

# Unheard Voices:

## Marginal farmers in Zambia's Western Province



Photo: Courtesy PELUM field team.  
A farmer's household in Senanga district

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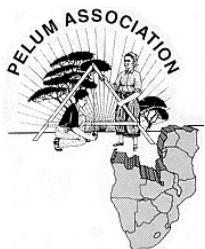
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## Dedication

This research is dedicated to the memory of Mr. Mnconywa Mahlathi Moyo, farmer, advocate, Chair of the Mongu District Farmers Association and friend of Concern Worldwide.

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# List of abbreviations

<b>ACF</b>	.....	Agriculture Consultative Forum
<b>AU</b>	.....	African Union
<b>BRE</b>	.....	Barotse Royal Establishment
<b>BSA</b>	.....	British South African Company
<b>CAADP</b>	.....	Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme
<b>CSO</b>	.....	Central Statistics Office
<b>DACO</b>	.....	District Agriculture Coordinator
<b>DC</b>	.....	District Commissioner
<b>DCDI</b>	.....	District Cooperative Development Inspectors
<b>DDDC</b>	.....	District Development Coordinating Committee
<b>DDCM</b>	.....	District Disaster Management Committee
<b>DMCO</b>	.....	District Marketing Cooperative Office
<b>DPO</b>	.....	District Planning Officer
<b>FAO</b>	.....	Food and Agriculture Organisation
<b>FARA</b>	.....	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
<b>FGD</b>	.....	Focus Group Discussion
<b>FNDP</b>	.....	Fifth National Development Plan
<b>FRA</b>	.....	Food Reserve Agency
<b>FSP</b>	.....	Fertiliser Support Program
<b>IFAD</b>	.....	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>MACO</b>	.....	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
<b>MDFA</b>	.....	Mongu District Farmers Association
<b>MMCI</b>	.....	Maureen Mwanawasa Community Initiative
<b>MP</b>	.....	Member of Parliament
<b>NAP</b>	.....	National Agricultural Policy
<b>NCC</b>	.....	National Constitutional Commission
<b>NDP</b>	.....	National Development Plan
<b>NEPAD</b>	.....	The New Economic Partnership for African Development
<b>NGO</b>	.....	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>PACO</b>	.....	Provincial Agriculture Coordinator
<b>PAM</b>	.....	Program Against Malnutrition
<b>PDCC</b>	.....	Provincial Development Coordinating Committee
<b>PSMC</b>	.....	Permanent Secretary for Marketing and Cooperative
<b>PSRP</b>	.....	Public Service Reform Programme
<b>SAP</b>	.....	Structural Adjustment Program
<b>WFP</b>	.....	World Food Program
<b>YWCA</b>	.....	Young Women's Christian Association
<b>ZNFU</b>	.....	Zambia National Farmers Union

# Executive summary

This study examines the challenges faced by marginal farmers in three districts (Mongu, Senanga and Kaoma) in Zambia's Western Province. Further, it examines the extent to which the Zambian government and donors are helping them to address those challenges. The study assesses the agricultural related policy landscape in Zambia and examines how the policy process translates into policy decisions and action. The above was undertaken with a view to determining whether current and pending policies reflect the views of marginal farmers and, if not; whether there are opportunities within the policy and decision making processes at which marginal farmers could make interventions.

The study discovered that there are many categories of marginal farmers. Farmer marginalisation is broadly contextual, although in most instances it is the product of a complex cocktail of factors that conspire against farmers. These include lack of access to basic services, infrastructure, inputs and credit, poor extension services, absence of agro-storage and marketing facilities; exclusion from policy making for and remoteness in addition to increasing frequency and severity of floods and droughts.

Further the study noted that besides government driven interventions, farmers have in addition to contend with a multiplicity of other interventions from a wide range of policy actors such as multilateral and bilateral donors, international and national NGOs, UN agencies as well as the Barotse Royal Establishment. The research noted that although all these multiple efforts attempt to respond to the plight of marginalized farmers they are not well coordinated and could further contribute to farmer marginalization.

# Chapter one: Context and methodology

This study specifically examines why, and the extent to which, poor farmers are excluded from agriculture policy processes and programmes in Western Province. Data collected from visits to villages in the three districts of Kaoma, Mongu and Senanga provide the basis for analysis in this report.

At the turn of the millennium, the province had a population of 784,509, marking a 29% jump from 1990. Density is highest around Mongu and the Barotse<sup>1</sup> Plain and there is a considerable population of Angolan refugees. A regional analysis of poverty levels in the country in 2006 showed that Western Province had the highest percentage (65%) of extremely poor households in Zambia.

## The agricultural economy in Western Province

Mixed smallholder farming and livestock-keeping constitute the major economic activities. Crops cultivated include tobacco, rice, maize (mbonyi), sweet potatoes (ngulu), cassava (mwanja), sorghum (mabele), millet (mauza), assorted vegetables (maloho), groundnuts (ndongo), mbambara nuts (litu) and cowpeas. Maize, sorghum and cassava are mainly grown for domestic consumption while tobacco, rice and vegetables are grown for sale. Livestock raised includes chickens, pigs and cattle, the latter being considered most important as an indicator of prestige and wealth. Cattle are owned by men and are critical for paying bride prices or dowries.

“Agriculture is primarily subsistence with limited interface with micro trade in maize, rice, fish and cattle which provides cash for some households. Beer brewing is an important source of cash for the poorer households, while government employment and remittances from urban employment provide an input of cash into the rural economy as well. The above commercial initiatives have however had little impact upon the overall character and standards of living among the general population in the Province, making it one of the poorest in the country” (CSO, 2000).

87.6% of formally-employed people in the province are in the agriculture sector. Due to the lack of industry in the province, there are few opportunities to add value to the many agriculture (including livestock) and aquaculture commodities that the area produces. Opportunities to enhance incomes and livelihoods in the province are thus limited.

## Education

Currently, there are very few schools at either basic or high school levels and Western Province has no college or university to provide tertiary education. The province has the lowest adult literacy rate in the country (LCMS 1996).

At 56%, primary school enrolment (in 2000), from 49% in 1990 is significantly below the national average of 62.2%. Secondary school attendance is also below the national average of 54% standing at 50%.

Though literacy levels improved between 1990 and 2000 it was observed that rates for males are higher than those for females in both rural and urban areas. Gender disparities in enrolments are more significant at secondary and in higher education institutions due to girls marrying early. The number of boys attending school was higher than that of girls both in rural and urban communities. Disadvantaged children are mostly females from rural areas; most of whom are likely not to enrol beyond basic primary education.

Low levels in enrolment in rural areas has also attributed to longer distances of communities from schools. Due to the lack of provincial tertiary education and the cost of living and studying in Lusaka, those who progress beyond secondary school level have few options beyond primary school teacher training or nursing.

<sup>1</sup> Barotse is the indigenous name of the province and is derived to the general reference to the Lozi people.

## Health

General health conditions in the province are poor, as evidenced by CSO 2000 statistics. Although infant mortality rates in the province declined by 2% between 1990 and 2000, they are still high in comparison to other provinces in the country.

Though infant mortality in the province declined from 113 to 110 deaths in every 1000 children born between 1990 and 2000, it is still well above the national average of 77 per 1000.

The under-five mortality rate declined slightly in Western Province from 238 to 233 per 1000 children between 1990 and 2000. Mongu, one of the three study districts, recorded the lowest provincial level while Kalabo<sup>2</sup> recorded the highest with almost 25% of under-five children dying before reaching the age of 5.

The upsurge in the HIV/AIDS pandemic reached its peak in the structural adjustment period of the early 1990s and claimed a significant proportion of the labour force. It left many orphans and other vulnerable children under the care of old and poverty stricken grandparents, most of whom are marginal farmers.

## Research methodology

### Primary data

An extensive literature review was conducted prior to and after field interviews to gather secondary data. The documents were sourced from government and research institutions dealing with agriculture as well as from NGOs working in Western Province.

Through several source documents, the theoretical underpinnings of the study were examined. The literature review also provided an opportunity to understand the gaps in information that needed to be explored further with field interviews and triangulated with the views from key informants. The secondary data sources also provided important insights in to the policy landscape of Zambian agriculture.

### Secondary data

Prior to the field study, a research team was organized and trained in participatory approaches and a field interview guide was developed. In addition, district-based researchers were recruited and enumerators and translators from the local communities were trained to assist in gathering data. Three districts, Mongu, Kaoma and Senanga were targeted and the study team interviewed respondents mobilised by the Concern Worldwide district teams either as individuals or in focus group meetings. The interview guide enabled a consistent flow of information in line with the aims and objectives of the study. Community level information was gathered using a range of participatory tools which included key informants interviews, focus group discussions, historical profiles, photographs, videos recordings and transect walks.

<sup>2</sup> Kalobo was not among the three study districts but was considered the most marginalized of all the 7 districts in the province.

## Overview of field areas



Map of Zambia showing Western and other Provinces  
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The sample study area covered 3 out of the 7 districts, approximately 42% of the entire province. 14 villages were reached and 210 respondents consulted through both Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interviews.

FGDs were held and key informant interviews were conducted with farmer association leaders, BRE Indunas<sup>3</sup> and officials, district heads of government departments, district Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MACO) officials and heads of NGOs and donors. Key informant interviews enabled the research team to gather information generated during community meetings. A meeting was also arranged with the Provincial Agriculture Coordinator (PACO) and other provincial MACO personnel.

A peer advisory group comprised representatives from Concern Worldwide, ActionAid, Oxfam GB, FOSUP and the Keepers Zambia Foundation and two meetings were held during the exercise. The advisory group meetings provided important feedback to the research team which enabled deeper analysis and examination of a range of crucial research issues and perspectives and ensured quality assurance. This inclusive approach added extensively to the depth of opinion and perspectives that enriched the research process.

<sup>3</sup> Customary advisor appointed by the Head of the BRE

# Chapter two: Marginal farmers – Policy spaces and decision making processes

## Defining Marginal Farmers

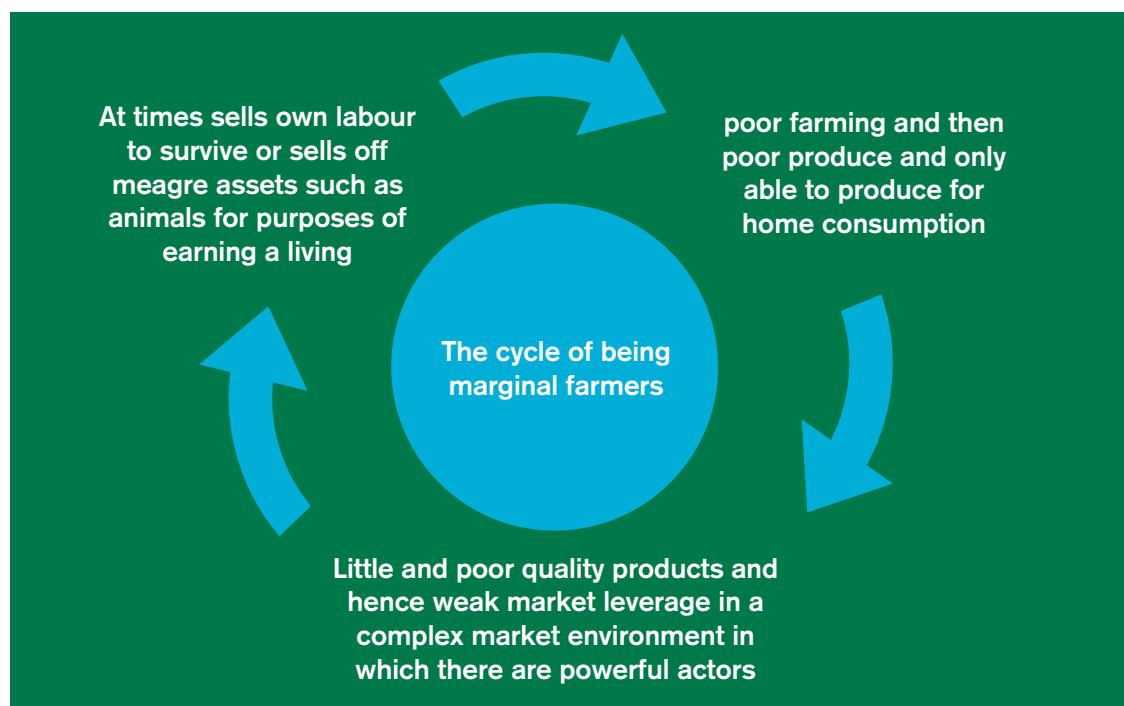


Figure 1

Definitions of small holder farming (a label that is often used to incorporate marginal farming) are typically broad and generally subjective. No agreed definition of smallholder farmers exists and none can be agreed because “smallness” can be understood in different ways. In some cases it is the size of landholding (even this is relative), numbers of livestock, volumes of crops taken to market etc. Marginal farmers are often left out of policy frameworks because broad categories within the small holder band mean specific features of marginal farming are overshadowed.

It was essential to establish who marginal farmers actually are in the Zambian context. This kind of farmer is generally resource poor with few capital assets. At times farmers will sell their own labour to earn cash for household essentials including foodstuffs and to pay for basic health and education. The sale of labour reduces farmers’ capacity to farm their own plot and the lack of available technology results in low productivity. This means that household staples will often be in short supply and other factors such as variable weather and inadequate input delivery will often result in dangerous levels of food insecurity.

The study showed that marginal farmers who are dependent on farming in the Western Province are not able to rely on income from farming to survive.

Although the background documents do not define who marginal farmers are, there are several characteristics of marginal farmers worth exploring. Poor local infrastructure compounds the physical remoteness of marginal farming which has a negative impact on trade and market access. This is worsened by social factors which mean several farmers lack marketing experience (partially explained by poor levels of formal education). From a political perspective farmers are excluded by the procedures of policy actors which fail to include the perspective of farming communities in the formation and implementation of policy outcomes.

Furthermore marginal farmers do not form one unified group and are stratified by social divisions such as gender inequality; this has a direct affect on women’s access to equal land rights.

## **Understanding the impact of policy and decision making processes on marginal farmers**

### Policy formulation

One of the central objectives of the study was to analyse the extent to which local, (district and provincial) as well as central (national) government policy and decision-making responds to marginal farmers' needs. The study particularly examined the various agricultural policies being implemented in Zambia, how they were formulated whether they respond to marginal farmers' interests and the extent to which marginal farmers were included in policy processes.

From the above premise, the team consulted several policy documents to deepen understanding of 1) current regional and national agricultural policy; 2) how existing policy spaces and decision-making processes impact on farmer engagement.

### **Regional and National Agricultural Policy:**

#### Comprehensive African Agriculture development program (CAADP)

Since 2003 when the CAADP was adopted as the overarching agricultural policy for Sub-Saharan Africa, great effort has been made to align national policy with the CAADP. The study therefore examined how the policy and decision making landscape has transformed in light of the CAADP.

It is noteworthy though, that CAADP as a continental policy was heavily top down and carries with it a political currency because its formulation relied more on political consultation with powerful political stakeholders. Then AU president Olusegun Obasanjo clearly acknowledges this, "The CAADP document is a product of a partnership between NEPAD and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. It is also a direct result of invaluable contributions by multilateral institutions such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme, the World Bank and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)..."

Many farmers and even government extension workers in Mongu district are completely unaware of what CAADP is and what it does. The recent CAADP stakeholder meeting in Lusaka did not involve marginal farmer associations from Western Province.

#### National Agriculture Policy (NAP)

The objective of the current NAP, further emphasized in the Fifth National Development Plan, (FNDP), is to facilitate and support the development of a sustainable and competitive agricultural sector in order to ensure food security and income generation at household and national levels and maximize the sector's contribution to gross domestic product. This was to be achieved through increased production, sector liberalization and commercialization, promotion of public and private sector partnerships and provision of effective services that would ensure sustainable agricultural growth.

For instance, the NAP expects that farmers will be mobilised to form cooperatives and through those cooperatives, will be visibly able to contribute to policy implementation. This factor was further underscored by the FNDP and has since become the driver for extension delivery. Notwithstanding the intention, farmer involvement in policy development is haphazard and the voices of all farming groups are not heard. The system does not clearly determine when farmers could or should input into policy and farmers are unable to identify which policies are in place. The main channel between national policy and farmers would ideally be extension officers. In Western Province, however, extension services are poorly funded and the recruitment of adequate numbers of officers has not been effectively addressed by government.

## Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE)

It was essential for the study team to examine the BRE not so much in its capacity as policy making body but more in the role it plays in regulating land use and ownership.

The BRE is a royal institution with a long history in Zambian agriculture. Its main role is to regulate the utilisation and ownership of land. All land in the three study districts belongs to the BRE and land can only be allocated to the central government on request for development purposes.

In remote places in the province, although people freely use land and can refer to their plots as their own, the legal ownership remains firmly secured by the BRE and its representatives. In their responses to the study team, farmers in remote locations raised lack of land titles as one of their major challenges affecting their capacity to use land as an asset to generate more wealth. Importantly the BRE does not allocate land to women. The lack of available land titles denies them access to financial services such as micro credit making it more difficult for them to invest in and improve farming methods.

## Policy processes, spaces and farmer engagement

The study found that agriculture policy formulation, and decision-making, are not necessarily well-defined linear and predictable processes. Instead, they are technical, contestable and often unpredictable exercises. Policies in Zambia are formulated at multiple levels and a range of actors take part in these processes. Policies and decisions are formulated and made through formal constitutional spaces such as the national parliament and the cabinet, as well as government departments at national, provincial and district levels.

The strategic plans of both governmental and non-governmental actors are generally unknown to each other. Although some degree of awareness seemed to exist among donors and international NGOs, in regard to one another's programmes, they nevertheless seem to prioritise their respective individual activities.

There is no agreed mechanism that draws and binds them together for collective strategising. Even district development committee meetings, which should be the central forum for such information sharing, is attended by choice and not obligation. Consequently, the various ongoing development interventions are broadly disparate with little opportunity to collectively respond and assess how progress is being delivered.

Depending on the way agricultural policy is conceived and constructed, spaces may include or exclude farmers. One of the challenges that farmers highlighted was the complex language which is used to convey agriculture and other government policy. When such policies or messages are not translated into simple English or local languages, they are poorly understood and inadequately implemented as farmers cannot hold local officials and extension staff to account.

In these spaces, the contribution of farmers is rarely sought in a systematic way. Where such efforts materialise, farmers' consultations or contributions are often made indirectly through what are perceived as farmers' representative bodies such as the Zambia National Farmers Union.

In addition, there are informal and almost parallel policy and decision-making spaces such as those of the BRE, the donor community and NGOs. These multiple structures and their associated decision-making mechanisms carry important implications for farmers. Despite their best intentions these mechanisms, to an often indiscernible degree, also contribute to farmer marginalisation. The study found, for instance, that farmers classified themselves as belonging to the various organisations that worked with them. More marginal farmers seemed to be left out of these processes often because they did not meet basic qualification conditions such as payment of a group membership fee or being located in the target areas of a particular project or programme.

The role of women in policy formulation and implementation has had been advanced by efforts undertaken by NGOs. However huge gender disparities persist at district and community levels; women still face cultural and legal barriers to control over land and access to food.

# Chapter three: The challenges for marginal farmers – in their own words

This chapter summarises the field findings from the three districts Mongu, Kaoma and Senanga. Farmer discuss issues such as exclusion, transparency of public actors, access to inputs and the impact of climate change on the local environment.

## **Exclusion from policy and decision-making processes leads to lack of confidence in government**

“Some of these [farmers] can't even contribute to policy because they can't manage to talk to anybody; they are not linked with any institution of authority at all”.

**Farmer leader, Mongu District Farmer's Association**

“We don't know about policy but we just hear about policies but don't know how they are implemented. We are not asked about policies. We are not invited to talk about policies. We only hear about things during public announcements”.

**Mrs. Margaret Mbelele Fwankila**

**of Sefula Area Farmers' Association. Mongu district**

These sentiments were echoed by respondents from several other areas who felt that the government has no clear system of getting them to be part of the policy discourse. For instance, they cited the unexploited role local information centres could play in generating and transmitting local people's ideas to and from MPs.

Farmers felt excluded from mainstream institutions and their policy processes on agriculture. Weak interaction with the area Members of Parliament (MPs) could be another contributing factor as it further disconnects and alienates central government from the local population.

It is clear from the study that there is plenty going on in response to the development needs of the province. It is, however, equally true that the poor are not necessarily fully aware of, or adequately consulted during, the shaping of these developments. Where consultations happen, they tend to be tokenistic and feedback is broadly lacking. In essence, assumptions are held in most respects that the answers to the needs of the poor or marginalised are known. These assumptions may not necessarily be accurate.

In Mongu, farmers wanted to actively participate in policy formulation and put forward the case for farmer meetings and radio programmes being used to convey their views. This process should allow time to include feedback by farmers.

They also expressed that farmer feedback should be treated as an important part of policy formulation and review, arguing that for farmers' participation in policy formulation to increase meetings between the extension officers and farmers should be intensified. This could be through greater attention to farmer cooperatives .

## **Access to farming inputs and credit is poor, and private sector involvement in input markets is limited**

“over 90% of farmers in Kaoma district are marginalized and they just produce without planning [...] they just produce by chance [...] land cultivation is by chance. The farmers are insecure due to low or no income, and they are never sure where and when inputs will be secured and whether the inputs will come”

**Safiya Nalisa, Chairperson of Nkenyema Information Centre in Kaoma**

<sup>4</sup> At the time of the study Mr. Likando Liswaniso the District Cooperative Inspector affirmed that the district had 77 cooperative societies although only 10 were active members of the District Cooperative Union.

“If an individual farmer who had money intended to purchase fertilizer from the FSP, he or she would only do so by teaming up with nine other farmers who should also have the cash at hand. In the absence of that this farmer with money would be denied access to FSP inputs just like those without - this is grossly unfair. If the program could cater for everyone indiscriminately then it could be good”.

**Mrs. Nyambe of Lui-Mwemba**

Under the FSP the government subsidises the cost of fertilizer by about 50%. This means it is a challenge for the private sector to compete in the market. Private sector involvement in agro-inputs supply to farmers is also hampered by transport costs. In Mongu, PACO noted “As a consequence of the FSP, the private sector focuses on doing business with profitable areas and not remote, inaccessible and unprofitable places.”

On one hand fertiliser subsidies by FSP makes private sector involvement in this area unprofitable, whilst on the other, the prices of fertilisers was deemed too high by poorer farmers. Consequently, farmers were slowly opting for the less costly and readily available organic fertiliser.

“We are being encouraged by the lack of fertiliser not to use them. Instead, we produce organic rice, maize, vegetables. Like now we concentrate on rice and vegetables because our soils are better suited for rice than other crops”.

**Member of Sefula area farmers’ association**

The FRA and FSP were the most common government initiatives known to respondents. Farmers did not support the PACO’s view that most of them know about these policies and were involved in their formulation. They asserted that this was through representation by the ZNFU, Agricultural Consultative Forum (ACF) and local parliamentarians. While the FSP is viewed as a positive intervention to help poor farmers, the exclusive focus on farmers in groups of ten or more was seen as exclusionary.

### **Poor agriculture extension service lead to inadequate input delivery, technical advice and information**

The low number of agriculture extension officers means that many farmers in remote rural areas are not reached. The District Agriculture Coordinator in Mongu summarised this scenario well:

“...our limited staff combines with our limited resources causing hiccups which make policy implementation cumbersome”.

**Mr. Ngambi, District Agricultural Coordinator, Mongu**

The Mongu District Agriculture Coordinator (DACO) confirmed the constraint of inadequate staffing saying that 12,000 smallholder farmer households are served by 27 Agricultural Camp Officers and 8 Veterinary Camp Assistants. Senanga District, with 18,000 households, has only 15 extension staff. Positions for most of the technical specialists at the districts are vacant, resulting in overstretching of an already lean staff base.

Respondents recalled how, in the past, government extension staff used to visit farmers and discuss crop problems in the field. Now extension officers act as consultants. A farmer who needs assistance has to go to the extension officer’s office. Advice is given even without visiting the field to gain first hand knowledge of the farmer’s problem.

“Things are not well with farmers nowadays as government extension officers tend to discuss fields and crops that they have never seen – discussions are only held in the offices where there are no crops or livestock [...] yes a limited number of extension staff are there but they choose to stay in offices all the time”

**Frank Situmbeko farmer in Lukanda, Mongu district.**

One member of Lui Lilela Farmers' Association spoke of the problem of corruption as a factor in restricting farming knowledge:

“Whenever, we have a problem with our field crops or livestock, we have to walk several tens of kilometres to ask for technical advice but the extension officers ask as for a payment in order to assist us [...] but we fail to pay and therefore they also refuse to assist us [...] this is hampering our acquisition of farming knowledge”

**A farmer of Lui Lilela area Farmers Association, Senanaga district**

Farmers in Kalundwana cited the lack of extension visits since the transfer of their existing officer during the Chiluba government eight years ago:

“We haven't got another one since although there is a house for the extension officer now occupied by the guard who may want to live there permanently because he has been there for far too long”.

**Member of Kalundwana Area Farmers Association, Mongu district**

Farmers in Matongo decided to form training groups to make it easier for officers who would otherwise have to meet with many farmers individually.

The Senaga District Agricultural and Cooperative Officer recommended that farmers' participation in policy formulation could be enhanced by improving direct meetings between farmers and extension officers through targeting specific farmers policy proposals and disseminating agricultural policy updates.

The extension gap has, however, been slowly filled by NGOs such as Women for Change, Young Women Christian Association, Concern Worldwide and Program Against Malnutrition who provide agriculture training and distribute farming inputs. Though NGOs have intervened to provide agriculture training, distribute farm inputs and build capacity, it is unclear how they link with existing extension services.

## **Remoteness and poor local infrastructure restrict market activity in agricultural communities**

The lack of agro storage facilities near farming or market towns in the province means that it is difficult for farmers to store and supply their produce. In addition to the transport costs incurred to deliver produce to buying centres, usually located in towns, farmers also lamented the low prices dictated by the FRA and length of time it takes for payment on produce delivered.

Farmers of Munkunye area in Kaoma district formed a group to deal with the problem of market access in 2006. Subsequently they opened an information centre with support from ZNFU.

“(We) wanted to have one big voice in agro-production, marketing and so on...we initially lacked a voice which could be heard. We want everyone to find food and fight against poverty if possible.”

**Member of the Munkunye Area Farmers Association, Kayoma District**

Farmers also said that unlike the FRA, Namboard was broad based in its marketing. Besides dealing in a wide range of crops, it also sold subsidized inputs to all categories of farmers and offered transport for farm produce.

“When compared to FRA, the Namboard purchasing system was transparent because weighing of grain was done in front of the farmer’s eyes”

**Lubasi of Lui Mwemba.**

“We do not sell our crops to FRA because the FRA depot is located only in Senanga and they only came to buy only rice (and not maize) last year (2007) [...] and they only bought from farmers with half a ton and more [...] and they have never been seen in this area since [...] Namboard was buying all crops and from all categories of farmers, big or small, and Namboard prices were fairer”

**Nasilele of Lui Mwemba**

Livestock keeping is a significant livelihood activity in the district and respondents had specific issues around cattle. The government imposed a ban on transportation of livestock and the use of refrigerated containers for slaughtered animals became mandatory. Resource poor farmers cannot afford such transportation and, as a result, the primary beneficiaries in the beef sector, despite increasing demand and consumption, are bigger suppliers and companies.

“When we were young, before independence, our parents had animals and they provided manure for the fields. Therefore, we had good harvests. We also produced millet and groundnuts using natural fallow systems”.

**Mr. Fwanyanga Mukutu Sefula (70-years old)**

Where surplus exists, farmers would like to be able to sell it but aren't able to due to lack of transport.

“We would like a situation where we would be able to hire transport and take our commodities to sell in urban markets where prices are better [...] but the roads are so bad that many transporters are reluctant to move their trucks on such dilapidated roads. The bad roads also cause the few willing transporters to charge exorbitantly for their crop haulage services”

**Mrs. Situmbeko of Matongo in Senanga district.**

Picture: Courtesy of Richard Chintu: Farmers transport maize from Lui Mwemba to Senanga for sale in a boat being pulled over a sandy road by oxen





Photo: Courtesy of PELUM study team. A vegetable garden in Kaoma district.

On crop marketing, **Mrs. Etambuyu Mundia** a member of Sefula Farmers Association said:

“Rice is our major cash crop but it is also new in the area, unlike other crops that were produced by our parents. The selling prices are difficult to determine. Despite producing the best rice in the country, we do not have a proper place to sell our rice. We do not have good packaging and labelling to ensure good prices. We sell at ‘give-away’ prices because the market is not organized. Since we have no stable markets, we are at the mercy of briefcase businessmen [...] transport is not there to take rice to the urban market [...] so we keep the harvested rice with us and wait for people to come and buy cheaply from us”.

The study noted that although the farmers of Sefula are associated with ZNFU and the Mongu District Farmers Association (MDFA), they still felt that they needed additional support and wider networks to be able to adequately respond to the challenges of marketing. They wished that government or any other institution could connect them to well-established rice markets because they themselves have very limited capacity or resources to do so.

The study found that the momentum behind group formation is enhanced as it is supported by government policy which requires that farmers form groups or cooperatives in order to access government subsidies and extension services. Many NGOs also use a group approach to deliver their services to the farmers.

However, farmers complained that when support is not forthcoming, the survival of the groups is threatened and confidence is lost. Moreover efforts at collective action are being frustrated by irregular extension visits.

## Lack of transparency in use of public funds to support farmers

“The system of determining levies is really top-down in nature as there is no provision for consultation or discussions with the farmers and thus levies are just imposed by the top authorities,”

Mr. Ngambi - Mongu District Agricultural Coordinator

The study examined the various interventions undertaken in each district to determine the extent to which such interventions were relevant and beneficial to marginal farmers. Levies and dues on grain and fish are set and collected by both local and central governments without any return for farmers. Farmers are promised public service delivery (better roads and extension services) but respondents saw these as not forthcoming.

However, it was recognised that levies do make a positive impact as they enable government to generate resources for sustaining public service provision such as free livestock and human vaccinations.

## Flooding, drought and environmental degradation

“Farming now is different and difficult. Sometimes rains start in November or later. When it comes, it rains and rains continuously for almost three days, which is bad for our crops. This time we had a mix of persistent droughts and floods. The weather patterns have gone completely mad. When we expect a drought, there is too much rain and vice versa. The rains destroy houses and wash away fields. It is getting even worse each year. There is also confusion in the weather information given by weathermen. Weather reports often mislead us. “As far as I can remember the last three years have been un-surpassed in terms of the amount of rainfall [...] rainfall has been too high as compared to the past years!”

80 year old Mr. Silumezi of Lui Mwemba

Photo courtesy of PELUM filed team: A cow on the arid sandy soil in Kaoma District



Drastic changes in climate were cited as a major problem to farming in the province. Farmers engage in coping strategies such as of simple off-farm income generating activities until floods subside.

Such strategies include making brooms and weaving mats from grass and reeds. As a flood coping strategy, extension staff pointed out that they encourage farmers to diversify their farming through intercropping. This entails intercropping early maturing maize, millet and sorghum, with rice because it is less susceptible to floods.

However, during prolonged droughts most farmers rely on canals for manual irrigation of small vegetables, maize, sweet potatoes and tobacco plots. This is carried out in particular by those living near permanent water sources such as lagoons, dams and rivers.

## **HIV and AIDS claims the lives of many able-bodied farm-based labourers presenting enormous challenges for vulnerable families**

Several respondents raised concern about the barriers that poor farmers living with HIV and AIDS face in accessing health services.

“As a remote rural community we are disadvantaged in terms of HIV and AIDS treatment...imagine someone who is seriously afflicted and devastated with HIV and AIDS walking for the whole day to Senaga to seek for medication at the hospital...thus, most people fail to access life prolonging drugs and just wait for death to take them slowly.”

### **Widow from Lui Mwenba village**

In Lui Mwemba, the farmer group comprises 312 members, most of whom are widowed women. When quizzed about this striking membership composition, the farmers had this to say;

“There are more widows in the village because men are more careless in life than women so they are dying of HIV and AIDS in more numbers than women”

### **Member of Lui Mwemba Farmers Group**

## **Farmer group dynamics**

Although the study showed that farmer groups facilitate the engagement of policy actors, the team observed that a group approach, if not promoted with caution, can aggravate marginalisation as in some cases they create a form of “village middle class”. This, in turn, creates a form of exclusion that subsequently distances group members from non-group members.

The study found that farmers groups are supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MACO) which encourages the formation of farmer cooperatives. Additionally many NGOs also use a group-based approach in service delivery. Some farmers who do not belong to clubs noted that government and NGOs have policies that support farmers groups and not individual farmers. Therefore, farmers who do not yet belong to groups want to join or form associations in order to access external support.

There is a danger that marginal farmers may be left out of these associations - it might be easier to reach them if they were encouraged to organise themselves around specific interest groups. However, caution should be exercised as this approach may aggravate their marginalisation.

# Chapter four: Recommendations for the Zambian government, donors, NGOs and other development actors

## Support establishment and strengthening of farmers associations, cooperative groups and self help groups

- Support for the formation of farmer groups should be based on the condition that groups are inclusive and do not marginalise vulnerable sections of the farming community. One suggestion was to get marginal farmers to form their own grouping as it might be easier to get their issues on board. Such groupings however, need to be cautious of not further marginalizing poorer farmers; efforts need to also be made to support poorer marginal farmers, especially women, to join farming groups. Marginal farmers are often least likely to be part of farming groups due to time, capacity and resource constraints.
- Another suggestion is to support the growth of cooperatives by constantly ensuring that they deliver products and services that respond to the needs of their membership and especially marginal farmers. Further insights need to be developed on the most effective mechanisms through which cooperatives can develop in a more organic fashion that also considers historical, social and cultural realities. This is especially necessary given that previous group-based delivery mechanisms have had little lasting impact. There is a need to create robust market systems which will involve more farmers, probably through farmer cooperatives. This system should also incorporate the component of local agro-processing to ensure value addition to agro produce.
- In addition, MACO and Farmer Associations need to harmonize the regulation systems in order to avoid competition and antagonism between the two farmer entities.
- Finally, there is a need to improve approaches to the promotion of and engagement with farming groups to ensure the best interests of all farmers are served. One concrete suggestion is to promote farmer participation in policy formulation through including farmers in meetings and radio programmes according to the proposals made by the National Consultation Commission (NCC)

## Increase commitments to agricultural technology improvements and uptake

- The quantity and quality of extension delivery needs to be improved and the system of farmer to farmer extension services (including for livestock) revived. The government should also improve public and private supply of agricultural inputs especially timeliness of seed to allow for early planting of rice and maize.
- MACO needs to be strengthened and re-staffed in order to address the needs of poor farmers. Additionally service providers in the voluntary and not for profit sector should also be considered as a potential alternative to government in extension service provision.
- The merits of the FSP need to be examined to determine both its efficiency and effectiveness. It is possible that the public fertilizer support program has itself contributed to the current woes in the input supply system especially by derailing it from being a fully private sector led intervention and creating deep rooted dependency syndrome in the population. Questions such as cost effectiveness, net food return per unit of fertilizer and overall impact on food security need critical responses from both government and donors.
- The need to increase commitments to agricultural technology improvements and uptake through augmented investments in agricultural research, and policy development that targets the needs of the vulnerable and impoverished households cannot be overemphasized. Lack of adequate agricultural equipment emerged as a major hindrance to improving productivity therefore highlighting the need for appropriate investment in this area.
- MACO should tackle livestock theft and curb livestock disease in a more comprehensive way this could include facilitating the creation of livestock market centres (through the cooperative system, for example) and improving veterinary services.

## **Improve local infrastructure and services**

- Zambian government needs to prioritise rural infrastructure development especially feeder roads, health centers and schools. In addition to this the government needs to invest in agro-storage facilities, market places and irrigation projects.
- Government should enact policies that enhance access to credit facilities by marginal farmers who also lack collateral.
- Given the regular threats from flooding further research into investing in water transport is warranted.
- FRA should diversify (broaden) the range of crops on its purchasing (shopping) list besides maize and as a public enterprise should treat farmers fairly by allowing for price negotiation.
- The Zambian government must make efforts to improve the quality of existing primary and secondary schools. Related investment in tertiary and other professional institutions is equally essential. Gender dimension must be taken into account when investing in education to ensure that female children are included.

## **Increase investments in risk reduction and build community resilience to tackle the impact of climate change**

- Poor communities in Western Province have no form of insurance against the vagaries of weather patterns and climate change. Greater investment by donors in risk reduction and building community resilience is clearly needed. Zambian government, donors and other stakeholders need to explore the possibility of targeted insurance products that respond to the peculiar nature of risks that marginal farmers are confronted with. Programmes such as canal clearing and flood mitigation require more serious consideration, both for their risk reduction and productivity enhancing benefits.

## **Improving government transparency**

- Decentralizing budgets and planning and ensuring there are feedback mechanisms for farmers to engage with the government would help in improving government accountability to marginal farmers.
- Decentralisation of planning is potentially an effective way for marginal farmers in defining their priorities and engaging with policy process at the local level. Real decentralisation offers an opportunity for planning, decision making and implementation to be decentralised to the lowest level with clear budgets to be spent at each administrative level. NGOs clearly have a role to play in this process in supporting marginal farmers in articulating their priorities and influencing the local planning process.
- MACO should encourage district and provincial stakeholders to engage more in agricultural policy through further decentralisation. Farmers should also have more control over how central government funding is allocated by creating mechanisms where farmers' needs are included directly in local spending plans.
- The government needs to ensure that it actively consults with marginal farmers and that feedback mechanisms that raise the value of marginal farmers' voices should be established to enable farmers to impact on policy outcomes and decisions.
- Government should be encouraged to clarify tax and levies policies for farmers and distribute tax revenue fairly to the source districts and within an acceptable timeline. This will enable the local authorities to utilize such resources to address specific local priorities which may not be prioritized in national budgets. Donors can make a contribution to discussions on tax with government parties and invest in relevant tax education programs.

## **Building a coherent development strategy**

- Development actors and partners must acknowledge that the current disjointed approach to development is ineffective. To deal with the challenges of marginal farmers, it is essential for government, donors, NGOs and farmers associations operating in the province work together in creating a development plan where responsibility for individual interventions is clearly outlined.
- In the area of land distribution - creating a new partnership framework on land allocation policies between the BRE and central government would go a long way in building some coherence between the two actors and benefit local farming communities.

# Tables

**Table i: villages visited**

Mongu district	Sefula, Namusakende, Lukanda, Kalundwana, Kasehembe, Simbule
Kaoma district	Mbanuntu, Kamulange, Munkuye
Senanga district	Lui lilela, Liomboko, Namambo, Nang'ondo, Sitongo

**Table ii: respondents by classification.**

Category	Respondents met	
	Male	Female
Farmers	70	100
Government officials	17	4
Donors	4	0
Others	13	2

**Table iii: respondents**

Location	Names																		
Sefula Farmer Leaders, Sefula, Mongu	Lewis Samwene Mundia, Frank Situmbeko Mukelebai, Etambuyu Mundia, Bothwell Mubiana, Margaret Mbelele Fwankila ) Mbanyutu (Burton)																		
Information Centre Association, Kaoma	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Precious Makondo</td> <td>Secretary</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Musiwa Luke Musuna</td> <td>Member</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Justina Mulima Teka</td> <td>Member</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peggy Nayoto Simate</td> <td>Member</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kapals Chinyama</td> <td>Member</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kennedy Mukimba</td> <td>Member</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fundula Fundula</td> <td>Member</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nkumbwa Njaamba</td> <td>Member</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jacqueline Mangoshi</td> <td>Board member</td> </tr> </table>	Precious Makondo	Secretary	Musiwa Luke Musuna	Member	Justina Mulima Teka	Member	Peggy Nayoto Simate	Member	Kapals Chinyama	Member	Kennedy Mukimba	Member	Fundula Fundula	Member	Nkumbwa Njaamba	Member	Jacqueline Mangoshi	Board member
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Kennedy Mukimba	Member																		
Fundula Fundula	Member																		
Nkumbwa Njaamba	Member																		
Jacqueline Mangoshi	Board member																		
KalundwanaFarmers Association, Mongu	Vincent Mate Nakambowa, Muchu Mbangeta, Siwataa Simataa, Muhau Manelele Mulyata Machai, Sitali Simataa, Sitali Katungu, Namunja Siyunyi, Wamundila Sikufele, Chinyemba Liege, Wamundila Litengu, Wamundila Ndulubila, Mrs Kalila, Ngula Mube, Nyambe Sitali, Namasiku Mwene, Mwangala Sitali, Litengu Machai.																		
Kashembe Area, Mongu	Inambao Mubita, Tiyeho Sitali, Namubebo Mulumo, Chibu Nduyi, Kasapo Ukomeha, Pumulo Mulumo, Tetamu Mubita, Mukatimwi Kalaluka, Muletambo Mukusi, Nduyi.																		
MACO, Mongu	Mr. Ngambi (DACO) PACO, Senior Extension Officer, Senior Livestock Officer, Senior Fisheries Officer and Planner,																		
BRE, Mongu	Induna, Mongu																		
Mongu Communities	Several Indunas and communities in Sefula and Namushakend																		
MACO, Senanga	M. Mukelebai (DACO), Likando Liswaniso (DCDI), Howard Halubobwa (DMCO)																		
Senanga Communities	Several community members and Indunas of Lui Mwemba, Matongo, Lui Lilela, Nande, Lunde, Matongo, Namwendwa, Loo and Netondo																		
NGOs	Mike Muleba, Director, Farmer' Organisation Support Programme (FOSUP), Jeremiah Mbewe, Action Aid, PRUVEN Project Coordinator Subrata Chakrabarty, Concern Worldwide John Msimuko, Keeper Zambia Foundation																		

**Table iv: summary of responses from NGOs operating in the province**

Agency	Area of operation	Definition of marginal farmer	Nature of intervention
ActionAid	Kaoma and Lukulu	Those that are food insecure. They can barely produce enough to feed themselves. Such farmers have no access to basic agricultural inputs such for production.	Reduction of Nutritional Vulnerability” (2008) focuses on target vulnerable households, people living with HIV/AIDS and OVCs capacity building to diversify in both agro produce and income generating activities (IGAs). Working through a trial partnership with Keeper Zambia Foundation and FOSUP
Concern World Wide	Mongu, Kaoma and Senanga.	Concern works with the ‘vulnerable but viable farmers’ following the government’s definition. It also helps the ‘destitute’ who may not be viable but require some emergency.	Capacity building of district and area farmers associations and assist them in production, processing and marketing. The capacity building includes governance, management, advocacy and resource mobilization. Also provide inputs support to vulnerable farmers and link them with the government extension services.
KZF	Mongu, Kaoma, Lukulu and Senanga.	Farmers who live in remote areas and are marginalized by distance, have limited access to knowledge and information, illiterate, high poverty levels and are food insecure and lack income.	Seed security, building assets, livestock rearing, sustainable agriculture –soil fertility improvement technologies, business development and entrepreneurship, production of honey, microfinance, setting up boreholes, sanitary facilities, maintenance and education.
FOSUP	Mongu, Kaoma and Lukulu	Marginal farmers can be defined based on several characteristics including remoteness, isolation and distance, limited production:	Institutional capacity building of farmer associations, tailor made/technical training and advocacy. Addresses the state of the roads, capacity building of farmers’ associations marketing information, disseminations. Value chain analysis of cassava and promotes sustainable agriculture.

# Annex

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**CONCERN**  
worldwide

Concern Worldwide  
13 & 14 Calico House,  
Clove Hitch Quay,  
London. SW11 3TN  
Tel: +44 20 7801 1850  
Email: londoninfo@concern.net

Concern Worldwide  
6110 Manchichi Road  
Northmead  
Lusaka, Zambia  
Tel: +260 211 291580  
Email: concern.lusaka@concern.net

Concern Worldwide  
52-55 Lower Camden Street  
Dublin 2  
Republic of Ireland  
Tel: +353 1417 7700  
Email: info@concern.net

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