRODUCTION EMPOWERS FARMERS

By Josiah Mpofu

Pasture is a natural and cost-effective source of nutrition for livestock. It provides a balanced diet which is rich in proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals for livestock well being. If various livestock species such as cattle and goat do not have access to good pasture,

they might not receive the required nutrients hence leading to weakened immune systems and increased susceptibility to illnesses.

Inadequate pasture can result in farmers depending on purchased feed for their livestock's dietary requirements. Farmers may have to invest in alternatives like hay silage or grain which can be costly especially for smallholder farmers who cannot afford to purchase these in times of drought or feed shortage.

Inadequate pasture for livestock can pose a serious threat to livestock development. This is because pasture plays a crucial role in providing good nutrition for livestock and upholding healthy ecosystems.

The need for pasture among farmers cannot be overstated as it is key in supplementing natural grass which is usually not available during the dry season. It is estimated that Zambia has over 55,100 square kilometres of degraded land due to overgrazing and other bad practices.

In an effort to help farmers have sustained food for their livestock, government through the Enhanced Smallholder Livestock Investment Programme (E-SLIP) in the 2019/2020 farming season launched the forage seed and pasture production intervention. The intervention was aimed at promoting pasture production among smallholder farmers, thereby improving the nutrition status of their livestock.



Livestock productivity needs all year round nutrition management

SUCSESSES

Various groups which included woman and youths across the country were empowered with forage seed in order for them to vigorously venture in pasture production for increased incomes among farmers.

Elina Katanekwa, from Lukamantano agricultural camp in Chilanga district, was one of the farmers who was empowered with 5 Kilograms of velvet beans and cowpeas which she planted in a hectare field during that agricultural season.

Ms Katanekwa, who also received a calf under the E-SLIP stocking and restocking model now boasts of having five cattle with one already passed-on to another beneficiary.

She appreciated the E-SLIP programme for empowering her with both cattle and forage seed as it has helped her to take livestock farming as a business. She described the livestock empowerment programme as a dream come true as she has always wished to engage into livestock production.

She said the gesture by E-SLIP has also transformed her crop production because she is now able to cultivate using animal draft power through the cattle she received.

Ms Katanekwa who has seen the benefit of rearing cattle noted that it was her first time to engage in livestock business. She is now able to have milk for her family's consumption and sell the remaining to her neighbours.

She attributed the increase of her cattle to the pasture she had planted which enabled her to feed the cattle even during the dry season.

CHALLENGES

She however mentioned that the pasture is no longer available due to the floods and droughts that were experienced in the 2022/2023 farming season which destroyed her entire pasture field.

"The pasture was performing well until the floods and droughts which were experienced in the previous season submerged my pasture and it all wilted," she lamented.

Ms Katanekwa lamented that the programme promised to provide her with a bailer machine which it never honoured leaving her with no alternative ways of preserving the grass that had remained after the floods and droughts.

She has since bemoaned the low

adoption levels for farmers to engage in pasture production as those who did not receive cattle were not willing to grow pasture.

Ms Katanekwa added that lack of market for pasture led to most farmers pulling out of the venture as the project only secured market for them only once.

She has appealed to the project to provide her with forage seed in order to secure food for her livestock as she does not have any pasture remaining.

Ms Katanekwa explained that most of the land in her area has been demarcated by new settlers leaving her with no place for her cattle to graze, adding that providing with forage seed will help to cushion pasture challenges.

INTERVENTION

E-SLIP forage development Specialist Bwalya Nkole said the programme had targeted to support 80,000 farmers to be promoted on on-farm pasture production during its life span.

Ms Nkole explained that the intervention was aimed at ensuring that farmers have access to enough and healthy food for their livestock especially in dry periods between April and November. She noted that in the dry period natural grass is usually scarce and low in nutritive value thereby compromising livestock health and well-being as well as productivity.

Ms Nkole said that the promotion of pasture production was done among smallholder farmers who are the majority livestock farmers who have no capacity to access forage seed which is expensive.

She noted that the programme also

provided training on pasture production for smallholder farmers besides empowering them with forage seed.

Lessons learnt by the Programme

Ms Nkole however stated that in the implementation of the Programme she learnt that there was need to consider the communities' view instead of imposing every intervention on them as doing so would have enabled the programme achieve all its objectives.

The Programme also learnt that there was need to adhere to the type of forage seed that farmers wanted, which would have been suitable to their environment other than giving them what they did not want.

Ms Nkole disclosed that the distribution of seed was done late, which hindered most farmers from planting early.

It was also observed that the programme only concentrated in training farmers about the importance and utilization of pasture to farmers but did not focus on the nutrition aspect for humans.

Many rural development initiatives such as the forage seed and pasture production intervention attempt to improve the lives of small-scale farmers. Some succeed, some fail - but all of them offer valuable lessons for the future.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) funded E-SLIP pasture interventions are key in ensuring that livestock have access to fresh and nutritive vegetation thereby enhancing both the beef and dairy industry.



The lungs of an cow that was infected with CBPP

COMMUNITY TASKFORCES HELPS KEEP KAZUNGULA CBBP FREE

By Natasha Mhango

“When you lose cattle, you lose all the amenities that come with cattle for example milk was a source of protein for our children and the growth of our children got stunted, this happened when our cattle was slaughtered during test and slaughter exercise,” Edwin Sikute explained as he recalled the impact of losing his cattle to a severe Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) outbreak.

Edwin is a small holder livestock farmer of Sikauunzwe camp in Kazungula district whose cattle was culled during the test and slaughter exercise that was mandated in order to contain the spread of CBPP.

The pandemic begun in 2005 and wiped out close to 40% of cattle over a period of three years. The district which had approximately 63,200 cattle before the pandemic, recorded about 41,700 a year later. By 2008, the cattle population had declined to 27,600.

The outbreak of CBPP was erupted by illegal cattle movement from neighboring Western province in which CBPP is endemic. Kazungula district in Southern province borders with Western province and so unfortunately for farmers in Kazungula district, their cattle were the first in the Southern province to be in contact with the disease. Given that Southern province was and still possesses most of the Zambia's cattle, the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock was compelled to act swiftly and effectively to curb the spread of CBPP from Kazungula to other districts in the province.

TEST AND SLAUGHTER – THE BITTER PILL TO SWALLOW

Due to its contagious nature, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) guidelines recommend that a test and slaughter exercise is the only solution to curbing the spread of CBPP. Zambia's Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MFL) was obliged to comply.

E-SLIP CBPP Epidemiologist, Dr. Cornelius Mundia explained that the test and slaughter technique involves drawing blood samples from a selected number of cattle in a kraal and if a few animals test positive for CBPP, then the whole herd is slaughtered because of the contagious nature of the disease. In other words, if a few of the cattle test positive for CBPP then it can be assumed that the rest of the herd are also infected.

The extent to which the disease had spread in Kazungula compelled MFL to act and they intervened through the Smallholder Livestock Investment Program (SLIP).

Livestock farmers of Sikauunzwe Cooperative in Kazungula vividly recall the outbreak as having been the worst calamity to hit their livelihoods. Edwin Sikute is a member of the Cooperative and among the first members of the Community Taskforce in the area.

Edwin - who is also a village headman in Sikauunzwe - was a much-needed opinion leader who was engaged by E-SLIP and the Ministry as a mediator to compel farmers to surrender their cattle for testing. Given the gravity of the outbreak, most farmers were aware that surrendering their cattle to testing was also indicative of possible slaughter.

"The department of Veterinary Services told us at that time that there was no other remedy apart from testing and slaughter...we had no way out. The farmers tried to argue but they were told there was no other way," Edwin said.

To say that farmers in the area were infuriated would be an understatement. Edwin narrated that the test and slaughter exercise led to the decline in crop production because their slaughtered cattle was what they depended on as draught power.

"Our yield performance was reduced to about one third of what we used to get," Edwin disclosed. As they recovered from their losses, the farmers vowed never to allow such an outbreak to inflict them again and with this attitude, they were open to the suggestion of establishing Community

Taskforces to supplement surveillance of the movement of cattle.

Robert Simangolwa is the Chairperson for the CBBP Community Taskforce for Sikauunzwe. He disclosed that the source of the CBBP outbreak was through the illegal movement of cattle. He elaborated further, that the impact that the test and slaughter exercise had on rural households was enduring and

that farmers are still striving to grow their cattle herds to what it was before the CBPP outbreak.

“Life was very difficult...Our children stopped going to school; young girls at a tender age fell pregnant because of poverty...we were unable to send them to school...that disease left poverty in this area,” Robert lamented.

He added that while farmers appreciated the interventions of the Veterinary department, accepting the interventions was another thing.

“We were enemies with the Vet! When we were told the only way to survive was test and slaughter, I was confused. I did not understand what that was...but one morning I woke up I found two of my animals had died from CBPP, the next day four and on the third day, I agreed to have the test and slaughter,” Robert explained.

Partnership with the Communities

Today, CBPP is under control in Kazungula. The District Veterinary Officer, Dr. Cliff Kakandelwa, disclosed that the cattle population has increased to 84,000. Some factors that can be attributed to the district's journey to recovery include the establishment of community taskforces that have been trained to monitor and report illegal movement of livestock.

Some of these taskforces have been empowered with bicycles and identity cards which are necessary for their efficiency. More resources for other taskforces would enhance the establishment of more efficient and effective community taskforces.

Complementing the farmers' efforts through a restocking exercise accompanied with regular vaccinations would also reaffirm government policies of promoting livestock farming in the area.

BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP IN RURAL WOMEN ECONOMIC STATUS

By Natasha Mhango

Zambia's 2020 Gender Inequality Index (GII) assessment stands at 0.539, ranking the country at 131 out of 162. The GII measures gender inequality in three important aspects namely: reproductive health, empowerment and economic status.

In contributing to increased rural household incomes, the Enhanced Smallholder Livestock Investment Programme (E-SLIP) believes that livestock production is one powerful launch for women-centered development. Given the cultural norms which surround women's ownership of livestock - most especially cattle - E-SLIP established a deliberate policy that requires that 50% of its livestock package beneficiaries are women.

Based on statistics provided by the Livestock Stocking and Restocking component, a total 30,737 beneficiaries had received livestock as of June 2021; out of which 20,910 were female and 7785 were youth.

The female statistics include 29 year old woman Ophelia Nkando who is a single mother of three and a livestock farmer in Mbabala area of Choma district in Southern province.

Given that Southern province is traditionally a cattle-keep province, her childhood involved being a cowherder for her family's cattle; and so she developed necessary cattle-keeping skills which compelled her to purchase two dairy cows for herself in 2009. Unfortunately, due to an illness, they were culled shortly after they each produced a calf.

In 2020, she received an in-calf heifer from E-SLIP which has compelled her to consider beef production.

"I always wanted to return to dairy production but after receiving beef cattle from E-SLIP, I have come to learn that beef is earning me more income than dairy cattle," Ophelia said. At the time of the interview, she was selling her beef at K30 per kilogram.



Nkando poses the offspring of the heifer she received from ESLIP

"I have not faced many challenges as a female cattle owner - it is our culture to own cattle. I occasionally struggle with generating money for cattle's feed and drugs," she disclosed. It is here where single female headed households lag behind in cattle productivity.

"When my herd grows I will sell 10 cows - that would be enough to help me build a house for me and my children; and then the other cows produced after; I will leave then for my children to live off," Ophelia said.

Empowering female-headed households through deliberate targets Women like Ophelia make up the female-headed household demographic.

Meeting their economic needs on their own requires twice as much effort as male-headed households whose efforts are supplemented by a spouse. Furthermore, due to existing cultural norms cattle

ownership is still generally confined to men while women and youth are simply the herders. Furthermore, women are usually the leading owners of small livestock such as goats and chickens. From this perspective therefore, E-SLIP has played a critical role in empowering women in an environment where they are already leading.

Through trainings in livestock management and entrepreneurial skills, E-SLIP embarked on creating market-oriented livestock production and; the chickens were much appreciated as one of the easiest and fastest means of economic gain by women.

The Chisomo Yenga Women's Group in Eastern province comprises 50 members who came together to generate disposable income. The group is comprised of widows who have had little access to finance and hence, their initial aim of forming the group was to create a revolving fund through which members were able to borrow and save money at affordable rates. This is popularly referred to as village banking.



Women from Chisomo Yenga group are eager for more training on poultry management

The Vice-chairperson for the group, Hilda Muluse, said that through their Fisheries and Livestock Extension Service Provider, they heard of the stocking and restocking exercise under E-SLIP and decided to apply for a livestock package.

She explained that after they were deemed as eligible beneficiaries, they

“We got six chickens each, in total 30 chickens, they produced and we now have 85 chicks,”

Hilda disclosed

received training in chicken production and were later given 50 local chickens. Five of their beneficiaries chose to keep their chickens together as group rather than as individuals so as to pool the monies required for chicken feed and veterinary drugs.

Eyeing the poultry market

The five members of Chisomo Yenga women’s group are planning on purchasing an incubator to boost their production and help generate income for individual members to construct their personal homesteads and poultry pens.

“The poultry structure you have seen here does not belong to any of us members. We are renting from someone affiliated to the group. But with this empowerment from E-SLIP, each of us will eventually be able to construct poultry shelters at our individual homes,” Hilda said.

Making vulnerable women like Chisomo Yenga economically self-sufficient is one end result of E-SLIP’s deliberate targeting of female beneficiaries. This has enhanced women’s access to livestock and livestock training. Ultimately, improved economic status of rural women will begin to be visible.

A JOURNEY WITH ESLIP:

How Farmers Unearth New Opportunities

By Dorcus Kabuya

Chilanga District has long been an agricultural hub, with smallholder farmers playing a crucial role in shaping the local economy by supplying agricultural products to Lusaka's central business district due to its proximity.

This economic status of the district could be attributed to various programmes being implemented to enhance agricultural productivity. One of these programmes is the Enhanced Smallholder Livestock Investment Programme (E-SLIP), which was introduced on the promise of uplifting livestock farmers by enhancing livestock management practices.

Beneficiary farmers who have experienced the programme first hand, felt compelled to shed some light on the significant shortcomings that could have potentially hindered E-SLIP's effectiveness in Chilanga District.

Farmers' Feedback

1. PASTURE PRESERVATION



"One of the fundamental pillars of any successful agricultural programme is the effective dissemination of information and comprehensive training for farmers." These were the words of Loveness Mazibisa, a heifer beneficiary of the Pass-On initiative under the Programme.

Mrs. Mazibisa noted that while the programme emphasised improved livestock management, the programme's oversight in addressing pasture preservation and storage undermined the overall well-being of cattle, adding that the limited availability of storage options left farmers ill-equipped to stockpile sufficient feed for the dry season when natural pastures were scarce.

"Regrettably, E-SLIP did not adequately address one very critical component of pasture storage. For any livestock farmer, pasture storage becomes particularly crucial during the

hot season when natural grazing lands become parched and insufficient to meet the nutritional needs of our livestock," she added.

2. BASIC VETERINARY SKILLS

At the heart of sustainable dairy farming lies the intricate dance of reproduction, and here is where the role of bulls becomes pivotal. The availability of these unsung heroes at the farm, shapes the future of dairy farming and healthy lineage of dairy cattle.

Hellen Kamwendo Sojini is another beneficiary who pointed out a visionary recommendation that could propel the farming community into a new era of self-sufficiency and sustainability - the training of local youths in basic veterinary



skills like jabbing, dipping and de-worming.

Mrs. Sojini highlighted that timely vaccinations, disease prevention and overall healthcare were important aspects of good livestock farming, adding that the shortage of trained veterinary professionals in most parts of the country cast a shadow over this vital aspect of farming life. "E-SLIP should prioritise the establishment of veterinary clinics, vaccination programmes, and disease

control mechanisms to ensure the health and well-being of livestock, contributing to increased productivity through training of the local youths to prevent them from engaging in negative vices like alcohol abuse," she recommended.

Mrs. Sojini identified the lack of transport and other logistics among government Veterinary Officers as a challenges in accessing timely veterinary services, leading to increased vulnerability to diseases among livestock in general.

"Am sure all livestock farmers can agree with me that there can't be productive livestock without accompanying veterinary services, and therefore, a more comprehensive approach to veterinary services within E-SLIP is crucial to ensure the overall well-being of livestock and, consequently, the sustained success of beneficiary farmers," she added.

This proposal is not just a response to a deficiency; it is a proactive step towards a more self-sufficient and empowered community.

3. PROVISION OF PURE BREEDS

Creider Keembela of Monze District is also another livestock farmer who benefited under the E-SLIP programme. Despite earning some income from the sale of milk of her dairy animal, she wished the programme had delivered pure dairy breeds for increased milk production.

“We appeal to E-SLIP to consider providing pure breeds to farmers which under good management can significantly boost milk production,” she stated.

Through the interactions with Mr. Keembela and two (2) other E-SLIP female beneficiaries, it was realised that farmers were promised a bull to be servicing all the cattle which were given under the programme, but this never happened.

The three women beneficiaries shared that the lack of a bull in their communities contributed to the delayment in executing the Pass-On programme which was meant at empowering the selected beneficiaries within a specified and agreed time frame.



“During the trainings, we were promised a bull to be serving all the cattle under the programme. But surprisingly enough, our animals were and are still being serviced by the local bulls, this has negatively impacted the preservation of superior genetics within our dairy herds, and this has come as a setback in the successful implementation of the Pass-On programme,” they shared in separate interviews.

According to the farmer beneficiaries, the need for knowledge on pasture preservation, basic veterinary skills as well as the provision and subsequent availability of pedigree bulls become very critical aspect in the success of the livestock farming. Therefore, the missing of these elements in the E-SLIP was a lost opportunity in as far as meeting the project’s desired impact on beneficiary communities.

By acknowledging and rectifying these issues, E-SLIP can live up to its promise of empowering smallholder farmers and contributing to the sustainable development in the livestock sector.

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF GENDER LEARNING IN RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

By Happy Mulolani



Arthur Tembo popularly known as Mr Brox poses with the cow that his wife benefited from ESLIP

ZAMBIA is a highly patriarchal and conservative country with the man considered as dominant and women as subordinates. For a long time, these norms and cultures reinforce patriarchy resulting in women taking passive roles in their households despite performing most of the agriculture tasks.

According to IFAD (2010), over 60 percent of women are engaged in agriculture production, yet they are the most deprived and marginalised when it comes to decision making in various value chains in their households. In Zambia, women are the majority food producers despite being marginalised (IAPRI, 2018). The country has a number of policies aimed at supporting women access to equal opportunities as men, such as the Equality Act 2015 which advocates for women empowerment at all levels.

This situation presents an opportunity to contest the notion of male dominance among farmer households through the Gender Action Learning System (GALS). GALS is an approach which looks at ensuring that decisions in households and vision setting are employed to address the gender imbalances existing in society. The purpose of GALS is to enable women and men gain more control over their lives. In this way, the GALS approach is best suited to re-configure the patriarchy notion and support a sustainable movement for gender justice..

To achieve this, requires employing a gender transformative approach to ensure the dominant gender norms are contested because without such an approach would mean the implementation of development programmes is rendered ineffective, and lead to women being overburdened with labour. Such a situation would lead to the social status remaining unchanged and communities poor.

A typical case of GALS is a smallholder farmer, Arthur Tembo aged 66 and his wife Helen Kamwando, aged 56. Together, they have 10 children and 20 grandchildren.

The couple own a 32 hectares farm in Mwembeshi area in Lukamantano agriculture camp in Chilanga district in Lusaka province. They are both members of Lukamantano cooperative society. They settled on this farm in 1983, which Mr Tembo inherited from his father who first settled in Mwembeshi in 1965 when he acquired the farm. At the time, they were very few settlers who were actively involved in farming in the area.

Previously, Mr Tembo used to dictate the type of crops the family would cultivate. This meant the wife rarely participated in decision making when it came to deciding the viable farming enterprises the family would undertake every farming season.

But, since their recruitment in 2019 by the Enhanced Small Livestock Investment Programme (E-SLIP), a programme supported by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and implemented by the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, they use the household approach where both the husband and wife make decisions collectively through planning in their enterprises. She explains that her husband no longer imposes the value chains to engage in their farming enterprises. Instead, the couple ensure their individual plans culminate into a shared vision through collective effort. She cited an example where the husband proposed to set-up a piggery at the farm looking at the profitability of the value chain.

"I supported the idea to start rearing pigs to supplement our family income because I knew the benefits of rearing pigs as it would boost our household income," Ms Tembo revealed.

She shared the same vision with the husband to start with three pigs, which have now multiplied to over 100 pigs, adding that the pigs fetch a very good price on the market.

"The price of pigs is very lucrative; Choppies buy our pigs at K65 per kilogramme," Ms Tembo disclosed.

She explained that all their children, both male and female participate in the value chains on the farm, especially milking and herding cattle.

"Every child and grandchild, who lives with us knows how to milk, make feed for the cattle, feed the pigs and cultivate the fields," she said.

The involvement of children from a young age is a good strategy to empower and also address gender imbalances from a young age.

As E-SLIP phases out, it will be very key to draw on strategies employed by the programme to constantly facilitate and also create awareness about existing gender imbalances through extension staff and the trained lead farmers. This approach will contribute to gender transformation in farmer communities.

Arguably, patriarchal notions still exist, which is why most farmers might have good visions but still need to support other farmers in their households to resolve gender imbalances in the farming community.

It is clear that Gender Action Learning System approach needs to have a gradual transition to positively impact on the farming community. Once households adopt this approach, it will ensure their individual plans translate into shared visions with the overall goal of achieving food security and increased income in their households.

BOOSTING EXTENSION OFFICER'S EFFICIENCY AND SUCCESS:

An Experience From Sharon Mutale

By Dorcus Kabuya

Sharon Mutale is a dedicated Livestock Assistant in Chilanga District who has had the privilege of being part of the transformative journey by witnessing the impact that targeted

interventions can have on smallholder farmers and their communities.

In the heart of rural communities, where the pulse of agriculture beats strongest, Livestock Extension Officers like Sharon, have become a beacon of change. Her once demanding and challenging workload has now undergone a remarkable transformation, thanks to the Enhanced Smallholder Livestock Investment Programme (E-SLIP).

The E-SLIP is not just a set of initiatives, it also focuses on strengthening the capacities of Livestock Extension Officers who play a pivotal role in disseminating valuable information and providing technical assistance to smallholder farmers.

One of the programme's core objectives is to empower Livestock Extension Officers with practical knowledge, tools and resources needed to catalyse sustainable development in the livestock sector.

This innovative approach taken by E-SLIP is proving to be a game-changer, bringing about a ripple effect that promises to uplift rural communities and strengthen the livestock industry. Sharon's tireless effort to support smallholder livestock farmers has taken a significant leap forward, as she now finds her responsibilities streamlined and enhanced by the E-SLIP intervention.

"As an Extension Officer, my role was not just to disseminate information but to ensure its practical application in the field."

Through training sessions and on-site demonstrations, farmers were empowered with the skills needed to enhance their productivity and consequently, their livelihoods," she explained.

E-SLIP was launched modern sustainable practices. Its success has not only eased the burden on Livestock Extension Officers like Sharon, but has also significantly improved the lives of the farmers she serves.

"E-SLIP has transformed the way we interact with farmers," Sharon remarked during a recent interview. "The programme has earned me respect from the farmers as I can share livestock best practices ensuring that farmers are equipped with the latest knowledge to enhance their livestock management skills."

She further said that her relationship with the farmers in her camp has improved because E-SLIP delivered on its extension message of enhancing farmers' livelihoods through provision of livestock.

Lack of transport is one of the major challenges that hinder effective dissemination of extension advisory services to



small scale farmers who are the primary stakeholders. In tackling this challenge, E-SLIP eased the mobility of foot soldiers in the programme operation areas through provision of transport.

“Through the programme, I was provided with a motorbike, a development which has enhanced my delivery of extension service to the farmers,” she noted.

One of the notable features of E-SLIP is its emphasis on community engagement and knowledge-sharing. Through workshops, field demonstrations, extension officers forge stronger connections with farmers, creating a supportive network that fosters collective learning and growth. Furthermore, the project strengthened the working relationship with the Veterinary Department.

“There is always a tendency for departments even within the same ministry to work in silos yet targeting the same stakeholder. This collaboration has empowered us to address livestock management comprehensively, ensuring the well-being of our animals.”

E-SLIP is a shining example of how targeted interventions can catalyse positive change in rural livelihoods.

HARNESSING RANGELAND MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE ANIMAL NUTRITION

By Josaih Mpofu

Rangeland in Zambia is facing substantial stress and degradation due to unsustainable practices. Rangelands are extremely vulnerable to effects of climate change such as droughts, prolonged dry spells and bad practices orchestrated by human beings.

The Ministry of Green Economy and Environment estimated that Zambia is losing 300,000 hectares of land annually due to deforestation, making it the biggest loser on the African continent and ranked third worldwide in forest degradation because of the rate it is losing its land to deforestation.

Rangeland degradation has had negative impacts in Zambia among them reduced forage and crop obtainability.

It is for this reason that Government through the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock has been implementing the Enhanced Smallholder Livestock Investment Program (E-SLIP) since 2018. The aim of the programme among others is to carry out some rangeland regeneration activities across the country.

E-SLIP forage development Specialist Bwalya Nkole revealed that the programme in collaboration with World Vision has embarked on planting 8000 nursery trees in places which have been severely degraded in Eastern, part of Central, Lusaka and Southern Provinces.

She said the programme's aim is to ensure proper land management practices and sustainable agricultural practices which are essential in regenerating and preserving the land in Zambia are implemented.

Ms Nkole explained that the programme secured about 100,000 hectares to engage in planting various plant species in order to rejuvenate the land.

To enhance rangeland management, the programme formed rangeland community facilitators in each province to ensure the ease implementation of the rangeland programmes. The facilitators were trained on rangeland management skills and were later expected to train other people in their respective communities.

Ms Nkole explained that the implementation was not ease as most communities shunned the intervention because they thought their land was being grabbed from them.

She explained that the programme engaged the traditional leadership that is the chiefs and headmen to encourage their subjects on the need to safeguard the environment.



Rangeland Committees have been instrumental in promoting the adoption of improved use of natural resources.

“After engaging with the traditional leaders, various measures were put in place to reduce land degradation and improve rangelands. The traditional leadership through E-SLIP developed by-laws that ensured that when the person is found cutting down trees indiscriminately, he/she will be fined by the chief to deter would be offenders,” Ms Nkole said.

Ms Nkole explained that the project also formed the rangeland committees that have been turned into cooperatives for sustainability purposes stating that when the programme comes to an end, the cooperatives can still receive assistance from other organizations who are into environmental management interventions.

Rangelands are extensive areas of land that predominantly comprise grasses, trees and shrubs. These places have continued to deteriorate due to human activities such as indiscriminate cutting down of trees for either charcoal production or farming purposes, late burning and overgrazing.

Ms Nkole stated that if rangelands are not properly managed overgrazing can occur resulting into the depletion of desirable vegetation leading to reduced forage availability and loss of plant diversity.

She indicated that the situation can exacerbate climate change and negatively impact livestock productivity by decreasing the quality and quantity of available pasture.

During the implementation of the programme, it was observed that climate change greatly affected communities, affecting their crops and livestock hence impacting household food security and incomes.

Another lesson learnt by the project is that most women in various communities are still being side lined regarding livestock production. A situation that requires the programme to put more measures aimed at ensuring that more women engage in livestock production.

The programme other than involving men in rangeland management also involved women to ensure that they help their husbands in managing rangelands.

Elen Kamwendo of Lukamantano agricultural camp of Chilanga district in Lusaka Province, was among the women that received the training on proper rangeland management system.

Ms Kamwendo appreciated the programme for empowering her on better rangeland management practices.

“I have now learnt that when feeding animals, you don’t have to let them graze at the same place for a long time, but there is need to rotate so that you give room for the grass to grow. I have also learnt that I don’t have to burn the grass and leave the land open as this can lead to soil erosion and land degradation,” Ms Kamwendo explained.

Ms Kamwendo who also received cattle from E-SLIP said she now knows how to engage in livestock and crop production while taking caring of the environment for increased productivity. She said the Programme has encouraged her to venture into dairy production as she plans to buy dairy animals when she sales some of her cattle she benefitted from E-SLIP.

Ms Kamwendo however stated that the programme could have gone further to teach boys about rangeland management as they are the ones who herd cattle in most cases.

She noted that rangeland can properly be managed by ensuring that young ones are taught on various land regeneration activities in order to secure the future generation and mitigate effects of climate change.

Ms Kamwendo called upon the project not to stop its interventions as many people have not yet grasped the concept of rangeland management adding that many are still hesitant to embrace it. Another farmer of Kamantano agricultural camp Loveness Mazibisa observed that she did not fully understood the concept of rangeland because the information was too technical to comprehend. Ms Mazibisa noted that the programme should have spent more time as the period of learning about rangeland management skills was not enough for her and other community members for them to understand.

She said the programme should incentivise rangeland committees in order for them to visit communities regularly as learning is a gradual process which requires time.

Some lessons learnt through Mrs Kamwendo and Ms Mazibisa’s observations is that learning is a gradual process and more time is required in order for people to have a proper understanding of a particular intervention and ensure the smooth implementation of the programme in uplifting rural livelihoods.

Inappropriate land management practices such as unsuitable fire management, poor rotational grazing and lack of rest periods for rangelands should be discouraged at all cost among communities in order to prevent further degradation of the environment.



Improved rangeland management can help regenerate depleted grazing

LIVESTOCK MORTALITIES – A STUMBLING BLOCK IN THE LIVESTOCK RESTOCKING EXERCISE

By Natasha Mhango

Small livestock such as chickens and goats have proved to be among the most fragile type of livestock in the E-SLIP livestock distribution packages. How they are maintained and managed is necessary in sustaining the livestock production models that E-SLIP has been implementing.

The E-SLIP production models strive to make market-oriented livestock production viable among rural farming communities. The first step in the E-SLIP model, is to make livestock accessible to rural households through livestock package distribution popularly known as the stocking and restocking exercise.

Sourcing and transporting livestock to their intended beneficiary locations is among the initial processes of this step.

Once they have been transported to the targeted locations, they are kept in holding for beneficiaries to collect them. During this whole process however, some of these animals have died. This has affected the distribution process as beneficiaries receive less than they were scheduled to.

What causes the mortalities?

Taonga Women's Group in Katete district of Eastern province said they were allocated 10 chickens from E-SLIP. Shortly after they collected them, one died.

Another group of beneficiaries, Chisomo Yenga Women's Groups in Petauke district said they were given 32 chickens from E-SLIP which produced 85 eggs shortly after. However, the group only realized 39 live chicks from the 85 eggs.

Notisi Shungu Cooperative in Nyimba district said they were expecting to receive 20 goats from an E-SLIP package but four of the 20 goats died shortly after transportation and before they could collect their allotted number.

E-SLIP's Restocking and Stocking Officer, Mweni Mwape, explained that there were various factors that could be attributed to the mortalities that beneficiaries are concerned with.

He said that small livestock, most especially chickens are generally fragile and hence become easily stressed after long distance travel and also as a result of change of environment.

"Ideally, as a country there is no legal framework on what vessel should be used when moving animals, but transporters have come up with ideas on how to transport animals that can seemingly provide comfort and proper ventilation for livestock that is being transported," Mr. Mweni said. He further highlighted that transportation was not the stage where the highest mortality of animals occurred. He explained most losses were incurred in the holding locations of animals in some cases and in other cases in beneficiaries' households.

“We’re currently doing a livestock performance assessment and what has been noticed so far is that most of the mortalities happen when you put the animals in holding without adequate food, and no stress-relieving supplies, after that, the mortalities occur with the farmers,” Mr. Mweni. Mr. Mweni’s statements align with the testimonies some of the beneficiary groups have given in interviews.

If the sustainability of the pass-on exercise is to be guaranteed, there is need to ensure that health and welfare of the livestock is strictly adhered to.

What can be done?

Grace Lungu, Senior Livestock Production Officer for Eastern Province says that increased capacity building of existing and new beneficiaries must be done at regular intervals as one way to gauge and regulate farmers’ skills in livestock management.

“For the groups that have managed to have their livestock start reproducing they also need to be trained in the management of those livestock from the time those livestock are kidded or the time that they are hatched up to a point when they are old enough to be passed-on,” Mrs. Lungu said.

This, enforced with stress relief packs which include some vaccines would help reduce unnecessary livestock mortalities after their transportation.

Livestock restocking, the practice of replenishing livestock that has been reduced or depleted, often due to factors such as disease, natural disasters or economic hardship, is an important practice in maintaining and growing livestock populations, especially in agricultural economies such as Zambia.



Poorly nourished animals are unlikely to survive long hours of transportation

THE FUTURE OF ESLIP: FARMERS WORK TO SUSTAIN INTERVENTIONS

By Happy Mulolani

When most projects phase out, they turn out to be white elephants due to limited funding, lack of ownership among the beneficiary community, among other factors.

In particular, the Enhanced Smallholder Livestock Investment Programme (E-SLIP), a project implemented by the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was birthed five years ago, amid the urgent need for livestock farmers countrywide to improve their breed, multiply stock, and also enhance food security and nutrition.

This approach was meant to ensure households are trained on how to rear cattle and benefit by passing on one calf per household, while one bull was provided to multiply. The idea was to empower smallholder farmers with improved livestock breeds. The cattle is mainly used for milking purposes which provides a source of improved nutrition for households.

The project also trained farmers in growing forage seed, pass-on of livestock which included; cattle, goats and chickens. During the lifespan of the project, the notion of the pass-on arrangement was to ensure smallholder farmers are trained on how to make feed for cattle using forage seed.

As the project winds down, some of the key issues worth drawing some lessons which other successive programmes can build on are offered in some farmers' testimonials.

A farmer in Lukamantano area, Elina Katenakwa, appreciates the trainings imparted to farmers in the area.

"Even as E-SLIP closes, it has impacted on my life as I have acquired skills and knowledge on how to rear cattle. I've also learnt how to make silage, which I never knew in the past," Ms Katenakwa narrated. Instead of cattle walking lengthy distances in search of grazing land, she has now learnt to make feed for the cattle within a close proximity.

"Previously, we would employ cattle herders and let the cattle walk long distances in search of pasture," Ms Katenakwa disclosed.

Ms Katenakwa, was one of the selected 20 farmers to benefit from the pass on programme in Lukamantano agriculture camp. The pass-on was tailored towards empowering farmers with livestock, especially cattle and goats.

Another farmer Helen Kamwando, revealed farmers have learnt agronomic practices which has enabled them to have better yields.

"Prior to E-SLIP training on how to cultivate seed, we used the broadcast method which used to give minimal yields," Ms Kamwando said.

When E-SLIP was introduced in 2019, Ms Tembo was among the trained farmers and selected to be a Livestock Coordinator. Ms Tembo played a key role in raising awareness to the farmers in the area about the significance of growing velvet beans, forage seed and other inputs which the programme gave them to boost the welfare of their cattle.

“E-SLIP empowered me with a bicycle to ease mobility and reach out to farmers in various parts of the camp,” Ms Tembo said.

The trainings have been useful for the farmers. Now, it has positioned them with a competitive advantage as they seek to sojourn in their enterprises.

The crops cultivated were mainly for consumption, while cattle was reared for cultivating the land. But, with the project interventions, the farmers have learnt how to plant in lines with recommended spacing.

“The agronomic practises we’re taught has helped improve our yields; while the cattle given during the pass on has provided milk to improve the nutrition status in our households,” Ms Tembo said.

She regrets that not all the trained farmers received the cattle, instead some were given chickens. For those farmers who were trained but did not benefit from the pass on arrangement, households which are yet to have a calf, will ensure they pass-on.

Ms Tembo assured that as a facilitator, she will continue to train other farmers and also look forward to working with other projects which might show interest in future.

Livestock Assistant for Chilanga district Sharon Mutale expresses concern at the unpredictable duration of projects, as communities need consistence in interventions and a gradual transition until project completion.

“Projects are more effective and empowering if they run for the specified programme duration, as the beneficiary communities are able to sustain the interventions,” she emphasized. From the farmers’ testimonies, it is evident that household approach is more workable and empowering as continuity is guaranteed among family members across value chains.

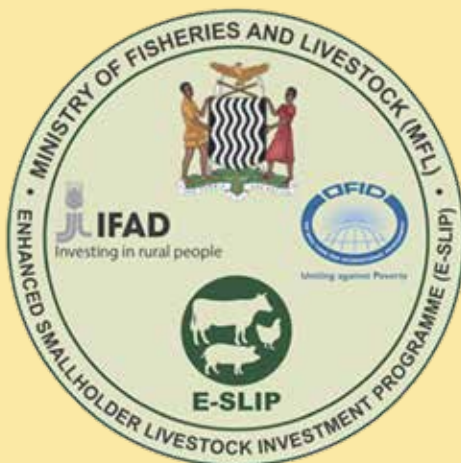
For communities to own project interventions, they must adhere to the specified time-frame of implementation in the project document to direct their efforts towards equipping beneficiary farmers. This also ensures farmers are nurtured through a process that assures continuity and a spillover effect to other farmers in the farming community.





Improving Rural Household Incomes





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