



Support to the Mongu District Farmers Association (MDFA)

Project Location:	Zambia
Project Start Date:	2008
Project Duration:	1 week

Introduction: Farmers in the developing world face a number of challenges in maintaining an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families. Drought, flooding, unavailability of credit and the high cost of fertilizer are just some of the difficulties which farmers encounter in trying to grow crops, let alone get them to market. Transport is important to them for many reasons:

- As the means through which services are delivered to beneficiaries;
- As the most frequently given reason for non delivery of services;
- Service delivery departments and donors across the world spend large amounts of capital and recurrent funds providing transport resources;
- Transport is frequently one of the largest costs within an organisation - often 30-50% of an organisation's expenditure after salaries have been paid;

When funding for more vehicles is found it is often the case that the expected increase in service delivery does not materialise.

In 2008 Transaid received a request for support from Concern Worldwide in Zambia. At the time Concern Worldwide was providing support to the Mongu District Farmers Association (MDFA) to help small-scale farmers improve their production of food. The MDFA were in possession of only one vehicle which they used for meeting with the different Area Farmer Associations, distributing fertilizer, and collecting agricultural produce for the market.

Methodology: Transaid has built the capacities of public sector organisations, such as Ministries of Health and Education, over many years to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to manage their vehicle fleets efficiently. In countries including Ghana and South Africa in the mid 1990's, this work led to the development of the Transaid Transport Management System training manual. The principles on which the manual is based are as appropriate for the single vehicle of the MDFA as for the South African Department of Health with 12,000 vehicles.

The contents of the manual were reviewed to determine which elements were the most appropriate for the MDFA given the short amount of time available for training. Attention was paid to the maintenance regime for the vehicle, the policy which guided the vehicle's use, and the calculation and analysis of running costs. Following the review of the manual a training program was developed which included case studies and practical tasks. A package of tools was also developed so that the trainees could leave the

course equipped with the logbooks, forms and documents they needed to implement effective transport management practises.

Outcomes: Transaid conducted a one week training course for 10 members of the Mongu District Farmers Association including the Chair and Vice-Chair. The training focussed on the following elements:

MODULE 1: Operational Management

Introduction
Tasks and responsibilities
Vehicle planning
Operational controls

MODULE 2: Financial Management

Introduction
Transport finance vision
Replacing vehicles
Annual budget and core financial management

MODULE 3: Fleet Management

Introduction
Maintenance and repair of vehicles
Managing the maintenance schedule
Managing vehicle maintenance
Maintenance options

MODULE 4: Health and Safety

Introduction
Health and safety in transport management
Crash and incident procedures for vehicles
Asset security and transport insurance
Other health and safety issues

MODULE 5: Human Resources

Introduction
Organizational structure
A competent, committed workforce
Developing specific policy guidance

MODULE 6: Monitoring and Evaluation

Key performance indicators

MODULE 7: Situation Analysis

How to conduct a situation analysis

MODULE 8: Policy and Policy Development

Introduction
Policies versus procedures
Policy structures
Reviewing and developing policies

Practical tasks which we included in the training were as follows:

- Logbook completion – All trainees were requested to complete a vehicle logbook using information from an imaginary story about a driver collecting and delivering produce.
- Logbook analysis – Trainees calculated specific key performance indicators including fuel consumption, vehicle utilisation and running cost per km.
- Policy development – Trainees produced a list of the key points which they would expect to be included in a transport policy. The trainees were then presented with a generic transport policy which has been used as the basis for transport policies in a number of organisations throughout Africa. Differences between the trainees' list and the generic policy were discussed.

Throughout the training tools such as logbooks and transport policies were reviewed by the participants in order to assess their applicability to the MDFA. As a result a number of tools were 'localised'; adjusted to be relevant to the MDFA and the context in which they operate. At the end of the training the following documents were available to the MDFA trainees:

- Vehicle logbook
- Monthly transport report template
- Transport policy
- Basic maintenance schedule
- Daily vehicle check sheet

Conclusion: It is hoped that through the training and tools which the MDFA received they will benefit in a number of ways:

- Greater vehicle utilization – ensuring that they get the most from their vehicle
- Reduced maintenance costs
- Reduced maintenance time
- Reduced expenditure on fuel
- Faster response to vehicle demand
- Longer vehicle life

Bearing in mind the number of farmers who rely on the MDFA to provide support to their farming activities, it is of the utmost importance that the one means of transport the MDFA owns is used as efficiently as possible. Through effective planned preventative maintenance procedures, and good ongoing management it is hoped that the MDFA truck will continue to serve its members effectively for years to come.

Tools Utilised: Transaid Transport Management Manual, Transaid Generic Transport Policy

Partners: Concern Worldwide, Mongu District Farmers Association (MDFA)

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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