



## Drought Relief Programme for the Department of Social Welfare in Zimbabwe

**Project Location:** Zimbabwe

**Project Start Date:** September 1992

**Project Duration:** 1 month

### Introduction:

In 1992, Zimbabwe was one of the worst drought affected countries. It was predicted that Zimbabwe would need to import two million tonnes of maize in 1992. The Government of Zimbabwe were involved through the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) with the internal movement of grain supporting the drought relief programme. This operation resulted in the movement of 10,000 tonnes of maize per month to villages. The DSW was required to increase volumes of grain delivered on the drought relief programme from 10,000 tonnes per month to 30,000 tonnes per month through 1,500 delivery points.

The DSW wanted to form an emergency control unit consisting of-

- Drought Relief Specialist
- Transport Specialist
- Information Specialist

The job of this emergency control unit would be to introduce logistic plans and management controls to maximise the use of the DSW fleet of vehicles along with other government vehicles made available to them.

Transaid requested that a team of TNT Managers spend two weeks in Zimbabwe acting as consultants for the DSW. This team were required to provide consultancy assistance to the DSW to aid them in finding appropriate candidates for the emergency control unit. This team also examined transport resources available from various government departments/organisations, implemented management control systems, introduced IT systems at provincial and national level, measured each operation carefully and researched into the benefits of gaining assistance from the private sector.

### Methodology:

Prior to departure, the team from TNT spent time researching previous work undertaken and the current situation relating to Drought Relief work in Zimbabwe. They studied previous reports and communications data from Save the Children (SCF) offices along with copies of various reports sent direct from SCF.

The TNT team began by advising the DSW on the selection of the transport specialist. Following this, they identified training requirements and necessary ongoing support. They also developed a detailed job description covering all areas of responsibilities, recommended a management structure within the transport function and identified clear lines of communications and reporting procedures.

The next initiative of the project involved examining transport resources available from various government departments and organisations. They also examined transport resources available from NGOs and donated vehicles. Through the conduction of surveys and interviews the team was able to identify the willingness of the private sector to be involved with the drought relief programme, understand how private contractors would look to recover their costs/profit, what contractual agreements contractors would be prepared to operate under and the methods and control of payments to private contractors. Additionally, they researched the operational methods and warehouse facilities provided by the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) and the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ).

After completing this, the team made recommendations as to how the private transport sector could be involved on the drought relief programme and how they should be managed and controlled to offer an effective alternative to support the government owned fleet.

### Outcomes:

- The TNT team endorsed the DSW's objective of using government vehicles only. This resulted in the government gaining as much financial benefit from marginally costed vehicles, thus making a major contribution to the limited distribution budget available to them. In the event that the private sector does become involved, contractual and operational agreements will need to be developed so the DSW can manage their contractors on a professional basis.
- SCF advertised for a transport specialist and agreed that the TNT team should undertake a joint screening exercise. After examining each CV and conducting a series of interviews, a transport specialist was appointed. This newly appointed transport specialist then conducted interviews and appointed eight provincial transport co-ordinators.
- The responsibilities and objectives of the provincial transport co-ordinators were clearly explained. They began by working in close conjunction with the District Social Welfare Officer to determine, manage and control distribution and storage using local knowledge of road conditions, vehicle running times and distances to ensure that the Social Welfare fleet was operating to its maximum efficiency. They also endeavoured to develop working relationships with other government organisations within the area to fully understand when their vehicles could be made available. It was decided that the provincial transport co-ordinators should be functionally responsible to the provincial social welfare officer and provincial drought relief co-ordinator. It was then decided that day to day operating decisions should be made at this level; the collation of operating facts, logistics data and performances achieved should be the responsibility of the provincial transport co-ordinator to facilitate a collective operational overview province by province.

- The managers from TNT employed an experienced logistics specialist to assist in the development of the team and the introduction of the management control systems.
- A one week programme of classroom training was made available to the transport specialist and the transport coordinators. During this week, all operational procedures, management reporting systems and lines of communication were examined and agreed. This led to a uniform approach in the collation and presentation of operational data at all levels.
- All goods dispatched from storage points were issued on grain collection slips. This provided proof of delivery, as each document had a unique sequential serial number so reconciliation of all returning notes could be undertaken to ensure none were mislaid. Additionally, for each and every delivery a signature had to be obtained against the volume/bags of grain delivered, this provided further proof of delivery.
- It was agreed that each vehicle working day should be covered by a drivers daily work sheet, to include details such as; supplier of vehicle, volume of grain collected against serial number, arrival/departure time at collection point, km driven and hours worked. From this information, the District Welfare Officer was able to determine the effective productivity of the driver/vehicle, the distances driven, the volumes delivered and any vehicle problems. Thus allowing potential areas of improvement to be identified to maximise the efficiency of the operating fleet.
- A stock movement record was introduced to determine the ongoing balance of relief grain held at collection depots. This allowed for reconciliation depot by depot to identify the total grain held and the amount available for the drought relief programme.
- It was recommended that the district welfare officer should forward consolidated information gained from the control documents weekly to the provincial drought controller.
- IT programmes were introduced to record information regarding the delivery of the grain and to keep paperwork to a minimum. IT spreadsheets were developed so that the data could be collated at provincial level and forwarded to the Social Welfare Emergency control unit for final reconciliation and analysis.
- Research was made into involving the private sector which raised a lot of concerns from both sides (the DSW and the private sector). After a meeting held with the Executive Officer of the Transport Operators Association (TOA), it was concluded that the TOA would welcome contractual agreements and that TOA members could undertake work either at a major national level or at selected provincial levels.
- The private sector has a capability that should not be ignored or dismissed in terms of overall planning, despite concerns and disagreements. They could play a significant role if not at national level certainly at provincial level supplementing the government fleets. Therefore, the TNT managers proposed ways in which the concerns about the private sector could be overcome.

#### Conclusion:

Therefore, in the investigations and evaluations undertaken during this study the TNT managers continually endeavoured to relate to the environment, culture and operational conditions found within Zimbabwe. Suitable candidates were appropriated for the transport positions within the DSW, which, along with effective team

management, could be developed to drive the relief programme forward. Management control systems were implemented and evaluated as key to measuring performance and essential for the overall project. The IT system provided a simple, quick and efficient method of bringing information together for reconciliation, monitoring and budgetary controls.

It was concluded, based upon the statistical research, that the implementation of this range of programmes would have a significant impact on the efficiency of the distribution of grain to provide drought relief.

**Tools Utilised:** A study undertaken on behalf of Save the Children by TNT Express (UK) Ltd- Drought Relief Programme for the Department of Social Welfare in Zimbabwe

**Partners:** Department of Social Welfare Zimbabwe, Save the Children, TNT Express (UK) Ltd.

#### About Transaid:

Transaid is an international UK development charity that aims to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods across Africa and the developing world through creating better transport. Transaid was founded by Save the Children and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. Our Patron is HRH The Princess Royal. Transaid specializes in the following:

- Building the capacity of public health authorities to provide effective, safe and cost efficient transport management systems to promote equitable access to primary health care services.
- Developing and improving logistics and supply chain systems to enhance the delivery of medicines, equipment and relief services to vulnerable communities.
- Promoting effective partnerships to support and enhance community participation in developing sustainable transport solutions in rural areas.
- Developing and delivering transport and logistics training and qualifications for public and private sector operators.

Transaid has the capacity and reach to lead projects throughout the developing world, but is equally capable of providing niche technical assistance to large scale health systems strengthening projects. Transaid maintains strong relationships with a number of leading international organizations including donor agencies such as DfID, DANIDA and USAID, and implementing organizations such as Health Partners International, Options Consulting, John Snow Inc. and Management Sciences for Health.

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