



Overseas Development Institute

European Aid and the Reduction of Poverty in Zimbabwe

Tony Killick
Jerker Carlsson
and Ana Kierkegaard

Working Paper 109

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EUROPEAN AID AND THE REDUCTION OF POVERTY IN ZIMBABWE

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Foreword

This paper is one of a series on the experience of European development co-operation agencies in the use of their aid programmes for poverty reduction. It is the product of a major collaborative research programme involving ten European development research institutes. The programme breaks new ground in its intention to compare and to draw from the collective experience of donors within the European Union. The Overseas Development Institute played a co-ordinating role. The institutes involved are:

Asociación de Investigación y Especialización sobre Temas Ibero Americanos (AIETI), (Madrid);

Centre for Development Research (CDR), Copenhagen;

Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), Rome;

Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik/German Development Institute, Berlin;

Développement des Investigations sur l'Adjustment à Long terme (DIAL), Paris;

European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), Maastricht;

Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Helsinki;

Nordic Africa Institute (NAI), Uppsala;

Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London;

Third World Centre, Catholic University of Nijmegen, Nijmegen.

The objective of the first stage of this research programme was to describe and assess each donor's goals as they relate to bringing the benefits of aid to poor people, and to review each donor's organisation and management to implement this objective. The ten donor agencies are those of Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK. A series of working papers on each development co-operation agency are being published. Those currently available are the following:

Danish Aid Policies for Poverty Reduction by Lars Udsholt (WP 100, May 1997);
German Aid Policies for Poverty Reduction by Eva Weidnitzer (WP 101, June 1997);
Italian Aid Policies for Poverty Reduction by José Luis Rhi-Sausi and Marco Zupi (WP 102, September 1997);
French Aid Policies for Poverty Reduction by Lionel de Boisdeffre (WP 103, September 1997);
Spanish Aid Policies for Poverty Reduction by Christian Freres and Jesús Corral (WP 104, September 1997);
Swedish Aid for Poverty Reduction: A History of Policy and Practice by Jerker Carlsson (WP 107, April 1998);
Finnish Aid Policies for Poverty Reduction by Timo Vopio (WP 108, July 1998);
Poverty Reduction and Aid: changing perceptions and their influence on aid allocation by Paul Hoebink and Lau Schulpen (WP 110), August 1998; and
The European Community's Approach to Poverty Reduction in Developing Countries by Christiane Loquai, Kathleen Van Hove and Jean Bossuyt (WP 111), August 1998).

The second stage of this collaborative research programme consists of a series of *seven recipient country studies* to examine the operations of the European donors in pursuit of poverty reduction in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, India, Nepal, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Mixed teams from different institutes have undertaken these studies with the assistance of the field offices of the agencies and of local research personnel. Special attention is paid to the country context, the nature of the processes involved including country strategies and dialogue between partners on poverty reduction issues. In addition, a sample of specific interventions are examined to assess the effectiveness of approaches to their identification, targeting, design and implementation as well the benefits they provide to poor people.

This study of the poverty reduction operations of European Development Agencies in Zimbabwe was undertaken by Tony Killick(ODI), Jerker Carlsson (NAI) and Ann Kierkegaard of the University of Gothenburg and is the first of the series to be published. Further country studies and a synthesis report of the findings of the whole programme of research are in preparation. I am most grateful for the co-operation of each Institute in this endeavour and for the help of all those donor officials and advisers who have responded to enquiries and interviews by the collaborating researchers. I would like to acknowledge the financial support provided by the former UK Overseas Development Administration, now the Department for International Development, which made possible ODI's contribution to the programme. However, neither they nor any others who have assisted in this programme necessarily agree with the facts presented and the inferences drawn.

John Healey
Overseas Development Institute

Summary

Like the larger programme of research of which this paper is part, our focus here is restricted. First, we confine ourselves to aid donors drawn from the member states of the European Union. In the Zimbabwean case, we restricted ourselves to the EU donors with the six largest aid programmes: Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the European Commission.

Second, our focus is only on the use of aid for the purpose of poverty reduction (hereafter PR). We should like to stress, therefore, that the view we offer is partial. There are entirely appropriate uses of aid other than to tackle poverty: to respond to immediate humanitarian crises, to facilitate the reform of economic policies, to enhance long-term development possibilities through investments in institutional and physical infrastructure, and so on. Indeed, the argument has often been made that all aid, being intended to improve economic performance, is ultimately poverty-reducing. As will be seen, we do not accept that argument for Zimbabwe but we do explicitly acknowledge that the quality of a donor's aid programme cannot be adequately assessed just by reference to its PR content. Nevertheless, PR is a most important criterion because, ultimately, the case for aid transfers from rich to poor nations rests on aid's ability to raise the well-being of the poor and vulnerable - and because most donors nowadays assert PR to be their overriding objective (or one of a small number of such objectives).

The analysis of this paper is conducted at three levels. The first is contextual (in the preparation of which the background paper by Raftopoulos and Jazdowska (1997) referred to in footnote 1 was of particular value), with Chapters 1 and 2 providing a sketch of the condition of Zimbabwe's economy, the nature and extent of its poverty problem, and the institutional and policy context of that problem. The second prong is a comparative examination of aid at the country-wide level, with Chapter 3 describing the overall aid environment and Chapter 4 offering comparative analyses of EU aid strategies and portfolios. Chapter 5 then presents the conclusions of more detailed examinations of a sample of project and programme interventions, with fuller details provided in Appendix 2. Each donor was invited to select a small number of interventions intended to be poverty-reducing, and these were analysed according to criteria developed for the larger programme of research. Chapter 6 summarises our results and discusses their policy implications for donors.

Acronyms

BDDCA	British Development Division in Central Africa
CAP	Community Action Programme
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DERRUDE	Department of Rural and Urban Development
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
EC	European Commission
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (the German Government's chief agency for technical co-operation)
MPSLSW	Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PAAP	Poverty Alleviation Action Plan
PAS	Poverty Assessment Survey
PR	Poverty-reduction or poverty-reducing, depending on context.
RDC	Rural District Council
SDF	Social Development Fund
Sida	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence (the name given to the government in being immediately prior to independence)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ZANU(PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) – the ruling party
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

Acknowledgements

Brian Raftopoulos of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Zimbabwe and Niki Jazdowska of the NGO Training and Research Support Centre, Harare prepared a background paper for this study focusing on the institutional and policy context of poverty in Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean perceptions of the activities of aid agencies in the poverty area (Raftopolous and Jazdowska, 1997). We have drawn extensively on their analysis, especially in Part II of the paper. Numerous donor and other officials were extremely generous in making their scarce time available to us for interviews, as well as in making documentation available to us. It would have been simply impossible for us to complete our assignment without their help, for which we are most grateful. If we are sometimes less than enthusiastic about the poverty-reducing value of the various donor aid programmes, we hope that will not be misread as ingratitude. We are also indebted for detailed and constructive comments on an earlier draft to Tony Addison. None of those who helped us are incriminated in the conclusions we reach, which are our responsibility alone.

Jerker Carlsson is a Fellow of the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala; Ana Kierkegaard is a PhD student at the Department for Peace and Development Research, University of Gothenburg; and Tony Killick is Senior Research Fellow of the Overseas Development Institute, London.

1. The economy and the poverty problem

1.1 Economic performance since independence

Zimbabwe came late to political independence, in 1980. Immediately thereafter there was an economic boom, led by a remarkable but short-lived growth in marketed output by smallholder farmers.¹ This boom was accompanied by major distributional advances, particularly in the extension of social services to an indigenous population which had received little attention from the preceding colonial and UDI regimes. The boom soon ended, however, so that by the mid-1980s the economy had slowed, there was increasing concern with macroeconomic imbalances and a probable worsening in the already large inequalities of wealth and income. Since 1992 the government (hereafter GoZ) has been pursuing an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) but the response of the economy has been erratic and, overall, sluggish. With the population growing at more than 3% p.a., per capita income is estimated to be a little lower today than in 1980.

A major feature of the economy, going far to explain the large fluctuations that occur in its growth, is its reliance on an uncertain rainfall, with a particularly severe drought in 1992. There is evidence that the frequency of droughts is worsening and the substantial economic consequences of this reflect the still dominant role of agriculture, particularly the vulnerability of the so-called communal farming areas, where most of the rural population live.

Another feature is the relative capital-intensity of production and output growth. The number of jobs has lagged far behind the growth of output and of the working-age population (Addison, 1996: 24). The World Bank (1998: 42) presents data showing Zimbabwe to have a particularly high ratio of capital to gross output, and indicates that the share of labour in value-added declined substantially between the mid-1980s and early 1990s. Such formal-sector employment as has occurred since 1980 has been largely confined to the public sector (a situation unlikely to be sustainable over the long term). Few new jobs are being created in either manufacturing or commercial farming, although there has been an important increase in the number employed in tourism. There has at the same time been a decline in job security, with increased casualisation of employment and the ubiquitous 'informal sector' cast in the role of

¹ For a good succinct analysis of post-independence economic and social policies see Davies and Rattsø, 1996.

employer of last resort, required to absorb large numbers of those newly entering the labour force. A frustrated hunger for formal-sector jobs is hence a major feature of the economic (and political) scene, made the more acute by substantial lay-offs from the public sector, with the civil service reduced by 16% in 1990–95 (World Bank, forthcoming). Given the excess supply of workers seeking formal-sector jobs, it is hardly surprising that real earnings have been declining – by 25% in 1990–94 alone (Addison, 1996: 16).

Since the mid-1980s, reducing the chronic tendency for the GoZ to run large budget deficits has been the primary focus of concern for macroeconomic management. The problem here has been on the side of expenditures, for by international standards Zimbabwe has a high ratio of tax revenues to GDP. Despite cut-backs in public services and subsidies (see below), and the reductions in the size of the civil service already mentioned, this remains a major source of difficulty, with the Ministry of Finance exerting weak control over state spending. In consequence, budget deficits regularly exceed estimates by large margins. Despite the efforts that have been made to strengthen the public finances, the best measure of the deficit of the public sector – the public sector borrowing requirement – remains large, in the range of 10–15% of GDP.²

There has been a consequential crowding-out of the credit needs of the private sector, chiefly through the effects of high interest rates (with a nominal rate of well over 30% for most borrowers), tending to depress private sector investment, contributing to the slow growth of productivity and undermining the objectives of the ESAP. There has also been substantial inflation, generally around 20–25% p.a. in recent years, and this too has discouraged productive investment by increasing uncertainties, as well as reducing the living standards of those groups unable to protect themselves from the effects of rising prices. Although there have been large fluctuations around the trend, average incomes fell in the period 1990–96 at more than 1% a year and, despite buoyant conditions at the time of writing, there are no obvious reasons for expecting a reversal of this trend in the immediate future.

1.2 Inequalities and the poverty problem

Against this backdrop of economic stagnation, what now can be said about the distribution of income and wealth, and about the incidence of poverty? Ideally, we should take a broad view of poverty, referring not merely to income and/or

² An unbudgeted promise by President Mugabe late in 1997 to pay substantial 'gratuities' to war veterans accentuated the budgetary problem, contributing to an IMF decision to withhold further financial support (*Economist*, 22 November 1997, p.130).

consumption levels but also to people's access to public services and to productive assets (including skills), and perhaps also to more subjective dimensions such as their sense of personal dignity and autonomy: poverty as a multi-dimensional *deprivation*. In practice, however, most available information relates to incomes or consumption standards.

Although the data for Zimbabwe are better than in many other African states, the amount of detailed information remains limited and incomplete. There are quite a lot of pieces of the jigsaw but many gaps remain to be filled. In an important attempt to remedy this situation, in 1995 the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MPSLSW) undertook a country-wide 'Poverty Assessment Survey' (PAS), the preliminary results of which have been published (MPSLSW, 1996). Unfortunately, the survey period coincided with a serious drought, distorting the results, and there were also problems with the reliability of the data collected. The resulting estimates of the incidence of poverty are regarded by many as serious overestimates, apparently showing nearly two-thirds of the population as either very poor (46%) or poor (16%). These figures greatly exceed earlier, albeit more partial, estimates and should probably be discounted. Nevertheless, much other detailed information was collected by the PAS, e.g. on local-level access to services and infrastructure, which should prove very valuable in the future development of targeted, community-based poverty-reduction initiatives.

Even without the PAS, sufficient pieces of the jigsaw are already available for there to be a substantial consensus on the main features of poverty, at least as it relates to income and/or consumption, and for some meaningful targeting and monitoring to be feasible. The following generalisations summarise what appear to be the main, generally agreed, features.³

The poverty situation

- (a) *Although substantial, income poverty in Zimbabwe is less severe than in other African countries.* In a comparison of the proportions of the population living on less than US\$1 per day in eleven African countries, Zimbabwe's was the median value, at an estimated 39% (Ravallion and Chen, 1996), while UNDP international rankings of countries according to their scores in a specially developed 'Human Poverty Index' (which, however, excludes income as an indicator) placed Zimbabwe top of all continental African countries (UNDP, 1997, Table 1.1).

³ The following is based mainly on information contained in the World Bank, forthcoming, and DANIDA, 1996, Vol. 1, ch.3.

- (b) *Nevertheless, a large proportion of the population is poor and some are extremely poor.* According to World Bank estimates (forthcoming, Table 2.1) based on consumption data, 25% of the total population is classified as living in poverty, including 7% in extreme poverty.
- (c) *Poverty is overwhelmingly rural.* Although nearly a third (31%) of the population is classified as urbanised, only 12% of those described as poor are urban dwellers. Rural areas, accommodating a little over two-thirds of the population, contain 88% of the poor and 92% of the very poor (*ibid*). Urban poverty is growing, however, with evidence of declining nutritional standards in the towns, particularly among women and children (Raftopolous and Jazdowska, 1997: 18). This increase is closely related to the spread of the AIDS virus.
- (d) *Within the rural population, there is a particularly severe concentration of poverty in the communal farming areas.* These contain half of the country's total population but three-quarters of the poor and over four-fifths of the very poor (*ibid*). However, there has also been a serious degree of poverty in the so-called Resettlement Areas (former commercial farming areas that were bought out for the relocation of peasant farmers from the communal areas), although this is now diminishing (Kinsey, 1997). There are also serious symptoms of poverty among commercial farm workers and their dependants, with low job and food security, high levels of child malnutrition, poor housing, and exceptionally inadequate access to water, sanitation, health and educational services.
- (e) *There are very large inequalities of income and wealth.* It was estimated for 1991 that 50% of the population received less than 15% of total incomes, while the richest 3% received 30% of the total (Stenflo, 1993). The gini coefficient for the country as a whole was estimated to be 0.57, which is exceptionally high and about the same as that of South Africa and of the same order as the most notoriously unequal Latin American countries (World Bank, forthcoming, Table 2.6). Underlying this is a highly skewed distribution of agricultural land. About 4,660 large-scale commercial farms, largely owned by white farmers, occupy 11.2 million hectares, with 35% of this in the most fertile Natural Regions I and II, 21% in Region III and 44% in Regions IV and V. The Communal Areas, with a population of approximately 6 million blacks, are made up of 16.4 million hectares, or 42% of the country's total land area, with 74% of this land situated in the poorest agro-ecological zones, Regions IV and V (Moyo, 1995: 83-84).
- (f) *There are also large inequalities within the black population.* To a substantial extent the rather extreme values reported in the previous paragraph reflect the

still large differences between the white and black populations but there are also considerable disparities in relative income within the black population, with data indicating levels of inequality within the communal areas greater than for the country as a whole (Jenkins and Prinsloo, 1995, Table 2). As will be argued shortly, this factor has particularly important implications for the design of an anti-poverty strategy in Zimbabwe, pointing up the importance of a targeted approach.

Poverty, growth and structural adjustment

What about trends over time? In particular, to what extent does poverty respond to the overall rate of growth of the economy? This is an important question, not least because it indicates whether aid donors can reasonably make the assumption that if their money assists overall growth it will thereby also help to reduce absolute poverty.

Unfortunately, the time series data on poverty necessary for a confident answer to this question do not exist. However, we have already pointed out the capital-intensive nature of past economic growth and the resulting failure of the Zimbabwean economy to generate formal-sector employment, with the implication that the growth may well have been associated with increasing income disparities. The existence of large initial inequalities of wealth and income also reduces the probability that growth alone could result in a satisfactory rate of PR.

Much of the discussion of the link between economic performance and poverty has centred around the effects of the ESAP, which has been more than usually controversial in Zimbabwe. However, this discussion tends to conflate two distinct questions: (a) should the adjustment costs that have been suffered be laid at the door of the ESAP or of the initial situation that made the ESAP necessary? and (b) could the ESAP have been designed so as to avoid some of the costs that have been suffered?

On the first of these questions, it would be simplistic to blame all the adverse effects on the ESAP, for, as Davies and Rattsø – observers by no means over-enamoured with ESAP – argue (1996: 397), the GoZ turned its attention to stabilisation and then adjustment because it saw that its early welfare-based approaches to the reduction of income inequalities could not be sustained in the longer term:

As the fiscal deficit became more problematic, the ability to sustain the redistributive policies through subsidies and social services became more questionable. It was thus the sustainability of the system which motivated the shift in policy.

Even so, some argue that the slowness of the GoZ to acknowledge this unsustainability led to more severe measures than would otherwise have been necessary – and that its continuing reluctance to act decisively to bring the public sector deficit under better control is increasing the restrictiveness of credit policies.

The ESAP was conventional. It included reform of public enterprises and of the civil service, both with a view to reducing the fiscal burden; cuts in government services and food and other subsidies; tight monetary policies and reform of the financial system; trade and exchange liberalisation; and deregulation of prices, marketing, transport and investment. Certain social safety-net provisions were added but these were not central to the programme. Nor were they effective, as will be shown later.

There were predictably negative consequences from some of the measures, made worse by droughts in 1992 and 1995 and by the stultifying effects of the high interest rates resulting from the combination of large budget deficits and tight monetary policies. There were job losses in both the public and private sectors. Trade liberalisation put manufacturing, which had been created behind high protective barriers (partly imposed from outside in the form of economic sanctions during the UDI period), under competitive pressures that not all could withstand. It is estimated that by 1993 retrenchments affected about 20,000 jobs in the public sector and 10–15,000 in the private sector (DANIDA, II: 75). The imposition of cost-recovery measures in health and education led to reduced use of hospitals and clinics and higher drop-out rates from the schools, particularly from secondary schools and among girls. The IFI-inspired ESAP pinned much of its faith on the neoclassical remedy of encouraging employment growth by cheapening labour relative to capital, but has been criticised for paying insufficient attention to the (more difficult) task of addressing structural weaknesses which frustrate the economy from robust responses to changing relative factor prices.

However, not all the effects were negative, even in the short term. It appears, for example, that while the reductions in subsidies on bread and maize meal had a strong impact on consumption patterns, some of the changes were in a nutritionally desirable direction, with a shift out of (the formerly subsidised) roller meal in favour of (the more nutritious) straight run meal (MPSLSW, 1996: 10–11). Overall, grain consumption was reported to have been maintained at satisfactory levels. The deregulation of transport and maize processing also brought beneficial effects.

Overall, however, and despite the absence of time series data, there is general agreement that poverty has worsened during the 1990s, a consensus with which the World Bank concurs (1998: 60; see also Addison, 1996):

The net effect of the economic changes that have taken place during the 1990s will be different for different households depending on their

sources of income and levels of consumption before adjustment. Some households will be better off, but many will be worse off. On average, we infer that most households will have become worse off ...

One particular channel through which adjustment may have worsened poverty was by depressing real formal sector wages. There is strong evidence that access of rural households to remittances from urban workers is a key determinant of their living standards (see below). With real earnings reduced by nearly a third in 1990–94, reportedly to below 1970 levels (Gibbon, 1995: 16), and with many workers having to supplement their formal-sector earnings by secondary sources of income, it is likely that remittances will have been reduced at least proportionately, quite possibly by more, with grave effects among poor rural households, particularly female-headed ones.

Whether or not this deterioration should best be blamed on the adjustment policies or on the unsustainability of earlier policies which made these measures unavoidable can be argued indefinitely. What is indisputable is that no great effort was put into designing the ESAP in ways which minimised its threatened poverty-increasing effects. This task was supposed to be handled by a newly-created Social Development Fund (SDF) within the MPSLSW. This was to administer programmes to compensate the poor for the ill effects of new or increased user charges and higher maize prices, and a programme of training and credit for the creation of small enterprises. However, the SDF is widely acknowledged to have been a failure. The Operations Evaluation Department of the World Bank (1996) is particularly scathing:

The SDA [i.e. SDF] suffered from many problems. Insufficient prior analytical work led to poor targeting of beneficiaries and inaccurate assessment of their numbers and where they lived, leading to an urban bias. The program was slow in getting started. After announcing the SDA component in 1991, the government took 18 months to appoint a coordinator ... [The] SDA was underfunded, overly centralised, and relied on overworked staff already fully committed to the drought relief effort. It suffered from serious design flaws. It relied on beneficiaries to apply for benefits, and the complicated and costly application process effectively excluded many of the poorest people ...

In fact, many potential beneficiaries remained unaware of the SDF, with only a little over a third of them applying for assistance and only 1% of those thought to be eligible for an urban food money scheme actually receiving assistance (MPSLSW, 1996: 13).

It also seems likely that the adjustment measures resulted in avoidable changes in the composition of GoZ health and education services in directions particularly adverse

to the poor.⁴ In the case of *health*, there was an overall 22% decline in real spending in 1990/91-1993/94, within which the heaviest axe fell upon the preventative services (especially family planning), with medical care services relatively protected. *Education*, too, was cut and within this the heaviest burden fell upon primary education, while the share of tertiary education rose. Even within primary education, reallocations at the margin appear to have been regressive, with particularly large reductions in tuition grants. Minot (1994: 30) estimates that the real value of primary school tuition grants fell two-thirds in 1987/88 to 1993/94.

Returning now to the connection between GDP growth and trends in poverty, it seems clear from the above that whether or not growth reduces poverty depends crucially on the initial extent of inequality and the composition of growth – in which sectors and utilising what mix of inputs – and the policy environment in which it occurs. Past growth has been capital-intensive, partly in response to former policy biases, and thus has not brought the improvement in the lot of the poor that it might have done. And the costs of structural adjustment have weighed more heavily on the poor than a better designed package of measures would have done.

Causes of poverty

If poverty is to be reduced, as distinct from being merely alleviated, then its causes must be acted upon. The following list probably covers the chief causes of poverty in Zimbabwe, although the relative importance of these varies between different categories of poor people.⁵

- (a) *Inequalities* in the distribution of wealth and income. The skewed distribution of access to good agricultural land, mentioned earlier, is particularly important, given the overwhelmingly rural nature of Zimbabwe's poverty. Kinsey (1997 *passim*) argues that land redistribution, for all its past faults, has had a positive effect both on poverty and output growth.

There are two closely connected further sources of difficulty:

- (b) *Environmental factors*, most notably soil degradation and deforestation, which are both a result of poverty and contributors to it, in the usual way.

⁴ The following are calculated from data provided in Minot, 1994.

⁵ The following paragraphs are based substantially on DANIDA, 1996, I:24-29.

- (c) Inequalities in *access to water*, and associated differentials in vulnerability to drought and food insecurity, with the commercial farming sector containing nearly 90% of the country's irrigated land (World Bank, forthcoming: 39).
- (d) The capital-intensive nature of past development, described earlier, and the resulting failure of formal-sector *employment* to keep pace with the growth both of the economy and of the working-age population.
- (e) *Inadequate access to state economic and social services*. Past provision of some services has been skewed against the poor, a bias only partly corrected since independence. Thus, with agricultural extension the GoZ's efforts to shift resources in favour of smallholders were largely focused on farmers in high-potential areas (Rukuni, 1994: 41) and also were less appropriate for women farmers. Similarly, although there have been great strides in education since 1980, poverty remains strongly negatively correlated with education (World Bank, forthcoming: 17). We saw above that cuts in education have tended to fall particularly on provisions most likely to benefit the children of poor families. Many of the rural poor are also badly served by the health services. The position of commercial farm workers and their dependants with respect to both education and health is particularly adverse.
- (f) The rapid spread of *HIV/AIDS* is another factor which is both a symptom and a source of poverty: a symptom because the poor are less well able to protect themselves and a source because of the growing number of widows and orphans it is creating. UNICEF (1994: 85) has estimated that the number of orphans alone is likely to increase from 67,000 in 1992 to 600,000 by 2000.
- (g) *Excessive dependence on a single source of income* is another source of vulnerability, for evidence from the communal areas shows that diversification of income sources, especially access to wage employment and/or remittances, is associated with higher living standards, with the poorest more likely to be reliant on a single income source, and with fewer incomings from wages and remittances (Jenkins and Prinsloo, 1995, Tables 9a and b).

Frequently, of course, various of these causal factors interact with each other in ways that make escape from poverty extremely difficult. The pessimistic view is well caught by the following summary of the situation in the communal areas, although others would be more positive about the capabilities of peasant farmers to improve their lot (European Commission, 1996: 2-3):

People in the communal areas largely depend on subsistence farming on poor and degraded soils, often in remote and drought prone areas. Traditional land use and farming techniques do not enhance agricultural

productivity. Land is communal and allocated on a needs basis by the chief of the area. As they have no title, farmers are not able to borrow against collateral for investment in their smallholdings or other ventures. Due to lack of financial resources there is environmental degradation as trees are destroyed for fuel, land clearance and building purposes. Because of inadequate social security systems, land and cattle are still important assets for both rural and urban Zimbabweans. Consequently, there is land fragmentation and overstocking in many communal areas. Agricultural business, rural credit and extension services ... are not generally available to the majority of communal and small-scale farms and, if available, are often of poor quality.

Implications for donors

It is evident from the above that poverty is a serious problem in Zimbabwe which aid donors who have PR as one of their basic objectives cannot neglect. It is also evident that general pursuit of economic growth, through traditional project and programme aid modalities, does not offer an adequate response to poverty, for the economy has tended in the past to grow in ways which have made limited contributions to PR. Growth is essential, of course, but of a character which channels more jobs and resources to the poor.

In determining the distributional consequences of economic growth, the overall framework of GoZ policies is crucial. Policy has made major contributions in the past, notably in the areas of education and health, but the discussion of the effects of adjustment showed that the welfare of the poor is not necessarily at the top of the policy-makers' agenda. Aid is unlikely to make much impact on poverty if the policy environment is unfavourable. This is particularly true in the highly sensitive area of the distribution of income-earning assets and services, most notably land and the GoZ's own services. Chapter 2 goes further in examining the politics of PR, as conditioning what the donors can hope to achieve in this area.

In the meantime, one further implication, of which all the donors are well aware, is that an aid programme which wishes to address the poverty programme needs to be strongly tilted towards the development of rural areas. Not just any rural areas, however, for the incidence of poverty varies greatly across different land-use zones, geographically and ethnically. With so many of the poor in the communal areas, these are the natural zones of concentration but the existence of large inequalities within these areas again suggests the need for targeting. As Jenkins and Prinsloo (1995: 1) put it, 'If rural inequalities are small, then generalised assistance to rural populations is sufficient in times of economic stress, and policies to stimulate output are more or

less equally accessible to most of the rural population.’ However, their results show that in the communal areas inequalities are large, as reported above. Who receives the benefits of aid interventions is hence crucial, with the obvious danger that they will be captured disproportionately by the less poor. To quote Jenkins and Prinsloo again, *‘Almost all programmes directed at rural people, even those attempting to alleviate poverty ... benefit the less poor rather than the most poor’* (p. 32). This, and the large initial inequalities within the black rural poverty, are factors of the greatest importance for the design of PR interventions in Zimbabwe.

Quite apart from the need for, but difficulty of, targeting, the communal areas present a wider dilemma for aid donors. Even though a well-designed new round of land resettlement could make a valuable contribution (Kinsey, 1997), it is widely recognised that it could not make more than a small dent in the difficulties of the communal areas. At the same time, the productivity potential of these areas is regarded as low and deteriorating as the frequency of droughts increases – and yet that is where three-quarters of poor people live.

In short, the generalised pursuit of economic growth cannot be a satisfactory response for donors concerned with PR. In their choice of interventions they need to aim at defined poverty groups, and in their policy discussions with the GoZ donors need to satisfy themselves that their own endeavours will not be undermined by an unheeding policy environment. This leads us to examine the institutional and political context.

2. The institutional and policy context⁶

2.1 Policies in the 1980s

At the time of political independence in 1980 the government adopted a policy of 'national reconciliation' which, in economic terms, sought to ensure a continuity of production structures, while improving the conditions of the majority of blacks neglected during the colonial and UDI periods. Confronted with high mass expectations of more equitable outcomes, the GoZ pursued high economic growth, increased incomes and social expenditures, and rural development.

The first economic policy document of the new government, significantly called *Growth with Equity*, was published in February 1981. In this the rationale for equity concerns was made clear (GoZ, 1981: 1):

... economic exploitation of the majority by the few, the grossly uneven infrastructure and productive development of the rural and urban and distribution sectors, the imbalanced levels of development within and among sectors and the consequent grossly inequitable pattern of income distribution and of benefits to the overwhelming majority of this country, stand as a serious indictment of our society.

The government subsequently launched a *Transitional National Development Plan* to achieve the 'growth with equity' objectives. This plan targeted a growth rate of 8.2% p.a. for 1982-85, with the extra tax revenues generated by growth to be used for redistribution through a reorientation of public sector expenditures. The first decade of independence indeed witnessed a rapid growth of social services for the neglected majority. Real per capita recurrent expenditures of the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare rose by nearly half between 1980 and the peak year of 1990. In education there was an increase of a third in the same period. In primary education the number of schools rose from 3,161 in 1980 to 4,530 in 1990, while the number of pupils enrolled increased from 1.2 million to 2.3 million (Nyangura and Mupawaenda, 1994). At the secondary level the number of schools rose from 197 to 1,512, with enrolment figures increasing from 73,105 to 710,619 (Secretary for Education, 1993).

As regards the land question, by the end of the 1980s the state had acquired over 3 million hectares for resettlement, although over 44% of this was in the dry and

⁶ Our indebtedness to the background paper by Raftopolous and Jazdowska, 1997, is particularly large in this section. We have borrowed freely from it.

infertile Natural Regions IV and V. As a percentage of its overall expenditures, government spending on agriculture increased until 1987/88, after which there was a decline. During this period the government's land policy was cautious and conservative, however, avoiding laws on farm sub-division or a land tax to stimulate the break-up of large-scale commercial farms, to make more land available for redistribution. Even where land was purchased it was not fully utilised, with over 235,000 hectares acquired for resettlement still unused by 1990 (ZCTU, 1996: 28).

Looking back at the 1980s, it can be seen that for much of the period the state attempted to address poverty through a combination of increased social expenditures, initially increased expenditures on agriculture, limited land reforms and minimum wage legislation. By the end of the decade all these measures had begun to show their limitations. With regard to the welfarist strategy, as Jenkins (1995) has concluded, constraints on growth meant that living standards would not rise, so a trickle-down approach to poverty reduction was not viable.

The end of the decade found the poor still on the periphery of policy-making, with limited organisational capacity to press their demands. In the rural economy the ruling party tended to dominate, leaving little room for autonomous organisational interventions. In the urban sector, the labour movement found itself on a collision course with the state and was marginalised in policy-making. Opposition of the labour movement to the trend towards a one-party state, its critique of the ESAP (often regarded as a proxy critique of GoZ policies in general without confronting it head-on) and its attempt to develop an autonomous critical presence, proved incompatible with the authoritarian style of the ruling party.

2.2 The 1990s: the ambivalent status of egalitarianism

As has been widely noted, the momentum towards reduced inequalities in the early years of independence has largely been dissipated during the 1990s. It became obvious that the welfarist approach had become fiscally unsustainable, while, partly in response to the ESAP, real wages fell sharply in the formal sector. At the same time and despite formal adoption of a new land policy in 1990 (GoZ, 1990), there was little further progress on the land issue or in the strengthening of extension and other support services in the smallholder sector, causing the GoZ-created Land Commission to conclude that there

...has been no coherent Government policy and commitment to support agriculture and rural development in the small scale sectors that is comparable to the support given to the large-scale farm sector during

the colonial period, and this is reflected in the patterns of public sector investment.⁷

It urged that land resettlement be a permanent long-term policy. There was indeed a well-publicised move on the land issue in late-1997 with the announcement by President Mugabe of a further large round of land reform (or confiscation, as its critics argued), but this did not appear to be part of a thought-out long-term strategy, causing it, for example, to be rejected for financial support by the UK on the grounds that the criteria for allocating the seized land were not transparent and it was not consistent with its own PR priorities (*Economist*, 15 November 1997, p.82).

At local and sectoral levels there are, of course, specific activities which address poverty. But these are not part of a coherent strategy, as Goericke (1997: ii-iii) makes clear:

Poverty-oriented planning is currently largely being carried-out at the level of specific initiatives, projects and programmes. Practically all of them are localised. There is little or no collaboration between those. In addition, there is little connection between that planning level and area-based development planning within the local government structure. And there is practically no linkage between project/programme level planning and macro-level development planning which at national level still follows the conventional (sub) sectoral structure without putting poverty-alleviation into its operational objectives.

At the heart of this loss of momentum is ambivalence on the part of ZANU(PF). While large numbers of the electorate would stand to gain from more vigorous redistributive policies, there are powerful political factors pushing in the opposite direction.

The first of these is the massive economic contribution – and power – of the white community, whose privileges would have to be addressed by a strategy of redistribution. One of our interlocutors suggested that there is an unspoken pact between the GoZ and the whites: they accept being blamed for everything that goes wrong in return for being allowed to get on with running the commercial farming and industrial sectors, although the validity of that view was called undermined by the move towards new large-scale land reform mentioned earlier – always assuming this was actually implemented, about which some were quite sceptical. It would be a delicate task indeed to address the fundamental inequalities in the economy without harming output and investment.

⁷ As quoted in DANIDA, 1996, I:33.

Against the all too visible economic power of the whites, there is the usual problem that, by contrast, the (largely rural) poor are weakly organised and lack political clout. As already suggested, the trade unions have become marginalised. Among the farmers, the major black farmers' organisation, the Zimbabwe Farmers Union, represents a variety of interests each with their own policy demands, ranging from the desire of peasants for more community land in small parcels to the call for improved freehold tenure by the larger black farmers who dominate the ZFU leadership, with the demands of the elite tending to dominate its policy positions (Moyo, 1996).

Against this, many grass-roots NGOs have sprung up in recent years, largely as a response to growing economic hardships,⁸ and these might provide a more effective collective voice for the poor. In most cases, their objectives have been quite limited, however. Saunders (quoted by Raftopolous and Jazdowska, 1997: 8) has described them in the following terms:

In absolute numbers, most organisations created in the late 1980's and early 1990's were founded with the intention of building a rudimentary bulwark for their constituents against the incursion of poverty and declining living standards. They include thousands of self help, savings and income-supplementing groups – the most direct, highly localised reply to the current economic and social crisis. As ESAP has led to accelerating poverty for most Zimbabweans, the number, variety and constituent membership of these groups increased. It is now unusual to find a shop floor, office space, church organisation or other regular place of meeting which does not play host to a savings club, burial society or some other social insurance scheme set up by its members. In practice, they have very limited agendas, defined by the basic survival needs of the group.

Moreover, the collective body of NGOs, the National Association of Non-Government Organisation, is regarded as both unrepresentative and ineffective, 'illustrative of the very narrow and individualistic perspective that is typical of many of the NGOs in Zimbabwe' (Raftopolous and Jazdowska, 1997: 37). To the extent that NGOs have sought to retain independence from the state, they too have found themselves unable to exert influence on such policy matters as land reform. Meanwhile, the GoZ has moved to exert control over the NGO movement by passing the 1996 Private Voluntary Organisations Act, which empowers the GoZ to control or close NGOs.

⁸ Citing an unpublished 1994 paper by Moyo, Raftopolous and Jazdowska (1997:8) report an estimated total of 850 NGOs, of which 550 were classified as 'community-based'.

The opposition parties are additional potential voices for the poor. These, however, tend to be urban-based and have said little about the issue, except as it affects urban voters. They are not perceived as having organisational structures that permit them to penetrate rural areas. In any case, they too are kept firmly on the margins of political power. It is perhaps more from within the ruling party that more effective advocacy for the underprivileged might develop in future.

There are some who go further and suggest that the GoZ might have a political interest in the perpetuation of poverty, or in the dependence which comes with it. Drought is commonplace, almost permanent, in many poorer parts of the country, which gives the GoZ an opportunity to use aid funding and donations to reinforce its own political hegemony (Raftopolous and Jazdowska, 1997: 35):

...thus it too is not primarily driven by the overwhelming 'humanitarian' need to reduce or eradicate poverty; rather it generally sees aid as a means through which it can reinforce its own position (e.g. distribution of drought relief and seed packs during and after the 1991/2 and 1993/4 droughts which were provided by donors but which were explicitly given to recipients as a gift from ZANU PF) and to find favour for its own political agenda. It is therefore no accident that much of the rural poverty reduction projects and funding are more concentrated in ZANU PF strongholds as well as being channelled through the local ZANU PF structures e.g. the Resident Minister, the Governor in all of Zimbabwe's provinces, in conjunction with representatives of the bilateral/donor organisations.

Or, as one aid official put it to us, 'patronage is more important than poverty reduction.'

Even if this judgement is too harsh, there is the additional factor of a dissonance between the community-based and demand-led approach desirable for effective PR and the strongly centralist outlook of the GoZ. In an attempt to augment the limited resources of the central fisc, the government has made some moves towards decentralisation but this has been carefully limited and controlled. Similarly in the design of the successor to the ESAP, the government has put in place some mechanisms of consultation but the policy processes into which the outcomes of such consultations might be fed are so opaque, and accountability so weak, that there is little confidence that the exercise has any meaning beyond public relations. As the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions has complained, 'This dialogue has been on an ad hoc basis, and most unfortunately the government goes

on to implement policies without taking the dialogue seriously.⁹ Indeed, some complain that decision-making within the GoZ is becoming more centralised, not less, as a result of more frequent *ad hoc* interventions by the Office of the President and the Politburo.

2.3 The uncertain status of poverty reduction

As an outcome of the forces just described, there is a general perception that PR does not come high among the government's policy priorities. Poverty, as such, appears not to be a major issue in Zimbabwean politics. However, caution is needed when talking about 'the' GoZ in this connection. For, as is shown later, there are departments of government which are both sympathetic to, and active in pursuing, the PR objective. That there is an overall ambiguity, however, is suggested by the position of the GoZ's Poverty Alleviation Action Plan (PAAP), discussed more fully in Chapter 4. As we show there, its progress has been caught up in inter-departmental rivalries and its Secretariat starved of necessary staff – an unlikely situation had PR been accorded a high priority by the leadership.

In fact, none of our donor interlocutors regarded PR as a top government priority and most suspected it was well down the list. They did not see poverty as at the front of politicians' thinking and they could rarely be sure whether a given minister or official was speaking for the government as a whole on this because there are so many currents within it. It appears that the President has not taken an active interest, and it is alleged that the main policy debates on distributional issues within the ZANU(PF) Politburo (as it is remarkably still called) are more about 'elite ethnic battles' than about reducing poverty. At the same time, there is no suggestion that the government is actively hostile to PR. So long as its control is not jeopardised and the essential interests of key supporting groups are not threatened, donors' PR interventions are quite acceptable, even welcomed. This means that the political constraint is not completely binding. Donors can find PR interventions which do not provoke government resistance and which have the active support of some departments of government (health, education, etc). Chapter 4 shows that donors minded to do so have been able to incorporate a substantial PR element in their aid programmes.

To sum up, then, the *de facto* political priorities of the GoZ are not particularly favourable to aid donors wishing to mount a serious attack on poverty (as distinct from ameliorating its effects), for to do so would necessitate addressing causes of the problem which the government may often want left alone. There is a dilemma here, for it is natural and proper that official aid agencies should want to work with, rather

⁹ As reported in *Zimbabwe Independent*, 7 February 1997.

than against, the GoZ's priorities, and to maintain co-operative relationships. Indeed, the principle of ownership demands that it should be so.

3. The aid environment

3.1 Aid dependency and the policy dialogue

The view among several of the donors to whom we spoke was that, because Zimbabwe is less dependent on aid than most African countries, the GoZ can take a more independent view in the formulation of its policies, keeping donors at arm's length. As one of them put it, 'aid is not large enough for donors to make a crucial difference to policies or priorities. The donors can find interstices in which to fit their PR projects without GoZ resistance but they are not big enough to make a decisive difference.' One of the consequences of this, we were told, is that the IMF and World Bank are less influential than in other African countries.

However, most indicators of aid dependency do not show Zimbabwe's present-day reliance on aid to be less than that of the average African country, as is shown in Table 1. On the contrary, dependence is *above* the African average on three of the four indicators in the table, which also shows that the country's dependence on aid increased sharply during the 1990s.

Table 1 Aid dependency indicators for Zimbabwe and Africa

		Zimbabwe	Sub-Saharan Africa average
Aid per capita (US\$)	1990	35	34
	1994	52	32
Aid as % GNP	1990	5	13
	1994	10	16
Aid as % investment	1990	21	34
	1994	39 ^a	34
Aid as % imports	1990	15	19
	1994	20	18

Source: World Bank, 1997, Table 6.10.

Note: ^a author's estimate.

Potentially, therefore, there is substantial scope for policy dialogue. Donor officials were in agreement, however, that at the level of economy-wide policies there was

limited intercourse, with the government reluctant to engage and the donors apparently reluctant to press. Donors also agreed, however, that genuine policy dialogue, and influence, was possible in specific sectors, or with particular ministries. Much depended on personalities, so that, for instance, there had recently been a large perceived improvement in the inclusion of donors in policy discussions in the Ministry of Agriculture following the appointment of a new Permanent Secretary. (It is at the level of senior officials, rather than ministers, that discussions usually occur.) The Ministries of Health, Education and Transport were also mentioned as departments which had engaged in constructive policy discussions.

If, in general, there is less extensive policy dialogue between donors and the GoZ than the country's financial reliance on aid might lead one to expect, perhaps because of substantial inflows of private capital, there is an important positive side to this: 'ownership', GoZ commitment to those interventions which it does agree with the donors. Aided by the existence of a relatively strong public administration, commitments once entered into are generally honoured and projects effectively implemented. Thus, one of our interlocutors who also had experience in Bangladesh compared the situation in Zimbabwe favourably with that country: 'The GoZ, not the donors, is in charge; it sets the agenda and the results are better'. Government insistence on their priorities can lead to long delays, however. Many of the larger donor initiatives, we were told, get caught up in inter-departmental turf battles. It can take a long time to work out agreements, leading to persistent under-spends. But once a project is agreed, it is usually executed quite well, although this does vary from department to department. The result is that most donors regard their aid to Zimbabwe as effective, despite the frustrations. Thus, the UK's Department for International Development¹⁰ (DFID, 1996, para 12) reports that of 12 project completion reports prepared in 1994-96, six had shown that all intended project outputs had been completed and had been 'largely realised' in the other six.

The situation described above also has implications for donor co-ordination. Again, at the sectoral level this can be good, undertaken by the responsible ministry. Health was identified as a good example. But at the country-wide level it is weak and discouraged by the government, which is content with a situation in which it can usually deal with donors one by one, rather than face them collectively.

¹⁰ In 1997 the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) was re-named to the Department for International Development (DFID), which is the title used throughout this report.

3.2 Poverty reduction and the aid environment

How does PR fare in the aid environment just described? What about dialogue on policies affecting the poor? There appears to have been little of this at the general, as distinct from sector-specific, level. Donor officials said it would be difficult to engage with the government on poverty as a generic issue, both because of the GoZ's general desire to limit the subject-matter of dialogue and because there is no effective channel of communication on this. The Office of the President would be the logical point of contact but is resistant and refers donors to the Ministry of Finance, which, in turn, responds that it does not have expertise on that subject. The GoZ points to the existence of the recently created independent Poverty Reduction Forum as providing a channel for debate for all interested parties but few regard that as effectively performing such a role as it concerns relations between donors and the GoZ. The government can also refer donors to the MPSLSW, as the department responsible for the SDF, but this tends to channel discussions into the specifics of the SDF and the PAAP—see Chapter 4—and away from overarching and systemic issues. Discussions are said to be under way about the possibility of creating a Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction.

The truth is, however, that there are few signs that bilateral donors have seriously sought to engage with government on poverty reduction as a generic issue. In the case of the ESAP, for instance, it appears that, to the limited extent that bilateral donors had any influence at all, their main concern was to induce the GoZ to adopt this, rather than trying to strengthen the programme's safety-net features. It similarly appears that the donors are being kept out of the formulation of the successor programme to ESAP, a situation they appear to accept.

In fact, the head of one of the European agencies argued that it would be a strategic mistake to try to raise poverty as a general issue because the discussions would quickly be side-tracked by the GoZ into 'the ghetto of the MPSLSW and PAAP'. It was possible, he urged, to engage more effectively at the sectoral level. When asked who spoke for the poor in such discussions, he acknowledged that they may not have an effective voice but insisted that the desirability of reducing poverty was an unspoken premise of all the discussions. The donors had not been speaking up for the poor in sectoral discussions but if PR were not reflected in the specifics they would start asking questions. We are not so confident.

Similarly, donor co-ordination seems particularly weak on the PR front. As the DANIDA report (1996, I: 82) concludes, 'The various actors tend to work independently of each other ... Opportunities to date for donor co-ordination have been limited, the government preferring bilateral co-operation.' In formal terms, it appears to be a responsibility of MPSLSW to co-ordinate but, as will be shown later,

its contacts with bilateral donors leave much to be desired. None of our donor interlocutors was aware of any substantial co-ordination efforts in the poverty area, except in specific line ministries. The overall context for PR aid is therefore unpromising. Donors are aware that PR does not rank high in the pecking order of the GoZ's policy priorities and have chosen not to press for a more effective dialogue. The GoZ's priorities prevail, which is desirable for ownership but results in a neglect of PR. Donors are left seeking crevices into which to fit their desired PR interventions but these do not necessarily add up to much and their efforts are weakly co-ordinated.

It appears that the wider public has a realistic perception of the position of the donors in this area, reported by Raftopolous and Jazdowska as seen as anxious not to rock the political boat and to avoid any perception of being associated with groups associated with opposition to the government. One consequence is that donors are reportedly seen as restricting themselves largely to the *alleviation* of poverty, unable or unwilling to address its causes. They are also seen as pursuing their own agendas and hence as not very interested in consultation with civil society (see below on processes of aid strategy formation) (Raftopolous and Jazdowska, 1997: 33-34, 36):

It is rare among the donor community in Zimbabwe for there to be any meaningful prior consultation with civil society/NGOs about the agenda or priorities that should be set by the donor organisations – be it explicitly in relation to poverty reduction or more broadly to a particular direction or emphasis that should be adopted by the donor agency.

From the standpoint of all NGOs consulted it seems clear that the specific parameters are set unilaterally by the donor organisations themselves; the only variation is in the extent to which the donor organisations allow recipient organisations to influence the remaining flexibility within the already-set parameters ...

In theory, the actors in the policy process on poverty issues, are government ministries, donor organisations and local NGOs (who by default 'represent' civil society). In practice however the main actors are government and the bilateral donor organisations. It is those two entities who establish an agreed basis for operation. In the subsequent process, then, the main actors are the bilateral donor organisations and NGOs. In fact it could almost be described as a vertical process with government and the bilateral and other donors communicating with each other on an equal level at the top; further down would be these donors communicating (downwards) with the NGOs who are at the bottom end of the vertical line.

4. Comparative donor poverty reduction policies

4.1 A best-practice model of PR aid

The purpose of this chapter is to offer a comparative analysis of EU donor aid strategies and portfolios as they relate to PR. In order to provide a best-practice yardstick against which to assess actual programmes, it may be useful for us to describe the features that we would hope to find in an aid programme designed for the purposes of maximising PR in Zimbabwe. We do not, of course, expect that any real-world programme or project will fully meet all the following criteria, but identification of such characteristics may provide a useful summary of features against which to assess the actual cases we examine.

First and against the background of the reasons presented in Chapter 1 why specific targeting is desirable for PR in Zimbabwe, the programme should be precise and specific about the concept of poverty to be employed in designing an intervention. It should be similarly clear on the defining characteristics of the poor people who are to make up the target group(s) of the interventions. Included in this latter requirement is a decision about whether the donor is intending to target the ‘poorest of the poor’ (a particularly demanding option because of the difficulties of achieving sustained improvements in productivities in the communal farming areas) or will be content to reach a larger, more broadly defined group of ‘the poor’: reaching the poorest is, of course, very difficult and is apt both to require more resources and to entail different modalities of delivery in comparison with the less ambitious alternative. Also within this heading is a decision whether to address gender-related aspects of the problem, e.g. by targeting female-headed households, within the larger population of the poor.

A further decision that donors should be clear about is whether their programmes are to aim at poverty *alleviation*, i.e. of mitigating the consequences of poverty, or *reduction*, which would require that the causes of poverty be addressed. There will, of course, be severe limitations on the extent to which any one donor – even the donors collectively – can tackle the sources of poverty, except as part of a GoZ, or other locally-originated and broad-based, campaign. However, even where these constraints are binding, donors are likely to be able to make some progress on causes, e.g. by improving access of target groups to education, water, etc.

The above decisions will provide a framework for the design of aided interventions. In the past the approach mostly adopted by donors has been top-down, designed either by donors or by agencies of recipient governments. There is now wide

agreement in the literature, however, that this approach is not successful and that projects designed on the basis of participatory, community-based processes are superior. This alternative helps to create ownership and commitment, and ensures that projects conform to the true situations of the target group(s) and their perceived needs. Technological choices embedded in projects should be such as to ensure maximum benefits to the poor, e.g. by use of labour-intensive methods, and facilitate long-term sustainability, e.g. by avoiding technologies which cannot be maintained with local skills and other resources. The interventions should also utilise inputs, usually labour, from the intended beneficiaries, to both economise on resources and reinforce ownership. The selection, design and institutionalisation of projects should embody safeguards against the ever-present danger that a disproportionate share of the benefits will be captured by the less poor at the expense of the target beneficiaries (within households as well as between them). There should be a clear and explicit link between the expected outputs of the project and the welfare of the target group, including the affordability of output pricing.

As already suggested, sustainability of the projects should be fostered through a conscious effort to secure local ownership. This may be reinforced by features intended to further develop local institutional capacities. Revenue-generation and cost recovery are obvious features of the sustainability of many projects – carefully designed, however, so as not to undermine the PR objective (there will often be a trade-off here). Finally, provisions should be made for the monitoring and evaluation of interventions, permitting donors and other stakeholders to discover the extent to which the interventions are realising their objectives and to provide the feedback necessary for lessons to be learned and improvements made. The monitoring and evaluation functions are exceptionally important for PR interventions.

This, of course, is an impossibly demanding set of desiderata. We repeat that we *do not* expect any specific intervention to meet all these criteria. On the other hand, we *do* expect that any donor serious about PR in Zimbabwe would make an attempt to meet a good proportion of them.

4.2 EU donor strategies

In commencing a discussion of EU donor strategies in Zimbabwe we should record a point of difficulty – that among several of the donors there have been changes in objectives and priorities too recent to be fully reflected in formal strategy documents and aid portfolios. Thus, it was said that a PR priority has only recently been adopted for Danish aid, so that to assess the country's past aid by the PR criterion is inappropriate (this was presented to us as a criticism of a 1996 DANIDA evaluation of its aid to Zimbabwe). A similar comment was made to us with regard to the UK's

programme: that poverty had only recently been given a high priority, so the existing programme does not have a large PR content.

The programme of the Netherlands was also in a transitional state. There had been a large restructuring of the country's aid organisation, resulting in a shift of authority from The Hague to embassies. Although there are general policy guidelines and budgetary power remains in the Ministry of Development Co-operation, embassies now have considerable freedom to decide their own policies/priorities. The guidelines require all interventions to pass criteria with respect to PR, the position of women and environmental sustainability, but it appears that screening processes are such that these are rather readily satisfied. A not dissimilar position existed in the Delegation of the European Commission, where the incumbent Delegate in Harare was taking a different view from that of his predecessor, so that the EU aid programme only partially reflected present-day priorities.

In fact, of our six donors, only in two did strategies appear not to be in a state of flux: Germany (so far as the limited information allowed us to judge) and Sweden. Even in the Swedish case, however, while overall priorities appeared to be stable, its new strategy paper places enhanced priority on the alleviation of poverty and 'measures to strengthen the culture of democracy'. The specific content of Sweden's programme in Zimbabwe was undergoing considerable changes, as will be shown. As we turn now to compare the strategies of our six donors, it is important to bear these changes in mind.

The comparisons are organised around Table 2, which is confined to the four of our six donors which have published strategy documents. This attempts to summarise the process through which the strategy was defined, the chief problems identified, the goals, objectives and priorities of each donor, the principal areas and modalities through which they propose to implement their strategies, and provisions for monitoring and evaluation. All of these are, of course, examined with reference to PR.

The process of strategy formation

The context under this heading is the identification in our 'best-practice' scenario of the superiority of participatory and community-based processes over bureaucratically-driven top-down approaches. Table 2 (Item 1) reveals a spectrum of approaches among the three donors for which we have information, with the UK conforming to the top-down approach (although it appears that future UK strategy documents may be based a more consultative process). We suspect that Germany is at least equally top-down in its approach, having a strategy paper which is regarded as an in-house document, prepared only in German. This does not suggest that preparation was

utilised as an opportunity for consensus-building. The position of the Netherlands is somewhat similar, except that preparation of the Dutch-language strategy paper was said to be based on extensive consultation with the GoZ, particularly at the sectoral level, although not with a wider constituency. Indeed, among the recent changes in the Netherlands' aid administration has been a discontinuation of annual development co-operation consultation meetings with the GoZ, although Chapter 5 records that the Netherlands is the only one of the donors to have responded directly to an initiative from below (the Matabeleland Aids Council), a depressing situation.

Table 2 Comparative analysis of donor strategies in Zimbabwe, ca 1996^a

	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>European Community</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
1. Process of strategy formation	Substantial discussions with Ministry of Finance and sectoral ministries. No discussion with civil society except informally.	Not known.	Based on consensus-building. Wide public consultations, not confined to GoZ (see text).	Largely an in-house production but with some consultation of senior GoZ officials at second draft stage. There is a fuller classified version not available to unauthorised persons.
2. Chief problems identified	Low investment causing slow growth of output and employment. Extensive poverty, linked to access to land. Environmental deterioration.	Weaknesses of policy and planning. Low productivity in communal agriculture. Uneven access to social services. Spread of HIV/AIDS. Vulnerability to drought.	Budget deficit the major macro problem. A 'very unequal society' with skewed land ownership.	'A divided economy. Most of the population is poor; many are getting poorer.' Budget deficit the major weakness of policy. Vulnerability to drought.
3. Analysis/definition of poverty situation	None; except some discussion of special problems of women.	None.	See above. Also discussion of special problems of women. No substantial analysis. (An unpublished staff analysis was prepared as background paper.) Heavy emphasis on need for redistribution.	None.
4. Overall donor goals	Sustainable development 'focusing on improving living conditions for the poorest and weakest ...'	Reduction of poverty, especially in rural areas.	Alleviation of poverty; strengthening 'the culture of democracy'.	Support for policy reform. Reduction of poverty.
5. Operational objectives & priorities	1. Support of economic reforms (structural adjustment). 2. Direct support to the poor.	Not specified.	Support for economic reforms. Others not clearly defined.	'Aims':- Economic reform and good government. Opportunity and human development. Productive capacity and environment.
6. Poverty objectives; target beneficiaries	Communal and resettlement areas specially targeted; also women.	Not specified.	The PR objective pervades the discussion but is not elaborated nor made precise.	Not specified.

Table 2 (cont'd)

	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>European Community</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
7. Chief areas of donor intervention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Private sector development. 2. Infrastructure (telecommunications, rural roads). 3. Agriculture (communal & resettlement areas). 4. Health. 	<p>Programme support for policy reform. Support for private sector and local communities in 3 focal sectors: agriculture and renewable natural resources; health; education.</p>	<p>Programme support for policy reform. Private sector development (small and medium). Education: support to be reviewed. Health & transport: support to be concluded. New areas under consideration.</p>	<p>Public service reform (including local government development). Health and population. Renewable natural resources. Water. Private sector development.</p>
8. Modes of intervention & implementation	<p>Sector programme support, including private sector. Project and advisory assistance. BoP support to be discontinued.</p>	<p>Balanced approach combining macro and micro interventions. Project content being reduced in favour of sector-programme support. Substantial support for micro-projects (see text).</p>	<p>Programme, sectoral and project interventions. Technical assistance through a 'Strategic Planning Fund'.</p>	<p>Not specified but include project interventions; possibility of sector programme support (including support for land reform); technical co-operation for privatisation, institution-building, etc. General BoP/budget programme aid to be discontinued.</p>
9. Provisions for monitoring & evaluation	<p>Not stated. DANIDA evaluation concludes 'Monitoring at all levels appears to have a relatively low priority.'</p>	<p>Not stated.</p>	<p>Not stated.</p>	<p>Several references to reviews and/or strengthening of monitoring & reporting, but not related to PR.</p>
10. Authors' comments	<p>There appears a rather strong conflict between stated objectives and chosen interventions (see Table 3), although DANIDA evaluation concludes there is "a reasonable match between the country strategy and the country portfolio".</p>	<p>Except for micro-project support, the PR objective largely relies on indirect benefits filtering through to poor.</p>	<p>A rather weak document, appearing transitional, ill-defined. Does not do justice to large PR content of Sida aid programme (see Table 3).</p>	<p>Little coherence between stated goals, 'aims' and programme content, which lacks focus. Little attempt to address specifics of poverty problem.</p>

Note: "This table is based on written strategy documents, augmented by interviews and other sources. As reported in the text, existing strategy documents may no longer fully reflect donor policies.

Sweden appears to have taken consultation the most seriously. This went through a number of stages, described to us as follows:

- 1.2 Sida informed the Ministry of Finance (MoF) that they intended to take a fresh look at Sweden's aid policies, following many years of continuity.
- 1.3 Local Sida staff then prepared an analysis of the country situation and alternative scenarios to 2015, which were sent to headquarters in Stockholm.
- 1.4 There were extensive consultations in Sweden with interested Ministries and NGOs.
- 1.5 Feedback was received from Stockholm. Sida Harare then prepared a substantial country analysis, including an evaluation of Sweden's past aid policies.
- 1.6 Five seminars were then arranged in Harare, with participants including the MoF and other interested Ministries, academics, NGOs and interested individuals. The topics for these included the land issue; decentralisation; HIV/AIDS (as a social problem); small-scale industry; and the macroeconomic situation. There was a free and active discussion, which provided useful feedback for the draft strategy.
- 1.7 There were then follow-up meetings with the MoF where considerable convergence emerged. On the basis of this, Sida asked the GoZ for a written request for future support. The form of this reflected the convergence and was close to Sida's own thinking.
- 1.8 A finalised aid strategy paper has now been presented to the MoF. This, however, is intended only to provide a brief and broad framework to be used as a basis for future discussions. These are intended to conclude with an agreed minute and a co-operation agreement.

No other EU donor approached this level of consultation; Sweden is the only one to have undertaken substantial consultation outside GoZ circles.

Problem identification

Items 2 and 3 of Table 2 summarise the main problems identified in the strategy papers, including their treatment of the poverty issue. It is evident from Item 2 that quite a wide range of problems was identified by these four donors. There is no obvious consensus, with the important exception that inequality is mentioned by each of them as a major feature of the socio-economic situation. None of them, on the

other hand, attempted anything which could be described as a substantive analysis of the poverty problem, although in the Swedish case a staff background paper was reportedly prepared for this purpose. The words of the evaluation report on Danish aid to Zimbabwe are apposite for most, if not all, the others: '... there has been no systematic nor comprehensive consideration given to the poverty concept in the formulation of interventions' (DANIDA, 1996, I: 77). None of the papers we have seen offer any substantial analysis of the problem, the forms that poverty takes in Zimbabwe, identification of target groups, identification of interventions that can best address the problem, or what other donors are doing about it.

Goals, objectives, priorities

This neglect is curious because the formally stated overall goals of the four strategy papers under examination all assert the reduction of poverty as a priority (Table 2, Item 4). In the case of the two 'missing' donors, Germany and the Netherlands, we have already reported in the latter case that although all aid interventions are required to pass poverty criteria, this has not in practice proved a very restrictive requirement. As regards Germany, whatever may be the officially stated policy in Bonn (see Weidnitzer, 1997), we were told frankly that PR is not a priority goal for its aid interventions in Zimbabwe. The provision of policy advice and institutional development are the two main goals, although these were defended as raising the country's long-term capacity to address poverty, if this was what the GoZ desired (see also Goericke, 1997: iii). In fact, it was from a senior German official that in our many interviews we heard the one clear statement of scepticism about the use of aid for PR Germany's aid interventions and personnel tended to be in and around Harare, which does not have a high incidence of poverty; the machinery of bilateral aid is not well suited to reaching the poor, being 'far removed from poverty'.

Even among the four donors in Table 2 professing an overall poverty goal, Item 5 of the table indicates some dilution of this when it comes to operational priorities. In fact, with Denmark as an exception, there does not appear to be a strong connection between goals and operational priorities, as stated in the strategy documents (although in practice Swedish aid appears to have given PR a high operational priority, and it places 'policy for resource distribution' top of its list of five prioritised dialogue issues). Operational objectives and priorities are either not specified or, in the case of the UK's 'aims', do not appear strongly connected to the poverty goal. As can be seen from Item 6, none of the donors under examination go far in defining their poverty objectives, nor in identifying target beneficiaries.

Areas and modes of intervention

While each donor has its own areas of expertise and specialisation, it is evident looking across Item 7 of the table that there are recurring themes – and that most of these are strongly consistent with a PR thrust, with agriculture, health, education and private sector development common to most. If ‘agriculture’ is interpreted broadly to include land and water, the first three of these are indeed sectors where donors might readily contribute to PR. The inclusion of these sectors by most donors is no coincidence: all have an appreciation of the poverty-reducing potential of assistance to those sectors, particularly in the rural areas. Although it does not emerge from the strategy documents as a major area of intervention, mention should also be made of the support for local government (Rural District Councils or RDCs), into which several donors are putting resources and which is regarded as bringing important potential benefits for the poor. This is among the interventions analysed in Chapter 5.

The Swedish situation requires explanation. Over many years Sida has concentrated its sectoral aid to Zimbabwe in health, education, transport and public administration. It is now re-examining its priorities, as a result of which it has already been decided that support for health and transport is to be phased out by 1999, while support for education is to be re-examined. What new priority areas will emerge from this rethinking is not yet settled, although land reform, water and the PAAP (see below) are potential areas.

As regards modes of intervention (Item 8), the main trend (reflecting a wider movement within aid administration) was in favour of sectoral programmes, with a corresponding movement away from both macroeconomic (balance of payments and/or budgetary) programme support and projects. The point was made to us that this shift was made easier by the relative strength of the civil service in Zimbabwe, meaning that there were GoZ departments with the competence and self-confidence to sit down with donors and interested parties drawn from civil society to work out consensual sectoral programmes for which donors could then provide financial support. The Ministries of Agriculture and Health were mentioned in this context.

Whether the shift towards sectoral programmes is helpful to the PR goal is arguable. It had strong advocates among our interlocutors. They saw the sectoral approach as giving them substantially more policy influence than either macroeconomic or project-level interventions. So long as the sectoral programmes which emerged from the process adequately reflected the PR objective, and we were assured that donors were concerned to ensure that this was so, the sectoral approach could be a valuable vehicle for promoting this objective. However, it does require that the line ministries in question have a clear policy, and the capacity to implement it, for otherwise donors would acquire too much influence, eroding local ownership and implementation.

On the other hand, an upgrading of sectoral programme aid is only consistent with a serious PR focus to the extent that the GoZ departments in question have poverty-oriented programmes to be supported. As is clear from the discussion in Chapter 2, however, the GoZ has not in general been very active in preparing such programmes, even though some line ministries and the PAAP are exceptions to this generalisation. It may well be that raising the PR content of aid to Zimbabwe would necessitate retention of a good many targeted project interventions, which suggests that the approach of the Delegation of the European Commission of consciously maintaining a balanced mix of sectoral and project-level interventions may be most appropriate for the pursuit of PR in Zimbabwe.

Monitoring and evaluation

Item 9 of Table 2 summarises the provisions in the strategies for monitoring and evaluation. It will be recalled that in our 'best-practice model' we stressed the importance of these for PR aid, but it can be seen from the table that the four documents under examination are virtually silent on this, at least as it relates to the poverty goal. It may be that these topics would be regarded by donors as falling outside the coverage of an aid strategy paper, although we do not see how donors could claim to be seriously pursuing a PR objective unless they were willing to devote the resources necessary to be able to monitor the extent to which their interventions were having the desired effects.

Overall assessment

It has to be said that none of the four strategy documents under examination was particularly impressive. None presented an approach to the donor's aid to Zimbabwe which flowed in a reasonably tightly argued way from an analysis of the existing situation, an appreciation of the interventions of other donors, and a statement of the donor's own experiences, objectives, priorities and comparative advantages in Zimbabwe. However, our standpoint here is narrower: the adequacy of the strategies as vehicles for promoting the poverty-reducing, or alleviating, objectives to which all four subscribed. Going back to our 'best-practice model', we might hope for strategies which would: (a) be based on a bottom-up, demand-driven approach, or at least on wide consultations; (b) include an analysis of the nature and causes of the poverty problem, as a basis for designing anti-poverty interventions; (c) translate the PR goal into reasonably precise operational objectives and priorities, including identification of monitorable target groups whose well-being it was intended to raise; (d) utilise modes of intervention designed specifically to reach the target groups; and (e) establish mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of the chosen interventions in reducing poverty.

While each in various ways did address the poverty issue, none came anywhere near to meeting these criteria – a judgement which can be safely extended to the ‘missing’ cases of Germany and the Netherlands. Only the Swedes made any attempt at consultation beyond the realms of the GoZ and even their opening-up fell short of designing a demand-driven approach to PR interventions. None of the four strategy papers could be said to present a systematic analysis of the poverty problem (although some addressed particular aspects of it), and none identified monitorable target groups. The chosen modes of intervention were conventional (although in Chapter 5 we report on some specific projects which have sought imaginatively to tackle the particular difficulties of reaching the poor). There was virtually no mention of monitoring and evaluation.

4.3 A comparative analysis of aid portfolios

One of the difficulties of the research of which this paper is part is that almost any aid activity can be presented as having a PR content. As one of our interlocutors said, ‘Anything that helps the Zimbabwean economy is good for the reduction of poverty’. Would that it were so! If we are to move beyond the level of rhetoric, the idea of PR aid needs to be made more precise, in terms of *the clarity of the link between an intervention and a specified group of poor beneficiaries*.

Using this criterion, we can differentiate three types of donor approach, according to the strength of the perceived links between aid interventions and PR: (i) the ‘all our aid is good for PR’, or trickle-down, school, which relies on the PR benefits of the general growth and development of the economy without seeking to establish any specific mechanisms linking economic performance to the reduction of poverty; (ii) donor programmes which could be said to pursue indirect PR because they are based, explicitly or implicitly, on some plausible link between the developmental activity promoted and the welfare of the poor, e.g. assistance to dryland communal farming areas; and (iii) programmes which address PR directly, meeting the best-practice criteria just presented.

We have utilised this way of thinking in order to undertake a comparative evaluation of each donor’s portfolio of aid interventions. The results of this are summarised in Tables 3 and 4, which we must now explain. The Netherlands is not included because, apart from balance of payments support, it has only recently begun to develop an aid programme in Zimbabwe, so its portfolio is not yet complete, nor representative of its intentions.

The procedures adopted for the compilation of Table 3 were as follows. First, we obtained from each donor brief descriptions of their existing portfolio of aid interventions in Zimbabwe. From these we excluded very small projects and regional projects whose coverage was not confined to Zimbabwe. Fuller information on what

was included and excluded is set out in Appendix 1. We then placed each of these into one of three categories, as indicated in the table, using the criterion of the immediacy of the link between an intervention and the welfare of the poor.

To illustrate: a project designed to bring health services to impoverished commercial farm workers and their families in a specific locality would be classified as 'direct PR' because there is a clear, monitorable, one-to-one link between the intervention and the welfare of a defined group of poor people. A project to improve health services in the whole of the communal areas, on the other hand, would be classified

Table 3 Summary of portfolio analysis (% shares, by value)

	<i>Direct PR</i>	<i>Indirect PR</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Weighted PR^a</i>	<i>(4) relative to mean</i>
	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>	<i>(5)</i>
Denmark	1	14	86	16	0.37
EU	16	7	77	39	0.90
Germany	0	35	65	35	0.81
Sweden	25	25	50	75	1.74
UK	0	51	49	51	1.18
MEAN	9	31	60	43	1.00
Note: ^a $((1) \times 2) + (2)$, i.e. direct PR given a weight of 2.					

as 'indirect PR', on the grounds that its benefits would be enjoyed by the whole population of that zone, whatever their economic status, but that it was reasonable to expect a substantial proportion of beneficiaries to be poor. Lastly, a programme, say, for strengthening the planning capacities of the Ministry of Health would be placed in the 'other' category, on the grounds that any resulting benefits would be enjoyed by the country's entire population, and that any link between it and PR would be tenuous and untraceable. Note, however, that the 'other' category does not deny the possibility of some PR benefits. Thus, general programme aid in support of the ESAP is placed in the 'other' category but it is perfectly possible to argue, as we saw earlier,

that adjustment policies are essential for the defeat of poverty in Zimbabwe. The point about it, however, is that any benefits from the ESAP are likely to be diffused among the population at large, and not confined or traceable to the poor.

One of the limitations of this exercise is that it requires the full value of each intervention to be placed in one or other of the categories, whereas they may have components that belong in different categories. It would also be easy to criticise the basis of Table 3 on the grounds of excessive subjectivism. However, as a safeguard against researcher bias we showed earlier versions of our analyses to officials of the donors in question and amended our classifications in the light of their comments.¹¹ It proved surprisingly easy to reach agreement on most of the classifications (although one official doubted the usefulness of the direct-indirect distinction). We should also bear in mind our earlier observation that donor objectives and programmes are changing in several cases so that present-day project portfolios may not reflect intentions for the future.

Turning now to the results, we focus for the moment on columns (1) to (3) of Table 3. As can be seen, there were marked differences in the portfolios of these five donors, although none had a high proportion of direct PR projects and three (Denmark, Germany, UK) had none or virtually none. Denmark also had little 'indirect PR' aid, with 86% of its total placed in the 'other' category. Sweden is at the other end of the spectrum, with a quarter of its aid being in each of the 'direct' and 'indirect' categories. The range of results suggests that there would be substantial scope for greater PR aid if the other donors were to raise their own efforts so as to emulate the portfolios already being achieved by the best performers.

In two cases, these results can be compared with evaluations undertaken by two of the donors in question. First, in the case of the UK our finding that it had no interventions in the 'direct' category contrasts strongly with DFID's own claim that 45% of its aid to Zimbabwe should be classified as 'direct poverty reduction' (DFID, 1996, Annex 2). We do not have enough information to attempt a reconciliation between this claim and our result. Part of the difference may result from the fact that the DFID classification includes projects too small to be covered by our exercise. However, it also appears that DFID uses a rather elastic notion of what constitutes a 'direct' PR intervention, for the whole of its programme aid in support of the ESAP reforms is (outrageously) so classified. Exclusion of this immediately halves the claimed proportion. There are also some other surprising and substantial candidates for direct PR: a wildlife diseases project; sexual health projects; training for enterprise programmes; and so on. In short, there appears to be a substantial element of window dressing here.

¹¹ Shortage of time prevented this in the case of Denmark.

In the case of Denmark we can compare our results with a 1996 evaluation of the use of its aid for PR in Zimbabwe. While this does not attempt a classification similar to ours and is rather critical of various aspects of the Danish programme from the poverty point of view, it nonetheless concludes with a judgement that overall 'there seems to be a reasonable match between the country [PR] strategy and the country portfolio' (DANIDA, 1996, I: 56). On this we can do no more than express disagreement. On the basis of our analysis, the composition of the Danish aid portfolio appeared singularly inappropriate for a PR strategy, although it may be a perfectly good portfolio by other criteria (see Appendix 1 for fuller details). It is known that an earlier draft of the DANIDA report was a good deal more critical than the published version and we are led to speculate that this was one of the aspects that was amended under pressure.

Columns (4) and (5) of Table 3 take the exercise a little further. Col. (4) provides a PR score based on giving direct PR interventions a weight of 2, indirect a weight of 1 and 'other' interventions a weight of 0. This results in a hypothetical maximum score of 200, i.e. if all of a donor's aid were in the 'direct' category. The element of arbitrariness about this is obvious; readers can either ignore this elaboration and concentrate on Cols. (1)-(3) or substitute weights of their own. Col. (5) then expresses the weighted results relative to the mean score, shown at the bottom of Col. (4) as 50. The effect of this exercise is to underscore the large differences among the five donors, from the PR point of view, with Sweden having a score well ahead of the rest and approaching five times as large as the donor in the relegation zone, Denmark. All, of course, fall far short of the theoretical maximum of 200.

The Col. (5) results are reproduced in Col. (1) of Table 4 below. Table 4 is based on the premise that any assessment of the PR value of a given donor's aid portfolio must also take into account the *size* of that portfolio, which is brought in in Col. (2). We found that annual values fluctuate a good deal so, to avoid the distortions this might create, we took the mean annual value of each donor's aid expenditures during 1990-93 (in millions of US dollars). The weighted PR scores are then multiplied by programme size to provide the outcomes in Col. 3, which in Col. (4) are standardised relative to the Col. (3) mean of 40.8. The relative Col. (4) outcomes differ somewhat from those in Table 3. The larger sizes of the German and UK aid programmes improve the relative standing of these donors, just as the small size (in 1990-93) of the EU programme pulls it further down. Denmark does worst of all, with a very low PR score compounded by the effects of a small programme. Sweden remains well above the rest, combining a good PR score with a substantial programme. Size matters.

Table 4 Table 3 results adjusted for programme size

	<i>Weighted PR relative to mean (1)</i>	<i>Size of aid programme^a (2)</i>	<i>(1) x (2) (3)</i>	<i>(3) relative to mean value (4)</i>
Denmark	0.37	20	7.4	0.18
EU	0.90	24	21.6	0.53
Germany	0.81	54	43.7	1.07
Sweden	1.74	43	74.8	1.83
UK	1.18	48	56.6	1.39
MEAN	1.00	37.8	40.8	1.00

Source: DAC.
Note: ^a Mean total annual ODA to Zimbabwe, 1990–93 in US \$ mn.

4.4 The donors and PAAP

From a donor point of view direct PR interventions have the considerable disadvantage of being labour-intensive and therefore expensive to design and implement. It is probably true to say that none of the donors considered in this report currently have the staffing capabilities to mount a major programme of direct PR interventions. This does not necessarily mean that they cannot engage in any such aid, however. A potentially attractive alternative is to buy into direct PR schemes devised by agencies of the GoZ (or possibly other local agencies). This brings us to donor attitudes towards the government's Poverty Alleviation Action Plan. In theory, this offers precisely the opportunity just mentioned: ready-designed direct PR programmes which donors could support. Not only that, but its semi-autonomous status within the GoZ is designed to offer donors administrative arrangements which permit them to contribute directly to the PAAP without going through the usual Treasury procedures and controls. However, bilateral donors, as distinct from

multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and African Development Bank, have taken scant advantage of this possibility. There is something of a bilateral-multilateral divide on this subject.

The PAAP grew out of the SDF, discussed earlier, in the realisation that the SDF was both too narrow in its focus (essentially intended as a safety-net mechanism for those harmed by the ESAP) and unsuccessful, as already recorded. The PAAP was initially presented to a Consultative Group meeting of donors in December 1993 with the intention of broadening the scope of the GoZ's 'targeted social programmes' and employment-creation efforts (GoZ, 1994: 1).

However, at that stage only an outline of intended activities was included and it appears that most donors were either lukewarm or took a wait-and-see position. Little materialised from the 1993 plan, with only the poverty assessment survey being implemented, and that only after a substantial delay (Goericke, 1997: 23). No bilateral donor has yet contributed to the PAAP on more than a minor scale (although it has received substantial support from the UNDP, the World Bank and the African Development Bank). As originally presented, the PAAP was described to us by one donor official as consisting of 'warmed-up, low-quality projects that had already been around for some time'.

Against this, the PAAP does appear to offer potential as a vehicle for donor support of direct PR activities. It is currently preparing a Community Action Programme (CAP), which is intended to be a demand-led and targeted set of interventions to finance small grants and technical assistance for social and economic infrastructure, improved natural resource management and other small-scale activities identified by communities. This builds on the database created by its 1995 Poverty Assessment Survey mentioned in Chapter 1 above and is to be implemented through local NGOs. Nonetheless and with the exception of Sweden, the donors under study here appear to have little interest. Indeed, some of the donor officials with whom we spoke were unaware of its existence. This draws attention to part of the problem: the PAAP Secretariat seems to have weak relations with bilateral donors (as distinct from the UNDP and World Bank). It would be the natural agency for co-ordinating donor activities in the PR area but does not carry out that function. It is supposed to meet regularly with the donors but, at the time of our visit, had not done so for over a year.

A further area of difficulty is donor uncertainty about the status of the PAAP within the GoZ. There are related doubts about the capability of the PAAP Secretariat to undertake its tasks efficiently and make good use of donor resources. Indeed, the Secretariat admits that it is seriously under-staffed at present. The Public Service Commission has approved a new structure and substantially increased establishment of staff but at present these exist only on paper because the Treasury has refused financial permission to recruit for the new positions, even to commit itself to permit this in future after an initial period of donor-funded recruitment.

An additional point relates to structures of power in low-income parts of the country. The PAAP intends its Community Action Plan to be operated through local NGOs. This is seen by donors – and other departments of government – as creating a parallel structure to the already existing local government structure of RDCs. Several of our donors are already supporting a major programme for strengthening the RDCs, both as a means of reinforcing democratic institutions and as a vehicle for reaching the poor. They dislike the creation of a parallel NGO structure and regard it as unnecessary, arguing that the RDCs have proved to be responsive to local needs and capable of reaching the poor. Such resistances are paralleled in other parts of the GoZ, particularly – and not surprisingly – the Ministry of Local Government, which regards decentralisation as *its* subject. Treasury officials similarly point out the danger that the CAP could end up creating ‘unsustainable temporary structures’.

Although it was difficult to obtain a candid discussion of this, it appears that the issue here is about the structure of power in rural communities. These are summarised by Raftopolous and Jazdowska (1997: 13) in the following terms:

In 1984 and 1985, the *Prime Minister's Directive on Decentralisation* provided for the establishment of representation at village, ward, district and provincial levels. These various levels were to be represented as follows. Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) were to be elected bodies, given the responsibility of identifying needs at a local level. Decisions made at this level were then to be passed on to Ward Development Committees consisting of VIDCO representatives from six villages, which would then pass on local needs to the District Council and then to the more powerful Provincial Councils. This attempt at providing a focus for more localised decision making has proved problematic for several reasons. These include the continued domination of central government, particularly at Provincial level; the proclivity of small elites to ‘represent’ local interests; poor planning skills at local levels; the continued influence of traditional leaders; and the ever-present role of the ruling party (Stewart, Klugman and Helmsing, 1994).

A similarly unsatisfactory situation was reported by the Land Commission (1994: 26):

Local level institutions administering tenure have been characterised by conflicts particularly between the traditional authority and ‘elected’ leadership. The intractable nature of these land administration disputes have, however, been further complicated by the subsequent superimposition of local ruling party structures and, later, of government village and ward development committees. This profusion of overlapping and incongruent local organisational structures, each with its own boundaries and drawing in different sources of legitimacy, has thus created weak and disparate local institutions.

It appears, therefore, that the CAP has been designed the way it has on the premise that, to be successful in reaching the poor, it will be necessary to bypass existing structures. NGOs are presumably regarded as more likely to be in touch with, and representative of, the poor (although Raftopolous and Jazdowska doubt the validity of this assumption). It is also desired to bypass the geopolitics – and bureaucracy – of local government revenue allocations, retaining freedom to allocate resources more strictly on the basis of need. Donors anxious to work within the existing formal political framework may naturally be reluctant to appear to be financing an institutional framework of uncertain status within the GoZ, parallel to, potentially in competition with, a constitutionally established system of local government in which the ruling party is deeply entrenched. Moreover, while our assessment of the RDCs in Chapter 5 below draws attention to weaknesses, it does not support the view that they cannot reach the poor.

Despite the legitimacy of these concerns, our view is that the coolness most donors have shown towards the PAAP actually reflects a relative lack of interest in direct PR interventions. One could counter their criticisms of the effectiveness of the PAAP by arguing that through their indifference they have forgone the opportunity to exert influence on the design of PAAP programmes and specifically the CAP. Had they been more active in support, they could certainly have ensured a better record of communication with the Secretariat, and they probably could have resolved – or reduced – the problem of its limited administrative capabilities. For, as its Director pointed out, while donors are holding off because they do not think the Secretariat has the capacity, it is impossible to persuade the Treasury to commit funds for recruitment, with the Treasury pointing to the lack of donor interest. If the donors were seriously interested, he was sure this would induce the Treasury to approve filling the new posts. Concerted donor influence may also have modified the design of the CAP in ways that would have raised its acceptability within parts of the GoZ.

In our view, the PAAP offers considerable potential opportunity to contribute to targeted PR programmes by means that would avoid a large, probably unfeasible, commitment of donor manpower resources. But there appears to be a real danger that this opportunity will not be seized.

5. The case studies

5.1 Introduction

We turn now from the general to the particular. To gain an understanding of the effectiveness of aid as a means of combating poverty it is necessary to study concrete situations. The main aim is to judge the effectiveness of donor interventions in relation to their stated PR aims and to draw out the key managerial elements which appear to determine effectiveness. The case studies analysed here represent a sample of the reality of aid for PR as undertaken by the major EU donors in Zimbabwe.

All the major EU donors with stated PR objectives are represented in our sample. Most of our studies relate to specific projects or programmes (for simplicity, we shall henceforth call them all projects). There are two exceptions, however. Since Denmark has recently undertaken a large evaluation of its programme in Zimbabwe from the PR point of view (DANIDA, 1996), we decided to use this material as one study. This two-volume evaluation contained a number of in-depth project studies and, rather than repeating the same exercise, we chose to summarise these.

Germany is the second exception. Following discussions with the German embassy, we selected the GTZ for our studies of German aid to Zimbabwe. The GTZ was at that time conducting an evaluation of its programme with terms of reference similar to our own (Goericke, 1997). We therefore decided to apply the same procedure as in the case of Denmark. As it turned out, however, the report could not readily be incorporated into the structure of our report, with the result that the German experience is less extensively treated below than the other five EU donors.

To what extent do the cases represent a fair picture of each donor's activities? We asked each donor to suggest two projects from their portfolios which they felt best represented their efforts to use aid for poverty reduction. We expressed a preference that one project should be considered by the donor as successful in reaching its objectives, while the other should be considered as having failed to do so. As it turned out, few donors could find any failures in their portfolios! The justification for the donors' selections was then discussed with us and in some cases we requested, and obtained, changes. The projects finally selected fall into the sectors of health, basic education, infrastructure, and agriculture:

Special education programme	Sweden
Farm health workers project	Sweden
Matabeleland Aids Council	Netherlands
Small dam rehabilitation	Netherlands
Labour based feeder roads rehabilitation and maintenance project	Denmark

Country programme evaluation ¹²	Denmark
Micro-projects programme	European Commission
Counterpart funds in health and education	European Commission
Land resettlement	United Kingdom
Small-scale irrigation using collector wells	United Kingdom

The analyses followed the general methodology agreed for the larger study of which this is part, with a focus on the processes of identification, design and implementation of the project. A key issue for us was the extent of stakeholder (particularly beneficiary) participation in these processes. We relied primarily on secondary sources but augmented these to an important extent by interviews with key actors. Three types of document were studied: (a) project appraisal reports, (b) a project document and (c) mid-term and/or project completion and/or *ex post* evaluation reports. This set of documents was intended to enable us to follow the project from inception to final completion. For a variety of reasons, it was seldom that all these documents could be found.¹³ Gaps in the documentation were filled by interviews with those who had been closely involved.

The following pages provide a summary analysis of all the selected projects. Our analyses of the full case studies can be found in Appendix 2.

¹² This covered the following programmes and projects: Support to smallholder irrigation; Rural afforestation programme; Support to the second family health project; Assistance to ferry service, Lake Kariba; Justice, peace and reconciliation programme; Women and law in southern Africa; Assistance to the economic structural adjustment programme of Zimbabwe; Local grant authority.

¹³ The **appraisal reports** would be difficult to find, especially if the project was started a long time ago. In some cases there had simply not been an appraisal. **Project documents** should be available and generally contain a lot of useful information. But there were exceptions. In some cases there had just been amendments to the original document. The amendments would be available, but not always the project document. Sometimes the project document was simply a 'contract' between the Government and the donor with little information about objectives etc. In some cases it was simply not possible to find the project document – it had been filed according to an archival system. The third source of documents were **evaluation reports**. Such reports were almost always available. It does not necessarily have to be an *ex post* evaluation, but a monitoring review or a project completion report may be just as useful. The evaluation reports could also contain useful references to the original appraisal as well as an outline of the objectives, outputs etc. of the project. Thus, we often found in practice that the evaluation reports were what we had to work with.

5.2 The poverty orientation of the projects

The projects were selected as examples of aid for PR. What does this mean in concrete terms? What were they aiming at and who were the likely beneficiaries? In order to determine poverty orientation we examined the objectives of the projects, to see how specific they were about PR. This met with some problems. Generally, the art of formulating objectives is not very well developed. Few of the projects followed the hierarchy of objectives suggested by the logical framework method. The weaknesses were those familiar to students of evaluation techniques. The meanings of concepts such as 'results', 'outputs' and 'immediate objectives' were often mixed or misunderstood. An especially common mistake was to confuse activities and objectives; if something had been done its objectives had been achieved.

It was not possible for us to bring order into this maze of different practices and unclear terminology. We have largely recorded the objectives as they have been formulated in the project document. In most cases these refer to what can be called 'immediate' objectives – things which should be achieved within two years of project completion. We have generally refrained from using the stated 'development objectives' of the projects because these were usually formulated in a vague and superficial manner. Their primary purpose seemed to be something other than facilitation of serious analysis of aid effectiveness.

In Table 5 we have classified our sample of projects into the same three categories already employed in connection with Tables 3 and 4. First, there are those with a 'direct' poverty focus, by which we mean that the project is intended to provide a clearly identified benefit directly to a group of poor individuals or households. In other words, the objective has to be specific about the benefits to be produced and to whom they are planned to accrue. Second, there are projects with an 'indirect' poverty focus. In this category we place projects where the planned benefit is concrete in terms of PR but is less specific about the intended beneficiaries. Such a project would be expected to produce benefits which will reduce poverty *provided* that poor potential beneficiaries are able to take advantage of it, for example a feeder road or a small dam. Thirdly, there are projects where the objective has no specific poverty focus, with neither the benefits nor the beneficiaries clearly specified in terms of PR, even though the results of such projects might include numbers of the poor among the beneficiaries. Table 5 below classifies the objectives of each case according to these criteria.

Table 5 Poverty orientation of objectives

<i>Project</i>	<i>Direct Poverty Focus</i>	<i>Indirect Poverty Focus</i>	<i>No Poverty Focus</i>
Special education for disabled children (Sweden)			* Improve the quality and access to basic education for children with special learning needs due to various disabilities
Farm health workers (Sweden)	* Expand and establish a FHW scheme for commercial farm workers		
Matabeleland Aids Council (Netherlands)			* Support projects which spread health awareness and provide services to AIDS patients
Small dams (Netherlands)		* Reduce the vulnerability and food insecurity of drought-prone communities * Assist such communities to seek sustainable solutions for protecting and optimising the use of small dam reservoir and catchment area resources	
Feeder roads (Denmark)		* Promote employment and cost-effective rehabilitation and maintenance of the road system in rural areas	
Danish country programme ¹	* Directly support the weaker groups in society by developing both the productive and social sectors.		* Create broad, employment-generating growth by means of support to economic reforms, expansion of the physical infrastructure and by development of the private sector
Counterpart funds (European Commission)			* Support to health and education sector budgets
Micro-projects programme (European Commission)			* Provision of social infrastructure facilities * Increase food production * Improve income generation capacity
Land resettlement (United Kingdom)		* Facilitate land transfer from commercial farm lands to communal farmers, while ensuring the maximum economic potential of the redistributed land	
Collector wells (United Kingdom)		* Field test the validity of small scale irrigation and collector well research results * Identify ways of improving the operation of the schemes * Identify a basis for replicating the schemes on a wider scale	

Note: ¹ These are the immediate objectives of the whole Danish country programme. There are also specific project objectives, which may be much more poverty focused.

Sweden's support of health schemes for commercial farm workers and their dependants is the only intervention in our sample with an unambiguously direct poverty focus. Commercial farm workers are recognised as amongst the poorest groups in Zimbabwe and a project which aims at improving their health standards must be seen as having a clear PR objective. In addition to this direct targeting of a known poor group, the project also contributes a direct benefit to farmers. The project trains one or two workers per farm as health workers. After the training they are able to attend to minor health problems and illnesses, as well as educating farm workers on the importance of nutrition and sanitation.

The Danish country programme is an interesting case. The general objectives of the country programme could well be classified as PR-oriented, since its purpose is stated as directly supporting the weaker groups in society by developing the productive and social sectors. One would therefore expect the various projects within this programme to be quite precise in their respective definitions of the weakest groups but this is not the case. None of the nine projects covered by the country programme evaluation provided any clear definition of their target group. For example, in the 'Support to smallholder irrigation development' scheme the immediate objective is to rehabilitate irrigation schemes generally in the resettlement areas, not specifically smallholder localities identified as poor. Similarly, the 'Rural afforestation programme' has three immediate objectives: to establish and conserve forest areas in communal areas; to reduce environmental damage; and to encourage environmentally sustainable production of multi-purpose wood. No specific poverty groups are identified as beneficiaries.

The Danish case is by no means the only one. Most project descriptions state the intended benefits clearly and comprehensively but they often fail to identify the beneficiaries properly, so as to ensure that project benefits are directed to the poor. A specific social group is rarely singled out. When this *is* done, it is often a group which contains a mix of very poor and fairly well-off households, such as 'people in rural communities', 'farmers in communal areas' or 'women'. None of these, quite popular as target groups for aid in Zimbabwe, are homogeneous in terms of poverty. Failure to realise this may lead to unwanted results, as stressed in our earlier citation of the work of Jenkins and Prinsloo (1995). For example, unless poor women are explicitly singled out, the chances are great that it will be primarily the better-off women who will take advantage of potential project benefits.

Donors behave as if all farmers in communal land areas are poor, even though this is not the case. However, this does not exclude the possibility that reference to a specific geographical area might be sufficient in order to target the poor. The Dutch-assisted small dams project is perhaps such a case. This is classified in Table 5 as having an 'indirect' poverty focus because the project is not targeted on the poorest people of the drought-prone areas in question. But if it can be established that people in drought-prone areas, in general, are among the poorest people of Zimbabwe then it would be reasonable to assume that this project has a clear PR objective.

The projects with no poverty focus at all are the special education project for disabled children, support for the Matabeleland AIDS Council and the EC counterpart funds. Here we find objectives with a limited, or unclear, poverty orientation. None of these projects produce benefits that are of any precise significance for poor people. The Swedish-supported special education programme is a representative case. Sida support has primarily been used for the further education of teachers, 'mobile teams', equipping resource rooms, development of indigenous braille language, establishing an audiological laboratory and a unit for the production of textbooks and teaching aids for blind and impaired children. These are activities which are of a technical character and in themselves do not produce anything specifically poverty-oriented. Such projects either fail to identify beneficiaries, or they identify a group whose poverty status is unclear. Disabled children and HIV/AIDS patients are both vulnerable but they are not necessarily poor. It may well be that the services provided by both these programmes are most effectively utilised by disabled children and HIV patients from families not living in poverty.

A marginal case is the EU's budget support to the Ministries of Health and Education for buying essential supplies such as medicines, furniture and schoolbooks. Although the European Commission carefully monitors that the 'right' goods are being bought, any possible PR impact is reduced for two reasons. First, the availability of medicines and schoolbooks benefits poor and rich students alike. Second, the fungibility of the resources provided makes it difficult to establish any PR impact. It is therefore fair to say that the present mode of monitoring the funds, ensuring that the agreed items have been purchased, is basically irrelevant from the point of view of ensuring poverty impact (although useful for ensuring accountability).

Against this, the budgetary constraint forces the GoZ to prioritise recurrent expenditures, particularly salaries, at the expense of capital expenditures. The EC counterpart funds are directed towards alleviating this shortage of government revenues. Furniture, schoolbooks, buildings, etc. are all items that the GoZ most probably would not have been able to afford in the absence of the EC funds. This suggests that the counterpart funds have, overall, a beneficial impact on preserving welfare expenditures. Strictly speaking, these are not directly poverty reducing, however, since the present mode of monitoring cannot reserve the funds for poor students only.

German aid, in the form of GTZ technical co-operation, is claimed to have a generally PR orientation (Goericke, 1997). The author identifies three different ways in which PR can be accomplished:

1. By influencing framework conditions so that an environment is created which enables poverty groups to engage in initiatives improving their situation. This covers interventions rendering advisory services to government organisations at the national level.

2. The intervention could assist provincial and/or district organisations to initiate, co-ordinate and monitor PR activities. The support would supply advisory services to regional and local government organisations, as well as supporting local initiatives.
3. The intervention could assist local communities or self-help groups to run their own PR initiatives by rendering advisory services to such organisations.

Most GTZ projects were geared towards the first of these three, with a range of advisory services being rendered to national-level government organisations. These, in turn, are assuming the role of executing agencies of projects into which German technical co-operation is an external input. The second mode of operation – focusing on the provincial and district level – effectively means enhancing the capacities of the RDCs to plan and co-ordinate local development initiatives. To what extent this kind of support will have any impact on PR depends on the core focus of the district development plans. To date, few RDCs have PR as a key strategic concern. Few GTZ interventions fall into the third mode. Technical co-operation at this level largely takes the form of funding NGOs, with the objective of increasing their capacity to carry out PR operations.

None of the GTZ projects examined by Goericke explicitly have PR as an objective. According to him, ‘development objectives’ usually include references to general welfare issues – e.g. to contribute to the improvement of living standards – rather than specific PR. As PR was not conceptualised, ‘... it remains unclear, how far and in which respects specific operations are tailored towards needs, capabilities and constraints of poverty groups’ (Goericke, 1997: 41). Specific attempts to address PR were more frequent at the operational level. However, descriptions, narrative summaries and indicators in the project documents tend to be technical, not easily lending themselves to analysis of contributions to PR.

To sum up, the impression gained from these studies is that the poverty focus of the projects is not very distinct. The projects aim at increasing welfare in general, rather than that of the poor – a procedure which, for reasons set out in Chapter 1, is an inadequate approach to PR in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the project documents are mostly not very precise about who the beneficiaries are intended to be, with target groups encompassing both poor and non-poor people. It is perhaps typical of this lack of precision that none of the projects examined contained any discussion of the concept of poverty and how it should be applied. Poverty is poverty, it would seem. There are, furthermore, few attempts to relate the projects and their objectives to a wider analysis of poverty.

5.3 Local organisations – participation of the poor?

In this section we examine the nature and character of local participation from the origin of the idea to the actual implementation of a project.

An aid project can be seen as a network where different actors assume various roles in order to perform specific functions. Traditionally, development aid is a relationship between governments, which means that a government ministry will be a given, but not necessarily dominant, player in an aid project. Other common actors are provincial and district councils, public enterprises and specialised government agencies, private consultancy companies and NGOs. The network is dynamic and actors change in their roles and importance during the lifespan of a project.

A recurrent theme in the aid debate, particularly with reference to aid for poverty reduction, is the extent to which local organisations/actors represent the intended beneficiaries and effectively safeguard their interests. The conventional wisdom is that the more involved the beneficiaries are in project design, planning and implementation, the greater the likelihood of a sustainable, poverty-reducing impact. How did our sample of projects originate? Did they materialise through bottom-up processes, starting as initiatives in the local communities, among the poor or their representatives? Or were they central initiatives coming out of line ministries or perhaps as a result of a process within the ruling party? A third possibility, of course, is that projects are initiatives by donor, or other ‘foreign’, organisations.

It is, of course, difficult to establish the origin of an idea or initiative. What might look like a local initiative could very well have started as an idea from a donor. It could also be the result of a long process of dialogue and interaction between various actors, where it becomes impossible to establish who contributed what and when. In spite of these problems, Table 6 tries to map the origin of the various projects, as we have been able to trace it through documents and interviews.

Table 6 Origination of the projects

<i>Project</i>	<i>Donor</i>	<i>Central initiative</i>	<i>Province initiative</i>	<i>District initiative</i>	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Other</i>
Special education		✓				
Aids council					✓	
Small dams						✓
Feeder roads		✓				
EC micro projects	✓					
Farm health worker					✓	
EC counterpart funds	✓	✓				
Land resettlement		✓				
Collector wells	✓					
Danish country programme		✓				

As can be seen, in Zimbabwe a donor-funded PR project commonly originates as a central government initiative. There are few examples of a bottom-up approach, although the Dutch-supported Matabeleland AIDS Council and the Swedish-backed farm health worker projects are exceptions, emerging from initiatives by individuals and interest groups outside the state apparatus. We have not been able to find any evidence of a bottom-up approach within the state administration. It seems that none of our projects developed as an initiative at the district level which was then passed upwards through the government administration to a line ministry.

There are examples of other projects where the donor obviously took the initiative. The UK-supported collector wells project is a good example. This originated as a DFID initiative. Interestingly, the pilot project was not identified on the basis of its likely poverty-reducing effects. The initial focus was on technology: DFID would provide facilities to install water points and the socio-economic aspects of water provision were not considered. In the event, however, the project developed away from this technical basis, towards an emphasis on community development.

The EC micro-projects programme could be another case of a donor initiative. Since the Commission is operating a similar scheme in Zambia, and perhaps in other countries, it may be assumed that the project idea has been developed by the EC for application wherever local circumstances are favourable. Still, the Commission would

not have been able to mount this project unless the GoZ had approved it and been prepared to provide the necessary local resources.

As was shown in Chapter 2, Zimbabwe has a centralist planning philosophy. Few things can be initiated without the consent and involvement of the central government. The state and ruling party have been the focal point for all planning efforts. This top-down model is, of course, reflected in our case studies, but the picture of centralisation should be slightly modified. Our examples suggest that it is difficult to establish how aid projects are initiated and developed. The fact that project documents and evaluations often refer to the central government as the initiator of an idea, is probably only the tip of the iceberg. Underneath lies a dialogue with donors, representatives of RDCs and other stakeholders, making it difficult to isolate the origin of an initiative. What appears clear, however, is that it is the central government which decides how and when to enter into a dialogue with the lower levels of public administration. In none of the cases have we seen references to a project being initiated by a village or district and then brought up through the administrative hierarchy.

It is equally not easy to assess the value of local participation for aid effectiveness. Experience suggests that projects born through a bottom-up approach stand a better chance of yielding lasting benefits. We cannot test this claim, however, because our material does not offer any particular evidence and also because not enough time has elapsed since the various projects were completed for us to get a good reading of their sustainability. Only the UK-financed land resettlement programme offers relevant evidence on the value of a bottom-up approach, albeit negative, for the DFID-commissioned evaluation of this points to the lack of involvement of resettled farmers as an important cause of the problems encountered.

5.4 Implementing the projects

Zimbabwe's top-down approach to development planning also permeates the way in which projects are implemented. In the early stages of the project cycle, a fairly limited number of actors circled around the central government. During implementation the same pattern persists but the range of actors seems to widen. Table 7 identifies the main actors involved (the darker the shading, the more intensive the involvement).

The pattern of involvement of local organisations in our case studies basically conformed to the traditional way of organising aid projects. At all stages of the project cycle it is clear that the central government was a key player which could not be bypassed. Line ministries occupied an influential role, over and above what was implicit in being signatories to an agreement. In many cases they still exercise a lot of control but often leave actual implementation to others. Normally this takes place

Table 7 Major local implementing actors

<i>Project</i>	<i>Line Ministry</i>	<i>Local Govt</i>	<i>Public institution</i>	<i>NGO</i>	<i>Donor</i>	<i>Other</i>
Special education					Sida	
Aids council				MAC		
Small dams		RDC		CARE		Benef.
Feeder roads		RDC				Benef.
EC micro-projects		RDC			MPP	Benef.
Farm health worker				Farmers union		
EC counter funds					EC	
Land resettlement		RDC			DFID	



Significant involvement



Moderate involvement



Intensive involvement

through collaboration with lower levels of the state administration or other public organisations, such as the Forestry Commission. In only two of our projects did a line ministry actually carry out the implementation: the Ministries of Health and Education in the EC counterpart fund project and the Ministry of Health in the Sida-supported programme of special education for disabled children.

In the case of the GTZ, there is a wide variety of project modalities, although reliance on government organisations is a common element. Often the technical departments of line ministries act as counterparts to the GTZ. Such arrangements are particularly common in projects where personnel are being deployed. At the district level, a majority of the projects are directed through the same technical departments, and the RDCs.

Three of the interventions were particularly decentralised – the small dams and feeder roads projects, and the micro-projects programme. Here we find the RDCs playing an active role in implementation. The councils were also the natural counterpart for the EC micro-projects programme.

In some projects the GoZ performs mainly a supervisory role and leaves implementation to a donor-created organisation or an NGO. An example of the former is the EC micro-projects programme. This has established its own project organisation, supposedly under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance but in reality carrying out the activities at its own discretion. An example where NGOs have executive responsibility is the Dutch-financed small dams rehabilitation project, where the organisation CARE is the main implementing agency. It is rare for a donor to have a direct link with a NGO, largely bypassing the government. Our sample included only one example – Dutch support of the Matabeleland AIDS Council.

Few project organisations assign an active role to beneficiaries in the planning and management of the project. The role of beneficiaries, such as disabled children, HIV patients and farm workers, is that of passive recipients. There are, however, examples of more participatory approaches, involving much more in terms of mobilisation. The projects for small dams, feeder roads and the micro-projects programme rely to a large extent on interaction with target groups for carrying out the activities. However, such mobilisation does not entail that representatives of that target group actually taking part in project planning and management.

To conclude, implementation is often decentralised to provincial and district levels, with the RDCs playing an important role in many projects. This is not without reason, since the RDCs, like the Zimbabwean civil service in general, have a good reputation for getting things done. The RDCs have their limitations, however: their economic base is weak, their role in the national planning system is unclear, and few RDCs have developed clear strategic priorities for their operations. The current emphasis on the RDCs does not imply a change away from a top-down planning system, nor does it necessarily result in a better outcome for PR. Participation, in the sense of planning and developing a project with intended beneficiaries, seems not to be practised. To the extent that beneficiaries participate at all, they do so through their formal representatives, who might be members of the rural district council or party officials.

5.5 Conditionality

Due to growing concern about ensuring aid effectiveness, donors have over the last 10-15 years stepped up their use of policy conditionality. Aid monies are not seen to have been properly used and recipient governments are seen as having failed to fulfil their part of the 'contract'. Donor countries have been particularly dissatisfied with the lack of commitment and seriousness sometimes shown by recipient governments. There is ample evidence that this description of the problem and its consequences is correct. What is less certain, however, is whether conditional aid offers the best cure for the illness.

Any analysis of the 'conditionality game', and its effectiveness, needs to consider at least two basic issues. The first is the need to distinguish between different levels of conditionalities: financial accountability, policy conditionality (linking aid to economic policy reform) and political conditionality (linking aid to the reform of political systems). The second issue concerns the necessity for a conditionality approach to provide a system of rewarding good implementation and punishing non-compliance. These two issues form the starting point for our review of the project cases. What kind of conditionalities, if any, were attached to our cases and how did donors ensure compliance with the terms of the conditions?

In the UK-supported collector wells project the DFID requested the GoZ to guarantee support to the project in terms of staff (advisors, extension officers, etc.). If this condition was not met, the DFID would reserve to itself the right to reopen negotiations with the GoZ. On the other hand, the DFID did not set any policy conditions regarding its financing of the land resettlement programme. The programme was linked to one of the key political goals of the new government, land reform. As such, conditionalities did not apply or were not necessary.

Generally, Denmark does not operate with direct conditionalities in its aid programmes. When problem issues arise, the policy is to engage in dialogue, rather than threatening to stop the project or other measures of 'punishment'. In the Rural Feeder Roads project, the GoZ's release of funds was required to be timely and adequate, and the government agencies responsible for implementation were required to ensure adequate staffing and improved co-ordination and control of the labour-based works.

In the Sida-funded Special Education Programme there is no mention of conditionalities in the project document. A potential conditionality issue would be connected to the facilities installed by the project: the laboratory, service centre, etc. The GoZ, as part of its project obligations, was to take over the actual running of these facilities once the project had been completed. Given the GoZ's budgetary difficulties, one could expect this to be an additional burden on an already long list of state obligations. There is similarly no mention of conditionalities in the farm health worker project document. However, Sida feels that there is a financial conditionality attached to the project, in the sense that the Ministry of Health agreed to take over the project when Sida withdraws. There is no system of 'reward' and 'punishment', which means that Sida relies on its relationship with the GoZ to ensure compliance with the conditionality.

In the Dutch support for the Matabeleland AIDS Council there is no mention of any conditionalities in the project document, with the Dutch mainly requiring the Council to file reports on financial issues. The procedure for handling disagreements is based on dialogue. In the event of persistent disagreement, an external consultant is called in as an independent arbitrator.

The conditionalities applied in the EC micro-project programme are detailed but largely concern financial and technical – not policy – issues. The GoZ is required to provide individual projects with supervisory personnel, technical materials (equipping schools and clinics), and other staffing. Conditionalities also apply to the groups and communities receiving grants from the programme, with theirs being required to cover some of the costs of the investment as well as to demonstrate their skills for running their project. In the case of the EC counterpart fund programme, the donor tries to control the use of the funds by listing items that can be purchased from these funds. By doing so the EC hopes that the funds will be used in a manner compatible with the objectives of its aid programme, although we have already pointed out the problem of fungibility in this regard.

Overall, it appears that the donors operate with little conditionality at the project level, if any at all. They are primarily guided by operational concerns – ensuring that the government supplies the agreed resources to the project in the form of personnel, equipment and money. They are much less concerned with policy issues, such as ensuring that poverty constantly remains in focus. None of the donors appears to monitor compliance and all prefer to rely on their relationship with the GoZ for dealing with any disagreements and possible breaches.

5.6 A successful contribution to poverty reduction?

The obvious source for information about poverty-reducing effects should be the various project evaluations. The nature and quality of aid evaluation will then determine to what extent it is possible to analyse the performance of our cases in terms of impact on PR. The guidelines of most donors require evaluations to answer questions regarding impact, as well as more short-term operational matters. All projects surveyed by us have been subjected to at least one evaluation and we should expect these to provide an excellent source of information on the effects the projects have had on PR.

It is difficult to put together their findings in a coherent, aggregate way. However, in order to achieve some sort of general picture, we have used the terminology and method of the logical framework system – a system which is well-known, although not always practised, by most donors.¹⁴ We tried to classify the information found in the evaluations according to the basic levels in the intervention logic of the EC's variant of the logical framework system: activities, results, project purpose and overall objective (EC, 1993). We assume that the reader is familiar with the distinctions between the different categories. Suffice it to say that overall objectives in connection

¹⁴ The terminology varies between donors, but the basic principles are nowadays more or less the same, as they all tend to follow a logical framework model in their system for project appraisal and monitoring.

Table 8 Project success by level of assessment

<i>Project</i>	<i>Activities</i>			<i>Results</i>			<i>Project Purpose</i>		
	<i>Fully</i>	<i>Partly</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Fully</i>	<i>Partly</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Fully</i>	<i>Partly</i>	<i>None</i>
Special education		✓			?			?	
Aids council	✓				✓			?	
Small dams		✓			✓			?	
Feeder roads	✓				✓			?	
EC micro-projects	✓				?			?	
Farm health worker		✓			?		n.a.		
EC counter funds	✓				✓			?	
Land resettlement	✓				✓			✓	

with PR aid will naturally be connected with achievements related to a sustainable contribution towards reducing poverty in Zimbabwe. The results are summarised in Table 8.

Generally, Table 8 provides a rather dismal picture of the state of our knowledge. The higher we climb in the intervention logic, the less we know about what the projects actually achieve. After a first reading of all the evaluations it became apparent that we could not utilise a column for overall objectives, since none of the evaluations was able to say anything substantial about achievement of objectives at this level. We know with a fairly high degree of probability that almost all the projects have been successful in implementing their activities as planned. We are rather less sure about the results of the projects; where the evaluations offer conclusive evidence, it would appear that projects rarely achieve all their planned results. Finally, with respect to project purposes, the evaluations offer very little information about outcomes; only in one case was an evaluation explicit about the project purpose. This was the evaluation of the UK-aided programme of land resettlement where the purpose was assessed as partly achieved. In six cases it is difficult to assess the value of the information provided by the evaluation and in one case the evaluation simply does not deal with this issue.

Most donors have regular and standardised reporting and evaluation procedures. It is usually written into the project agreement when there should be an evaluation, the issues to be covered, etc. Policy-wise, it is quite clear that donors expect their evaluations to answer questions regarding impact and sustainability. But there is a great discrepancy between policy and practice. The pattern we see in Table 8

conforms to what we know from other sources about the quality and nature of aid evaluations, which have been found to focus on activities and results, primarily because they are concerned with operational matters, serving the planning needs of project managers and donors. Evaluation, as distinct from monitoring, normally takes place at the time of project completion, or when a project moves from one phase to another. It is uncommon to find an *ex post* evaluation concerned with issues of impact and sustainability. Our sample contained only one – the land resettlement evaluation just mentioned.

Operational concerns also explain the importance most projects attach to procedures and formats for project monitoring. Reporting procedures are normally concerned with activities and budget monitoring. Regular performance monitoring relative to the achievement of objectives is less common. Issues of impact and sustainability therefore remain unresolved. The donors and their evaluations are quite silent on these vital issues. This situation is unsatisfactory and raises questions as to how development aid is managed. It would seem that money is being spent without much knowledge about how well or for what purpose.

The question remains, can we see any evidence or indications of effective PR in our case studies? We are forced to approach the question impressionistically, for the material does not permit much else. On the basis of what we have read, seen and heard, we have tried to provide an answer to this question. It is admittedly one that could easily be criticised using strict criteria of reliability and validity. We nevertheless believe it provides a reasonably true picture.

To measure impact, we use four variables: *livelihood, resources, knowledge and rights*. The important distinction between livelihood and the remaining three is that livelihood can be said to indicate the household's current condition and the means by which it reproduces itself. Resources, knowledge and rights represent areas where there is potential for effecting a change in that livelihood, and where interventions could reduce key vulnerabilities. The indicators used to measure each of these vary, depending on the area with which the intervention is concerned.

Our assessments of each of the cases can be found in Appendix 2. To facilitate a more comprehensive picture of the type of impact found in the case studies, we summarise the main features in Table 9. The information has been classified according to our four poverty variables. It is important to realise that there is rarely any hard evidence to measure each indicator. Our material – evaluation reports and interviews – provides us with information that is highly subjective: our assessment of the views of evaluators and other actors. Add to this the difficulty of judging whether an impact has been 'very positive' or, at the other extreme, 'very negative' and it is clear that it is not particularly meaningful to rank the projects in terms of effectiveness.

Table 9 shows that, *across the board, we assess the projects as having improved welfare in Zimbabwe*. We can see positive contributions in almost all our variables.

For the first of these – livelihood – we used the following indicators: employment and workload, particularly emphasising gender relations; income-generating activities, either regular or seasonal; food security; ownership of assets; and health status. The projects undoubtedly contributed to people's livelihood, for example through an improved health situation, or better conditions for agricultural production through improved access to water and productive land.

Likewise, *we view the projects as having increased the resources available to households*. This variable measures the resources available to people to enable them to improve their own welfare, as indicated by access to productive assets; markets; credit; land; water and sanitation; communication facilities; education and training opportunities. The strongest impact would seem to be on the variable of knowledge, as indicated by school attendance; community health care and health awareness; acquisition of technical, managerial, marketing and leadership skills; and coping mechanisms. *Across the cases, a major enhancement of people's knowledge seems to have occurred*. It is not possible to quantify the impact in any way but we can deduce from the type of activities undertaken that a sizeable number of people were reached and given education in one way or another.

Rights entitlement was the most problematic variable, primarily because it is difficult to establish a cause-effect link between a project and any improvement in entitlements. As indicators we used participation in local organisations; assertiveness in access or entitlement to rights; property rights; land rights; legal status; reproductive rights; respect from authority; and personal security. Applying these indicators *it was difficult to find many projects that had made any concrete impact on entitlements*. The Matabeleland AIDS Council provided an exception, however, where the project activities could be said to have made young women aware of their sexual rights. In most projects the impact was less clear, although, stretching the criteria a little, one could argue that good health and access to health services, as in the farm health workers project, constitutes an important part of basic human rights, and that the project made farm workers more aware of their rights in this regard.

Overall, then, there are indications that the projects studied had a positive impact on welfare in Zimbabwe. Does this mean that they represented good examples of aid for PR? On this we are quite doubtful.

The evaluation reports available to us yielded hardly any evidence on effective PR. Two major factors explain this paradoxical judgement. First, the effectiveness of evaluations in terms of asking the right questions leaves a lot to be desired. A review of Swedish aid evaluations (Eduards, 1996) concluded that they seldom offer any feedback on the PR effectiveness of Swedish aid. This is a weakness that extends well beyond the Swedish case; evaluations are simply not providing the evidence needed to establish PR effects.

Second, there are shortcomings in the design and appraisal of aid interventions. There was evidence that the projects did indeed reach their intended beneficiaries and yet it was not possible to state that they had an impact on PR. This is explained by the wide and imprecise definitions of beneficiaries employed in all projects. A few examples may illustrate the point. The small dams and the feeder roads projects can be expected to bring considerable benefits to rural communities in the form of improved access to clean drinking water and transport. Undoubtedly these communities contain poor people. We cannot assume, however, that just because they live in these societies access to a road or drinking water has reduced their poverty. Equally, in the land resettlement scheme we cannot assess PR by assuming that all resettled farmers were poor. Across our cases, there is a consistent failure to provide a precise identification of who are actually poor. Without a clear idea of the target group, it becomes difficult to design effective interventions for combating poverty.

Table 9 A summary of impact on PR as found in the case studies

	<i>Special education</i>	<i>Farm health worker</i>	<i>Matabeleland AIDS Council</i>	<i>Small dam rehabilitation</i>	<i>Feeder roads</i>	<i>Danish country programme</i>	<i>EU counterpart funds</i>	<i>EU micro-projects programme</i>	<i>Land resettlement</i>	<i>Collector wells</i>
<i>Livelihood</i>	The services do not facilitate integration of children – hence negative impact on poor families.	Health improvement positive. Nutrition and sanitation are not sufficiently covered by FHW.	Preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS – positive impact. Although livelihood of children is unsecured.	General increase in production and productivity through dams and irrigation systems. Distribution of benefits unknown.	General positive contribution, but possible hidden negative effects on women and income distribution.	General enhancement of livelihood from improved health and income etc. Poverty effect unknown.	No direct effect from the project.	Improvement because of service availability – health and education. Income generation.	Better farm lands lead to higher incomes for previous communal farmers.	Improvement through securing water for irrigation, husbandry and household gardens.
<i>Resources</i>	There is no effect on resource availability because of the state of the service centre.	Improvement since farmers did not previously have access to medical services.	Counselling of patients and information on prevention positive impact.	Better access through training, rehabilitation and construction of water resources.	Better access to markets. Effect reduced by insufficient and costly transportation.	Increased access but not necessarily for the poorest.	Increases educational and health resources generally.	Better access to infrastructure. Environmental protection adds to access to resources.	Farmers got access to productive land and equipment.	Contribution of resources in terms of water and time, especially women's time.
<i>Knowledge</i>	A positive effect, but moderated by high drop-out rates for girls and ethnic discrimination.	Increase in farmers' knowledge of good hygienic standards.	MAC increases knowledge of HIV/AIDS how it is prevented and cured.	Expansion through improved knowledge of hygiene and maintenance of water points.	Possible expansion in knowledge of markets, agricultural inputs and methods.	Expansion of knowledge in democracy, HIV/AIDS etc.	No particular effect on knowledge.	School projects enhance the knowledge base. Clinics improve knowledge on nutrition and sanitation.	Expansion in knowledge of agricultural methods. Although not as high as it good have been.	Training in collector wells management increased knowledge base of hygiene.
<i>Rights</i>	Theoretically the SEP enhances the rights of disabled persons. In practice, we do not know because of lack of data.	Good health and access to health services form part of basic human rights.	Empowering young women in the sense of being able to refuse unprotected sex or no sex at all.	Difficult to determine, except human right to food and economic security.	Possible positive effect through people's positive engagement in the community.	Positive regarding women's rights in projects such as the WLSA and family health project.	No particular effect on rights entitlement.	Effect on project promoters' awareness of their rights.	Farmers did not actively participate in the redistribution process. Hence not actively made aware of their rights.	No immediate rights impacts apart from the right of a household to feed itself.

It is almost equally difficult to evaluate such interventions in terms of sustainability and impact. It is not unreasonable to expect an aid project aiming at PR to be fairly precise about whose poverty it is supposed to reduce.

As to the causes of this weakness, our evidence suggests three possible explanations. The first is lack of theoretical awareness, or standpoint, about the roots of poverty: what is poverty? A second is lack of knowledge of the status, constraints and potentials of the target group: who is poor? A third explanation is the absence of a critical analysis of the preconditions required for an intervention to achieve PR: how can aid reduce poverty?

6. Summary and policy conclusions

It remains now to summarise our results and to consider what implications they may have for donor policies.

6.1 Summary

The economic and political context

Poverty in Zimbabwe must be seen in its economic and political context. To the extent that averages mean anything, Zimbabwe's economy delivers a per capita income which is well above the African norm. However, average incomes today are no higher – probably a little lower – than at independence in 1980. The economy is seriously drought-prone and the expansion of job opportunities has not even kept pace with the rather slow output growth. There is a chronic tendency, as yet unresolved, for the public sector to run large financing deficits, with adverse consequences for the exchange rate, inflation, interest rates and private sector development.

Although, on a head-count basis, the proportion of the population with incomes below the poverty level is well below what is typical in other African countries, a quarter of the population is nonetheless classified as poor, with 7% living in extreme poverty. Nine-tenths of the poor live in rural communities, although urban poverty is growing. Underlying the poverty are exceptionally large inequalities, most notably in the distribution of land. Although there is a considerable racial element in these inequalities, there are also large inequalities *within* the black population. Other major sources of poverty include the stagnation of formal-sector employment (especially in the private sector), and inadequate access of poor people to various state economic and social services.

Another important issue is the connection between poverty and GDP growth. The data are not good enough to permit a definitive judgement on this but it seems from the record that whether or not growth reduces poverty in Zimbabwe depends crucially on the composition of the growth and the policy environment in which it occurs. Past growth has been capital-intensive, partly in response to earlier policy biases, and thus has not brought the improvement in the lot of the poor that it might have done. And the evidence indicates that the costs of the post-1992 structural adjustment policies have weighed more heavily on the poor than an alternative package of measures might have done.

It appears from these facts that the generalised pursuit of economic growth has not proved an effective PR strategy in Zimbabwe, with the implication that pursuit of this goal requires the identification of defined groups of poor beneficiaries. The

importance of the nature of the growth-path in turn draws attention to the importance of the policy framework and of the place of PR in the hierarchy of policy goals.

At independence the government adopted a policy of national reconciliation which sought to ensure continuity in production structures while improving the conditions of the majority of blacks. Confronted with high popular expectations of more equitable outcomes, the GoZ attempted to address poverty through a welfare-based social expenditure programme, increasing expenditures on agriculture, undertaking limited land reforms and introducing minimum wage legislation. However, the momentum of the early years of independence for reducing inequalities had been largely dissipated by the late 1980s. The welfarist approach was perceived as having become fiscally unsustainable, while, partly in response to the ESAP, real wages were falling sharply in the formal sector. Progress on the land issue, and in the strengthening of extension and other support services in the smallholder sector, had virtually ceased before the GoZ's sudden announcement in 1997 of the intention to confiscate about 1,500 further, mainly white-owned, farms.

There is a general perception that PR does not now come high among the government's policy priorities, and is not a very active issue in Zimbabwean politics. However, there are departments of government which are sympathetic to, and active in pursuing, the PR objective. The overall ambiguity is reflected in the position of the GoZ's Poverty Alleviation Action Plan, whose progress has been caught up in inter-departmental rivalries and whose Secretariat has been starved of resources, a situation that is unlikely to have occurred had PR been accorded a high priority from the top. There is a suspicion that the GoZ might have a political interest in prolonging the patronage derived from state interventions in favour of the poor. Moreover, the ruling party's style is autocratic, top-down, and this too is unfavourable to effective PR interventions.

A major factor conditioning donor – GoZ relations is that, despite high and rising indicators of aid dependence, it is the government which is in charge. This has the considerable advantage of resulting in high levels of GoZ 'ownership' and of satisfaction by donors about the effectiveness of their aid to Zimbabwe, in contrast with the situation in many other African countries. But it also means that it is the government which sets the agenda for policy conversations with the donors, a power which it has used to limit attempts by donors to influence economy-wide (as distinct from sectoral) policies.

As a result, there has been little dialogue about poverty. There is no effective channel of communication for PR as a generic topic and there are few signs that donors have sought to engage with government on this, although they have been active in particular sectors. The GoZ's dominance also helps to explain why there is no effective aid co-ordination on the PR front, although, here too, there does not appear to be much demand for this from the donors.

The overall context for PR aid is therefore rather unpromising. While not actively hostile, the *de facto* political priorities of the GoZ are not favourable to aid donors wishing to mount a serious attack on the causes of poverty (as distinct from ameliorating its effects), for to do so would necessitate addressing issues which the government would want left alone. The donors are aware of this and have chosen not to press for a more active engagement. The GoZ's priorities prevail, which is desirable for ownership but results in a neglect of the poverty issue. At the same time, however, the political constraint is not completely binding, for some donors have found PR interventions which have not provoked GoZ resistance and which have the active support of specific ministries. Donors have been able to find interstices into which to fit their desired PR interventions, although these do not necessarily add up to much. And there does remain much potential for enhanced PR programmes.

Donor policies

Whether or not they actually do so is examined in some detail in Chapters 4 and 5. We firstly assessed the aid strategies of the donors under examination, taking as best-practice criteria that strategies should: (a) be based on a bottom-up, demand-driven approach, or at least on wide consultations; (b) include an analysis of the nature and causes of the poverty problem; (c) translate the PR goal into reasonably precise operational objectives and priorities, including identification of monitorable target groups; (d) utilise modes of intervention designed to reach the target groups identified; and (e) establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the chosen PR interventions.

While each of the four available strategy papers did in various ways address the poverty issue, none came anywhere near to meeting the criteria set out above – a judgement which can be extended to the 'missing' cases of Germany and the Netherlands. Only Sweden made any attempt at consultation beyond the realms of the GoZ and even their opening-up fell short of designing a demand-driven approach. None of the papers presented a systematic analysis of the poverty problem and none identified monitorable target groups. The chosen modes of intervention were conventional. There was virtually no mention of monitoring and evaluation.

We further undertook a comparative assessment of the PR content of the current portfolios of five of the six donors under examination, classifying specific interventions into 'direct PR', 'indirect PR' and 'other' categories. We found marked differences in the portfolios, although none had a high proportion of direct PR projects and three (Denmark, Germany, the UK) had none or virtually none. Denmark also had little 'indirect PR' aid. Sweden was at the other end of the spectrum, a quarter of its aid being in each of the 'direct' and 'indirect' categories.

We then adjusted the results obtained (a) in order to give a greater weight to 'direct' interventions and (b) to take account of the absolute size of each donor's aid programme. The first of these adjustments underscored the large differences among the five donors from the PR point of view, giving Sweden a score well ahead of the rest and four to five times as large as the worst performer, Denmark. All five fell far short of the theoretical maximum score. The effect of adjusting for the amount of aid was to improve somewhat the relative position of Germany and the UK, both with relatively substantial programmes.

The case studies

A detailed examination of ten case studies is presented in Chapter 5 and Appendix 2. This examines the extent of the poverty orientation of projects *which had been chosen by donor officials as representative of their efforts to use aid for PR*, concluding that their poverty focus was not very distinct, aiming to increase welfare in general rather than specifically among the poor. Project documents were mostly imprecise about who the beneficiaries were intended to be, with the target group often defined broadly, encompassing both poor and non-poor people.

None of the projects examined contained any discussion of the definition of poverty and how it should be applied in the case in hand. There was, furthermore, virtually no attempt to relate the projects and their objectives to a wider analysis of poverty in Zimbabwe. Sweden's support of health schemes for commercial farm workers and their dependants was the only intervention in our sample with an unambiguously 'direct' poverty focus.

As regards participation of the poor in design and implementation of projects, it was difficult to establish how the projects were initiated and developed but it appeared that projects mostly originated as central government initiatives. There were only two examples of a bottom-up approach, emerging from initiatives by individuals and interest groups outside the state apparatus. It seems that none of our ten projects started as an initiative at the district level. This may be misleading, however, because underneath an apparent dominance of the central government may lie a dialogue with donors, RDCs and other stakeholders, making it difficult to trace the origins of an initiative. What appears clear is that it is the central government which decides how and when to enter into any dialogue.

As regards implementation, we found that this was often decentralised to provincial and district levels, with the RDCs playing an important role in many projects. Although they have a good reputation for getting things done, the RDCs have their limitations too. Their utilisation does not necessarily imply a departure from a top-down planning approach. Nor does it automatically imply a better potential for PR outcomes, depending on power structures at the district level. Participation, in the

sense of planning and developing a project with intended beneficiaries, does not seem to be practised. To the extent that beneficiaries participated in design at all, they did so through formal representatives, although beneficiaries were more frequently involved in the execution of projects.

We also examined whether donors had attempted to attach conditionalities to their projects to maximise their PR value but it seemed they had made little attempt to do this, if any at all. It seemed that they had been primarily guided by operational concerns – to ensure that the government supplied the agreed resources to the project. They were much less concerned with policy issues and none of them appeared to operate a system for monitoring compliance. All preferred to rely on their relationship with the GoZ for dealing with any disagreements and delinquencies.

Finally, what impact did this sample of projects have on poverty in Zimbabwe? Our overall assessment of their impact on welfare in general was positive, by the criteria of livelihood, resources, knowledge and rights. We saw positive contributions according to almost all these criteria, particularly the enhancement of knowledge. However, this did not mean that they represented good examples of aid for PR. On this we were quite doubtful.

The project evaluations available to us yielded hardly any evidence on PR effectiveness. This was partly because the evaluations scarcely enquired into this aspect; they simply did not provide the evidence needed to judge the effectiveness of the projects in addressing poverty. A further explanation was provided by shortcomings in the design and appraisal of aid interventions. There was evidence that projects reached their intended beneficiaries and yet it was not possible to state the extent to which they had an impact on poverty because of the inclusive definition of intended beneficiaries. It is difficult to design effective interventions for combating poverty without a clear idea of the target groups and, without that, it is equally problematical to evaluate the sustainability and impact of such interventions. So we remain in a state of ignorance.

Conclusion

To sum up, combining the results from the case studies with those from the strategy and portfolio comparisons, *the conclusion is inescapable that, with the partial exception of Sweden, the donors we have studied could not be said to have given the PR objective much consistent priority. Most had tried to improve the well-being of poor groups with specific interventions but the PR content of their programmes was quite limited, none had come near to applying best-practice PR standards and some were quite explicit in stating that PR had not in practice been given priority in aid to Zimbabwe.* This may help to explain the otherwise puzzling indifference of these donors to the PAAP, although political considerations have also been an influence.

However, it is immediately necessary to qualify this rather damning conclusion by recalling cautions that were made earlier in this paper. First, our focus is only on the use of aid for the purpose of poverty reduction. The view we offer is, therefore, partial. Donors in Zimbabwe have other legitimate objectives for their aid, even though their rhetoric generally claims PR to be their ultimate goal. While we do not accept for Zimbabwe the argument that all aid intended to improve economic performance is ultimately poverty-reducing, we do acknowledge that the quality of a donor's aid programme cannot adequately be assessed just by reference to its PR content. To some extent, we are judging Europe's donors by a criterion which they would not accept as adequate. Nor would they always agree with our emphasis on the degree of targeting of beneficiary groups, and of the 'directness' of PR interventions, as criteria for assessing donor programmes.

Moreover, we should recall that among several of our donors there had been changes in objectives and priorities too recent to be fully reflected in formal strategy documents or in aid portfolios. In fact, of our six donors, only for two did strategies appear not to be in a state of flux. In the main, the recent changes which have occurred in donor policies have upgraded the PR objective, so we finally turn to ask what policy inferences they might derive from our analysis which would increase the impact of their PR endeavours.

6.2 Policy implications

We can ask two broad questions under this heading: (a) to what extent should donors who place weight on the PR objective be providing aid to the GoZ? And (b) to the extent that they do provide aid for PR, what strategic issues arise from a comparison of best-practice with present donor policies in Zimbabwe?

How much aid to Zimbabwe?

It is tempting to draw from our discussion the conclusion that donors should reduce, possibly even terminate, their aid to Zimbabwe, on the grounds that the ruling party has not demonstrated a serious commitment to tackling poverty and that, in such an environment, there is little the donors can do by themselves. PR aid is resource-intensive and difficult. To put together a poverty-oriented set of interventions, with adequate arrangements for monitoring and evaluation, donors would need to commit large manpower and other resources but these interventions are unlikely to be effective in reducing poverty – even in reversing its growth – if the GoZ's policy stance, and its top-down style of government, remains inimical, and if it rebuffs donor attempts to engage it in a policy dialogue on this issue.

However, there are important considerations to set against reaching such a sombre conclusion. First, we should keep a sense of perspective. PR is only one amongst several objectives. One of the common elements in our conversations with donor representatives was that they were rather positive about the general effectiveness of their aid to the country, not least because the GoZ is in the driving seat and the public administration remains quite good at providing necessary inputs. The aid situation in Africa is not such that donors can lightly turn their backs on a country in which most aid interventions 'work' quite well. Moreover, we should remind ourselves that the extent and severity of poverty is substantially less in Zimbabwe than in most African countries. It is a serious and growing problem but it does not wholly dominate the difficulties facing the country, still less the currency of political debate. This factor weakens the case for allowing aid allocation decisions to be driven solely by the PR criterion.

Furthermore, although we have described the attitudes towards poverty of ZANU(PF) and the government collectively as ambiguous or indifferent, it has not been actively hostile to donor initiatives in this area. As shown in Chapters 4 and 5 donors have found useful things to do to combat poverty when they have been so minded, and sympathetic departments of government with which to work. The main constraint so far has been that the donors examined have not, collectively, been very active in the PR area. It may be that, had they all tried to develop substantial and active direct PR programmes, this would have created increasing tensions with the *de facto* priorities of ZANU(PF) and the government, but we suspect that the donors are still quite far from exhausting the possibilities.

Nonetheless, a situation in which donors are not working with the grain of government priorities is intrinsically unsatisfactory, not least because of its implications for 'ownership'. And while there surely remain many specific interventions which donors could undertake without bringing themselves into conflict with the GoZ, having to operate in the interstices, as one official put it, is likely to both limit and distort what they can do. An important distortion is that it is apt to push donors in the direction of poverty *alleviation*, as against attention to its root causes. Some causes can be tackled without raising large political sensitivities, e.g. interventions to improve health and education coverage for poor groups, or employment-creation schemes. Others, notably to reduce the large inequalities of wealth and income, are altogether more delicate.

The mismatch between donor and GoZ objectives in the PR area indicates a need for an active dialogue between donors and the government on the design of anti-poverty policies. However, there is little of this at the country-wide level, with neither the GoZ nor donors showing much inclination to engage. The latter apparently do not feel they are in a strong negotiating position, although we have shown that Zimbabwe's reliance on aid is large and fast-growing. The donors could surely push harder if they wished – and should if they are serious about PR.

One of the findings reported earlier was that provisions to assist the poor included in the programme of structural adjustment measures (ESAP) introduced in 1992 proved wholly inadequate. Bilateral donors were largely excluded from its formulation and had apparently not sought to ensure that it would include adequate social safeguards. Disconcertingly, the same appears to be happening with ESAP II, a situation which the donors again appear to accept.

It is difficult to reconcile the relative passivity of the donors in the policy dialogue area with any vigorous attempt to tackle poverty, given the rather unfavourable policy environment. Table 1 has shown that it is a myth that the GoZ does not need to listen to them because of low aid dependence. If they do not push the matter because they do not think the country's leadership would listen, that raises questions about the desirable size of aid allocations to the country by donors serious about PR. They should get tougher with the government, with the message that failure to engage would cause donors to review their aid allocations.

Towards a PR aid strategy

What, now, of our second question? What strategic issues arise from a comparison of a best-practice model with present EU donor aid for PR in Zimbabwe?

A starting point here is to recognise that there is little that aid donors can do by themselves to reduce poverty in Zimbabwe. Recognition of this makes it essential for donors to place their efforts in the context of a wider approach to the issue, in favour of an attack on the causes of poverty, which is why an active policy dialogue is so important. Moreover, the heavily labour-intensive nature of effective PR interventions and the comparative disadvantage of external official agencies in aiding the poor indicate the large advantages for donors of being able to buy into anti-poverty schemes devised locally by agencies of national and local governments, as well as by NGOs and other groups. This is why we have been puzzled by past bilateral donor indifference to the PAAP. Even if it is regarded as seriously flawed, greater donor support and participation would surely have helped to remedy the weaknesses. We urge that they re-examine their policies towards the PAAP.

In doing so, the donors should endorse the rationale on which the Community Action Programme of the PAAP is based: the central importance for interventions to target the poor. The case for this rests centrally on the recognition of exceptionally large inequalities even within the black population and the ever-present danger that the non-poor will capture the lion's share of PR initiatives in the absence of targeting. This is particularly the case if the priority is to raise the welfare of the poorest of the poor.

Acceptance of the central importance of targeting would have major implications for the content and design of donor programmes. It would entail a shift in favour of more

'direct' PR interventions and a disavowal of generalised support for improved economic growth and efficiency as an adequate contribution to PR. Large inequalities and the need for targeting mean that the precise nature of the growth-path is all-important, with a strategy favouring poor farmers, formal-sector employment generation and the development of other off-farm sources of income as illustrative of the priorities needed.

Part of the task of setting individual donors' PR efforts in the wider context is more effective co-ordination of their efforts, of which there is little at present. Co-ordination only works well, however, if the recipient government is willing to take responsibility for it; we are much more sceptical about donor-driven mechanisms, which are well known for their weaknesses. Fortunately, the GoZ has shown a readiness to take charge of donor efforts in other areas and we would urge that it should do so in this case as well.

Best-practice considerations point to the superiority of participatory and community-based approaches to the design and execution of PR interventions, but the donors examined here have not yet travelled far along this road, as our case studies show. In practice, donors have favoured top-down approaches and they have been poor at consulting with stakeholders outside official circles. An effective PR aid strategy would necessitate a change in this. A specific point we would like to make is that, while decentralisation should help, this need is not necessarily met by a devolution of power from a donor agency's headquarters to its Harare office. The UK's DFID is well known to have gone further than most in this direction. No doubt this has brought benefits, but it is not our observation that it has resulted in a more participatory philosophy in the design of specific interventions.

A further issue that would need some re-examination in a PR-driven aid strategy is the balance between sectoral and project interventions. We found a general trend away from the latter in favour of the former. This may not be fully consistent with the PR objective, however. PR is about targeting, for which projects may be better suited, while programme aid is basically in support of sectoral and economy-wide policies, which may not give priority to PR. However, support of some sectors was regarded as effective and superior to project-by-project approaches. The stance of the European Commission in seeking consciously to maintain a balance as between these two modalities seems the appropriate one.

A final comparison with the best-practice case relates to monitoring and evaluation. In the case of PR interventions, particularly strong provisions need to be made so that donors and other stakeholders can discover the extent to which their interventions are realising their objectives, and can obtain the feedback necessary for lessons to be learned and improvements made. In the projects we studied such provisions were weak. Evaluation reports yielded hardly any evidence on PR effects, and seemingly did not even try to find out. Evaluations are simply not providing the evidence needed to establish PR effectiveness. Underlying this is a failure to set up base-line survey

and monitoring mechanisms which would generate the data needed for informed evaluation.

In brief, we urge:

- (a) That the donors should be altogether more insistent on the desirability of an active dialogue with the GoZ on poverty issues and should let it be known that the outcome of these will influence aid allocations to Zimbabwe.
- (b) That donors' PR efforts should be explicitly set in the context of a wider appreciation of the nature of the poverty problem and of efforts to combat this. Specifically, donors should insist on consultation about the social safeguards to be built into any renewed programme of structural adjustment.
- (c) To the extent possible, donors should buy into locally-generated schemes, preferably based on beneficiary participation and ownership, rather than developing their own. They should collectively give far more active support to the PAAP and use this to help remedy the past weaknesses of this initiative.
- (d) In their discussions with the GoZ, donors should stress the desirability of greater co-ordination of donor (multilateral as well as bilateral) and other PR efforts, with the GoZ taking the lead.
- (e) Strong efforts should be made to improve the extent of targeting of poor groups. Although the attractions of the trend towards sector programmes are real, it could be hard to reconcile too much of this with more effective targeting. Donors should therefore maintain a balance between sectoral and project interventions.
- (f) Donors should greatly strengthen their provisions for the monitoring of PR interventions and ensure that all evaluations report on the poverty consequences of the interventions under study.

There are two wide gaps to fill: between contemporary perceptions of best practice and the past efforts of EU donors in Zimbabwe; and between the best European PR efforts in Zimbabwe and the weakest. It should not be too hard to narrow both of these differences.

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Appendix 1: Classification of EU donor aid portfolios

**Table A-1. Analysis of Danish aid projects in being as at April 1996
(DKr mn)^a**

	Direct PR	Indirect PR	Other
Tree planting			62.4
Family health		38.2	
AIDS prevention			33.6
Emergency water supplies,			32.9
Drug distribution programme II			23.0
Further education of clothing			12.6
Improved ruminant nutrition			7.3
Private sector development			8.9
Metalworking co-operatives in			4.5
Binga RDC	2.8		
Lutheran World Association		2.7	
Provision of pay phones			85.3
Production of PVC flooring			2.9
Production of cheese			2.9
Rural libraries		2.9	
SUB-TOTALS	2.8	43.8	276.3
GRAND TOTAL			322.9
Percentage share	1%	14%	86%

Source: *DANIDA Projektorientierung, April 1996.*

Note: ^a Projects of under DKr 2.5 million excluded.

Table A-2. Analysis of EC projects/programmes in existence as at end-1996

The following is based on summary information on 'Project Identification Sheets'. Regional projects are excluded, as are projects involving less than ECU 1.0 mn.

	Direct PR (ECU mn)	Indirect PR (ECU mn)	Other (ECU mn)
MACRO & TRADE			
STABEX (1992)			15.0
STABEX (1993)			5.4
SAP support (SASP2)			32.0
Export promotion			10.2
Tourist development			3.6
Cross-border trade promotion			6.0
MANPOWER &			
Return of qualified nationals			7.0
Human resources			4.5
Veterinary sciences			11.2
RURAL DEVELOPMENT			
Kariba Communal Areas		4.6	
Minefield clearance			10.0
Gokwe water & sanitation	6.1		
Agric Finance Corporation			3.5
Mashonaland Fruit & Veg	3.3		
Small-scale irrigation	14.0		
Veterinary wildlife			1.8
Micro-projects programme		5.7	
SUB-TOTALS	23.4	10.3	110.2
GRAND TOTAL			143.9
Percentage share	16%	7%	77%

Table A-3. Analysis of German programme, August 1996 (DM mn)

	Direct PR	Indirect PR	Other
Financial co-operation (KfW)			
Takura Venture Capital Fund			6.0
Zimbabwe Development Bank			25.6
Agricultural Finance Corporation			10.0
Structural Adjustment			50.0 ^a
Dept. of Civil Aviation equipment			6.3 ^a
Rural roads		46.5 ^a	
Irrigation programme		29.5 ^a	
Mwenezi & Chiredzi water		7.6	
Matabeleland telecoms			27.0
Erosion control		6.0	
Technical co-operation (GTZ)			
Vocational training and development			29.0
Reform of water sector			18.5
Micro and small-scale enterprises		1.6	
Family planning & health education		6.0 ^a	
Energy programme			9.0
Agricultural management advice			2.5
Integrated rural development (IRDEP)		6.9	
Social science perspectives in natural			1.3
Private business advisory service			6.8
Primary school environmental science			3.5
Engineering, University of Zimbabwe			3.0 ^a
Environment and Remote Sensing Inst.			10.0
Vegetation and resources system			3.5
District health improvement		2.0	
Conservation tillage			1.8 ^a
Promotion of rural self-help		1.5	
Masvingo Technical College		9.0	
Sub-totals	0.0	116.6	213.8
Grand total			330.4
Percentage share	0%	35%	65%

Source: Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany *The Zimbabwean-German Development Co-operation Programme* (August 1996)

Regional projects and those valued at less than DM 1.0 million excluded.

Note: ^a Latest (eg 1993, 1994 or 1995) contributions only plus firm outstanding commitments.

Table A-4. Analysis of Sida programme, November 1995 (SEK mn)

	Directly targeted PR	Indirect PR	Other
Education			
Additional facilities for primary schools	129		
Teachers houses, rural secondary schools		71	
Education in commercial farming areas	10		
Support for disadvantaged schools	14		
Textbooks/teaching materials	22		
Paper for textbooks, etc	14		
Planning capacity of Ministry of Education &			28
School management training			13
Special needs education			39
Curriculum development			84
Scholarship fund, ex-refugees	27		
Education of ex-refugees (ZIMFEP)	72		
Teacher training			24
Health			
Immunisation		71	
Water & sanitation, Manicaland		27	
Community-based rehabilitation	34		
LSCF workers health	9		
AIDS control			23
Child feeding practices	48		
Family health management			5
Maternal & child health		9	
Health planning & evaluation			5
Drought transportation	7		
Transport			
TC to Ministry of Transport			70
Feeder roads development		118	
Roads maintenance study			9
Labour-intensive road construction etc	11		
Public Administration			
Civil service reform			69
Financial management			184
Local government development		83	
Ministry of National Affairs, etc		25	
Balance of payments support			
Import support (OGIL/OIS)			237
Sub-totals	397	404	790
Grand total			1591
Percentage share	25%	25%	50%

Source: Sida, Harare, 'Sweden-Zimbabwe development co-operation: a summary of policies, programmes and projects' (November 1995)

Table A-4. Analysis of UK programme, 1996 (£ mn)

	Direct PR	Indirect PR	Other
Structural adjustment			
Programme aid			10.00 ^a
Privatisation			
Dairy Marketing Board			2.20
Civil service reform			
Judicial training			1.57
Customs data			0.54
Institutional development of ministries			0.68
Strengthening of police force			6.50
Local government			
Midlands pilot district support		2.08	
RDC development		10.60	
Health			
Min. of Health change management			2.34
Sexual health		9.00	
Child supplementary feeding		2.04	
MoH Policy & Planning Dept			0.70
Water & Sanitation			
Quality Analysis Laboratory			0.67
Bikita rural water		2.28	
Lupane rural water		2.80	
Renewable natural resources			
Pest management			1.19
Wildlife diseases			0.80
Small-scale irrigation		0.59	
Private sector development			
Training for enterprise			3.11
Credit support			1.30
Deregulation			0.30
Takura investments			0.43
Miscellaneous			
Support for NGOs		0.50	
Drought mitigation		5.00	
Aid and trade (ATP)			1.39
SUB-TOTALS	0.0	34.89	33.72
GRAND TOTAL			68.61
Percentage share	0%	51%	49%

Source: DFID-Harare 1996 Annual Review, September 1996. Projects of less than £250,000 have been excluded.

Note: ^a Suspended pending resumption of an IMF programme.

Appendix 2: The case studies

EU Counterpart funds in health and education

Description

The effectiveness of programme aid, in this case in the form of counterpart funds (CPFs), for PR is one of the issues being analysed by this project. This is a controversial issue about the extent to which we can gain knowledge about the poverty impact of CPFs. The fundamental problem behind this question concerns the fungibility of aid. The disbursement of aid releases locally available funds which the government can put to use elsewhere in the economy. This might very well be uses which are of very little relevance for the purpose of PR. Fungibility is a general feature of aid which makes evaluation, particularly in terms of impact, quite difficult. The key question is whether fungibility can be 'controlled' in such a way that programme aid does not miss its target – the poor.

Project objective

In its country programme for Zimbabwe, the EU specifically uses programme aid for PR purposes, through the CPFs generated from the EU's support for economic reform – the Structural Adjustment Support Programme (SASP). The CPFs have a clear poverty objective, which is a reflection of the general thrust of EU aid policy in Zimbabwe. This policy rests on four pillars: (i) development of democracy and human rights; (ii) the alleviation of poverty; (iii) sustainable economic and social development; (iv) integration of Zimbabwe into the world economy.

In the National Indicative Programme 1996-2000, which is the framework for co-operation between Zimbabwe and EU, three sectors are to be the focal ones: health, education and agriculture. Regarding CFPs it is said (p.2):

...the parties will examine the possibility of using the Structural Adjustment Facility (SAF) and the Government of Zimbabwe will examine the extent to which NIP resources will be used in support of the economic reform programme. Counterpart funds raised in the context of both the NIP and any direct support for structural adjustment funded from the SAF will be used in a coherent manner so as to support the priorities set out in the programme. A protocol on the use of all CFPs will be established by the parties.

Project design

In order to ensure compliance with this policy, the use of CPFs is limited to the sectors of health and education. Furthermore, within these sectors is a set of criteria guide disbursements from the CPFs. First, they cannot not be used for salaries or allowances. They will only finance expenditure originated and denominated in Zimbabwe dollars. Expenditures will be explicitly targeted in order to maximise the impact on the poorest in the population. Finally, the expenditures financed should be supportive of and coherent with the GoZ reform programme and should strive towards regional decentralisation.

Targets of the project are specified as 'furniture and equipment', 'technical equipment', 'construction works' etc., and are linked to specific vote appropriations in the budget estimates. For health, CPF expenditures are divided between 'Medical Care Services' and 'Preventive Services'. In education they are allocated between primary and secondary education, and government buildings. How large the actual appropriations are is not specified in the agreement between the GoZ and the EU.

Project implementation

To assist with the disbursement of CFPs, a protocol was signed allowing for the formation of a Management Committee, comprising officials from Ministries, the Reserve Bank and the National Economic Planning Commission, and supported by two Technical Assistants. The EU monitors the use of the CPFs by checking that the right items have been procured by the Ministries. This involves manually checking the invoices submitted to the government from the various suppliers.

In 1993, Z\$103m. was made available under the EC's first SASP for budgetary expenditure in the social sectors. The GoZ allocated these CPF to programmes such as drugs (Z\$42m.) and school books (Z\$50m.) in the Health and Education Ministries respectively. Although the programmes were late in being implemented, by the end of December 1993, 100% of the CFP had been justified and the programmes were considered successful.

For the fiscal year 1994/95 a total of \$274m. was planned for, split equally between the two sectors. In December 1994 the first tranche of the second SASP was disbursed. CPFs arising from this disbursement amounted to \$256m. which were again allocated by the government to health and education programmes. For 1995/96 a total of \$88m. was allocated to each ministry, giving a total of \$176m. By December 1995, 80% of these funds had been justified.

Interest accruing on undisbursed CFPs at the end of December 1995 amounted to \$117m. The GoZ asked that this interest be used for budgeted programmes within the Drought Relief Operation.

GOZ policies for the health and education sectors

In its 'Health for All Action Plan 1991-5', the government has stipulated the objectives of a health care policy based on five elements: (i) equal access for all to health system facilities; (ii) development of primary health care; (iii) quality of service delivery; (iv) high priority on areas geared to the most commonly occurring diseases; (v) high priority on preventive services and the promotion of national health (DANIDA: 17).

Public spending on health focused on preventive and primary health care, family planning, nutrition programmes and various community-based health interventions. Over the past 15 years more than 600 rural health facilities have been built, rehabilitated or upgraded, giving rural households reasonable access to basic health care. These investments have paid off. A few examples will suffice. Life expectancy increased from 56 in 1980 to an estimated 61 in 1990. Between 1980 and 1994 the infant mortality rate fell from nearly 100 deaths per 1,000 live births to about 50, weight-for-age malnutrition for children under the age of three fell from 22% to 16%. Despite these gains Zimbabwe still has health problems related to poverty, namely communicable, infectious and parasitic diseases, respiratory infections and maternal and perinatal conditions (UPZ: 27).

Education has been a major priority area for the GoZ. Zimbabwe's education policy has laid a strong emphasis on primary and secondary education, as well as on equal access to education for rural and urban areas. Since independence the educational sector has experienced considerable expansion. Between 1979 and 1995, the number of children enrolled in primary school increased by 213% and in secondary school by a remarkable 1,000%. Primary education is now almost universal, with 86% of the appropriate age group enrolled in 1994, while around 60% of the appropriate age group is enrolled in secondary school. This is reflected in the rise in the literacy rate – from 62% of the population over 15 years in 1982 to the current 80% (UPZ: 31).

GOZ budget allocation to health and education

Government expenditure on health has risen from \$45.6m. just before independence, in 1978/79 to \$802.5m. in 1993/94. It increased further to \$1.5bn in 1994/95, and was estimated to decline slightly to \$1.4bn in nominal terms for 1995/96. Since 1990/91 nominal increases have failed to keep pace with inflation. Looking at the whole period

from 1978 to 1993 real spending on health has fallen by some 22%, most of it is attributable to the years after 1990.

These figures do not necessarily reflect a change in government policy. First, because the actual changes are small. Secondly, we do not know whether they are temporary or represent the beginning of a new trend. Up to 1993/94, the decline seemed to be the effect of reductions in overall spending as a result of the country's grave budgetary crisis. The share of the total budget allocated to health has not recorded any significant changes. Compared with the immediate pre-independence period, when it was around 5%, health spending remained stable at around 5.5% (reaching a peak of 6.8% in 1990/91). The estimates for 1995/96, however, saw a decline in health spending to an all-time low of 4.3%.

As with health, education was a priority area for the government after independence. Expenditures on primary, secondary and tertiary education rose rapidly from \$119m. in 1978/79 to \$2.5bn in 1992/93, and a further rise to \$4.2bn in 1994/95. For 1995/96 the budget was estimated to reach \$4.5bn. Like health, education has received nominally larger budgets almost every year, but from 1991 there has been a decline in real terms. The real value of recurrent spending fell by 11% in 1991-2 and by a further 9% in 1992-3. Comparing the 1993-4 budget with 1990, in constant 1990 values, shows a significant decline of 24%.

Again, an important issue is the extent to which this reflects a change in priorities. A look at recurrent expenditure on education as a share of the total budget suggests such a change. The shifts are more pronounced than in the case of health. Education was a strong priority area during the period from independence up to 1993/9. In 1977/78, it accounted for 9.7% of the total budget. This share rose throughout the 1980s and reached 19.2% in 1993/94. Since then education has received a declining share of the total budget from 16.3% in 1994/95 to an estimated 14.7% in 1995/96, the lowest figure since 1980.

Is a new government policy reflected in allocations to other items in the budget? A comparison of 1994/95 and 1995/96 shows no remarkable shifts in allocations to sectors such as agriculture, industry, defence, health and education. What seems to take a significantly larger share of government resources are expenditures related to the international debt, on which interest and amortisation amounted to \$6.9m. in 1994/95 (27% of total expenditures) and were estimated to have grown to 38%, or \$11.9 m. for 1995/96. In this year we also see the introduction of a new budget item – a vote of credit, amounting to \$3.2m. or 10% of the budget total. The budget line is explained as follows:

To make provision for expenditures related to donor funded projects such as civil works and other capital developments; consultancy and other technical services; construction; feasibility studies; procurement of vehicles, equipment

and supplies; and salaries, wages, allowances and freight charges resulting from such projects.

Thus, around 48% (debt servicing 38% and the vote of credit 10%) of the total budget is used for expenditures related to international capital flows. This appears to be the major explanation for the observed changes in the expenditure pattern.

Let us then look at the composition of spending within each sector. Are there any changes not really compatible with a poverty-oriented policy? In health, the medical care services have always taken the lion's share of the health budget – 78% in 1987/88, rising to 85% in the 1995/96 budget estimates. The share allocated to preventive services has fallen over the same period from 15% to 11% of the total budget. Surely it is more cost-effective to prevent diseases rather than cure them once they have broken out. In this way the allocation pattern may be sub-optimal. It is more difficult to conclude that the emphasis on medical care services reduces the poverty impact of health spending. This would appear to depend on a range of other factors such as the geographical distribution of hospitals and clinics, the availability of essential drugs, the staffing situation, etc.

In education, primary education accounts for about half of education allocations, although there has been a slippage from 57% in 1987/88 to 46% in 1994/95. Secondary education for a long time received a fairly stable allocation of around 27% of the total, dropping in 1994/95 to 21%. On the other hand, tertiary education been very favourably treated in recent budgets, with 20% of the total education budget in 1994/95 and 1995/96 – a significant rise from the 15% average during the period 1987/88 to 1993/94. Thus it would seem that it is secondary education that has been forced to give way to higher education, in particular.

The composition of recurrent costs varies between the two sectors. In education, which is labour-intensive, salaries have always represented a major share of total expenditures, on average 75%. Recurrent non-salary expenditures have accounted for between 17 and 20%, while the remainder has been used for capital expenditures. In health, salaries accounted for 45% of total expenditures in 1987/88, but have since fallen to 35%, in spite of a fairly constant manpower level. Non-salary recurrent costs accounted in 1993/94 for 56% of the total, part of a consistent increase since 1987/88. As with education, capital expenditures account for a very small share of the total, averaging 5% for the whole period 1987/88 to 1993/94. This does not exclude the fact that in certain years major construction work affected this percentage, example being the Chinoyi hospital and the aquatic stadium for the All Africa Games.

Impact

Are these expenditure patterns consistent with a poverty-oriented policy and do they leave us with some guarantees that CPFs really contribute to PR? For strictly theoretical reasons CPFs can not be evaluated in terms of impact. Fungibility issues are too important and cannot be fully resolved. Hence, CPFs become a shot in the dark. It is therefore fair to say that the present mode of monitoring them is basically irrelevant from the point of view of ensuring a poverty impact, although it may be useful for ensuring accountability. It should, however, be possible to argue that the likelihood of a positive impact on PR increases if the policy framework is conducive to such an orientation, and secondly if the aid funds contribute towards something that would not have been undertaken had the aid funds not been there. In other words, aid provides additional resources.

The question, then, is whether or not the GoZ policy framework emphasises PR. The answer must be in the affirmative, particularly if we look at the period from independence up to the early 1990s. During the 1990s the economy has been under serious pressure. The country is going through a transition period – from a development strategy that has lost its dynamic, to a new strategy emphasising other actors and a different economic regime. The budget crises are a particularly difficult expression of this transition. The changes in expenditure patterns within the health and education sectors can only partly be said to reflect a change in government priorities. There is not, for example, any shift towards sectors which would indicate a non-poverty profile (such as defence or industry). Rather the changes reflect the situation of a government which has become increasingly dependent on international capital flows in the form of loans and aid. Both require servicing and the resources have to be taken from somewhere.

Furthermore, the budgetary constraints force the GoZ to prioritise recurrent expenditures, particularly salaries, at the expense of capital expenditures. The EU CPFs are directed towards bridging this gap in government financing. Furniture, schoolbooks, buildings etc. are all items that the GoZ most likely would not have bought in the absence of the CPFs. The funds would simply not have been available, since it is highly unlikely that the GoZ would have shifted funds from salaries towards capital expenditures.

Thus, for programme aid to have the desired impact it is necessary that there is a conducive policy framework and a good policy dialogue between donors and the government. Even if the EU CPFs benefited from both, this would probably be even more effective if the policy dialogue covered a whole sector. Preferably such an arrangement should involve all donors.

Method

Interviews were held with officials at the Delegation of the European Commission in Harare. The following documents were used:

GoZ. Budget Estimates for the year ending 30 June 1996.

Co-operation between the European Union and the Republic of Zimbabwe. *Annual Report*, 1995.

Framework of Co-operation. National Indicative Programme 1996-2000. Lome IV Convention as revised by the agreement signed in Mauritius on 4 November 1995.

Understanding between the GoZ and the Commission of the European Communities for the use of counterpart funds generated from the Commission's structural adjustment support to Zimbabwe.

Farm Health Workers Project (Sweden)

Description

The Farm Workers Health (FWH) project began in 1981 as a pilot project funded by Save the Children UK. In 1989 the Ministry of Health (MoH) took it over with support from Sida, which is due to end in 1999 when it is expected that the commercial farmers will bear much of the cost. The project has kept to its budget (details to be found in the quarterly reports from 1994 to 1996). It is run by the MoH, but the Farmers Union is also involved. The FWH project is country-wide. The programme trains one or two farm workers per farm to look after minor health problems and illnesses and educate their fellow workers in the importance of nutrition and sanitation (workers may also receive training in constructing better toilet facilities to improve sanitary conditions).

Sida is planning to phase out its funding gradually up to 1999, in the expectation that the project will by then be sustainable. (The Dutch, however, are at the moment investigating whether they may take over funding the project.)

Project objectives

The stated development objective of the FWH programme is to enhance the health status of 1.7 million farm workers on 4,000 commercial farms. An immediate objective is to make the authorities, farmers and health workers aware of the need to focus on health services for farm workers and their families.

Sida funds projects (or parts of projects) which the responsible authority has formulated; Sida's objectives thus largely correspond to the objectives as stated by the GoZ. The immediate objective of the FWH programme, as defined in the project document (agreed to by Sida and the MoH), is to expand and establish a FWH scheme for commercial farm workers in all eight provinces of Zimbabwe. There are several other 'long-term objectives' as well:

- to make health care services more available to farm workers and their families;
- to improve the nutritional status of farm workers, with a particular emphasis on mothers and children; and
- to further community participation (farm owners as well as farm workers) in identifying and solving existing problems.

The FWH programme thus fits the Sida strategy of reaching the poorest parts of the population. Poverty reduction has been defined by Sida in general terms but not

explicitly in relation to this specific project, where it is implicit by a kind of 'definition in practice'.

Identification

The project was initiated by a medical doctor working in, and later the Principal Medical Officer of Mashonaland Central who subsequently received support from Save the Children UK. Sida took over the programme because of its good results.

The 'poor' are clearly defined in the programme since the target group – workers on commercial farms – is by definition one of the poorest and most marginalised groups in the population. Among the farm workers women and children are singled out as specific target groups.

The programme was defined and initiated 'from above' out of a perceived need to enhance the health status of this group. The main participatory element is that the health worker is 'chosen by popular vote' (Matienga, 1993: 8). The indicator used is the poverty of the workers and the distance from the nearest clinic (since independence the GoZ has aimed at a situation where no one lives more than 8 km from a clinic). Health status should be possible to monitor quite easily, but it is not clear whether such monitoring takes place.

The programme as such has been the subject of evaluations and the MoH issues quarterly reports. These are, however, preoccupied with financial issues and the number of workers trained rather than with monitoring the actual health and nutritional effects of the programme on farm workers (which might be difficult if farmers are opposed to such monitoring).

Project design

Sida standard procedure was followed (the programme was presented to Sida by the GoZ and Sida agreed to fund it).

No assessments were made as to the needs and coping mechanisms of the farm workers (since it is assumed that there will always be a need for better health and nutritional standards). The results from the Save the Children Fund UK were considered substantial.

The beneficiaries do not participate in the project design. They are not organised, since they are afraid of getting organised and of making demands on the farmer, even concerning health issues.

What is special about the programme is that the MoH and Sida try to reach the target group through their employers, i.e. the farmers and the Farmers Union, as well as visiting farms to recruit workers for training. The project is not in itself contributing to empowerment; the programme makes people healthier but not necessarily braver. However, Sida not only supports health but also children's education among the farm workers and hopes thereby to create enabling conditions for the workers future empowerment.

With regard to the sustainability of the programme there were some problems during the first half of the 1990s, mostly because many of the farm workers and thus the FWHs were Moçambican and Malawian refugees (or married to refugees) who were repatriated. It was also difficult to get the MoH seriously interested in the project because most commercial farm workers were foreign; this is no longer the case and the Ministry's interest is now greater. Another issue of sustainability is that the FWHs need refresher courses and bicycles which are largely provided by Sida. When the project is phased out Sida hopes that these costs will be met by the Ministry and the individual farmers.

The principal responsible authorities are the MoH and the Rural District Councils (RDCs). The programme is reviewed quarterly by the MoH, and at least one evaluation and one review of the project have been undertaken. No schedule for monitoring and evaluations is stipulated.

Conditionalities

The conditionality set for the programme is financial, i.e. that the MoH will take over the project when Sida withdraws. Another aspect is that the project must correspond to Sida's stated goals, in this case the goals of equality and of reaching poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups in society. There is no system of 'punishment' or 'reward' since Sida works by a process of dialogue. The owner of the project is the MoH. This may be threatened if the MoH's budget for the project is subject to cutbacks, or if the farmers refuse to take on a share of the costs.

Implementation

The MoH is the executing agency, since the outreach activities and training of FHWs are undertaken by District Nurses and local hospitals. This, of course, means that the RDCs are also involved in the actual execution of the programme. Co-ordination of the programme is undertaken at the national level by a National Steering Committee and, at provincial and district levels by Co-ordinators. Sida has paid for a co-ordinator at the MoH.

There have been no changes in the project since 1990, and no conflicts between the major parties (though there may be a conflict developing as the GoZ is apparently quite open to the Dutch interest in taking over the funding of the project, despite expected sustainability). One explanation for this may be that Sida is planning to phase out all its activities in the health sector during the next three years, *inter alia* because there are so many other donors in the sector.

The evaluation conducted in 1993 is rather imprecise and makes no reference to poverty reduction.

Outputs

The output of the project is clearly identified as:

- refresher courses provided for 2,166 FHWs;
- training of 1,180 new FHWs; and
- better health status among the 1.7-2 million farm workers on approximately 4,000 commercial farms.

Unfortunately, the annual and quarterly reports are unclear about whether this has been achieved. They give the numbers of personnel trained but not how many were supposed to be trained during the particular period covered. There is no assessment of the progress made from the start of funding in 1990. However, meetings to alert farmers on the issue have been held as planned, information material has been produced and disseminated, the trained workers have been equipped with bicycles and medical bags, refresher courses have been held (no mention of how many attended) and preparations for integration of the project into the primary health system have been started.

Clearly (so long as the farmers/GoZ are prepared to pay the costs) the FWH programme makes health services both accessible and affordable to farm workers, and the output, in the form of enhanced health status, is appropriate to their needs. The programme does not strengthen the local community, however, in any particular way (e.g. better health resulting in more energy for pursuing other rights). One reason is that the farm workers are so marginalised (they are not organised in any way, they have no voting rights in local elections, and thus no channels through which to pose collective demands) and they are so afraid (of the farmer, of losing their jobs, etc.) that they do not dare (think of?) organising themselves for any purpose. At least, there have been no signs, as far as Sida, Harare's Senior Programme Officer for Education and Health, Sigrid Halvarsson knows, of any such developments. The documents do not deal with the issue of sustainability and Halvarsson was of the opinion that it would not be a problem because the farmers would in time come to realise the positive effects of healthy workers and therefore take on large parts (if not all) of the

financial costs of the project. The approach by the Dutch might also ease Sida's concerns about sustainability (as well as releasing funds at the MoH, which would of course, be positive from the GoZ's point of view).

Impact

There was no discussion of impacts in the documents, which were largely focused on the more technical aspects of the programme, i.e. transport, training, delays, administration and the like. The assessments below are therefore an amalgamation of the experiences of the Senior Programme Officer for Education and Health and my own impressions.

Livelihood: Better health, of course, has a positive impact on livelihood. However, it also needs to be followed by better nutritional and sanitary standards to be sustainable. The programme therefore includes training in the construction of toilets, though not to the same extent as the training of health workers. Nor is the establishment of vegetable gardens for farm workers (to enhance nutrition) a general trend, probably because it depends on the farmer setting aside land for this purpose. In the long run the medical treatment may not be followed up by nutrition/sanitation and the impact *may* therefore be limited.

Ranking: improvement

Resources: Again, access to a health worker, in terms of both medical treatment and information on nutrition/sanitation, is a considerable resource to farm workers who did not have ready access to such services previously. Farm workers often live a considerable distance from clinics/hospitals, and are thus dependent on the farmer's willingness to drive the worker to the nearest clinic/hospital or (more likely) the kindness of his wife (operating as a 'backdoor medic', Auret, 1992: 25).

It should also be considered a resource to the farmer to have healthier workers (which might, of course also lead to a heavier work load on them since they perform better). For the trained FHW as well as the workers in general increased knowledge on nutrition and sanitation should also be considered a resource.

A problem issue is that, in many cases reported in Auret, 1992, the trained FHW is financed by selling beer in the farming communities. Alcohol, if consumed in large quantities (as is not unusual among farm workers) is likely both to jeopardise the health of the drinker and his – men drink more often than women – family and to lower nutritional status (i.e. less money to buy healthy food).

Interestingly, most of the FHWs are women, 'a purely cultural phenomenon whose underpinnings derive from "roles" in our society' according to Matienga (1993: 8). This suggests another impact, namely that by being trained women gain what is to

them a precious role/status in the community which they might not have obtained otherwise (even though these women are, according to Auret (1992), well situated and respected in the community when they are elected). This is an important resource for the individual.

Ranking: access

Knowledge: The FWH programme contributes to increased knowledge among farm workers of the importance of good hygienic standards and of good nutrition and basic medical treatment. The education of farm workers' children is also of great importance (even though it is not part of the programme) – especially the provision of O-level grants (70% of them to girls who are extremely underprivileged in this group). This provides opportunities for individuals to leave the farm and achieve a better life.

Ranking: expansion

Rights entitlements: Health and access to appropriate health services are basic human rights, as well as being an important goal of the GoZ. There are no special rights considerations in the programme; all farm workers are targeted (with a focus on women and children). The ethnic composition of farm workers is rather different from other sectors in Zimbabwe, since many are still foreigners/refugees. This has no influence on Sida support, but has been a reason for the GoZ to be not too keen, at least formerly, on financing this sector.

Ranking: participation

Methods

Consultation of documents from the Sida office in Harare with the help of Ms Sigrid Halvarsson, Senior Programme Officer for Education and Health at Sida, Harare.

- Matienga, E. (1993) *Evaluation of Sida Supported Farm Worker Health Programme: Health Sector Support to Ministry of Health and Child Welfare 1990-1993, (draft)*.
- MoH (1993) *Annual Report, 4 May*.
- MoH (1994) *Annual Progress Report 1993/1994 and Implementation Plan for Sida Founded Farm Health Worker Programme*.
- Katito, *Farm Health Worker Programme: Plan of Action for 1993/96, Sida Funded Phase*.
- MoH (various) *Farm Health Worker Programme: Quarterly Report, January 1994-March 1996*.
- *Sida Supported Programme: The Farm Health Worker Programme, Background Information plus Progress Report 1993-1994*.

- Auret, D. (1992) *A Review of the Farm Worker Health Programme with Particular Reference to the Period 1990-92 Sida Project: Health Sector Support to Ministry of Health 1990-1993*, November.
- Auret, D. (1993) *Plan of Operation for the Farm Worker Health Programme, 1 July 1993-30 June 1996, and Annual Work-plan 1 July 1993-30 June 1994*, MoH and Sida, March.
- Lindahl, Claes (1995) *Health under Stress: A Study of the Health Sector in Zimbabwe*, November.
- Assistant National Co-ordinator, MoH The Farm Health Worker Programme: Plan of Action for 1997/1999 Sida Funded, (revised but not yet passed).

Interviews with Sigrid Halvarsson, Senior Programme Officer for Education and Health, on 19 and 24 March 1997.

Labour-Based Rural Feeder Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project Zimbabwe (Denmark)

Description

The project is funded by DANIDA and Sida and is based on experience gained through the *Rural Feeder Roads Pilot Project 1991-4* funded by DANIDA. The project began on 1 January 1997, and is planned to last 2½ years. It aims to establish labour-based methods for the rehabilitation and maintenance of rural earth and gravel (feeder) roads, and also includes staff training and technical assistance.

It is assumed that it will contribute to the enhancement of income and living standards in the rural (mainly disadvantaged communal) areas by short-term employment as well as improving people's access to transport and markets. There is a geographical difference as a higher turnover has been experienced in Matabeleland, where people stayed at the project only long enough to save money to go to South Africa (presumably on labour migration).

Project Objectives

The development objective is to contribute to the promotion of social and economic development in rural areas through improved rural transport (interestingly in an interview with ILO/Asist its objective was to be different, namely to promote employment and cost-effective rehabilitation and maintenance of the road system). This will be done through the establishment of labour-based methods. The immediate objectives and expected outputs of the project are clearly defined:

- *Cost-effective rehabilitation of 640 km of rural roads.* Activities planned: to improve planning, management and monitoring; continue to support the existing units; develop policies and procedures for contracting-out; select and train 4 local consultants to oversee rehabilitation; define client activity and develop capability.
- *Development and implementation of an efficient routine maintenance system to cover 1,400 km of gravel roads.* Activities planned: select and train local contractors for routine maintenance; allocate resources and labour-based supervision in eight maintenance areas; prepare operation manuals for labour-based maintenance.
- *Development of training projects and systems to provide ongoing capacity for labour-based methods in Department of State Roads (DSR).* Activities

planned: assess training needs of DSR staff, consultants and contractors; identify external providers of training; design courses to be run by Roads Training Centre (RTC); prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate a labour-based training project; assess impact of the training and set up systems to follow up.

- *Awareness raising of the benefits of labour-based methods both within and outside DSR.* Activities planned: collect and collate information on benefits of labour-based methods; disseminate information to technical and lay audiences.

Poverty reduction as such is not defined in the *Project Document*, but the project is set in a socio-economic context of rural poverty and has an objective which aims at PR. Gravel and earth roads play an important role in linking rural areas to the main surface network and most of the DSR's gravel and earth roads are located in communal or resettlement areas as opposed to areas of commercial farms. People living in these areas have historically been neglected in terms of infra structural development and have significantly lower incomes than the average. Thus, the beneficiaries of the project are defined as people living in the rural areas served by the DSR's gravel and earth roads, as well as those employed on the roads as casual labourers. No mention is made of the local contractors and consultants who will also benefit from the project.

As mentioned above the project is not a PR project as perceived either by ILO/Asist or the Ministry of Transport and Energy (MoTE). The objective is to provide employment, not to reduce poverty (though it is implicitly hoped that employment will have some PR effects). The experiences of ILO/Asist in other African countries, upon which the project is based, show that most of the people employed are landless ('poorest of the poor'). However, according to the MoTE, this is not the case in Zimbabwe, where landless people are commercial farm labourers, whereas others either own their land (resettlement), or live in communal areas or in towns and cities.

Identification

The pilot project (funded by DANIDA 1991-4) was initiated by the GoZ requesting support. The recently started *Labour-Based Rural Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project, Zimbabwe* is a continuation of this and is now co-funded with Sida. It is based on good experience of similar projects in Zimbabwe and other African countries. According to ILO/Asist, the basic principle of labour-based methods is to make use of the appropriate technology, which in a country like Zimbabwe is labour-intensive. Employment on a project is by ballot, and the duration of employment between 3 and 6 months (or the time taken for the work to pass through a community/area). It is not possible to get 'hard' proof of the positive effects

of this kind of project, but socio-economic studies positive to the labour-based method have been carried out.

The labour-based method is top-down (local authorities identify and implement) and beneficiaries take no part in the project identification process. The poor are defined only in so far as being termed 'people in the rural areas', and the only specific group singled out in the *Project Document* are 'women'. It is maintained that women can be successfully employed on the same basis as men and the project represents a highly valued source of income to women (especially female headed households). The extent to which women can control their income from the project is unclear, however, and this should be reflected in employment policies; women should be employed as the result of encouragement, not as a matter of positive discrimination. It is suggested that this warning will hinder women being pressured into employment on the project, a suggestion which seems rather strange. Women may still be encouraged/pressured by husbands or other men. The experience of ILO/Asist and the MoTE is that men often feel resentment at the possibility of being excluded from the project by women (especially so, the higher the wage). Because employment on the project is by ballot approximately 20-30% of the employed are women.

No specific indicators of poverty were used except the vague definition of the beneficiaries as people living in the communal and resettlement areas. There seems to have been no assessment of the social stratification in these areas nor of who will be utilising the roads for income-generating activities (e.g. well-off/marginalised, men/women, cash-crops/vegetables or other goods for the local market, etc.). It might also have been of interest to make a socio-economic assessment of the effects on agriculture, i.e. whether better communications lead to cash-cropping on a greater scale (which might indicate less space for subsistence crops, falling incomes for women, lower nutritional standards for women and children, etc.). If these are the consequences they ought to be countered in some way or other.

The socio-economic changes due to the project are not known, and very difficult to determine. An evaluation of such issues is planned by the donors.

Project design

The project is not defined as a PR project and followed the routine procedures for project planning. It is quite a large-scale project (from 1997 covering the whole country), top-down and the beneficiaries have not participated in the planning process. It is obvious that it is far more concerned with the technical and physical implementation than with the socio-economic implications for the beneficiaries. This should be considered in later evaluations.

The project is, however, clearly targeting the rural poor through casual employment and better communications, making access to various resources (clinics and hospitals, local markets, marketing boards, etc.) somewhat easier. What is rather worrying is that there seems to be no awareness of the existing stratification or of the possible effects of better communications on gender relations and further stratification in the rural areas.

Since the focus of the *Project Document* (and other documents available) is more on implementation than on the socio-economic effects (which were implicitly assumed to be positive) it cannot be deemed to maximise asset creation among the rural beneficiaries. Such assets are not considered explicitly in the *Project Document*, but are rather assumed to be positive (since better communications presumably have only positive effects).

There is no mention of empowering effects, but it is possible that better communications may lead to some empowerment (for the rural beneficiaries generally and/or women specifically). No specific measures were taken to enable a process of empowerment. It is possible to argue, however, that the project might inspire the empowerment of individuals or groups in the local communities, e.g. through employment by itself, increased income and/or access to health and educational facilities.

Sustainability is sought by establishing a tradition of this kind of road-works in the DSR and in the Rural District Councils and through the establishment of Zimroad and Zimfund. It might also be considered a factor of sustainability that the rural beneficiaries value the income from working on the roads. However, this is a sustainability which is dependent on the salary being paid. This is also true of the contractors and consultants being trained for the purpose of keeping the project sustainable after project completion.

The project is to be reviewed annually (January/February) and the findings distributed in early March the same year to allow for modifications. This means that, if the time-frame is respected, there will be three reviews during the lifetime of the project. Furthermore, performance and socio-economic effects are to be monitored by the Labour-Based Development Unit (LDBU), and the donors will monitor the project quarterly and carry out an evaluation on completion.

Conditionalities

The GoZ will contribute 26% (Z\$56.7m.) and the donor's contribution will be 74% (Z\$163.9 m.). The release of funds needs to be timely and adequate. Furthermore, the MoTE and DSR must ensure adequate staffing, and improved co-ordination and

control of the labour-based operations by the DSR's head office is required to ensure that the work is both high quality and cost-effective.

Since the only conditionalities are financial/technical, one could argue that 'ownership' is not threatened. It is debatable, however, whether the project can be perceived as 'owned' by the beneficiaries at all, since it has a clear top-down approach (the DSR and the assigned contractors 'deliver' employment opportunities and in the end better roads to the beneficiaries). The only 'owners' of the project are thus government departments which under any circumstances are dependent on (and part of) the GoZ (and thereby the donors).

It is felt, however, that there is an implicit conditionality concerning gender (both Danida and Sida are rather sensitive about this), since the donors are 'keen on the gender issue'. Targeting single-parent households, specifically female-headed, has been tried but was not successful; it was too difficult to identify such households, the idea was good, but ill prepared. However, the MoTE finds the gender issue important because it is seen as a conditionality, and one way of sensitising the whole structure would be to get more women in top positions. A gender consultant did some studies of the project during a 12-month period but as yet there has been no follow-up.

No serious conflicts seem to have occurred between the donors and the GoZ. However, complications have arisen because of negative attitudes at the MoTE and at district level. These were described as being held by individuals, thus not characterising the whole ministry/district; furthermore such attitudes are fading rapidly, owing to the good results of the pilot project.

Implementation

The project is executed by the DSR (which forms a part of MoTE) and the RDC, reporting to the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MoLGRUD). The actual work, however, is carried out by people in the local communities who will benefit from the rehabilitation and maintenance undertaken. In time it is envisaged that the execution will be undertaken by local contractors and consultants, in line with the privatisation of the economy as part of the ESAP.

The labour-based methods are consistent with the Transport Sector Policy of the MoTE. All capital investments of MoTE and MoLGRUD are subject to approval by the National Economic Planning Commission (NEPC). Economic appraisal and identification is a matter for the donors and the GoZ. Thus, the project is executed by the DSR and the RDCs, but financed and monitored by MoTE, MoLGRUD and NEPC and in the end sanctioned by the GoZ and the donors.

The pilot project and the project met with resistance from MoLGRUD and some people in the DSR, but this is apparently fading, as the pilot project showed good results. The pilot project was 'evaluated' on its completion by the Project Co-ordinator who prepared the *Project Completion Report* (May 1994) for Danida. In this report the PR effects are not evaluated. (This has been done in socio-economic assessments completed 'as far as practical' (ibid.: 12), which shows the extent of interest in this issue). Rather, the focus is on the practical execution of the pilot project. The PR impact of the project is assessed to a greater extent in the *Final Feasibility Report* (June 1996), in which a social anthropologist was involved assessing the possible effects on women and poverty alleviation. It is expected that the transportation of crops will be eased by the project, thus contributing to PR, as will the income earned from working on the roads. In areas with low yields (predominantly zones IV and V) income from agriculture is not expected to increase, but the project is seen as important in so far as it eases people's mobility (e.g. it might have positive effects on health but this is not mentioned in the report).

Outputs

The expected outputs of the project are as stated in the *Project Document* (November 1996) and are listed under the objectives heading. Poverty reduction/alleviation is not given as an expected output of the project nor of the pilot project, which focused on establishing labour-based brigades and on kilometres of road rehabilitated and under maintenance. The expected outputs of the project (better roads) will be accessible to the rural poor (as well as those not so poor), as are the achieved outputs of the pilot project.

Rehabilitation and maintenance of the rural feeder road system in Zimbabwe are clearly appropriate to the needs of the rural population. In fact, they might have one very positive effect, namely making it possible for peasants and small farmers to sell their products direct to the marketing boards rather than to 'middle men' (who do not pay adequately). These 'middle men' are often commercial farmers who add the peasants' and small farmers' crops to their own to make their own production look better/more efficient than it actually is, thus undermining the agricultural statistics, as to which farmers are most productive. (Looking into the matter, it turns out that peasants and small farmers produce more per ha than commercial farmers.) One could add, of course, that the production of cash crops is highly gender-sensitive, i.e. the common pattern is that women work the fields, while men reap the profits. This might not seem a problem, since wife and husband should share their income. Reality is often different, however, since men often use the income to cover their own needs first (women generally use income to cover the family's needs first). In other cases wife and husband might share income, but on his death she is often deprived of his (or his family's) house and fields, thus losing what they might have built together.

This is, of course, a matter of law and people's knowledge of it, but it should nevertheless be considered.

It is expected that the DSR will assume responsibility for the future sustainability of the project. The *Project Document* (November 1996) suggests that Zimroad and Zimfund have been set up to control the funding and remove much of the bureaucracy. This, it is hoped, will enhance the sustainability of the programme. It is expected that the GoZ (through the ministries and the NEPC) will be responsible for future funding.

Impact

The project is focused on technical and economic viability rather than on the socio-economic effects on local communities and individual households. Nevertheless it *may* influence people's lives in terms of Poverty Reduction.

Livelihood: The livelihood of people in the communities *may* be enhanced. There are nothing 'automatics' about this, however. There may be no changes at all. In fact, for women the impact may be negative in terms of increasing workload, less time away from the fields, less space for growing subsistence crops which many people are dependent on for their survival, etc. Casual employment *should* have positive if temporary positive effects (again a gender perspective might suggest that men employed would fend for themselves first, while women might direct the income to family needs). Access to health facilities might be enhanced, which would be positive. Ranking: Slight improvement (but gendered)

Resources: The project will probably enhance people's access to markets (including marketing boards), which will be positive in terms of income. However, access to markets is dependent not only on accessible roads, but also on adequate transportation of goods. Transport is expensive and unreliable, and thus people who make an effort to access the market (national/international) might end up with less real income (minus transport costs and with low prices because of good or late harvests/lack of storage in waiting for better prices, etc.). Once again it is important to point to the gender issue; women's time might be put under strain due to changes in agriculture (e.g. increased cash-cropping), whether husbands are home to help out or not. Access to health and educational facilities as well as to agricultural inputs might also improve.

Ranking: access (but, again, this is probably gendered)

Knowledge: This is more difficult to assess than the two indicators above. Of course, access to health and educational facilities will have positive impacts on general knowledge. Better roads might also result in better access to agricultural inputs and

knowledge about such inputs (maybe even leading to better agricultural education among farmers), and so better income which is also positive.

Ranking: expansion (gender and geographical differences should be expected)

Rights entitlements: Better incomes and livelihoods *might* spur interests in creating local development clubs, women's groups/co-operatives or farmers' co-operatives, thus enhancing people's positive engagement in the community, i.e. empowerment. Empowerment both of the community as such and of women in particular will have positive effects in the longer run both locally and nationally. Being *very* optimistic, one might foresee slower urbanisation, lower fertility rates, increased incomes, enhanced knowledge about women's rights and so forth.

Ranking: participation (guesstimate: depends on many other things than the road!)

Method

Consultation of documents concerning the project from the Danish Embassy/DANIDA via Thure Christiansen:

- *Project Completion Report: Rural Feeder Roads Pilot Project 1991-1994, Zimbabwe, May 1994.*
- *Final Feasibility Report (and project Document): Labour-Based Rural Feeder Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project, Zimbabwe, June 1996.*
- *Project Document: Labour-Based Rural Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project, Zimbabwe, November 1996.*

And from David Stiedl at ILO/Asist in Harare:

- COWIconsult (1992a) *Mutoko and Mudzi Baseline Study for the Rural Roads Pilot Project: Preliminary Draft, April.*
- COWIconsult (1992b) *Rural Feeder Roads Pilot Project (Danida) Road Labour Study, Mutoko and Mudzi Districts, October.*

Thure Christiansen at DANIDA, Harare, suggested a meeting with David Stiedl at ILO/Asist who was contacted on 12 March 1997. David Stiedl and Francis Hwekwete from the Ministry of Transport and Energy (MoTE) were interviewed on 17 March.

Land resettlement in Zimbabwe (UK)

Description

The Land Resettlement Programme (LRP) was initiated in 1980 following independence. The plan was to resettle 17,500 families on approximately 1.1 million hectares of land previously owned by white commercial farmers. In 1980 an initial UK financial commitment of £20m. was made. A further £10m. was pledged in 1981. It was later agreed that these funds would be provided as programme aid with the counterpart funds being used to finance the GoZ share of the LRP. The Overseas Development Administration played an advisory role in the LRP in addition to the financing.

The executing agency was the Ministry of Lands Resettlement and Rural Development (MLRRD). Also involved were the Ministry of Agriculture, the Department of Rural Development and the Ministry of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development (MLGURD).

Project objective

Land resettlement was very high on the list of priorities of the new GoZ. The ODA began to be involved as part of the Lancaster House talks and was asked by the UK government and the incoming GoZ to explore the development aspects of land redistribution, in particular. It identified 3 main problems: (i) inequality of land distribution in which racial divisions were apparent; (ii) a political pressure to find land for returning refugees and freedom fighters; (iii) much of the European land was under-utilised.

In 1980 the project objectives were finally formulated by the GoZ, largely based on the work of the ODA. There was basically no difference between the two regarding the objectives of the LRP, apart from the insistence of the GoZ on a reference to assisting the peasant sector of the population.

The overall objective was to facilitate land transfer while ensuring that the maximum economic potential of the redistributed land was achieved together with the alleviation of social stress and the satisfaction of political requirements. Specific objectives were to produce a more equitable land distribution; to promote political and social stability in rural areas to maximise the use of Zimbabwe's land resources; to relieve pressure on resources in the communal areas and to improve the base for productive agriculture.

Identification

From the outset no attempt was made to appraise the resettlement programme as a whole in any detail. It was agreed to appraise each component scheme on an individual basis and to implement only those schemes measuring up to the appraisal criteria. This was necessary since the sheer magnitude of the LRP made it impossible to undertake the whole planning in one go. Appraisal was based on the assumption, based on knowledge gained in Kenya, that land transfer and resettlement would be of general economic benefit to the nation. The ODA and the GoZ agreed on specific appraisal procedures and the ODA retained the right to decide which of the schemes it wanted to finance.

Identification, valuation and purchase of land were undertaken by the MLRRD. The planning of the schemes was done by the Agricultural Technical and Extension Services Division (AGRITEX) of the Ministry of Agriculture. An Inter-Ministerial Committee on Resettlement (IMCR) considered and amended the plans. Appraisal and approval of the plans was the responsibility of the BDDCA advisers.

The appraisal criteria for resettlement followed the general ODA guidelines for project appraisal. There were three main areas: technical, financial and economic. The economic analysis also included a sensitivity analysis. The evaluation concluded (Cusworth and Walker, 1988) that each component was thoroughly scrutinised prior to implementation, which contributed to ensuring that resettlement became much more than a land transfer. It is noteworthy that no quantified social development indicators were set.

Project design

The ODA did not attempt to become involved in policy formulation with respect to resettlement and declined to be closely involved with scheme-by-scheme planning and implementation. This was the role of the Zimbabwean administration. The ODA, however, stressed the importance of designing the programme with the aim of maximising its economic benefits and ensuring sustainable development in the resettled areas.

The LRP involved the purchase of large-scale farms from European settler farmers by the GoZ. The farms were grouped in blocks and designated resettlement schemes and settled by small African farmers. There were a number of models for resettlement. The most important was Model A (receiving over 80% of the total expenditure), consisting of individual family farms with settlers living in nucleated villages and sharing common grazing land. In addition development of agriculture required the establishment of a production and social infrastructure.

Conditionality

The ODA set no conditionalities that might have threatened GoZ ownership or commitment to the programme. Resettlement was one of the key political goals of the new government. Nor did the ODA set any conditions to ensure a strong poverty focus. It was not seen as necessary.

Implementation

The principal executing agency was the MLRRD. One of its departments, DERUDE, had the prime responsibility of implementing the main Model A scheme.

The process worked more or less as planned. But in the early years land purchase outpaced the planning and appraisal procedures which led to accusations by the GoZ that the procedures were too cumbersome and that the UK was holding back the rate of resettlement. As a result, the GoZ initiated the 'Accelerated' resettlement programme under which purchased land was settled with only a minimum of planning and no provision for infrastructural development.

According to the evaluation there is no evidence that the ODA was holding back on the rate of resettlement except insofar as it insisted on proper planning. The real cause of the timelag between land purchase and development was the limited capacity of DERUDE to implement approved schemes.

DERUDE claimed that the Ministry of Finance (MF) did not provide enough funds for development. The MF retaliated that DERUDE was not using the funds that they had available. At different times both were right.

The selection of settlers was carried out by MLRRD officers together with District Council personnel. This involved visiting the communal areas informing the people of the establishment of the scheme and assisting prospective settlers with filling in applications. The final selection was done by MLRRD in Harare and the decisions communicated to the settlers through the local authorities. Instructions were given to those chosen to make a preliminary visit to the schemes by a certain date during which they were allocated a plot by the Regional Officer. DERUDE assisted the settlers during their first year with ploughing and provided a crop pack of inputs free of charge.

The selection process was slightly changed towards the end of the LRP, in an attempt to ensure that land was allocated to more experienced farmers. At the outset land had been allocated to the poorest people who were also those least capable of farming efficiently.

ODA adopted a hands-off approach and left almost everything to the local authorities. It exercised influence over implementation, however, in three main ways:

(i) Financial control: The GoZ was required to expend funds on agreed schemes and then apply for the 50% ODA contribution to be paid to it out of the grant. Auditing and control of resettlement expenditure was undertaken by a GoZ parastatal - the Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (ARDA). The evaluation concludes that the ODA approach was imaginative as it allowed for as much local control over expenditure as possible, whilst at the same time providing enough supervision and control to reduce any abuse to a minimum. The only gap in the process was the lack of any guarantee that the expenditure was actually being used to achieve the planned outputs.

(ii) The Annual Joint Review was established to take care of this. It involved teams of advisers from both governments. The results of the Review were a series of recommendations to the IMCR which then monitored their implementation.

(iii) The third input from the ODA was its support for the monitoring and evaluation unit at the MLRRD. It took some time to establish this unit since the MLRRD was reluctant to allow expatriates at the operational level. Once established, however, it produced a lot of important information. The evaluation drew heavily on the information provided by the unit.

Outputs

In terms of target achievement the programme has made important progress. The LRP as a whole, including parts undertaken without UK assistance, had up to 1988 involved the resettlement of some 40,000 households, involving at least 250,000 people on over 2.2 million hectares of land. The total cost has been Z\$130m. The cost per household was £3,645. According to the evaluation the LRP resulted in significant economic benefits and the results were regarded as sustainable. The economic rate of return was estimated to be 21%.

... it must be a source of satisfaction that such a complex politically oriented programme that was required to achieve a range of, in some cases apparently conflicting objectives, has not been in economic terms a waste of resources (Cusworth and Walker, 1988: 18).

Impact

As at September 1996 a total of 71,000 households had been resettled and a further 20,000 had benefited from access to increased grazing. A majority of the families settled benefited through increased opportunities for income generation and access

to health and education services. The LRP had a particular poverty impact since a majority of the settler families were previously communal area farmers with limited access to land, who must be regarded as the poorest members of the population.

Two issues have to be dealt with, however, if sustainability is to be satisfactorily realised. First, the issue of continued financing of the resettlement areas, particularly maintenance and administration, which are about five times as costly as in the communal areas. The settlers make no contribution to the costs of administering the scheme. Second, the issue of the representation of settlers in its administration. For a long time settlers were disenfranchised at the local government level and had to look to DERUDE to help them with their problems. Both these issues are linked to the issue of the settlers' integration and participation in the local government of their new areas. In 1993 a change was effected when the Rural District Councils Act brought the resettlement areas under the RDC's and allowed the settlers to have elected representatives. In spite of the success record, the evaluation finds a number of potential problems with the LRP, which must be dealt with in the future:

- (i) The capacity of settlers to sustain and increase their incomes varied markedly according to the location of the settlement.
- (ii) On average the settlers have accumulated significant debts, mainly because of three years of drought, administrative weaknesses in the service delivery system and a propensity of the settlers to satisfy their immediate cash requirements ahead of loan repayment.
- (iii) Settler households with a poor repayment record may have difficulties in qualifying for new credits, which will make it difficult for them to expand their production in future.
- (iv) The arrangements governing the transfer of settlement permits and settler participation in the local administration of resettlement areas need to be improved.
- (v) Resettlement may be adversely affecting the status of women, particularly those brought into schemes as new additional wives of male settlers.
- (vi) Environmental degradation through lack of control over cattle numbers in communal grazing areas is a threat to the programme's sustained viability.

Perhaps the most important lessons learned, according to the evaluation, can be summarised as follows:

First, the resettlement has had little impact on the situation in the communal areas, which still suffer from accelerating land degradation. In other words, resettlement itself is not the answer to CA rehabilitation. Future resettlement must be one element in a development initiative involving direct targeting of the communal areas.

Secondly, some settler households have benefited more than others, as a result of schemes being located across the programme and the allocation of resources and availability of services within the individual schemes. The evidence suggests that, without careful enforcement of regulations, better-off settlers may prosper at the expense of the less well-off. A related issue is that of land rights and the role of women, and this needs careful monitoring. Thirdly, there has been a general failure to deliver services efficiently, which has constrained production and led to an accumulation of debt among settlers. Sustainability requires this problem to be solved.

GoZ plans for a new land resettlement policy post-96 have taken not of some of these lessons. The previous LRP had suffered from institutional weaknesses. There were reportedly as many as 19 government ministries and departments involved in planning and implementing the scheme. The GoZ does not seem likely to choose a different approach for the next round. The procedure continues to be technical and supply-led, with little scope for the involvement of prospective settlers (or RDCs) in planning and implementation. For example, at the Provincial level it is the Resettlement Officer (RO) who applies the rules and regulations concerning the schemes. This is a regulatory and monitoring function, rather than developmental. The ROs play no active role in the economic and social development of the schemes.

The resettlement procedure continues to rely on institutional capacities which are not there. For example, the two agencies responsible for planning, the District Development Fund (DDF) and AGRITEX, between them have a capacity to plan for 5000-7,500 households per year. Given the scope of the GoZ's plans, this is inadequate.

Method

Interviews were conducted with two ODA officials, Mr Mark Lowcock and Mr Eric Hawthorn. The following documentation was used:

Cusworth, J and Walker, J. (1998) *Land Resettlement in Zimbabwe. A preliminary evaluation*. ODA Evaluation Report EV434. London: ODA.

Adams, M., Cassidy, E., Cusworth, J., Lowcock, M. and Tempest, F. (1996) *Report of ODA Land Appraisal Mission to Zimbabwe*. British Development Division in Central Africa, ODA, October.

Government of Zimbabwe (1996). *Policy Paper on Land Redistribution and Resettlement in Zimbabwe*. Harare, 30 September.

Matabeleland AIDS Council (Netherlands)

Description

The Matabeleland AIDS Council (MAC) project started in 1989 and received support from the Dutch through HIVOS from 1994 to the end of 1997. During this period 726,000 Guilders was distributed to the MAC. HIVOS can only support projects designed and executed by local organisations and is, with financial backing from the Dutch Embassy in Harare, the one foreign organisation giving major support to the MAC. The project is implemented solely by the MAC, and operates only in Matabeleland, with its head office in Bulawayo.

Project objectives

The Dutch support three 'sectors' in Zimbabwe: (i) the national budget, (ii) HIV/AIDS projects and (iii) the Farm Workers Health project (in the planning phase at the moment).

Immediate Dutch objectives are to support projects which spread health awareness and to provide services to AIDS patients. Their development objective with the MAC is to strengthen the organisation. They also support the MACs stated objectives:

- to identify and mobilise suitable resource people in the communities;
- to train a wide range of people in counselling skills including those in contact with and taking care of people with HIV/AIDS;
- to provide counselling support to people with HIV/AIDS, their families and carers;
- to development and disseminate educational materials and information on AIDS and to promote awareness about AIDS;
- to develop a drop-in centre to facilitate the dissemination of information and educational resources and to provide facilities for counselling and training;
- to promote contact with a wide range of agencies which could provide information and support to the MAC; and
- to support research and government initiatives.

These objectives are wide-ranging and might seem too much to tackle with. However, this range of activities is probably necessary if there is to be an impact on attitudes, actions and awareness.

The project is not a PR project but will nevertheless have impacts on poor families/individuals by providing training, information and counselling. The

beneficiaries are those with HIV/AIDS, their carers and the local communities rather than 'poor' people as such. The Dutch view the project as poverty-directed, however, because it aims at preventing household breadwinners (defined as mainly male) from contracting the disease, as well as preventing parents from contracting HIV and eventually dying from AIDS, leaving their children with no support. 'Direct' poverty-reducing effects of the MAC might be the different activities of the project, e.g. home-based care and the organising of communities to take care of orphans. The more 'indirect' effects on PR would be (planned) small-scale enterprises and credit possibilities for women which make them more independent of their husbands (and thus less dependent on 'providing' them with sexual 'services' if they suspect they have HIV/AIDS).

Identification

The project was started by a group of Bulawayo residents concerned about the AIDS situation. It arose from out of a number of meetings where both men and women and several ethnic groups were represented but with no representation from lower income groups. Many of the members of the MAC are doctors, nurses, personnel from the National Railways of Zimbabwe and from private companies, lawyers, psychiatrists, clergy and NGO leaders (*Evaluation*, 1995). The 'poor' are not defined or targeted by the MAC. It has been suggested that there is less AIDS in the poorer rural strata, that it is largely an urban disease which seems to hit the middle classes worst.

The Dutch chose to support the project both because HIVOS asked the Embassy for funding and because it falls under the prioritised area of HIV/AIDS. It was not chosen because of its likely effects (on HIV/AIDS or on poverty) since it is well nigh impossible to determine whether the possible effects on the spread of HIV/AIDS is caused by the project or other factors.

The project targets people who have contracted HIV/AIDS, their carers, local communities and adolescents, not poor people *per se*. Those forming the target groups of the project have not participated in its identification. There are no indicators for monitoring or evaluating the project, and no schedule for evaluations, but monitoring is done by assessing the actual output in comparison with planned outputs.

Project design

It is not possible to say whether the project design followed a 'normal procedure' because this kind of aid is quite new to the Dutch. The procedure for funding the MAC was as follows: HIVOS was approached by the MAC, it then asked the Embassy to fund the MAC which the Embassy approved. The project was designed, however, entirely by the MAC. The Dutch analysed the needs with regard to home-

based care (because of reports of AIDS patients not being able to support themselves), and the effects on and needs of AIDS orphans (focusing on the capacity of the local community to take care of these children). There is no special design for targeting 'poor' people but to the extent that the poor contract HIV/AIDS and/or seek information and/or counselling, etc. they are reached by the project.

The MAC is planning to introduce a women-oriented component to the project, i.e. opening up credit and the possibility of creating small-scale enterprises for women (so that they can fend for themselves if the husband dies of AIDS and to enable them to escape sexual- economic dependence on their husbands).

Furthermore, the MAC concentrates on adolescents, providing them with information on how to avoid contracting the disease. These two activities have empowering components and in this sense the project has a kind of sustainability. The MAC does not have an 'empowerment' ambition as such, however, but the income-generating projects and information for adolescents might be seen as important enabling conditions for sparking off empowerment processes.

The only institutions involved are the MAC (implementing) and HIVOS/Dutch Embassy (funding). Other donors (such as NORAD and MS) also fund the MAC but their contributions are limited. This means that the MAC is heavily dependent on HIVOS/Dutch Embassy, and this is recognised as a problem by the Dutch.

The project is reviewed annually, and as far as can be determined from the documents the MAC is flexible. It has been evaluated only once by the Dutch (1995) and another evaluation is not planned. The 1995 evaluation criticised the MAC for not having appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems. The evaluation was concerned with the organisational aspects of the MAC rather than with the effects of the project in line with the Dutch main development goal, i.e. to strengthen the organisation.

Conditionalities

There are no conditionalities mentioned in the documents and this was confirmed by the Embassy. However, the Dutch do require the MAC to file reports on financial issues, and if disagreements arise, these are solved by dialogue. A principle is 'learning by doing', regarding financial issues, i.e. if the reports are not approved by the Dutch they are sent back to MAC for revision, and if the Dutch are still not satisfied the task is handed over to an external accountant.

The Regional Health Officer at the Dutch Embassy expressed satisfaction with the work of the MAC, and no conflicts between the donor and the NGO could be traced. Since the project is carried out by an NGO, there are no contacts between the Dutch

and the GoZ. Some regret was expressed, however, that the GoZ did not take more responsibility for HIV/AIDS prevention and services.

Implementation

The MAC is the sole executing agency with financial support from external donors. As no funding comes from Zimbabwean authorities, there is no formal co-operation between the MAC and the government. There is some 'ad hoc' co-operation, however (e.g. when the MAC tour schools with HIV/AIDS information or when rural health teams are approached to spread information about the disease in the rural areas). According to the 1995 Annual Report the MAC received funding from one national donor (NORAD), five NGOs (of which HIVOS, supported by the Dutch Embassy, is one) and one UN organisation (UNICEF).

During the time the Dutch have been involved in the project no major changes have taken place, except maybe for women being 'in' as a special target group in the 1993 document (i.e. before the Dutch became involved) but 'out' until the November 1996 report. This inclusion/ exclusion depends on the MAC and not on any conflicts between the organisation and the donors.

Since the 1995 evaluation which was concerned with the organisational structure of the MAC, there have been no evaluations of project performance or assessments of the effects of the project.

Outputs

The planned and realised outputs are clearly stated in the half-yearly reports. They cover a wide range of issues, and actual output has in many cases been delayed. Despite this, the Dutch expect that the MAC will be able to execute the planned actions within the assigned time frame (if not there will probably be an extension of a few months). Planned outputs vary from one year to another. They are too many to list here, but can be collected under the following headings (according to the November 1996 report):

- Workplace programme (HIV/AIDS information);
- Outreach programme (support for rural HIV/AIDS awareness-raising);
- Youth STD/HIV programme;
- Information dissemination programme;
- Support group for people living with HIV/AIDS;
- Counselling service;
- Research
- Networking; and

- Institutional development.

According to HIVOS interim assessments (1994-6), the MAC has managed to achieve the objectives that it set itself. Attention needs to be paid to monitoring the qualitative impacts of the MAC's work, human rights aspects are not adequately covered and the MAC does not adequately address issues relating to sexual relationships and gendered empowerment, according to the November 1996 report.

The project's sustainability was not discussed in the documents but a closer examination of financial situation reveals that the MAC cannot become sustainable (i.e. independent of external funding). It might, in time, be able to change fees from people seeking counselling, etc. The government should create a body to take care of the HIV/AIDS situation in the country, as well as providing funding for such activities, but so far it has not showed any marked interest. Furthermore, the MAC ought to spread the funding of the project more equally between the different donors to avoid dependence on one or a few donors.

Impact

The MAC has the potential to become an important factor in the lives of people with HIV/AIDS and their carers, as well as an important source of public information about the disease and how to avoid contracting it. It is difficult to assess the actual impact of the project, however, since no impact monitoring has been carried out. This summary below will therefore be based on pure assumptions about the *possibilities* of the project.

Livelihood: By preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS (through information and distribution of condoms etc.), as well as informing and training those taking care of AIDS patients, i.e. home-based care (e.g. preventing carers/families from spending money on useless drugs) the MAC might have an impact on livelihood. Also by engaging communities in the care of AIDS orphans, it can contribute to the enhancement (or at least ensuring that things do not get worse) of these children's livelihood. This is debatable, however, since it is not obvious that these children will be taken good care of when MAC staff are out of sight. The system of mutual care of orphans as well as other marginalised individuals is in many cases eroded in Zimbabwe. It should be noted, however, that the MAC does not address the issue of livelihood enhancement, but that this might be a side-effect of the project.

Ranking: Improvement

Resources: It might seem difficult to talk about enhancing the resource base of AIDS patients and their carers, but meeting with people in the same situation, receiving counselling and having the carer trained and informed should be considered a resource. Furthermore, it might also be regarded as a resource if wasting valuable resources on useless drugs is prevented. Being informed about AIDS and its

prevention is also a resource for adolescents. As with livelihood the MAC does not address the issue of resources but might contribute to their enhancement for people who stand to lose out (especially socially), thus having a positive impact.

Ranking: access

Knowledge: It is clear that a main implicit as well as explicit objective of the MAC is to inform people about HIV/AIDS and how to prevent the spread of the disease. Thus, the project contributes to increased knowledge in this particular area, and to enhanced knowledge among carers and adolescents.

Ranking: expansion

Rights entitlements: Most prominent in this area is the impact the MAC might have on adolescents, especially young women, i.e. empowering them in the sense of being able to refuse to have unprotected sex or sex at all. Furthermore, with the renewed focus on women and their particular sexual-economic vulnerability, the MAC has the potential to become an organisation supporting the social and economic rights of women to which Zimbabwe committed itself at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995.

Ranking: participation

Methods

Documents consulted at the Dutch Embassy in Harare with the help of Counsellor J. Schellaars.

- Matabeleland AIDS Council, Plans and Budget 1993-1994, April 1993
- Summary of Annual Report, 1994
- Summary of six monthly reports, June 1995
- Matabeleland AIDS Council, Evaluation Report, December 1995
- Matabeleland AIDS Council, 1995 Annual Report, 1996
- Reporting with respect to the content of the period 01.01.96 unto and including 30.06.1996, November 1996

An interview was also carried out with Regional Health Officer, Dr F. Öry on 25 March 1997.

Poverty Reduction in Danish Development Assistance – Country Study Zimbabwe

Description

The report on PR development assistance to Zimbabwe is an evaluation of 9 different development interventions covering a period of 10 years (1987-97). The budgets for the interventions vary from 1 million DKK (with grants as small as 75,000 DKK within the Private Sector Development Programme) to 150 million DKK. Disbursements for the interventions seem to be according to the funding, or lower. The organisations involved in the interventions were (are) mostly a number of government ministries and local government authorities. Two interventions were carried out by NGOs, one national and one regional. The interventions were mostly termed 'national', i.e. covering the whole country, while one intervention was directed at selected communal areas and one was part of a regional intervention.

Project objectives

The project objectives of Danish PR development assistance are very broad (the single projects have project-specific objectives). In the *Evaluation* (Vol. 1: 54) the overall objective is stated as being to support 'sustainable economic development focusing on improving living conditions for the poorest and weakest groups in society'. The immediate objectives are:

- to create 'broad, employment-generating growth by means of support to economic reforms, expansion of the physical infrastructure and development of the private sector'; and
- to directly support 'the weaker groups in society by developing both the productive and social sectors'.

The planned outputs are generally not fully achieved in the projects. In some cases they are difficult to measure (as with the assistance to the ESAP) or negligible (and from the perspective of DANIDA's overall development objective even negative, e.g. the support to smallholder irrigation where already successful farmers were reached rather than the 'poorest and weakest'). The immediate objectives of the individual projects are:

- Support for Smallholder Irrigation Development: to rehabilitate irrigation schemes in the resettlement areas of Zimbabwe (emphasis on schemes in Natural Regions IV and V).

- Rural Afforestation Programme: establishment and conservation of forest areas in communal areas, reduction of environmental damage to forest areas and environmentally sustainable production of multi-purpose wood.
- Support for the Second Family Health Project (FHP 2): improvement of maternal/child health, reduction of population growth, access to basic health/population/nutrition services, all of which are linked to the objectives of enhancing the management and planning capacity of the MoH and Zimbabwe National Family Planning Committees (ZNFPC).
- Assistance to Ferry Service on Lake Kariba: to provide reliable transport in rural areas, three ferries for transport of heavy construction equipment on Lake Kariba.
- Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Programme: to contribute to increased awareness of civic and human rights issues, prevention of human rights violations, promotion of human rights.
- Women and Law in Southern Africa: improved legal status of women, increased knowledge about women's legal status, changed attitude and behaviour among law makers/court personnel, improved interdisciplinary research skills of women law researchers.
- Assistance to Economic Structural Adjustment Programme of Zimbabwe: contribute to the implementation of ESAP; and
- Local Grant Authority: to fund activities/minor projects, additional deliveries, bridging arrangements and mini projects. Support mainly directed at management and co-operation between Danish and Zimbabwean enterprises.

Generally speaking, DANIDA's overall development objective is formulated as having a direct PR goal, but this is lost in many of the projects and neglected/not mentioned in others and only in one are the beneficiaries defined (partly) as being poor (women). Neither poverty nor the 'poorest and weakest' are defined further in any of the projects (in 1996 DANIDA produced a paper on poverty, however).

Identification

The various projects were defined by the receiving agency in co-operation with DANIDA. The receiving agency is not always governmental, but may also be NGOs. DANIDA does not have a clear definition of 'the poor' and thus the definition varies in terms of target groups. In some projects the target group is smallholders, in others

women or the unemployed. In many cases the target group is not defined in any way as part of 'the poor' (e.g. support for the ESAP has the economy as its target and only indirectly 'the poor' which in such a context is a rather blurred target group).

Furthermore, DANIDA had not generally assessed the likely impacts of PR development assistance on poor and marginalised groups before the 1996 evaluation. Thus, it did not have specific indicators for undertaking monitoring and evaluation of these effects.

Project design

DANIDA followed its standard procedures in all the projects included in the evaluation. The 'poor' were not involved in the design of the projects, but the receiving authorities (and NGOs) were. DANIDA's analysis, understanding and incorporation of the needs and coping mechanisms of the 'poor' are not very impressive. An example is the smallholder irrigation project where it did not understand and so did not assess stratification in the rural areas, with the result that the project reached those who were already in a favourable position locally.

Generally, DANIDA's PR development assistance to Zimbabwe targets poor areas, either through national programmes or directly. Other mechanisms of reaching poor population groups are not usually employed, however. Only in recent years has the cross-cutting issue of gender become 'mainstreamed' (i.e. part of the planning and implementation in all development interventions), and then mostly in the form of the women in development (WID) approach, a strategy developed by feminist critics of development aid in the 1970s and employed by DANIDA only as late as the 1990s (DANIDA 1994/7), at a time when the WID approach had received substantial criticism and the more recent Gender and Development (GAD) strategy was being opted for. Only in one project, namely support for the regional research project Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), was the issue of women (and women's rights) central to the project. Some of the projects focus on affordability and/or access to services or employment but generally such issues are not at the forefront. Empowerment has not usually been an issue in the relevant projects, but in the present rhetoric 'ownership' is heavily emphasised. Empowerment can be said to be an important *intended* effect in one of the projects, i.e. the Voter Education Project, and a long-term hoped- for effect of the support to the WLSA. In most projects a ministry or a government authority was the institution involved both as partner and executor. Only in a few were NGOs the receiving and executing agencies.

The economic sustainability of the projects seems not to have been a major issue. The 1996 evaluation team was evidently concerned about sustainability and discussed the issue with respect to each project, but the extent to which sustainability has been achieved (or striven for) is not clear. Environmental and economic sustainability come

into conflict in one project (smallholder irrigation) and only in one project does economic sustainability seem to be of concern, namely, the Ferry Service on Lake Kariba, where some of the routes were an important resource to the local population (i.e. to the poor in remote areas) but were economically unsustainable and therefore threatened by close-down.

DANIDA is not very flexible. This may be due to the fact that it has a weak (underdeveloped) monitoring/evaluation system and is therefore not likely to discover and attend to problems arising during the project cycle, i.e. to change the direction of the project if necessary.

Conditionality

There are no direct conditionalities in Danish development assistance, while sectoral policy is popular. It is expected, however, that the responsible government authorities will take over the projects by the time DANIDA phases out its activities. If the responsible government authority does not comply with expectations DANIDA's practice is to engage in dialogue on the issue rather than 'punish' the recipient or pull out of the project. To engage in 'dialogue' might also represent a kind of pressure on the recipient, however. It is difficult to assess the extent of local ownership of the individual projects. Ownership has become an issue only recently; it is not considered in the projects (or in the 1996 evaluation). Since the projects are generally top-down in approach, ownership would not be local but governmental and there is no evidence that government ownership has been threatened in any way by the 'policy of dialogue' to attain compliance.

Implementation

Generally, the executing agency is one or several ministries and/or government authorities (e.g. AGRITEX or the Forestry Extension Services (FES)) at provincial and district level. DANIDA has been more involved in some projects than in others, but generally it is not involved in the actual execution of the projects.

Since DANIDA does not have a systematic feedback of results (i.e. monitoring) flexibility in terms of changing/modifying the orientation of projects has been low. The 'policy of dialogue' also means that, when disagreements arise between donor and recipient, the latter might be pressured into changes, but such changes would concern other aspects (i.e. sustainability, deliveries, etc.) than changes in the execution of the project.

As mentioned above, DANIDA has a weak monitoring/evaluation system and the poverty aspects of the projects were not evaluated until the 1996 evaluation.

Outputs

Outputs are generally not clearly stated in the available documents, but it is possible to get glimpses through the Summary Assessment of the selected interventions in Volume I of the 1996 Evaluation. Generally outputs are mixed, i.e. in all projects some outputs have been achieved as planned while others have not. An exceptions is the smallholder irrigation project where resettled farmers in natural regions IV and V were supposed to be the target group, but where in fact most of those reached by the project were located in natural regions II and III (i.e. the richer areas). In yet another project, assistance to the ESAP, outputs were uncertain because 'the effects of Danida's contribution alone is difficult to isolate' (*Evaluation*, 1996, Vol. 1: 74).

The quality of outputs is just as mixed. The only project which can be said to have achieved its set outputs with high quality is the research conducted by WLSA. The 1996 evaluation team also claimed that the support for the *Family Health Project 2*, in which a DANIDA objective was to reduce the total fertility rate from 5.5. to 4.5, was successful since the TFR declined to 4.3 during the period of its support. Such a claim cannot be sustained since it is not possible to isolate any single factors which influence fertility decline.

Impact

Generally, the interventions can be characterised as having similar impacts. Those which differ in any way will be emphasised. The problem seems not to be whether Danish PR development assistance to Zimbabwe has had positive impacts; the question is, who have benefited from the assistance?

Livelihood: Livelihood generally has been more or less enhanced by most of the projects, from a health, income, access to resources or food security perspective. The various projects have not enhanced the livelihood of the 'poorest and weakest', however, since particular methods to reach such groups have not been applied (e.g. characterising communal farmers as poor without paying attention to local stratification). One project aimed at enhancing the access to markets of marginalised population groups, namely, the ferry service on Lake Kariba, but the most marginalised seem likely to lose that service since routes to the poorest areas are not economically sustainable. Another project, the *Family Health Project 2*, also aimed at reaching the poor but was terminated earlier than planned, and surprisingly during a period when the GoZ was making severe cut backs in the health budget.

Unfortunately it is not possible to say much about the gender balance of these improvements, but since gender has only recently become a 'cross-cutting' issue (mainstreamed) in DANIDA's development assistance one might expect a fair

imbalance from a gender perspective (since the mainstream approach is usually implicitly male-oriented).

Ranking: no impact (for the 'poorest and weakest')

Resources: The projects have enhanced the beneficiaries access to resources. The problem lies not in the enhancement of resources, however, but in the issue of whose resource base is enhanced. Again, the Lake Kariba project seems to be the one where the target groups were actually (partly) poor and marginalised; it is therefore unfortunate that the relevant routes cannot be sustained. The training of HIV/AIDS healers might be seen as enhancing resources, not of the immediate beneficiaries (i.e. the healers) but of those reached by the healers. Only one project aims specifically at enhancing the resources of women, namely, the work by WLSA, but the resources enhanced (rights/law) are abstract and far removed from most Zimbabwean women who do not have access to information about, or the necessary resources (time, energy) to make use of, their rights according to the law. It is therefore positive that WLSA has made links 'particularly with poor, disadvantaged women' (Evaluation, 1996, Vol. I: 73). As regards the gender aspects, the problem is generally the same as above (apart from the WLSA project).

Ranking: no impact (generally)

Knowledge: Many of the projects have the implicit aim of enhancing people's knowledge, e.g. the Voter Educational Project, HIV/AIDS education of traditional healers and family counsellors and WLSA (see comment above). On the whole, this objective has also been achieved (to varying degrees). The issue at stake is thus not whether the projects have enhanced the beneficiaries' knowledge but, again, whose knowledge has been enhanced.

Again, one of the more successful projects is the work of WLSA which has reached a (limited) number of poor women. Also the healer education and the smallholder irrigation projects are clearly directed at enhancing knowledge and have achieved this objective. But again, the question is whose knowledge has been enhanced.

Some of the projects had no implicit objective of enhancing knowledge, e.g. the assistance to ESAP.

Ranking: no impact (generally)

Rights entitlements: There have been no implicit rights objectives in the projects, except for the WLSA project. It could be argued that women's reproductive rights were enhanced by the *Family Health Project 2*, by providing women with contraceptives. But this was not followed up by analyses of the context in which women live, so it is not possible to determine whether the project reached the 'poorest' or the 'weakest', i.e. women who might be in greater need of contraceptives as part of an empowerment process than those actually reached.

It might also be claimed that the smallholder irrigation project enhanced the rights entitlements of farmers since food security is a declared human right, but these farmers were not among the 'poorest and weakest'.

Ranking: no impact (generally)

Method

Consultation of relevant documents and contacts made with responsible persons at COWI (the consultants who carried out the evaluation). The two reports concerning Zimbabwe were consulted at the Danish Embassy in Harare while the main evaluation report concerning the whole evaluation exercise (including other countries than Zimbabwe) was supplied by Bent D. Jørgensen at PADRIGU.

- *Evaluation of Poverty Reduction in Danish Development Assistance—Country Study Zimbabwe. Volume I: Main Report*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, November 1996
- *Evaluation of Poverty Reduction in Danish Development Assistance—Country Study Zimbabwe. Volume II: Assessment of Selected Interventions*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, November 1996
- *Poverty Reduction in Danish Development Assistance*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, 1996/14

Other material was also used which did not concern the evaluation of PR development assistance to Zimbabwe but the gender issue in Danish development assistance. These documents were consulted at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark:

- *Evaluation of the Implementation of Danida's WID policy—Volume I. Main Report*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, 1994/7
- *Evaluation of the Implementation of Danida's WID policy—Volume II. Desk Study*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, 1994/7
- *Evaluation of the Implementation of Danida's WID policy—Volume III. Evaluation of Specific WID Projects (Economic Theme)*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, 1994/7
- *Evaluation of the Implementation of Danida's WID policy—Volume IV. Evaluation of Specific WID Projects (Institutional and Legal Theme)*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, 1994/7

People contacted for further information were Britha Mikkelsen (team leader of the evaluation) and Erik Brander (team member), both at COWI.

Since this is an evaluation of an earlier evaluation of nine different projects the method has been to focus on the similarities of the projects, i.e. treating them as if they were one project. Only in cases where single projects differ significantly have they been emphasised.

Zimbabwe/EU Microprojects Program

Description

The MPP started in 1982 as part of Lomé Conventions II and III. The current programme is the ninth pertains to Art. 252 of Lomé IV (to be terminated in 2000). The MPP follows the Lomé Convention cycle.

The budget for the 9th MPP amounts to is ECU 5,700,000. Individual project budgets may not exceed ECU 300,000. Organisations involved are the main office in Harare and regional offices (in Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Masvingo and Mutare), as well as the groups/communities receiving funds for their projects.

Project objectives

The overall development objective of the MPP, according Art. 252 of Lomé IV, is to 'make have an economic and social impact on the life of people, meet a demonstrated and observed need and [it] will be undertaken at the initiative and with the active participation of the local community' (Cherret and Schulz, 1995). The immediate objectives of the 7th MPP are as follows:

- The provision of social infrastructure facilities;
- Increase food production; and
- Improved income generation capacity.

The 1995 evaluation criticised the MPP for not being clear on its objectives. This criticism has been taken very seriously and from October 1996 to June 1997 workshops have been held to address the issues of objectives and purposes, as well as to discuss future possibilities of conducting participatory monitoring and evaluations of the MPP. The MPP has no definition of PR. There is, however, a 'common understanding' of poverty and of the need to contribute to poverty alleviation and the programme, by the nature of its design, contributes to PR. Marginalised groups and areas are targeted/singled out, but there is an awareness that the poorest of the poor seldom present project proposals and therefore seldom receive funds.

Identification

Individual projects are identified by the beneficiaries who apply for support at their regional offices. 'The poor' are not clearly defined (as discussed by Cherret and

Schulz, 1995: 4) and the only specified target group is 'women'. It is also of importance that the group/community has been working on the project for about a year (e.g. planning, trying to find finance, etc.), i.e. that the project is well grounded in the group/community. If it is not, the experience at the MPP main office is that the project easily falls apart during implementation or shortly thereafter.

Appraisals (both desk and field are undertaken) and during these the appraisal team try to identify who are going to benefit from the project. There is an awareness both at the main office and at the Harare regional office that it is difficult to determine whether richer members of a group/community are 'hiding' behind poorer members. Field appraisals are undertaken as a kind of rapid rural appraisal; discussions with the group/community, investigation of the environment, determination of the needs of the project as well as an appraisal of the skills among the members of the group/community. Beneficiaries' needs are thus the basis for support. Projects receive support if they are considered by the regional officers to have an economic/social impact (which is, however, not measurable according to the 1995 evaluation because of lack of defined indicators, as well as of systems for assessing such impacts).

Individual projects are monitored at least three times a year and often more frequently. They are not subject to evaluations, but the MPP as a whole is evaluated.

Project design

The programme supports projects in the following areas: rural development, health, education and other sectors (including urban projects).

The design and procedures of the MPP are different from those of regular EU projects, but the projects are not designed in any particular way; since the MPP is based on people's own formulated projects they are also designed by the beneficiaries. Funding is, however, dependent on the appraisal by the MPP staff.

According to the 1995 evaluation the MPP has become more focused on income-generating projects over the years, which was also confirmed at the main and Harare regional offices. This also means that the appraisals of a project will consider its economic sustainability (e.g. whether the project will meet a demand). The MPP supports local bakeries, but only reluctantly because bread is produced more cheaply by larger companies in town.

During the appraisal need is also considered, i.e. is there a need for the income-generating project, for the school or the clinic?¹⁵ Are those who apply in

¹⁵ In the two latter cases official statistics and GoZ policy are considered to determine need.

need?¹⁶ Thus, coping mechanisms and needs are analysed by the MPP team while they are in the field and on the basis of their experiences and knowledge.

By covering the whole country there is no structural bias towards any particular ethnic group. However, the MPP target 'primarily people living in the rural areas' (*Zimbabwe: Background Information*), especially in communal areas, and women. By targeting such generally marginalised groups, the MPP as such has the potential to function as an enabling force/condition for the group or community to enter into an empowering process. This is exemplified both in the evaluation (1995) and by the Programme Officer at the Harare regional office. Concerning women, the 1995 evaluation states (Chesset and Schultz, 1995: 115): 'As women pointed out at various meetings with the evaluators, their participation in women's groups has given them the self confidence to speak up, to assume leadership roles, to begin to analyse their needs and possibilities'. The Programme Officer at the Harare regional office recounted the story of a women's group which had received MPP funding for a piggery, which led the group into dairy production, irrigation and their most recent project, bio-gas. They only received funds from the MPP once (for the piggery), but since then have been able to invest in new projects as well as attracting new funders. As the Programme Officer said, if a project is successful people will often get a good feeling about themselves and the group/community, leading to a strengthening of that group/community, components which are essential in an empowerment process.

Projects are formulated by groups (of not less than 10 members) or communities, who apply to the regional office for funds, selected projects are then referred to the National Management Unit (NMU), which passes the proposed projects on to the Appraisal Committee, which makes recommendations to the Steering Committee, consisting of the EU delegation and the Ministry of Finance (MoF), which finally approves the projects. The projects should be small and many concern infrastructure (e.g. building of schools and clinics) or income-generating activities.

There is a flexibility in the organisational structure, evidenced by the fact that many of the recommendations of the 1995 evaluation were pursued. The structure is now less complicated, the relationship between the Steering Committee and the Appraisal Committee has been clarified, two additional regional offices have been opened and a process of identifying the MPP objectives and purposes, as well as participatory methods for monitoring and evaluation, has been initiated.

¹⁶ An important aspect of the appraisals is to identify the needy, but there are no specific indicators used for such an exercise.

Conditionality

At the national level the GoZ is committed to providing individual projects with supervising personnel (which means that people will not be building schools or constructing wells by themselves), technical materials and equipment and personnel for schools and clinics (which also includes paying salaries, i.e. a financial commitment). The group/community, on the other hand, must pay 25% of the costs (in cash or kind) of the project (an issue also looked into during the appraisals); they must also have the basic skills required and must be prepared to invest time and energy in the project. Experience has shown therefore that a project should begin in May when the financial contribution should be collected, the reason being that between May and August is the least work-intensive period of the year and people have just sold their harvests in May.

There are no major conflicts between the donor and the GoZ, maybe because of the very structure of the application for funds (with the GoZ involved in the approval of projects). Also, infrastructural projects, which are the only ones where the GoZ is conditioned to provide material/ personnel, fall within the general development strategies of the GoZ and are therefore welcomed.

Implementation

Implementation is carried out by the community with the assistance of the GoZ and monitored by the MPP regional offices (the monitoring is not done in any systematic manner). The top structure of the MPP has been changed; the Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (ARDA), which was formerly the executing agency, was terminated on 31 March 1996. This has made the structure more straightforward and less bureaucratic. It was also necessary to clarify the relationship between the Steering and the Appraisal Committees (which the 1995 evaluation criticised for the confusion of roles between them).

The orientation has also changed somewhat over the years, i.e. the MPP has become more focused on income-generating projects. It is not possible to discern why this is so, but it may be because it is believed to be more effective in battling against poverty (it might also have to do with the emphasis on privatisation under the ESAP).

The individual projects as such have not been evaluated but the MPP has been evaluated by the donor. The evaluation did not specifically address the impact of the MPP on poverty, however, but was focused on the management of the programme.

Outputs

As was pointed out in the 1995 evaluation it is very difficult to determine the output of the MPP, since there are no indicators to go by: 'Impact is the most difficult aspect to deal with given ... the programme is not designed in a way that its development goals can be identified and monitored' (Cherret and Schulz, 1995). This problem is recognised by the MPP and is being dealt with (workshops mentioned above).

It is difficult to measure outputs if there are no clear (and measurable) goals for the intervention/funding, and this is the problem with the MPP. However, there are outputs in the form of school buildings and clinics and of income-generating projects which last and some which develop after the MPP has withdrawn. There are no statistics on this, however, and so it is only individual stories that can be used for 'measuring' the outputs.

Impact

The MPP seems to have taken the 1995 evaluation very seriously, maybe to the extreme of putting 'implicitities' on paper. During interviews the issues below were clarified to a certain degree, which was not the case in any of the documents consulted.

Livelihood: In the rural communities livelihood is improving, especially because the MPP makes services more accessible. The programme also contributes to improved health and education (by building clinics and schools). By supporting income-generating projects it also enhances rural household incomes as well as nutrition. It should be cautioned, however, that the impact on livelihood is dependent on the success of the project—even though an unsuccessful project may not always kill local initiative.

Ranking: improvement (given the project is successful)

Resources: Access to resources has increased in project groups/communities since they are provided with infrastructure (social as well as economic), and because the MPP takes environmental issues seriously this also contributes to the resources of a community. Since everything provided for the group/community project is the property of that group/community, this represents increased resources. Also, the feeling of ownership is strong, especially concerning income-generating projects, largely due to the fact that people themselves formulate the project according to their perceived needs. Infrastructure projects like a clinic, a dam or a school, however, tend to distance people somewhat (because they will not be doing everything by themselves and they might not see the personal, immediate need for them). When it comes to time as a resource, most of the women in MPP projects are women with older children. This is probably an indicator of women having more time to engage

in non-household activities as a result of no longer being burdened with toddlers/pregnancies (as well as in-laws' critical observations of a younger wife's activities, something which many women find constraining and limiting). One might also claim that the feeling of success in a project is a psychological resource.

Ranking: access (again depending, to some degree, on the type of project and its success)

Knowledge: Obviously a school project will enhance the knowledge base through education and clinics may increase knowledge of nutrition and sanitation, etc. However, income- generating projects also increase knowledge through the information/training given to those involved in the project. The knowledge may be both of a legal kind and of a practical nature (construction skills and the like). Such knowledge may have a direct impact on people's lives, e.g. women becoming knowledgeable about their legal rights to their income or providing building skills which can be used for other purposes.

Ranking: expansion

Rights entitlements: The MPP informs project members of their legal entitlements and provides legal advice. One immediate impact of such information is, as mentioned above, that women realise that their income, as well as the project property, is theirs and not their husbands'. The Programme Officer at the Harare regional office stated that men were initially sceptical about women's projects but that such attitudes often change into approval over time. She also said that most of the women in such projects had older children (no toddlers), which indicates that with age women are more free to do as they want (without their husband's initial approval).

It is important to consider local practices, but it is also important to remember that local practice may be in conflict with legal advice, e.g. local practices may be affected by information about women's rights as Zimbabwean citizens.

Ranking: participation (but dependent to some degree on the group/community members' ability to 'absorb' and 'operationalise' information about their rights, etc.).

Method

Documents consulted:

- *Zimbabwe: Background Information on proposed 9th Microprojects Program.*
- *Zimbabwe/EU Microprojects Program: Information Guide.*
- *Zimbabwe/EEC Multi-Annual Microproject Programmes (Agreement).*
- Cherret, I. and Schultz, K. (1995) *Evaluation of the 7th Microprojects Program in the Republic of Zimbabwe: Document Summary*, February.
- Goericke, F.V.L. (1996) *Report on the 3rd and 4th Phase of the Consultancy for the Introduction of Participatory Planning and M&E/MIS into*

ZIM/EU/MPP, Including the Regional Programme-Level Planning Workshop, Harare.

- *Zimbabwe-EU Microproject Program Project Cycle*, a figure showing the intended schedule of implementation.

Met with K. Muyambi, Programme Officer of the MPP, on 11 March to consult the *Evaluation of the 7th Microprojects Program*. Interviews with K. Muyambi and Ms D. Chiwara at the Harare regional office (both on 17 March 1997).

Small Dam Rehabilitation for Food and Economic Security Project (Netherlands)

Description

The pilot project (SDRP) began on 1 December 1995, and was due to end on 30 November 1997. An unspent amount of more than US\$40,000 was carried over to the second budget year. The organisations and authorities involved in the pilot project initially were the GoZ, the RDCs of Bikita and Mwenezi in Masvingo Province, the Dutch Embassy in Harare and CARE Zimbabwe.

Project objectives

The objectives are not explicitly stated in the documents but easily be discerned as:

- to reduce the vulnerability and food insecurity of drought-prone communities in districts of the Masvingo Province; and
- assisting such communities to seek sustainable solutions for protecting and optimising the use of small dams and catchment area resources.

The SDRP documents do not define poverty reduction or the beneficiaries (who are simply described as communities in communal areas). The expected output of the project is stated as 'the members of Bikita and Mwenezi RDCs will gain the expertise necessary for future environmental planning and management, having improved their skills in co-ordination and participatory planning to ensure co-operation with local community-based management structures'. This output was to be ensured during the existence of the pilot project by establishing management structures in accordance with the community management approach (CMA) developed by CARE. This method is based on co-operation between local communities and state authorities, as well as active participation by the local communities.

Identification and appraisal

The NGO CARE Zimbabwe identified the project, and suggested that the Dutch finance it. As mentioned above, there is no definition of 'the poor', but the target group is singled out as being farmers in communal areas (which *may* have little to do with 'the poor'). By chance (i.e. by no effort from CARE or the Dutch Embassy) most of those participating in the projects at community level are women.

No reference is made to the evidence of the good impact of the method used in the project, but it is based on 'two years of experience of similar projects led by CARE

International in Zimbabwe before the Dutch became involved. However, financial and social feasibility studies were carried out before choosing project sites/communities. The project targets no particular group except drought-prone communities in Natural Zones IV and V (communal farmers) and women, who are the only clearly defined beneficiaries. Communal farmers in drought-prone communities are certainly people with limited resources and thus the project in effect targets a poor population group, i.e. it has an implicit PR approach (also evident in the name, i.e. 'food and economic security'). Only in the case of irrigated vegetable gardens has women's participation (management) been deliberately encouraged.

CARE Zimbabwe knew what it wanted to support, i.e. rehabilitation of small dams, and engaged RDCs and local communities in the project. Their participation consisted, at least initially, of their interest in the project, and their signing a project agreement of 'mutual expectations, commitments, responsibilities and obligations throughout the duration of the project' (*Progress Report* 1 December 1995-30 June 1996: 6), with the rules set by the communities. Thereafter they participate actively in all rehabilitation works and complementary activities (e.g. irrigation).

The only poverty indicator discernible (i.e. not spelled out as such) is that the communities approached are drought-prone communal communities. This means that the project targets poor areas, using methods for poverty alleviation which are quite easily monitored and evaluated.

Project design

The executing agency, CARE Zimbabwe, followed its standard procedure for this kind of project. The method used, CMA, is an approach developed by CARE International. The beneficiaries did not participate in the design of the project. In the *Draft Guidelines* (1997) CARE formulates the participatory approach by claiming that the NGO 'assists' the local communities (one might add that the NGO also initiates the process).

A study of coping mechanisms in relation to natural resources was undertaken by CARE Zimbabwe in 1993 and a social feasibility study was also carried out. The project is, as mentioned above, also based on good experiences. It's design is sensitive to the difficult situation of vulnerable communities, as evident from the approach which emphasises diversity and complementarity.

The SDRP is a pilot project restricted to the Bikita and Mwenezi districts and thus a limited project. The design only partly targets women explicitly, but 'the traditional gender roles are more often than not resulting in more indirect women's participation' (*Progress Report* 1 December 1995-30 June 1996: 6). Thus, it seems to target women by chance. The project offers affordable and accessible resources to the beneficiaries

who are themselves involved in the creation of these resources. Its design has the implicit goal of the maximisation of asset creation. Less money than was expected was spent during the first year of operation due to delays in implementation.

Sustainability is a kind of 'hidden agenda' of the project: 'CARE field staff assist elected Dam Rehabilitation Committees (DRCs) and Irrigation Committees (ICs) to manage all aspects of project implementation and post-project maintenance' (ibid.: 1). The principle is that by means of mobilising the community to manage the local environment and the resources, and by training and involvement in the project's execution it will become sustainable. Economic sustainability is secured through the income generated from the irrigated gardens and the training in marketing skills which is also included in the project.

DRCs and ICs consist of members elected from the local community. The second progress report (1 July-31 December 1996) also stated that CARE will define 'a clear project exit strategy in collaboration with the RDCs' (p.3). Note that this was taking place one year after the start and one and a half years before the planned termination of the project.

The CMA is an empowering approach to community development according to CARE. The CMA method of the SDRP is formulated, somewhat incorrectly, as a method *to* empower communities 'enabling them to implement projects ... support is given to communities to build their capacity to plan, manage and implement their projects' (*Progress Report* 1 July-31 December 1996: 4). Hence, given that the project succeeds, the effect will be empowerment because people in the local communities will have received training to manage dams, small scale irrigation, marketing, contacts with agribusiness agents as well as with the RDCs. An important, hoped-for, effect is the empowerment of the RDCs, namely enhancing their ability to implement drought mitigation projects by using the CMA.

There are quite a number of institutions/organisations actively involved; GoZ, CARE Zimbabwe, the RDCs, AGRITEX and all the project-related committees: DRCs, ICs, Project Co-ordinating Committees (PCCs) and Grassroots Committees (GRCs). Furthermore there were plans to involve the Natural Resources Board (NRB), the Forestry Commission (FC) and the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (MoH). The SDRP seems to be quite flexible, an example being that it was discovered that the rate of economic return to the communities 'could be increased dramatically if a seventh component ... was added supporting the development of a community based agribusiness dealership network' (*Progress Report* 1 December 1995-30 June 1996: 6). Such a network was initiated. There are no indications of 'negative' changes taking place in the project, which is subject to regular monitoring and evaluation in the six-monthly Progress Reports.

Conditionality

Conditionalities are not mentioned in the documents examined but a Memorandum of Understanding with the GoZ/Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) was signed and the MoA was aware of its commitments to the implementation of the project, which ties in with its policy to reduce poverty. The GoZ has been supportive of the project.

In the case of this project an NGO had the responsibility for contacts with the Zimbabwean authorities. The Dutch funding was directed to CARE, not the GoZ. No conflicts would therefore occur directly between the GoZ and the Dutch, but, should they occur, were to be dealt with by CARE and the GoZ.

Implementation

CARE Zimbabwe, AGRITEX and the RDCs were the central executing agencies, but direct implementation was by the different committees, assisted by CARE field staff. So far no major changes, except for planned and extension of the project, have taken place. The Dutch do not believe in final evaluations of projects but rather in regular monitoring, which seems to fit the CARE approach well since it allows more flexibility.

Outputs

The documents do not state planned outputs in any detail. They are nevertheless clearly defined in the *Progress Reports*, from which it is quite evident that a lot happened especially during the second half of the first year (July-December 1996). Training was initiated, a project implementation manual was compiled, communities were mobilised, agribusiness agents as well as farmer-led dry land farming demonstrations were established, joint meetings were held at district level and opportunities for wider collaboration were identified. Other outputs were also registered, such as strengthening of the RDCs to facilitate community managed drought mitigation projects, community mobilisation and capacity building for the management of small dams, rehabilitation and protection of their catchment areas and structures, initiation of household garden irrigation systems and, finally, marketing of garden produce.

At the time of writing it was too early to define the quality of the outputs, and particularly whether the project was strengthening the communities involved. Its design and objectives, however, have the potential for leading to new organisations/projects being established/initiated in the communities, and so it might be defined as providing the enabling conditions for future empowerment of both the community and individuals.

The discussion on sustainability is not lengthy but quite substantial. The whole idea as well as the design of the project *build* on the capacity of the communities and the RDCs to take it over after a relatively short period (2 ½ possibly extended to 3 years). That the project also emphasises the marketing of produce shows that the design attempts to create financial sustainability for the main part of the project, i.e. dam rehabilitation. If it is successful the communities will have the resources to operate dams and irrigation systems more or less by themselves.

Impact

At the time of writing, the project was still in its first half of implementation which means that the assessments below will be based on assumptions as to its possible success.

Livelihood: Since the project aims at increasing productivity by rehabilitating of dams and constructing of irrigation systems it contributes to enhanced livelihood. One might caution against the possible increase in cash-cropping (where incomes are generally male-dominated), but this is countered by the special gender sensitivity of the project design, which encourages women to participate both specifically in the irrigation of vegetable gardens and generally in the management of the project.

Ranking: improvement

Resources: The SDRP contributes to increasing physical resources in the communities by training, rehabilitation and construction, and also to a possible increase in psychological resources in that people feel encouraged and skilled to deal with problems faced by the community, i.e. empowerment as a resource. Moreover, time as a resource is explicitly mentioned in the *Progress Reports* especially with regard to women, who usually rely on 'bucket irrigation' but will now have a more efficient irrigation system, thus saving valuable time.

Ranking: access

Knowledge: Since an important component of the SDRP is to train the members of the community in operation, maintenance and rehabilitation, as well as in management and planning, the general knowledge of the community will be enhanced. Furthermore the 'knowledge of being able' (i.e. empowerment) will also increase.

Ranking: expansion

Rights entitlements: It is difficult to determine whether the project will contribute to enhancing the rights of the community, apart from the right to food and economic security. On the other hand, an indirect effect may be that individuals and groups are encouraged to look beyond the limits of the community, thus becoming aware of laws

and rights entitlements and the debate on such issues.

Ranking: no change/participation

Method

Consultation of documents at the Dutch Embassy in Harare on 17 March 1997 as follows:

- *Small Dam Rehabilitation for Food and Economic Security in Selected Communal Areas of Bikita and Mwenezi Districts, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe – Progress Report 1 December 1995-30 June 1996.*
- *Small Dam Rehabilitation for Food and Economic Security in Selected Communal Areas of Bikita and Mwenezi Districts, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe—Progress Report 1 July-31 December 1996.*
- *Small Dam Rehabilitation Project (SDRP) for Food and Economic Security in Bikita and Mwenezi Districts. Draft Guidelines for Establishing Small Dams Rehabilitation Projects at Rural District Council and Grassroots Levels, February 1997, CARE International Zimbabwe*

Interview with Ms K. Mathers, Programme Development and Monitoring Co-ordinator at CARE International in Zimbabwe on 27 March 1997.

The Special Education Programme (Sweden)

Description

The Special Education Programme (SEP) has received support from Sida since 1985. Up to May 1996 SEK 4-5m. a year had been allocated to the programme, of which about SEK 3m. a year was disbursed as part of Sida's educational sector support to the GoZ. This is made available through the Ministry of Education (MoE) which co-operates with the Ministry of Health (MoH) in identifying children with special needs. The various units (i.e. the Audio-visual Services Centre, the Audiological Laboratory, the Braille Production Unit etc.) are incorporated in the project under the MoE.

Project objective

The SEP is only one part of a larger programme, the community-based rehabilitation programme (CBR), where it is mentioned as having the objective of integrating 'disabled people in the community with special emphasis on pre-school and school-age children' (*Plan of Operation*, 1993). Its more specific objective, according to the 1996 evaluation (Bäckman *et al.*, 1996), is to:

- 'improve the quality of and access to basic education for children with special learning needs due to various disabilities'. The *Promemoria* (1996) lists a further objective as being 'to create opportunities for disabled children to participate in the general school system'. The latter may be considered the development objective since it concerns not only Zimbabwe but also other countries where Sida supports similar projects. The immediate objectives of the SEP are not clear from the documents (i.e. not stated), but may be deduced from the operational objectives for 1993-6:
- provision of equipment and staff accommodation;
- promotion of early identification and referral of disabled children;
- integration of disabled children into the community and mainstream schools; and
- raising (by 100%) awareness on disability issues and rehabilitation services available to the disabled.

One might ask, however, whether it is really rehabilitation it is all about; the disabled can seldom be rehabilitated to a state close to non-disability. At the same time the *Promemoria* (1996) states that Sida support has been reserved primarily for teachers' further education, 'mobile teams', equipping resource rooms, development of an indigenous Braille language, establishing audiological laboratories and a unit for

producing textbooks and teaching aids for blind and sight-impaired children. These are cited nowhere else as objectives of the SEP.

The beneficiaries are all disabled children, with no distinction being made between poor or non-poor. There is thus no definition of poverty in relation to the programme and no mention of the SEP as contributing to poverty reduction. Of course, one effect of reaching poor disabled children (since all children are targeted) is that children who would probably never have been educated are now part of the school system. However, with the pressures on the labour market from increasingly better educated young people, the disabled will not have any real chance. Thus, one might question how the SEP contributes to PR even indirectly.

Identification

The SEP was initiated by the GoZ asking for assistance from Sida. The GoZ has committed itself to the enhancement of the rights of disabled people, so the SEP is in accordance with policy objectives in both Zimbabwe and Sweden. Since the project beneficiaries are all disabled children there is no definition of the poor as the target. It is obvious, however, that the kind of services offered in the programme will be more readily accessible to non-poor and rich than to poor disabled children. It is also assumed that bringing disabled children out 'into the open' so to speak and showing the community what they are capable of, will have positive effects on the lives of these children. This is thus one of the expected (implicit) impacts of the SEP.

The project is top-down, i.e. formulated by government authorities on the basis of the assumed needs of the disabled children and the communities in which they live (need for equipment, education and information in general). It is the disability (not poverty) which is the indicator, as well as the number of disabled pupils treated.

Project design

Sida followed the standard routine. The GoZ asked for support, Sida considered the project from the viewpoint of its development/aid goals and granted support to the whole or parts of the project.

The needs of the beneficiaries were defined jointly by GoZ/Sida and not by, or in co-operation with, the beneficiaries. They were thus not analysed but assumed on the basis of previous studies carried out by other institutions.

The project is designed to reach all disabled children in the country through identification and referral which involves both the MoE and the MoH. One of the problems is the access to and affordability of the equipment needed for disabled

children's participation on equal terms with other children in ordinary community schools. The GoZ's objective is that the provision of equipment should be income-sensitive and that no one should have to wait a long time for their aids (Braille school books, hearing aids, wheelchairs, etc.). The intention of creating separate units for the production of audiovisual aids and braille books was to be able to reach as many children as possible as quickly as possible, but shortage of finance has meant that the laboratory, the service centre and the production unit have not been able to operate as efficiently as was planned. The sustainability of the programme is thus threatened even before the termination of the Sida-supported project.

The empowerment issue is of interest. Sida has 'empowerment of disabled people to achieve "full participation and equality"' as an objective (*Work Objectives* 1993/94). By identifying and integrating disabled children in ordinary schools and in their communities, the SEP is seen as empowering them. But one must have doubts about whether anyone can be empowered by others or whether they are provided with enabling conditions (SEP) which might result in their own empowerment – a crucial difference. Secondly, can one be sure that these children are really incorporated into the schools and the community in an 'empowered' manner, i.e. without being treated as some kind of integrated outcasts? Of course, education is in itself always a 'good' goal but does 'integration' automatically make life better/easier for the disabled children? The question is not whether such projects should be supported or not, but whether they need to be carried out alongside other projects of a more socio-economic character. It is also a question of constant monitoring *of the children's psychological state*, i.e. not only of the number of children reached and aids provided.

The Ministry of Finance (MoF) is the ministry which receives the money from Sida and allocates it to the MoH and MoE. The MoH is involved in the identification and clinical examination of the disabled children, while the MoE is responsible for their education and educational facilities. Co-operation between the ministries has worked well at the different departmental levels.

Annual reports are written, but there is no other regular monitoring or evaluation. A study of the possibilities for giving multisectoral support is planned. It is therefore not possible to gauge the progress of the project.

Conditionalities

Sida's practice is not to impose any conditionalities but to initiate dialogues when there are problems, or to put pressure on the GoZ, e.g. by stopping disbursements if the plans presented to it are not considered good enough, or by stopping the financing of overseas education for teachers of blind and hearing-impaired children.

The owner of the project is the GoZ through the ministries involved. This ownership may be threatened both by Sida's possible disapproval of plans (or the threat of it) and, probably more likely, by the GoZ which is still cutting back expenditure in the health and education sectors.

Relations between the GoZ and Sida seem to be somewhat strained in this particular project, but the Senior Programme Officer for Health and Education emphasised that this was not the case. However, the fact that Sida has stopped paying for teachers education abroad and is not willing to put further finance into the various units indicates that there are some conflicts over financial aspects of the programme. According to the Senior Programme Officer this was not a matter of conflict but purely the result of the generally poor economic situation in the country.

Implementation

The SEP is executed by the MoE, which has the main responsibility, in co-operation with the MoH. No other authorities/organisations are involved (except for the Ministry of Social Welfare which pays the school fees for the poorest children). Except for the establishment of the braille and audiological units, there has been no change in the projects organisation or orientation since it was launched in 1985. The financial situation with regard to the units, laboratory and service centre as reported in the 1996 evaluation was very problematic, and Sida's reaction was negative. One example of the effects of this is the comment in the 1996 evaluation – 'poor parents of hearing-impaired children suffered problems and hunger in the effort to get their children to the laboratory for assessments' (Backman *et al.*, 1996: 32). The constraints experienced in getting the laboratory/service centre/units to function efficiently were thus affecting (especially) poor parents negatively.

The SEP has been evaluated at least once and progress reports are produced during the year, as well as annual work objectives. In none of these documents are the PR effects of the project assessed.

Outputs

According to the *Promemoria* (1996) the output of the SEP has been good and the funds have been used efficiently, as instanced by the fact that in areas reached by the SEP the numbers of disabled children in ordinary schools are higher than in other areas despite the problems outlined above. It is difficult to assess the output because there are no clearly identified objectives to be achieved (apart from increasing the number of disabled children attending school and providing them with the necessary aids – the latter has clearly posed problems).

As mentioned above, the services offered have not been very good, with some apparently negative effects in terms of the poverty status of individual (poor) families. According to the 1996 evaluation the teaching is relatively good but the number of untrained teachers teaching disabled children is large (maybe as a result of the huge increase in disabled children identified and referred to schools – from 2,679 in 1982 to 104,295 in 1995). The number of schools with remedial education programmes, i.e. capable of educating disabled children, is more than 8,000. In these terms the SEP is ‘successful’, but only by infra-structural and numerical standards.

In none of the available documents is there any discussion of the SEP’s sustainability. However, an indication is given in the 1996 evaluation concerning the laboratory/service centre/units where financial problems led to understaffing which affected the SEP negatively. The question is whether the resources to cater for such services will be available when external funds are withdrawn. The same financial problems seem to have affected the mobile units (which provide on-the-job training for teachers); 9 were provided by Sida, but in 1996 only one was still operating. Similar problems probably do not pertain (at least not to the same degree) to the training of skilled teachers at the United College of Education (Bulawayo) and the University of Zimbabwe (UZ).

Overall the SEP seems to be divided into two separate parts which ideally should complement each other, namely the teaching of disabled children, on the one hand, and the provision of aids for these children, on the other. Only the former is (seemingly) achieved.

Impact

The indicators are difficult to assess in this project.

Livelihood: It is difficult to see how the SEP, as it is functioning now (or did a year ago), is contributing to enhanced livelihood among disabled children and their families. One of the effects of poor services indicates that for some, especially poor, families livelihood is negatively affected by the programme. Furthermore, children provided with aids (e.g. wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.) are not allowed to take them home after school (confirming the duality discussed above). Hence, they have few chances of being ‘integrated’ into their homes and communities.

Ranking: no effect/impoverishment (as SEP is at present)

Resources: Again, because of the poor state of the laboratory/service centre/units the resources provided by the SEP can be resources only for those who are eventually served. In terms of the financial resources of families with disabled children the same problem arises as for the livelihood indicator. The SEP is, of course, a resource in

terms of providing teachers and teaching facilities for special education (again the duality of the project is revealed).

Ranking: no effect/access

Knowledge: By providing any education at all to disabled children, the SEP is contributing to their knowledge and the knowledge base of the country as a whole. However, education does not seem to be free of problems either. The problem identified specifically in the 1996 evaluation is the high drop-out rate for girls. This is a general trend and should not be any different for disabled children. That girls drop out depends both on gender roles (a woman is not *supposed* to work outside the home since her primary role is mothering) and on gender discrimination (girls are subject to sexual harassment and abuse by male teachers and pupils). The 1996 evaluation also points to ethnic discrimination in that the screening test (to identify pupils with learning difficulties) is provided in English and Shona but not ('yet' as the evaluators put it) in Ndebele and presumably not in other Zimbabwean languages.

Ranking: expansion

Rights entitlements: The SEP strives to incorporate the disabled in the wider society and guarantee them the same opportunities in life as the non-disabled. The GoZ thereby endeavours to fulfil the human rights of the disabled, which is an honourable aim. Not many African countries have committed themselves to this goal, and Zimbabwe is the only African country with legislation securing the rights of the disabled. However, in terms of participation an evaluation of the SEP's effects on these pupils' lives as a whole needs to be undertaken. Do they become 'integrated' in society? Are people really sensitive to disabled people (as a result of information)? This cannot be judged from the available information.

Ranking: no effect/participation

Methods

Consultation of documentation on the project from Sida, Harare. Ms Sigrid Halvarsson, Senior Programme Officer for Education and Health at Sida, Harare, helped in identifying the project documentation.

- *Community Based Rehabilitation 1993/94*
- *Rehabilitation Unit: Work Objectives; 1993/94 - 1995/96*
- *Plan of Operation for Sida-supported Community-based Rehabilitation Activities, 1993/94/95, May 1993, Rehabilitation Unit*
- *Agreed New Work Plan and Review of Offices/Managers Work 1996*
- *Sida Progress Report, Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR): July 1995*
- *Sida-Funded Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Activities, 1996*

- Bäckman, Ö., Lundholm-Hedvall, Å., Mntungwana Hadebe J.A. and Mavundukure, G. (1996) *Evaluation Study of the Special Education Programme in Zimbabwe, Report of the joint evaluation team*, May.
- *Promemoria: Sidas bistånd inom handikappområdet—en översyn*, Stockholm, December 1996
- *Five Year Strategic Plan: Rehabilitation Unit, 1997-2001*

An interview was conducted with Sigrid Halvarsson on 24 March 1997.

Small-Scale Irrigation Using Collector Wells: Pilot Project – Zimbabwe (UK)

Description

The SSI pilot project ran from October 1992 to January 1996. The budget was initially £594,000 but in total £645,000 was disbursed. The organisations involved were the donor, i.e. the ODA, the GoZ, the Agricultural Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX), the Research and Specialist Services (R&SS), the Department of Water Development (DWD), the Institute of Hydrology (IH) and the British Geological Survey (BGS). The pilot project was located in communal areas in Masvingo Province, i.e. one of the driest parts of Zimbabwe.

Project objectives

The development objective of the ODA might be quoted as being to improve the quality of life of people in poorer countries by contributing to sustainable development and reducing poverty and suffering. For the SSI pilot project, however, the development objective was stated to be ‘to improve the long-term well being of rural communities and the rural environment by effective use of groundwater’.

The immediate objectives were

- to field test the validity of small scale irrigation and collector well research results obtained at the Lowveld Research Station;
- to identify ways of improving the operation of the schemes, e.g. by identifying and overcoming constraints; and
- to identify a basis for replicating the schemes on a wider scale.

Poverty reduction (as well as ‘the poor’) is not defined in the documents but the project delivered what was needed in one of the driest and poorest parts of Zimbabwe, i.e. resources such as time, (clean) water, income and nutrition. Furthermore, it targeted farmers in the communal areas. The beneficiaries were thus nationally (and historically) marginalised people.

There has not been a concerted effort to reach the poorest among the farmers in the project villages, but the *Return to Households Survey* (1996) shows that the poorest segments of the community (defined as ‘struggling to survive’) are not excluded from the collector well groups (they amount to 17% of the members). Those defined as ‘comfortable’ (just above the former) made up 36% of the members. Thus, those who

might be defined as the poorest of the members of the project communities constitute more than half the members of collector well groups. One might say that in this way *the communities* have consciously or unconsciously defined the SSI pilot project as directed at the poorer (among the (assumed) poor).

The project documents, however, get no closer to a definition of the 'beneficiaries' than as 'communal farming areas of Masvingo Province' (Waughray *et al.*, 1996: 1).

Identification

The project evolved out of ODA research on collector wells. As such, it was initially a technology-driven project, defined by the donor and the GoZ. Quite soon after implementation started, however, it turned into a project concerned with what the villagers wanted, i.e. the use of the collector wells. No baseline study was carried out to identify the 'poor' people to be targeted by the project, but in the end it turned out to be supporting the poorest among the farmers in this generally poor area. The only group with which the documents were specifically concerned were women who might generally be defined as more marginalised than men in Zimbabwe. This, again, was not an issue at the outset of the project but turned out to be important in later studies. The project was not identified on the basis of its likely PR effects. Initially it focused on technology: the ODA would provide water and the socio-economic aspects were not considered. No base line studies were conducted but geological surveys were. As mentioned above, the SSI pilot project was not concerned with the socio-economic aspects of the project at the outset, but 'valuable lessons were learnt in the first schemes and these led to significant improvements in the implementation of later schemes' (Lovell *et al.*, 1996: 15). The main lesson was mainly that, for a project to be sustainable, it had to involve the beneficiaries, making them the 'owners' of the project as well as taking account of considering their needs. To this end community leaders were consulted, meetings organised and time for reflection and consideration allowed both in the community and among project staff. No specific poverty indicators were used in the project. It was, however, identified that these areas are where it is most difficult to find water. Therefore, by (geological/technical) definition these areas and their inhabitants are poor. Even if no specific indicators are defined (except the technological, i.e. how much water the wells produce) certain aspects have been used as indicators, e.g. household incomes from irrigated gardens, women's involvement in the project and the maintenance of the wells. The different sites (six in all) were subject to monthly monitoring visits when garden inputs and outputs, water use and yields were recorded, well water level data collected and problems and progress discussed with well group members.

Project design

The project followed the standard procedure, but would be ranked for PR through appraisals and compliance with the project cycle. This is the first project supported by the ODA in Zimbabwe where it is directly involved in the field, since most ODA projects are with the central government. The main difference therefore was that the project had to change its way of working with local communities. It is not possible to tell whether the beneficiaries have been involved in the design of the project (most likely they were not at the beginning but have been brought in more and more throughout the implementation process). However, in the ongoing planning for the next phase of the project, i.e. extending it to new communities, previous beneficiaries are very active. This means of course means that the beneficiaries of the next phase are not involved in the design process since they have not yet been identified. Needs and coping mechanisms were not analysed (or taken into account) in the design process, probably because at that stage the project was perceived as a technical project.

However, as it evolved it seems to have become a project benefiting (if not targeting) poorer people, women and children. The affordability of collector wells as well as the access to water were two of the main reasons for getting involved in the project at all (i.e. to test the validity of this type of well).

The costs of the wells are now covered by user charges for the purchase of spare parts, and a small group of villagers have been trained to maintain and repair the wells (which is 90% carried out by the villagers). Hence, they do not have to rely on the Rural District Councils for assistance. Furthermore, there is sufficient pressure within the villages to keep the wells functioning. As the project became more and more inclusive the feeling of ownership also increased, also accounting for the high sustainability of the project.

Importantly, this also means that the villagers realise that they are/have become independent of the RDCs, that they can earn money by gardening instead of relying on the government for hand-outs (which might not come). This was a part of the design of the project and in this sense it aimed at creating enabling conditions for empowerment (though not formulated in such terms) directed not at the poor as such but at the members of the groups and of the communities.

ODA provided an adviser living in the area. Furthermore, the collector wells were constructed with ODA funds by people at the IH and the BGS. During the implementation of the project both IH personnel and AGRITEX officials were involved, while the RDCs were involved as the appropriate government authority. The project was monitored on a regular basis and with the growing involvement of the beneficiaries it became highly flexible, i.e. beneficiaries were allowed to explore new ideas and areas thus expanding the uses of the water from the wells.

Conditionalities

The only conditionality (not perceived as a conditionality by the ODA) was directed at the GoZ which was to guarantee support to the project in terms of appropriate personnel (advisers, extension officers, etc.). If this conditionality was not adhered to the ODA would enter into dialogue with the appropriate government authorities to solve the problem. The actual operation of the wells is carried out by villagers and no conditionalities are applied at that level. One might think of the contract which the well groups sign with the ODA concerning their responsibilities as a kind of conditionality, however. This does not seem to pose any danger to the ownership of the project but rather to strengthen the feeling of ownership.

It is not possible to discern any major disagreements between the ODA and the GoZ. Probably this is due to the design of the project focusing on the local committees, the RDCs and AGRITEX. The latter is concerned with agricultural development and hence interested in well functioning agricultural projects.

Implementation

The principal executing agencies were Agritex and the ODA which supplied an adviser as well as specialists on short-term assignments. The RDCs were also involved as well as staff from the provincial offices of the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG).

The main change during the implementation of the project was the realisation of the importance of involving the local communities, i.e. participation and ownership, for the sustainability of the project. Its orientation therefore changed from being technological to becoming more focused on socio-economic aspects (that is, mainly on income generation). This probably accounts for the sustainability of the project in terms both of keeping the wells functioning and of enhancing the economic security and nutritional status of project members and non-members (Waughray, 1996).

The SSI pilot project has been evaluated at different times and from different perspectives during its implementation and immediately after its completion, on both its technical and its socio-economic effects. The *Return to Households Survey* (1996) did to some degree assess the impact of the project on the poorest members of the communities, but this was not defined as an issue of the evaluation which did not explicitly deal with the PR effects of the project.

Outputs

The planned output was both clearly defined (the construction of collector wells on six sites) and achieved (with some delay). The quality of the output, i.e. the collector wells in strictly technical terms, is good. The wells have been developed with the aim of being affordable and easy to construct and maintain, as well as sensitive to the water level in a given area (to hinder excessive use). The quality of the socio-economic outputs can also be seen as good; women have been involved, often more than men, and they clearly benefit from the use of the water from collector wells for irrigation of their vegetable gardens. Even non-members benefit; hence the SSI project has, in general, a positive effect on the whole community (Waughray, 1996). It should therefore be judged as both affordable and appropriate to the needs of the beneficiaries, which include both poor and better-off community members: 'It can be estimated that with an average membership of 85 members per scheme, 51 households are likely to improve in wealth by observation, 21 of those being in the very poorest brackets' (ibid.: 61).

The material collected does not explicitly mention whether the SSI project resulted in the establishment of new organisations. It is only hinted at (ie. not explicitly highlighted) in the *Return to Households Survey* (1996) as that scheme members save money earned from selling vegetables in so-called 'revolving funds' (e.g. five persons saving Z\$5/week, gives each member a turn of investing Z\$25 every 5 weeks) or save privately for other income-generating activities. It is also stated in the survey that 'the increase in community-based and women-focused savings groups that has resulted from the collector well gardens adds more weight to the suggestion from communities that the experience of collective action and involvement in the collector wells scheme aids the implementation of further community-focused projects and sustainable income-generating initiatives' (Waughray, 1996: 44).

Sustainability is expected to be good since the wells were constructed with this as a main goal and the communities are heavily involved (and trained) in their maintenance. It will be necessary, however, to do a revisit after five years. According to the Renewable Natural Resources Adviser at ODA, Harare, the real test is how well the collector wells function during/after the next severe drought.

Impact

The project seems to be fulfilling the indicators pretty well. It comprises training, as well as the provision of water (renewable resource), income generation and rights (both directly and indirectly).

Livelihood: The SSI project enhances the livelihood of the communities where collector wells have been established by securing water for irrigation, husbandry and

household needs even at times of water scarcity. By providing irrigation small gardens are operated in which vegetables both for consumption and income are grown. The project has contributed to alleviating women's workload and increasing their economic assets by providing a feeling of ability and ownership as well as better nutritional standards (periods of vegetable shortages have been cut).

Ranking: improvement

Resources: The obvious resource to which the project has made an important contribution is, of course water which is a scarce resource in these areas. Another resource to which it has contributed is time (explicitly mentioned in the documents), especially women's time, as women are those mainly responsible for growing (incl. weeding and watering) vegetables for nutritional and economic purposes. The increased access to vegetables is in itself a resource as it contributes to the health status of the members in the community ('human capital'). Also the sense of ownership of the project should be termed a resource, as well as the 'spin-off' effects of it (such as savings funds, investments, etc.).

Ranking: access

Knowledge: Obviously the training required for maintaining the collector wells enhances the knowledge base in the communities (mainly among men). However, the increased income from the sale of vegetables grown from irrigation (as well as other income-generating activities engaged in by scheme members) also contributes to enhancing the knowledge of the children in the communities as it pays for school fees, books and uniforms. It is also highly probable that the sense of ownership and the consequent engagement in other activities will in time generate knowledge of the wider society, e.g. the legal system, economic structures and possibilities, etc.

Ranking: expansion

Rights entitlements: There are no immediate rights impacts of the project (except maybe that of the right to feed oneself and one's family and the right to clean water). There are, however, several indirect rights which might be enhanced by the project. These are mainly the rights of women (and children). Women who become economically active tend to develop interests in reproductive, social and political rights as well, taking steps to educate themselves on these issues. There is, however, a danger that women are not informed/do not inform themselves about their rights to keep their incomes and thus women's economic rights may not be realised.

Children's right to basic education is already exercised in the communities through the incomes generated from the irrigated gardens.

Ranking: participation (in general)

Methods

Collection of project documents from the ODA office in Harare with the help of the ODA Renewable Natural Resources Adviser, Mr Hansell.

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Nutrition Gardens and Groundwater Development in Zimbabwe (NGADI Project). Location: Masvingo Province. Annex 1: Key Findings of the Pilot Phase, January.

Lovell et al. (1996) *Small-Scale Irrigation Using Collector Wells Pilot Project – Zimbabwe. Final Report, October 1992-January 1996*, January.

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An interview was conducted on 27 March 1997 with Mr Hansell. Contact was also made with Mr Lovell who represents ODA in the project area.

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