**Field Project Reviews – Project re-conceptualization and visioning process**

**Project name: Women Led Honey Value Chain Development Project**

**Project rethinking and co-creation and project review meeting with communities**

1.0

Date: 07/05/2019

**Tikondane Women Club (Beekeeping and VSL group)**

Learning visit to the club with Tigwizane noted several things recorded for future programming, continued co-creation and scale-up conceptualization as needed and these included the following:

1. Generally, there is a ‘hand out’ mentality among the women under Tigwirizane interventions groups – Need to foster group dynamics mentorship/training in the next years of pursuing interventions
2. Group members act individually and yet see the groups as conduit for receiving development aid support – Group and association formation needed to promote farmer-to-farmer learning across the larger area that cover good performing groups. The group already works with one innovative farmer ‘Mr. Shadreck Stuart’ – who support the women on probono basis on beekeeping technical-expertise support. Future interventions therefore need to scope ‘innovative farmers’ and design associations around them to work as change agents towards cooperative development in respective value chains
3. The group tend to transact with closed tendencies to other non-group members to emulate the development thinking – Need to foster open door community learning and future project interventions should include having ‘innovation fairs or open days’ for community learning and innovation scale-ups

**Group visioning**

**Asked on what would be next-steps to ensure project scalability & sustainability?**

1. Communities prefer to engage in diversified agro-based activities such as vegetables and horticultural value, or contract marketing on soya beans production (largely viewed to be implemented at individual level for aggregation during harvest season) – The women group was already searching for land to rent for group market driven farming with focus on tomatoes, cucumber & sugar beans plus green maize. Some of the group members indicated to have leant from *Chimwankhunda* cooperative on soya beans production and proceeding of cooking oil plus soya milk using a bulking group approach (“we want such interventions as well”).
2. Lessons: It was leant that similar arrangement had been undertaken before where DAPP and/or Concern Universal (now UP) supported community group on various agricultural production activities for two and five years respectively, but they all collapsed after project phase due to land ownership issues. Land belongs to chiefs and are only spared to cater for project period – scale-up project phases need to incorporate gender and land ownership issues to establish possibilities of permanent pieces of land for group community development initiatives.
3. It was noted that group based interventions need to have a deliberate link to support household level development and ensure that the youth (both in school and out school) are of key interest to participate in community development efforts (youth groups need to be formed)
4. Further notation was made that the project need to focus on concretizing outcome based results that include realization of honey harvests, market linkages and return on investments. There is need to ensure the project is grounded into community self-driven programming and ‘broad based linkages’ are pursued – self micro-investment need be to be fostered i.e. VSLs would support access to land for group agri-production. Development partners to communities such as Greenlivelihoods, need to link ‘promising community groups’ to financial institutions (i.e. Green Fund Ltd) and service providers plus markets (i.e. agro dealers and extension services) to ensure self-reliance and sustainability
5. Lessons: Women indicated to have started becoming more self-reliant at household level as opposed to overreliance on men’s support on household economic support including supporting children on school needs and costs (development fund – ‘the primary school fees’)
6. The women prefer to grow big in beekeeping, despite the area facing a lot more challenges as it has limited sources of water and availability natural forests that favor bee-colonization. Broad based formation of associations that goes beyond ‘village boundaries’ was suggested as a solution despite communities ‘seemingly’ reluctance owing to perceived communal politics’
7. The groups need to have effective communication platforms apart from ‘episodic’ meetings that are held (women indicated that few have cell-phones and mostly rely on men’s/husbands handsets for communication – *this should be read with the sense of hand-out expectation mentality too*) – NB: Need to lead women groups to ‘Household level’ targeting and ensure gender sensitive targeting as possible (Male champions approach needed). Interventions such as radio listening, linkage to extension toll free lines, farmer-to-farmer learning visitations and community asset co-locating usages need to be implemented for broad area development outcomes.
8. Women groups proposed project need to support organic fertilizer making to ensure increased crop productivity.

**2.0**

**09/05/2019 – Co-creation meeting with Mr. Shadreck Stuart (an innovative self-reliant farmer)**

1. Greenlivelihoods team, visited Mr. Shadreck the ‘innovative beekeeper’ and it was established he is more than willing to continue offering probono extension services to other farmers on beekeeping and also leading intervention groups if such arrangement is put in place. He lamented for lack of self-driven development with the coming of NGOs and their ‘freebies’ approaches that have killed the hard working mentality that communities used to have in the past.
2. It was leant that Mr. Shadreck is a well-qualified and passionate beekeeping and general natural resource management trainer after attending self-sponsored trainings that were delivered by USAID funded COMPASS II program (in 2007).
3. He has once participated in national agricultural fair in Blantyre under the auspices of AICC that supported the marketing/branding (labels) part of the honey packages – and yet the needed support was scaling-up the enterprise to reach economies of scale.
4. If on marketing, future support need to focus on growing production levels, marketing linkages, product standardization (i.e. registration with MBS etc.) – as current market is home-sale, where established individual buyers are informed on days of harvests (twice a year – May-June and Nov-December)
5. The meeting suggested that the need to form a ‘honey value chain innovative network’ that would put focus on youth-women-men inclusive development approaches – extending to schools by forming ‘nature clubs’ as Malawi used to have before. It was further noted that the intervention package should also include other ‘fast yielding activities’ to supplement honey value chains.
6. “we initiated a bee-keeping farmer group development process here but it died down because of the hand-out mentality rooted in the people here” – there is need to ensure self-initiated and valued programming otherwise development will remain a night mare in Malawi. For instance, a group was formed in *Funsani* village and they are still awaiting Greenlivelihoods and other well-wishers to support them with production inputs, otherwise it dies down”. All these groups need to culminate into a sustainable network that can also fundraise on its own – **with special drive on knowledge transfer to our ‘children’ and the youth. Furthermore, youth need to venture into fast moving value chains such as ‘tomatoes, cucumbers, water melon etc.’ to hold into long-term development participation.**
7. **Action:** *Mr. Stuart to meet the youth and other potential groups plus individuals to map the way-forward on formation an association of integrated development package. It was suggested that he will encourage the groups to form associations that would built into a cooperative with time (The also recommended that Greenlivelihoods needs to support resourcing and market linkages plus certification processes for this to materialize).*

**09/05/2019 – Learning visit to Pumphunthe – Club (17 members – 9 women & 8 men)**

1. The visit to Pumphunthe was more enlightening on self-driven group development initiatives. With 10 hives the group feels inadequate to make effective business for the group. The group added 2 beehives (that were made by a local artisan in the area) to make it 12 against the estimated total of over 50 hives that the forest can accommodate if honey commercialization is to be initiated. The two hives were reported to have been supported by visiting high school student volunteers from Denmark that came through with support from Dan Church Aid (DCA)
2. The group also plies village savings and loans as part of beefing up their financial capital (last year total savings shared at end of financial year hit up to Mwk290000). However, suggested for a more diversified and value chain development and processing group development approaches – where they cited the need to promote contract farming, value addition to agro-products such as soya etc. and also linkages to established markets.
3. The meeting observed that there was great need for the group to open to communities and other groups such as the youth (boys and girls) to be part of the co-ration, group formation and value chains development including featuring the youth as change agents i.e. through digital migration development and marketing including innovation incubation via research.
4. Honey was reportedly being harvested twice a year – as this is partly driven floral and water availability patterns (rain cessation around July and start of rain season around Nov – same as learnt from Mr. Shadreck – Need for more training on the honey value chain development and marketing plus diversified micro-investment options)

**Visioning**

1. The group intend/aspires to scale up honey value chain development
2. The group need to have a scale-up number of associative groups, increased number hives (suggested number at least 50 hives) and also diversified income sources plus promoting value addition especially on soya products – where finished products such as cooking oil, soya milk etc. were cited as dreamt examples
3. Need to foster ‘long-term’ development investment with Greenlivelihoods & its partners no the on and off co-creative partnership styles that are dictated by donor support

**Remaining community feedback**

* Communities had been requested again on their own and rank/prioritize on what they think is their development pathways. The facilitating team is yet to revisit communities for their feedback before the 24th of May 2019.