

FINAL 2013 REPORT IBALA COURSE FOR SMALL SCALE FARMERS



GIVE THE CHILDREN OF MPONGWE A FUTURE

Registered in Zambia as a society – number ORS/102/96/12

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1. Introduction

After an evaluation in November 2012 of the Ibala project, GCMF has decided to start focusing on a more individual way of training farmers. A first course for 20 students was organized at Ibenga Area Gender Association (IAGA) and started in September 2013. A Curriculum in Organic Farming has been developed by GCMF and has been accredited by TEVETA. The course is based on 7 roles of the Organic Farmer and is competence based. The course has a length of three years. The first year the course will be very intense with a weekly full day theory and practice training at the training center and a two weekly monitoring at the students home fields. Main focus will be on the farming and entrepreneurship skills. In the second and third year the training will be less intense with only half a day per month theory training at the training center, mostly in life and entrepreneur skills which are also not to underestimate part of successful farming, the two weekly monitoring will continue during the whole period of the course. In the first year of the course lessons and monitoring takes place on Monday and Tuesday.

Students will pay school fees but these will be invested in the farming at their home field which means that they will pay back themselves. Lessons at the training center are for free. Costs for these lessons will be recuperated from income generating projects.

The two teachers, Joe and Elias have done all the preparations for this course and are giving the training; they both work fulltime for GCMF/Ibala since 1st of May 2013.



Elias with his class



Joe with his class

2. Evaluation

- **Curriculum and lesson plans**

Since Teveta was not able to offer a curriculum in Organic farming, the first thing we did was, with the support of Mrs. Ton Korsten-Korenromp, adapting the existing curriculum for conventional farming to a curriculum for organic farming. This curriculum is accepted and accredited by TEVETA for the course in Ibenga and is now a national document under TEVETA (this means that it should also be accepted for the VTC as soon as we are ready to apply for that)

Making a calendar for the lessons in the first year was not difficult since we follow the farming season.

Joe and Elias followed 2-day training from Mrs. Korsten-Korenromp in Problem-Based Learning and Student Centered teaching methods. Making the lesson plans was a bit of a struggle. The teaching principles that we introduced (student centered, problem based) were very well understood by Joe and Elias but to immediately translate this into actual lesson plans was a bit too complicated (it is of course for everybody a learning process). Most of the lesson plans were made but were not adapted to the level of our students, which is an essential principle of Problem Based Learning. When the course actually started we evaluated every week the lesson that was given and learned from that to prepare the lesson for the following week. End of November there has been a complete review with PUM expert Mr. P. Stoer and Mrs. Korsten; it was concluded that lessons are now well prepared. A strong point was that the teachers had learnt to build on and made use of prior knowledge and skills that the student already has.

Monitoring schedules for students' evaluation have been developed for theory lessons, practical lessons and monitoring (see attachment).

- **Advertising and recruitment**

Advertising for the course has been done by organizing a field day at the training center and by distributing posters and folders throughout Ibenga Ward.

The field day was a big success, many people have attended and it was even broadcasted on national television. The organization, which was almost completely done independently by the IAGA executive and Joe and Elias, was near to perfect. It was a perfect occasion to put the Ibala and other IAGA projects in the picture and gave us the possibility to put these projects on the map.



Recruitment at the field day

To recruit we developed an application form in which we asked information on civil status, health status, familial status, professional status and farming status of the applicants. Finally we received 32 filled in forms.

After interviewing all the applicants, we made a selection of 20 students. A reasonable good mix of different people out of different population layers; all small scale farmers. Only the gender equality is not really satisfying with only 6 female students (although the men in our course are not doing bad, we have already noticed throughout the lessons and monitoring that female farmers take much more responsibility for their fields). Applicants were also mainly male. This is a working point for the future. After selections we have invited all the accepted students for an information meeting where we have clearly explained the guidelines and terms of condition concerning the course. We made

agreements about the timeframe of the course, payments, attendance and late coming, teaching methods and certificates. 19 students showed up and one had apologized in advance.

Unfortunately but not unexpected three students have dropped out after a few weeks. Of course this is a pity, but with seventeen students still in the course from whom we can see that they are very motivated to finish the course and are always present during lessons and monitoring sessions, we can speak of a successful start.

- **Teaching materials and farming equipment**

We have bought all the basic teaching materials (blackboard, flipchart, chalks, files) that are necessary to teach in a proper way.

A very good and complete handbook "African organic farmer" written by Susan Wren and published by OPPAZ was bought to use by students to do research during lessons. All the students also receive handouts after each lesson that they can keep in their personal file so that at the end of the course they have a complete overview from what they have learned.

On the internet and during our fieldtrips we have found lots of useful lesson materials that we will introduce in our course when possible.

By the start of the next course year we will have developed our own handbook for specific use during this course.

The farming equipment and farming inputs that we needed for this year's course were completely listed. We did research on where we can find the best price/quality materials. All students that have paid their school fees have received their materials and inputs.

- **Registrations**

The course and curriculum is registered with TEVETA. Joe and Elias are officially accredited as teachers with TEVETA.

Joe and Elias are following a teachers' methodology course at TVTC in Luanchya. They have successfully passed phase 1&2 and will during the Christmas holidays to the final phase 3.

- **Field trips**

We did many interesting field trips during the preparations of the course and during the PUM mission with Mr. Stoer and Mrs. Korsten-Korenromp. We went to:

2. Dawn Trust in Ndola (general organic farming and training),
3. Rainland Farms in Kamfinsa (vegetable gardening, tree growing and compost making),
4. Cinderella farms in Fisenge (fish farming, beekeeping, life stock and orchard),
5. Fig tree in Kabwe (general organic farming),
6. FFF in Mkushi (training),
7. Hennie Smith in Lusaka (organic vegetable gardening for commercial purposes),
8. Conservation farming unit in Chisamba (agro forestry, conservation farming),
9. Chipembi farming college in Chisamba (agriculture school),
10. Golden Valley Agriculture Research Trust in Chisamba (general agriculture research),
11. Biodiversity Community Network in Lusaka (research on indigenous crops),

12. OPPAZ in Lusaka (umbrella organization for organic farming,
13. PELUM in Lusaka (training and promotion) and
14. Kasisi near Lusaka (training).



Garden from Rainland Farms

These fieldtrips have enabled us to gain a treasure on information in all fields of organic farming. We could learn about farming techniques, training methods and marketing possibilities. We now have a very useful network in the world of Organic Farming in Zambia.

- **Organizational and administrative structures**

The training at the training center and monitoring of the students at their home field is done by Joe and Elias. They are also responsible for the maintenance and storage of the farming equipment and inputs, supervision on the construction of the poultry, student administration and further development of the course.

The project manager, Stijn Gijbels monitors and supports Joe and Elias' work and takes care of financial matters. Every week there is a short evaluation meeting with the whole team. Stijn also has a weekly meeting with the executive of IAGA. Mr. Kangwa, local board member of GCMF, monitors the project for GCMF and regularly attends meetings and visits the training center in Ibenga.

For the student administration we have reserved a desk at the IAGA offices. All the information of the students and the progress they make is recorded at this office and later stored in the computer at our office in Mpongwe. We closely follow and record the progress on farming skills and personal situation of our students so that we can intervene fast if necessary. We hope that through recording the life situation from our students for a longer period (even after they have completed the course)

we can study the achievements we make and adapt our program if necessary to the needs of the local farmers.

We have developed policies, a students' contract and fee payment schedules, they are kept in the students' personal file.

- **School fees**

Payment of the school fees is, as expected, not always going easy. All students have paid their commitment fee of KR300 on time but monthly payments are not coming in as they should be. At a certain point we were forced to hold in farming inputs for some students that were far behind with payments. This has caused that they have planted later than their fellow students but finally they have managed to pay and planting was not delayed too much.

Fortunately we have finally managed to reduce the monthly fee of KR110 to KR80, this was because of good negotiating with suppliers which brought down the cost of farming equipment and inputs. This means that students can now pay KR20 each time they come to the lesson, this is much easier to handle for them.

For the students that are already in the course we hope that their home fields where they have to apply organic farming will give them enough profit to pay a big amount of the fees for next year at once. They are monitored on the work and recordkeeping on these fields so we expect good profits.

For new coming students we will increase the commitment fee and further reduce the monthly payments.

- **The actual farming**

This year we have managed to prepare the fields and do the planting on time and on standards, weeding is done every week and the plots look very clean. The demo plots at the training center look near to perfect. Despite the unregularly rain pattern in Zambia this year all the crops have germinated very well and we expect a good harvest.



Students at work on their demo plots at the training center

At the students' home fields where monitoring is done, things are not always as perfect as they should be because of poor time management from some of the students. However we can notice that all the students have picked up the lessons very well and that they are making lots of progress on their farming skills. Some students needed extra attention and motivation during monitoring but all of them have finally managed to plant on time and according to standards. Weeding is sometimes a struggle but here again extra monitoring and motivating helps a lot.

All students have managed to make their own compost heap for their home fields, half of it was used for planting and the other half is now used for making compost tea for top dressing.



Compost heaps at the training center

- **Construction of the poultry in Ibenga : income generating**

To start constructing the poultry we had to wait until the final plan and budget was finished and a good team of bricklayers was found. Buying of the materials was delayed because of problems with the truck. The construction of the poultry however is now in progress.



Making foundations for the poultry

- **organic garden at the training center**

A group from Zwolle has visited our projects in October and has donated a drip line for the garden. This means that gardening now can be done much easier throughout the year.

The same group has also planted musangu trees at our demo plots for agroforestry. The trees have picked up well and in a few years they will contribute in making our soil more fertile.



Zwolle group planting Musangu trees

- **Evaluation mission by PUM**

End of November a senior expert from PUM Netherlands, Mr. Pieter Stoer and Mrs. Ton Korsten-Korenromp have visited the project. He did a deep going evaluation of the course together with the management, staff and Mrs. Korsten. His evaluation was as follows:

Observations IBALA-training activities

- *The combination of theory and practice, and monitoring at the home fields is a strong concept.*
- *The trainees appreciate the training and the way of teaching:*
 - *it gives new insights; they learn how to make their own organic fertilizer*
 - *it gives them confidence; they learnt how to keep records*
 - *it learns them to do timely preparation of the land*
- *Paying the training fees is still a delicate issue; some trainees can barely meet the ends. Three farmers had to stop because of this. 17 farmers continued the training. The fees were kept as low as possible.*
- *The two trainers, Joe and Elias, are skilled and dedicated; teaching is done in an interactive way. Elements of problem based learning are practiced already.*

Recommendations IBALA-project

- *It is worthwhile to continue the training on organic farming in Ibenga area; there is a concrete demand and already a 'waiting list'.*
- *Monitoring of the home fields (maize, groundnuts, soybean) can still be better integrated in the training methodology*
 - *Make photo's every monitoring visit and share experiences in the group*
 - *Discuss progress fieldwork and let group members give feedback*
- *Make sure that the notes of the training will be processed into a manual.*
 - *Compile the existing notes, add illustrations and make a layout*
 - *Use the manual for future trainings*
- *Continuation of the training (2014 and beyond) could be hosted from the agricultural department of the GKVTC. This has many advantages:*
 - *The training will become an outreach program of the GKVTC in Ibenga*
 - *The training can be extended to other areas in the district*
 - *Content wise there is much overlap between the training and the courses*
 - *Exchange visits can be facilitated and promoted*
 - *The knowledge base among trainers and teachers is broadened*
 - *Funding for institutional support is hard to get, but small project funding for training programs is easier to achieve.*
- *From 2014 on the training in Ibenga (20 students) can be conducted by one trainer, with back up from the teachers from the GKVTC.*
 - *Joe and Elias conduct the training until June 2014, and continue the monitoring at the home fields in 2015 and 2016.*
 - *In 2014 a new trainer will be recruited for the second training, starting in September 2014.*

(Pieter Stoer, December 2013)

- **Ibala finances**

In the report to Cordaid in April / May 2013 we included an estimated budget for Ibala (See Appendix estimated costs Ibala 2013-2014). This budget was € 23.373,00 (the balance of the total € 39,668 euro Cordaid has transferred to GCMF).

As can be seen in the Ibala accountancy we have spent more money on this project than was donated by Cordaid. There are two reasons for this:

- A big amount of money (KR45906) is spent on the purchase of farming equipment and inputs for our students' home fields and the demo plots. These bought materials and inputs should be seen as an investment and that will be paid back later. This amount of money will be recovered from the monthly school fees that students have to pay until they finish the course (a total amount of KR36800 that still has to be paid in 2014 and 2015 by our students) and the profits that will come from the demo plots at the training center.
- In our accountancy the Ibala project includes the costs that are made for the startup of the organic agriculture department at GKVTC and the investments that we have to make to do this (at this moment this is mainly wages, allowances, field trips and office work). This is a long term project that transcends the short period of the Ibala project sponsored by Cordaid (although the Ibala project is a very important pilot project for this bigger department). Some

additional costs added in this accountancy must thus not be seen as costs that are directly related to the running of the Ibala project as it is nowadays but as longer term investments.

- In August we made a more detailed budget for the project. See attachment. To make it possible to have a second and third students' intake for the Ibala course for small scale farmers in 2014 and 2015 (after which the project should become self-sufficient) and to continue with the startup and development of the organic agriculture department at GKVTC, we hope that Cordaid and other private and public donors will continue supporting our projects.

We have developed a detailed budget for 2014. If we get access to this money we will be able to proceed with our organic farming projects as we are doing now.

4. Conclusion:

The preparations and the actual execution of the course went very well so far.

We have managed to successfully start the course but to complete and fine tune the total lesson plan for the entire first year the work continuously goes on throughout the year. By June 2014 we will have a completely ready and evaluated manual for the first year of our training. Lesson plans for the second and the third year will be prepared in June/July/August 2014.

Working on the lesson plans and curriculum has been (and still is) a time consuming business but we have managed to integrate the principles of problem based and student centered learning in our course and these principles are very well adopted by our teachers and students.

The dropout rate stayed very low which is good indication that students are motivated, appreciate the teaching methods and got the feeling that they are learning something useful. As expected it takes some time before all of the students have completely adopted the principles and standards that are required to do successful organic farming at their home fields. It is however clear that all of them are making progress.

For the farming itself we have made lots of progress compared with the previous years. On the demo plots everything so far is perfectly done on time and on standards. It is a perfect example for the community on how farming should be done. Also the home fields from our students serve as a very good example and motivator for the community.

The success of this course is mainly due to the very hard work and dedication from our teachers, Mr. Joe Nkhoma and Mr. Elias Saliuya and the support and advice from Mr. Stephen Kangwa, our steering committee member responsible for agriculture. With this team and the strong foundations they have laid we will be able without any doubt to further establish our organic agriculture projects in Mpongwe.

2014:

For the rest of the farming season, our most important goal and focus will be to further develop the first year of our course, to make our poultry a profit making business and to manage our fields and garden.

After this farming season and evaluation of our work, we will in the first place develop the second and third year of the course and recruit a new load of first year students. It is decided to recruit twenty four (instead of thirty) new students to start the course in September 2014. The demand is higher but with the start of the Organic Agriculture Department at the GKVTC it seems wiser not to put too much pressure on our staff and mainly keep on focusing on quality.

At the end of the visit of Mr. Stoer and Mrs. Ton Korsten-Korenromp we had a meeting with our entire team to plan for the future. We have made a strategic plan to develop the Organic Agriculture Department at the GKVTC and how to integrate the Iبالا course in this department.

We would like to learn from Cordaid if we can send the strategic plan and application to Cordaid to realize this strategic plan.

Appendixes