Self Help Africa’s programme focus in Zambia is on two key areas: rural enterprise development and sustainable agricultural and rural livelihoods. Projects address a selection of integrated issues: sustainable agriculture, food and nutrition security, research into and production of improved varieties of seed, rural enterprise development and income generation, and environmental rehabilitation.

The country programme works primarily through commodity producer groups, seed producer groups, research stations, local NGOs, civil society organisations and local government to reach smallholder farmers.

Self Help Africa also provides support and capacity building to local government departments in planning, monitoring, evaluation and training.
THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS:

- 17,000 households in Mbala and Livingu districts benefit from the project
- 60% of beneficiaries are women
- 5,400 members in 120 savings and credit associations
- 372 farmer groups

400 farmers (50% women)

Objetive: To improve the livelihoods, health status, food and nutrition security of over 23,000 poor households.

The programme was successfully implemented by Self Help Africa from 2013 to the end of February 2019, when it closed. The programme achieved its intended objectives and impacted positively on its target population.

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Food security: food security improved from below 50% at baseline to about 80% post active programme implementation period.
- Resilience: Households moved from an average of 25% in resilience at baseline to about 60% at endline.
- 372 Livelihood Enhancement Groups received various intervention related trainings.
- Infant and Young Child Feeding training given to 523 care givers from Livelihood Enhancement Groups (LEG).
- HIV, AIDS awareness reaching out to 12,200 LEG members.
- Malaria awareness reaching out to 6,484 LEG members.

Objective: To improve the food, nutrition and income security of smallholder households in Kafue district.

Productivity in Zambia is held back by a lack of access to quality seed, transport and other infrastructure. Because of this, farmers often struggle to feed their families throughout the year.

As part of our response to this, Self Help Africa, in collaboration with the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute, the Seed Certification and Control Institute, and the University of Zambia, is working with Seed Grower Associations (SGA) and their smallholder farmer members to increase production of early generation indigenous legume seed and to develop a better understanding of how the different varieties perform under conservation agriculture practices in the different geographical regions of Zambia.

The Community-Based Seed Enterprises project is also building the capacity of the SGAs themselves, providing technical assistance on business planning, financial management and governance. Seed production provides a profitable business opportunity for farmers with the entrepreneurial drive and capacity to produce at consistent quality and SGAs provide essential collective purchasing, aggregation and marketing services to their members.

Nutrition Sensitive Agri-Food Value Chains

Objective: To improve the nutritional status of members of farming households.

Over the past two decades, the prevalence of stunting has persistently been above 40% in Zambia, which impedes human development, productivity and economic growth.

Self Help Africa is the Zambian-based implementing partner in a research consortium led by McGill University, with sub-grantees WorldFish Centre and Bioversity International. The Nutrition Sensitive Agri-Food Value Chain project’s objective is to promote the availability, accessibility and consumption of diverse, safe and nutritious foods for improved household nutrition and health.

The project will collaborate with a variety of Zambian actors, including the University of Zambia, agro-dealers, government extension staff, cooperatives and smallholder farmers, as building local capacity and harnessing existing local knowledge are key to the success of the project.

These objectives will be delivered through linkages formed with the private sector, trainings on food quality and nutrition, and knowledge dissemination through multimedia.

Through assessments of the opportunities to add value to, and improve the nutrient content of, selected commodities throughout the value chain, SHA, partners and project participants will be able to develop contextually appropriate methods of processing these foods in ways that maintain or enhance their nutrition content.

The project will work with 300 vulnerable households from the refugee and host communities to increase self-reliance.

This will reduce dependency on UNHCR hand-outs and enable these vulnerable households to meet their food and nutrition requirements, as well as basic social and economic needs such as school fees, medical fees and food requirements.
Objective: To build links between schools and local producers, strengthen the link between nutrition and agriculture and facilitate the development of nutrition-sensitive and inclusive value chains.

The government’s Seventh National Development Plan (NDP) recognises that poor nutrition erodes human capital potential and perpetuates the vicious cycle of poverty.  

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Home Grown School Feeding programmes are identified as a key strategy for enhancing wellness and livelihoods for the poor and vulnerable, and for enhancing food security and nutrition in order to improve the health of the population.

Self Help Africa is implementing activities in six districts of Zambia (Mumbwa, Shibuyuni, Petauke, Luangwa, Sinda, and Nymbai) focusing on building community, school and government capacity and ownership of the programme so that it can begin the transition towards independence from World Food Programme (WFP) support, while developing an evidence-based model for programme delivery that can easily be scaled up and out across Zambia.

As required by the Scope of Work, SHA will work closely with key programme stakeholders at school, district and national level, it will mobilise communities in the target districts building their knowledge and skills on nutrition and nutrition-sensitive agriculture while raising awareness of the Home Grown School Meals programme.

SHAs will work to align activities with WFPs country framework and priorities, with a particular focus on monitoring and evaluation systems.

- 200,000 primary schoolchildren from 6 districts, across 435 primary schools
- 3,000 smallholder farmers directly targeted (40% women from female-headed households, 20% will be young people (18-35 years), 40% vulnerable groups (elderly, persons with disabilities, households without productive assets)
- 15,000 family members indirectly targeted

Objective: To improve the resilience, food, income and nutrition security of 3,000 households in the Monze, Namwala and Mazabuka districts of Zambia.

Protecting and Restoring the Environment and Supporting the Emergence of a Resilient and Vibrant Economy in Kafue (PRESERVE) is a three-year project (March 2019-February 2022) to improve the resilience, food, income and nutrition security of 3,000 households in the Monze, Namwala and Mazabuka districts of Zambia.

The project will use the Functional Landscape Approach (FLA) to promote the sustainable use of natural resources for diversified livelihoods and increased incomes, whilst protecting and restoring essential eco-systems within the Kafue Sub-Basin.

The project builds on Self Help Africa Zambia’s previous experience implementing Strengthening Climate Resilience in the Kafue Sub-Basin (SCRiKA) in the targeted districts from 2016 to 2018. Funded by the Government of Zambia through the African Development Bank (AFDB), SCRiKA assisted community groups in 11 districts of Zambia to design and implement projects that would enable them to adapt to the long-term consequences of climate change.

SHA has used learning from SCRiKA and feedback from project beneficiaries to inform the design of PRESERVE Kafue. Where possible, the project will utilise structures already established by SCRiKA, such as reorienting Project Committees into Village Natural Resource Management Committees.

The targeted beneficiaries are smallholders and other vulnerable groups that are disproportionately affected by climate-related shocks.

- 3,000 smallholder farmers directly targeted (40% women from female-headed households, 20% will be young people (18-35 years), 40% vulnerable groups (elderly, persons with disabilities, households without productive assets)
- 15,000 family members indirectly targeted

Objective: To enhance the capacity of financial associations to provide improved services to the Enterprise Groups to enable them to operate sustainably through improved production and market linkages.

The Irish Aid Local Development Programme (IALDP) came to an end in February 2019. This programme had been implemented since October 2013 in the Northern Province of Zambia in Luwingu and Mbala districts. Enterprise development was seen as a key component to ensure sustainability after the end of the project and within this component, access to finance and financial inclusion stood out as the most cardinal.

This prompted the establishment of six Financial Associations (FAs), three in each district, (Mbuku, Mamfunza and Beacha in Luwingu and Intulo, Omba and Ubunonshi in Mbala) which would serve as village banks to offer financial services to the communities.

To avoid negating the work that went into establishing these entities, it is therefore necessary that Self Help Africa continue, to some extent, to facilitate in the mentoring, coaching, and market linkage activities that should see the FAs culminating into self-reliant autonomous institutions.

The Sustaining Enterprise Growth in Financial Associations (SEFGA) project aims to enhance the capacity of financial associations to provide improved services to the Enterprise Groups to enable them to operate sustainably through improved production and market linkages.

These services will include financial services loans, Business Development Services and product financing as well as market services (which include bulking, value addition and facilitating market linkages). Most of the Accumulated Savings and Credit Associations (ASCAs) members are part of the Enterprise Groups therefore these services are, by association, meant for the ASCAs as well. Product development for the FAs will be key as they will be able to tailor products to meet the different requirements of their clientele.

The project, in addition to providing financial services, also aims to promote and develop grain marketing/trading by the FAs, who will absorb the grain grown by smallholder farmers within their catchment areas, benefitting from quality seed provided by the Seed Grower Associations. The Enterprise Groups should benefit from the products provided by the FAs, which could range from traditional loans to equipment lease or hire.

- 1,000 households
Mary Ndlovu, Kalonga Village, Lundazi District, Eastern Province, Zambia.
Photo credit: Ken O’Halloran, 2015.