

2012 – 2016

IMPACT REPORT

selfhelpafrica.org



**Self Help
Africa**



Who we are

Self Help Africa (SHA) is an international development organisation dedicated to the vision of an economically thriving and resilient rural Africa. We have almost 50 years of experience working in smallholder farmer-led agriculture and agri-enterprise and support smallholders to build sustainable, healthy and resilient livelihoods.

Our mission

SHA is fully committed to our mission to support sustainable livelihoods for Africa's smallholder farmers, with an emphasis on women and youth, as well as the vision of the sustainable development goals, which envision a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all life can thrive.

What we do

- **Climate-Smart Agriculture:**

We help farmers to increase productivity, through the promotion of the sustainable intensification of agriculture while ensuring environmental stewardship. We encourage the use of techniques and practices that mitigate the effects of climate change and ensure sustainable natural resource management.

- **Food security and nutrition:**

We go beyond increasing production to address the quality and diversity of production and consumption. As well as supporting farmers to feed their families through increased and diversified production and seasonal availability of food, we take a nutrition sensitive approach to all our work; promoting improved dietary diversity and good hygiene and sanitation practices.

- **Enterprise and value chain development:**

We promote market-based solutions to poverty. We help farmers to access markets, add value to their produce and build strong farmer-led organisations that continue to flourish without the need for external support.

- **Access to Finance:**

We support rural communities to access the financial services they need to establish secure livelihoods by facilitating access to savings, credit, and other financial services such as agriculture insurance.

- **Policy influencing:**

We want farmers to have a voice in the policies that affect their lives. We produce evidence-based research and, as experts in agriculture, use our knowledge of what works for farmers to influence reform in the agriculture sector.

Our impact at a glance: 2012–2016 in numbers

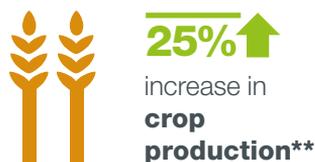
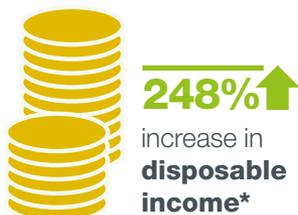
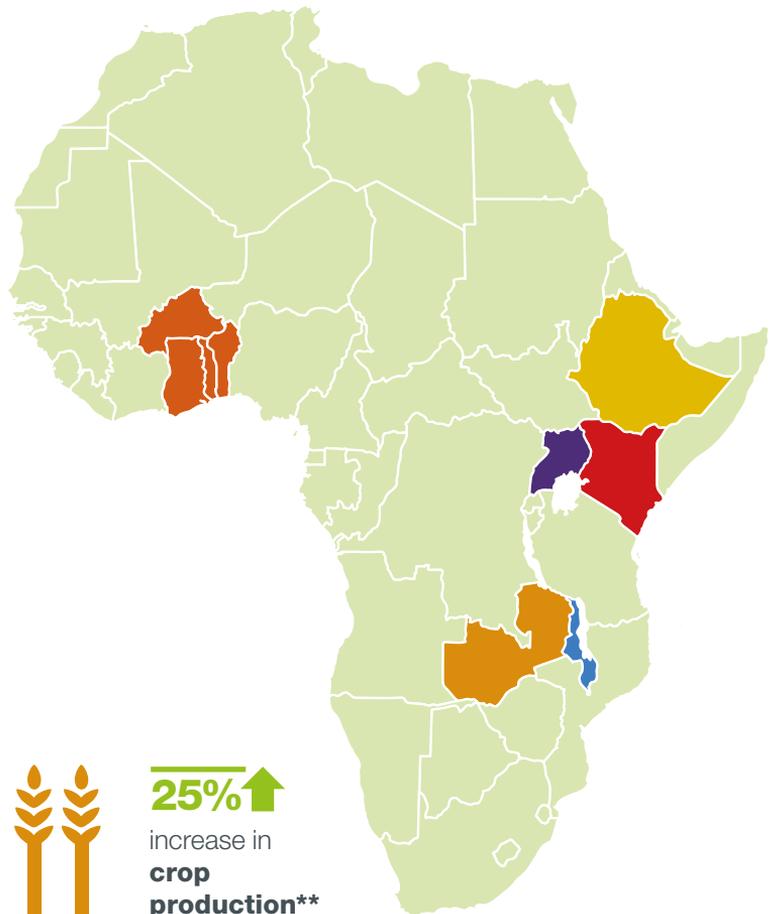
47% of households we worked with had enough to eat throughout 2012.



78% of households we worked with had enough to eat throughout 2016.



Total number of people reached where we work:



*based on those surveyed, this a weighted average for our poorest beneficiaries.

**316,974 households (1,958,212 people) have increased their crop production by at least 25%. This equates to 79% of households with whom we are focussing on increasing production.

Improving food security and nutrition in Northern Province, Zambia

With extensive natural resources and proximity to international markets, farmers in Zambia's Northern Province should have secure livelihoods, yet poverty remains entrenched; productivity is stifled by under-developed markets and a lack of infrastructure. A 2012 survey conducted by Self Help Africa showed that 43% of the region's population did not have enough income to meet their basic needs. SHA has been working in Luwingu and Mbala since 2013 implementing the Irish Aid Local Development Programme (IALDP), which aims to **improve the livelihoods and food and nutrition security for 16,000 households**, and strengthen district authority service delivery.

People Helping Themselves

SHA supports communities to work together to create their own solutions to poverty. In IALDP, this has been achieved through the establishment of 372 Livelihood Enhancement Groups (LEGs): community-based groups that ensure the needs of the community are at the heart of the project, providing focal points of activity within each area targeted.

Food Security

SHA is supporting farmers to increase productivity by

providing quality inputs and training in climate-smart crop, livestock and aquaculture production. We encourage farmers to plant a wider variety of nutritious crops and engage in small livestock production to improve diets but also to provide valuable income throughout the year.

By establishing viable community seed production enterprises and commodity producer groups we ensure that farmers are not reliant on our support beyond the lifecycle of our programme.

Nutrition

Malnutrition in Northern Province is extremely high, with levels of stunting at 45% in 2014. In IALDP, SHA is helping communities to tackle this problem head on. With our support, individual LEG members have received UNICEF accredited training to become trainers in community-based infant and young child feeding practices. These nutrition champions are setting up "Mother-to-Mother" support groups; organising cooking demonstrations and educating the community on the preparation of nutritious meals.



10%↑

increase in the proportion of households who have **access to food all year**



20%↑

increase in the number of households that have acceptable **dietary diversity**



16,740

farmers trained to increase their **productivity**



Elizabeth & Showthem Sikombe, Nsunda, Northern Province, Zambia, 2015.

The “Mother-to-Mother” groups, which include male members as well as female, are conducting a community supplementary feeding programme for malnourished children using simple diet plans created with locally available foods.

Improving access to markets

While productivity increases are helping to improve food security, SHA is also helping IALDP farmers to establish more secure livelihoods by increasing business skills and access to finance.

62 enterprise groups have been identified from within the programme’s LEGs and SHA is providing them with targeted mentoring and support. Storage sheds constructed with the support of SHA are being used for farmer meetings, community

training and to store grain and seed. Market surveys have been carried out and we are setting up a database of buyers and traders as well as a simple SMS system for sharing up-to-date market information.

We are also working with the Zambian Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry to deliver training in entrepreneurship. Farmers within the enterprise groups are now aggregating their produce and successfully selling in larger volumes to buyers such as the World Food Programme, and the Zambian Food Reserve Agency.

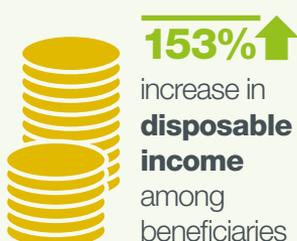
Access to finance

SHA is helping IALDP farmers to invest in small enterprises and increase their assets by increasing access to savings and credit within their communities. This enables

even very poor households to invest in the development of profitable micro-enterprises.

90 Accumulated Savings and Credit Associations (ASCAs) have been set up through the LEGs and members are investing their funds in small businesses such as trading in fish, vegetables, cooking oil, salt, beer and hairdressing.

ASCA members have reported that the groups have enabled them to manage their cash flow better, to obtain start up capital and to make improvements to housing and nutrition. The ASCAs have now set up six registered “Village Banks” to give access to more capital to on-lend to members.



Charity's life transformed

“My children and I are healthier and are sick less of the time.”



Charity Kamwala's warm smile speaks volumes about the transformation there has been in her life since she began working with Self Help Africa, in 2013.

Instead of a basic diet of low-protein cassava which was the staple for her family, the 56-year-old widow from Nsunda village, Northern Province, Zambia says that her family now eat millet, maize, vegetables and other food that they grow on their small farm in a remote pocket of Northern Zambia.

A mother and grandmother who cares for seven of her young dependents, Charity recently replaced her straw roof with new tin sheets, and extended her mud-brick built home with additional rooms.

“When I look at the house, I still can't believe it's mine. I feel like a different person owning it” she says.

Charity Kamwala is amongst 10,000 families receiving farm training and other support from Self Help Africa in Mbala District of Zambia's Northern Province, one of the poorest regions in a country where over 60% of the population live on the equivalent of less than a Euro a day.

As a member of a village-based savings and loans group established in her community, she has taken out a number of small loans to buy the ingredients to make scones that she sells in the locality to supplement her farm income.

“My life has changed a lot so far, and I am now living better than before,” she says, before predicting – with a smile – that it will get even better in the future.

Strengthening cashew value chains in West Africa

West Africa is the single largest raw cashew-producing region in the world, yet productivity remains low and just 10% of what is produced is processed in the region. SHA has been helping West African farmers to increase their incomes from cashew since 2013.

In 2012, SHA embarked on a pilot project with FritoLay (PepsiCo's snack food arm) and local processor Tolaro Global to support smallholder farmers in Benin in increasing production and the collective marketing of cashew. We supported the set up and training of four farmer cooperatives, trained farmers in improved and sustainable production techniques and post harvest handling, and provided simple equipment to assist with value addition, as well as setting up community-based seedling multiplication.

Thanks to our efforts farmers saw increases in both productivity and crop quality, enabling them to increase their income through high volume sales and better prices at market. This successful pilot led to another partnership from 2014-2016 with Intersnack,

the Dutch-headquartered snackfood company supporting a further 2,000 Beninese cashew farmers to increase the quality and quantity of cashew production and strengthen our five partner cooperatives.

Our growing reputation in the cashew value chain in West Africa also led to a partnership with the African Cashew Alliance on a three-year Walmart Foundation-funded project 'Empowering Women within the Cashew Value Chain' in Ghana and Kenya. SHA is leading the capacity building of 25,000 smallholder farmers in Ghana and 10,000 smallholders in Kenya in cashew orchard management; utilisation of by-products; and training farmer associations in value chain management and farming as a business to enable them to better navigate this competitive

market. The adoption of intercropping cashew with legumes by smallholder farmers has not only enriched immediate returns from the cultivated area, but also contributed to soil fertility enhancement and a reduction in the labour burden of women who are responsible for weeding. For our partner Tolaro Global, the increase in farmer productivity has enabled the company to triple its processing capacity.

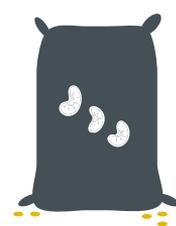
Building on our experience in Benin, SHA has been instrumental in the establishment of the Cashew Interprofession in Burkina Faso to protect and promote the cashew industry, part of whose remit is to enforce agreed commitments between producers, processors and traders in relation to securing of nuts at a reasonable price for processors.



21% ↑
increase in
price per kg
achieved
in Benin



29,200
Beninese
farmers
reached



28.5% ↑
increased
production
in Benin

Increasing resilience in Malawi and Burkina Faso

SHA helps vulnerable communities to confront multiple threats to food and nutrition security and address the fragility of current food production systems. Our Resilience Programming Framework encompasses three integrated, complementary and mutually reinforcing outcomes: food and economic resilience; ecological resilience; and organisational resilience. It guides the design and implementation of programmes - such as **DISCOVER** in Malawi and **BRACED** in Burkina Faso - which are helping farmers to better cope with the long and short-term effects of climate change.

Developing Innovative Solutions with Communities to Overcome Vulnerability through Enhanced Resilience (DISCOVER)

In Karonga, northern Malawi, SHA worked with communities to identify a range of shocks and stresses that could affect smallholders and designed an integrated livelihoods and resilience programme to address these at both household and community level.

Working with 13,000 households to benefit 78,000 people, we are helping to improve food and economic security through increased and diversified crop and livestock production. We are promoting the use of drought and flood tolerant crop varieties,

community-based seed systems (to ensure on-going availability of drought-tolerant seeds) and conservation agriculture techniques. We are supporting enterprise development and access to finance through the development of Village Savings and Loans groups and promotion of sustainable enterprises such as beekeeping.

At community level, we are supporting village and district structures to develop action and response plans, share information for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and support for sustainable natural resource management of wetlands, watersheds and forests. We have also established community early warning systems to ensure preparedness for future disasters.



89% ↑

of DISCOVER farmers diversifying activities by 2015



€72,291

saved by DISCOVER Village Savings and Loans groups

Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED)

BRACED works intensively with 34,950 rural households, benefitting 620,000 in the wider community by increasing economic and ecological resilience and building institutional capacity.

SHA is helping to improve production and food security by promoting drought tolerant crops and supporting community-based production of drought tolerant seed varieties, installing drip irrigation systems, and helping farmers to add value to their produce and access market information.

On ecological resilience we are promoting conservation agriculture techniques and the use of CO₂ reducing technologies such as fuel-efficient stoves. We are supporting reforestation, promoting the use of non-timber forest products and helping communities to develop forest management plans.

At institutional level, we are supporting the Burkinabé Ministry of Agriculture to establish plant clinics (community clinics providing diagnosis and advice on pests and diseases), setting up community-based early warning systems and engaging with policy-makers at village, district, province and national level to support the adoption of plant clinics and early warning weather systems into development plans and budgets.

CASE STUDY:

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT



“My children will have the opportunity to do more than me in the future.”

Habibou Tiendrebeogo was still in her 20s when crisis struck and her husband went blind following an illness.

She became the sole provider for her four young children on their two-acre farm in Nomgana village on the outskirts of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Like other women in her village, Habibou joined the BRACED project and received improved maize, beans and sesame seeds to plant. She also received training that has allowed her to maximise her yields, and earn more from selling her surplus.

“I used to grow the same crops, but I didn’t harvest as much. I planted my seeds not long ago and they are already looking good.”

For Habibou’s children, this has meant they can continue their education to secondary level:

“I used the income from my crops to pay for my childrens’ school fees. The project is helping them.”

While Habibou only attended school for five years, the future is brighter for her daughter Fatimata, who is amongst just 15% of girls in Burkina Faso attending secondary school. And she has big dreams, as she hopes to attend university and become a doctor.

Community-based seed production in Ethiopia

SHA's pioneering work with Edget Farmers' Union has resulted in an improved supply of wheat seed in the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples' (SNNP) Region of Ethiopia, and has received national recognition.

Access to quality seed is essential for farmers, but in Ethiopia demand far outstrips supply. A major bottleneck has been a shortage of improved early generation wheat seed. Self Help Africa worked with Edget Farmers' Union to pioneer farmer-led seed production, which has now set the standard for community seed multiplication nationally.

Our support has provided the Union with capital investment in seed cleaning facilities, storage warehouses, seed quality testing facilities, and provided training and extension services to farmers to undertake quality seed production, storage and marketing activities. We also helped to establish relationships between the Union and agricultural research services.

The project is a sustainable success story. An initial pilot of SHA's approach in the 2012/2013 growing season with a budget of just €45,000 saw 623 farmers achieve significant increases in income. Today, Edget Farmers Union has



30%↑
of improved wheat seed in SNNP Region is **supplied by Edget farmers**



€1 million
current **annual turnover** of Edget Farmers' Union

become a successful farmer seed enterprise, employing 12 professionals and operating a lab for seed quality testing. It has been profitable for 4 years and has received national recognition as a member of the Ethiopian government's seed variety selection committee.

SHA played a crucial 'trusted broker' role in this project, linking farmers to research institutions and government staff, as well as disseminating results and helping to change attitudes and perceptions of farmers' capacities among government and research staff, who now recognise the capacity of farmers' groups to enter the seed market as autonomous local seed businesses. For individual farmers, membership provides the opportunity to achieve the best possible price

for their produce. Primary cooperatives pay farmers a premium of between 15% and 25% above market price for grain.

Building on this success, SHA has been selected by both the FAO and Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency to implement our community-based seed production approach as a "gold standard" in other regions of Ethiopia and in June 2016 received the Cooperative Capacity Builder Award 2016 from the Federal Cooperative Agency in recognition of our work with cooperatives. In 2016 SHA was asked to sit on the national emergency seed committee set up by the Ethiopian government to deal with the impact of the El Niño phenomenon.

Reducing poverty in Uganda

Part of USAID's flagship Feed the Future initiative, the Community Connector (CC) project saw SHA work with over 80,000 individuals in the north and southwest of the country between 2012 and 2016, working to improve livelihoods and nutrition with a particular focus on women and children.

SHA worked with a number of partners on this project, acting as the technical lead for the agriculture and livelihoods component. We provided training curricula and materials for the training of smallholder households in agronomic skills, agri-business skills and farmer organisation development, subsequently supporting farmers to establish links with private sector enterprises.

In line with our ethos, our approach was rooted in building the skills of the community from within. We established learning sites across 15 districts in southwestern and northern Uganda to demonstrate recommended technologies or agricultural techniques, helping farmers to improve farm production, productivity and food security by promoting

the adoption of high value enterprises such as seed potato production, onion and passion fruit production, beekeeping and livestock management.

We helped farmers to build more secure livelihoods by working with over 3,000 farmer producer groups to improve their knowledge and empower them to make informed farming decisions about their businesses and increasing access to financial services by supporting Village Savings and Loans groups.

Working through dedicated learning sites within the target communities, we targeted pregnant and breastfeeding mothers specifically with training in farming crops of high nutritional value such as amaranth, carrot, cabbage and aubergines. These are all crops that are easy to

grow, but are often neglected on the farm and on the table.

The project has also had notable success in empowering women using the innovative Family Life Model (FLM), an integrated approach that presents the relationship between the aspirations of families (family food, wealth and health) and the resources that they can exploit to meet these aspirations, including the role of family unity. 95% of respondents sampled in a 2015 study noted that women's access to and use of finance had improved as a result of participating in the FLM approach. The study also found that according to the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index framework, participating women are economically empowered with an overall score of 80%.



12% ↓

reduction in households reporting moderate to severe hunger



119% ↑

average increase in disposable income from 2012–2014

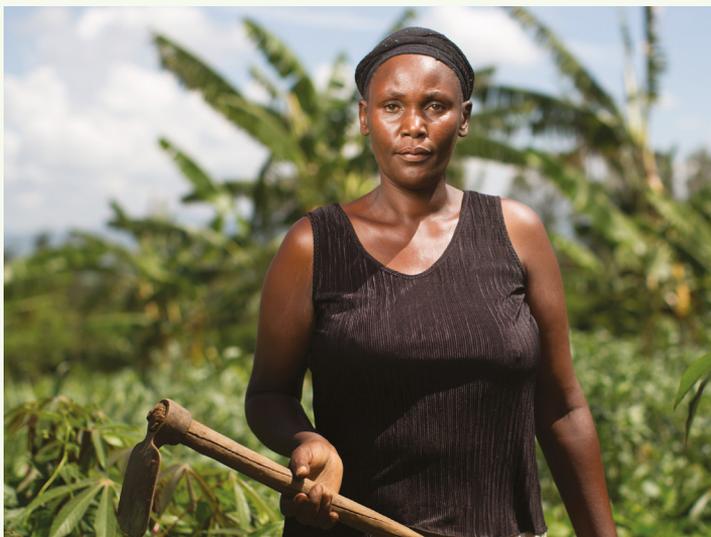


22% ↑

increase in the number of 6–23 month-old children having 3 meals a day

SUPPORT FOR HIV HOUSEHOLDS

“I feel proud that I can now afford to send my children to school”



Low energy, illness, vulnerability to disease and social stigma are amongst the many challenges endured by rural households living with HIV/AIDS, in Africa.

One agricultural project being implemented by Self Help Africa to address this distinct challenge has delivered major benefits to more than 1,500 Kenyan households, since it was first launched in Nakuru County over four years ago.

47-year-old Julia Gitari is one householder who has benefitted from the project. Alongside 150 households in her community, Julia was given a polytunnel greenhouse, drip-irrigation units, training and other support when she joined the project in 2013.

The equipment reduces the amount of time and labour she has to spend both weeding and irrigating her crops. She says that her family's diet has improved beyond all measure and the sale of fruit and vegetables is enabling her to earn €350 a year (\$KE35,000) from her land.

Julia says that she has lifted her self out of poverty as a result of the backing she has received, and explains that while her general health, as a person with HIV/AIDS has improved, what has also improved is the attitude of others towards her family.

“I feel proud that I can now afford to send my children to school, and people in the community respect this too,” she says.

Value addition in the Kenyan dairy value chain

In Keringet, a settlement in Kenya's Rift Valley Province, SHA's work with a local community trust, KCSEED, has blossomed from a collaborative development project to create an enterprise that will continue to thrive and provide a steady income for dairy farmers and develop the local economy into the future.



15,000

litres of milk received daily by KFL from 2,300 dairy farmers



242%↑

increase in KFL's turnover from 2014 to 2015, to €1,200,000



10,000

local dairy farmers positively affected by the project

SHA began working in Keringet in 2012, supporting the community to improve access to potable water and sanitation, improve agricultural production and develop farmer enterprise. SHA has since supported KCSEED to set up Keringet Foods Limited (KFL) – a public limited company established to promote economic development by adding value to agricultural produce.

We helped to establish a milk bulking centre equipped with three 5,000 litre milk chilling tanks, a small pasteuriser and a laboratory for testing raw milk. KFL staff and service providers including vets, agro-inputs shops, and artificial insemination agents work with local farmers to improve feeding, breeding and milk production practices. The centre also provides facilities that enable small-scale

dairy farmers to bulk their milk, chill it to preserve its quality and jointly market the chilled milk to processors. This reduces the cost of procuring milk from processors, meaning that farmers receive a better price for their milk.

The project uses an innovative integrated payment/financing model for dairy farmers. A trilateral payment system was created which demonstrates how far agri-finance can be taken to achieve optimal support for smallholders. Farmers access agro-vet and milk-transporter services on a 'check-off' system and credit is deducted monthly from sales paid by mobile-phone based money transfer, while agro-vets benefit from increased business and a single customer to invoice (the bulking plant); and the bulking plant benefits

from increased and regular supply of milk from farmers, and a better price from dairies.

SHA's collaboration with KCSEED has helped to improve livelihoods in Keringet and established an enterprise with real potential. Their presence in the dairy market has had a wider impact, applying upward pressure on prices paid by other milk off-takers and improving services from agro-vets and other service providers. Youth are participating by setting up milk collection rounds. Today, KFL is running at full capacity, processing thousands of litres of milk daily and is developing a long-term strategy to expand its activities to higher value dairy products such as yoghurt and cheese, and setting up milk dispensers selling pasteurised milk in local towns.

Supporting a strong enabling environment

Successful agricultural transformation depends on the presence of a strong enabling environment. Agricultural sector reform has been the basis of SHA's policy engagement efforts between 2012 and 2016, with engagement in a number of national-level processes in Africa.

Agriculture and Seed Sector Development

In Ethiopia, through our Farmer-Led Early Seed Generation Programme, SHA has been playing an 'innovation intermediary' role in enabling smallholder farmers to engage in seed multiplication and establish local seed enterprises. On the basis of this groundbreaking work and related evidence generated, SHA was invited to take part in the drafting of Ethiopia's new Seed Strategy, which was adopted in 2013.

The strategy recognised smallholders' capacity to produce quality seed and contribute to a pluralistic seed sector that provides quality assurance over both the formal and informal seed sectors. The Edget Union model was recognised as the first of its kind and is currently being replicated in other regions with

support from the Agency for Agricultural Transformation (ATA). This was an excellent example of evidence-based policy influencing, the impact of which is shown by the model being replicated at scale.

In Malawi, SHA contributed to the process of formulation of the National Agricultural Policy, adopted in 2016. The key innovation in the policy is the effective articulation of climate smart agriculture (with emphasis on the promotion of conservation agriculture, land rehabilitation technologies, and agroforestry) and the introduction of the Lead Farmer concept.

Similar initiatives were undertaken in Uganda with the Agriculture Extension Policy and Zambia with the Wetlands Management Policy – both still work in progress.

Value Chain Development

SHA has also been contributing to reforms that would enable the creation of an adequate policy and institutional framework for agribusiness development, addressing different dimensions of the agriculture commodity market with emphasis on commercial opportunities for smallholder farmers and profitability pathways.

In Burkina Faso, SHA has been engaging with the Ministry of Industry and Trade, pushing for the adoption of a national strategy for the cashew sector – with emphasis on market regulation, financial and technical support for the sector and enhanced dialogue between the cashew farmers and processors. In 2015, an Interprofession was set up, comprising of the National Union of Cashew Producers (UNPA), the National Association of Cashew Processors (ANTA), and umbrella groupings for traders and exporters and input providers.

OUR APPROACH:

Integrated and inclusive development

Across all our programmes we promote discussion and mutual understanding of issues between men and women in relation to gender inequality.

Our aim is to improve women's economic empowerment through increasing their voice, choice and control in their households and community; their voice in collective spaces, their decision making power, and their control over the economic resources produced as a result of their labour.

SHA has technical expertise in promoting a gender transformative approach. Our strategic commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment is embodied in our Social Inclusion Policy, which ensures that the crosscutting issue of gender is mainstreamed across our operations and management practices.

SHA involves communities (including men, women and vulnerable groups) in a participatory assessment of their needs and challenges and uses the information as the basis of our project design. We prioritise the inclusion of women as

equal partners in livelihood development through our 'whole household approach'. The approach extends to farmer training and capacity building, the Family Life Model, and by targeting the inclusion of at least 50% women as direct beneficiaries in all project activities and particularly in leadership roles. In addition, our projects integrate activities to promote discussion and mutual understanding of issues such as rights and responsibilities, gender roles and unequal workloads.

We know that there are no 'quick wins' in improving gender relations; changing behaviour and attitudes takes time. Nevertheless, using our innovative Voice, Choice, Control monitoring tool we have begun to detect shifts in the communities we work with, with all our country programmes recording a measurable, positive change in women's decision making power.

IMPACT IN PRACTICE:

Changing gender relations in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, women account for 60–80% of food production, but unequal gender relations mean women struggle to access services and resources and end up producing 23% less per hectare than their male counterparts.

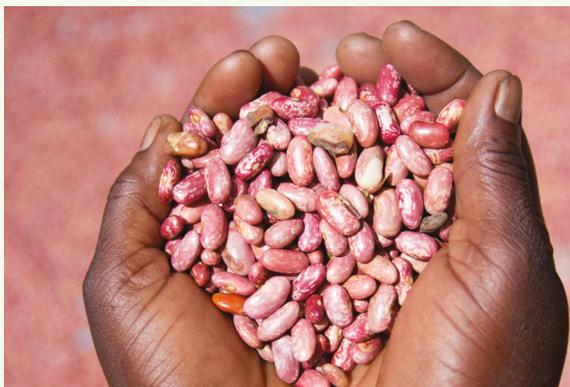
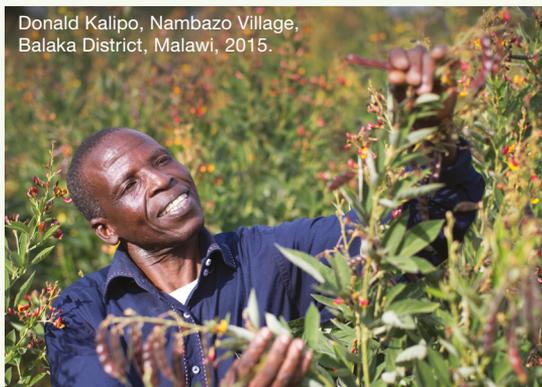
In SHA's Building Resilience through Seed and Conservation Agriculture project, efforts to change practices and attitudes to improve the situation of women are paying off:

"Since the previous training a lot has changed in our household. My wife has become a registered member of the cooperative. I used to stay outside home during the nights and spend my money. However, now I just go back home with all I have. We have better love and discussion in our house. She taught me how to prepare 'Sambusa' and I help her with lighting the fire, boiling oil and the like. I used to be afraid of the smoke but not now" - Mr Gebeyehu

OUR APPROACH:

Measuring our results

Learning is at the heart of our values. We strive for the highest possible standards in our work, and encourage a culture of constant learning and improvement.



In recent years SHA has invested in improving our monitoring and evaluation systems, helping us to see and communicate our results, ensuring accountability to our stakeholders – including farmers – and improving the planning and delivery of programmes. This means that we can make informed decisions about individual projects and our wider organisational strategy; reviews in 2013 and 2014 enabled us to identify strengths and weaknesses in our programmes, and led to a stronger focus on resilience as well as greater emphasis on improving nutrition.

Our monitoring and evaluation system is based on tracking key changes we seek to make while ensuring value for money,

taking care to be practical and resource efficient.

We keep our systems as efficient and practical as possible by: timing data collection carefully, using a set of standardised ‘core’ indicators and using tablet computers to speed up data collection.

We use our data to ensure we reach the people that need our support the most.

We understand that people participate in and benefit from our programmes in different ways, and to varying extents. The data we collect on our project beneficiaries is disaggregated by wealth groupings, helping us to target our programmes and determine if the poorer households are benefitting and make changes to address challenges as they arise. Our monitoring and evaluation

system is grounded in an understanding that every village we work with is different. We gather information on the local costs of staple and nutritious foods, livestock, basic non-food items and school costs as well as farming inputs and other factors such as access to markets, so that we can understand what it means in a local village to have a decent, or ‘minimum’ standard of living.

We use the evidence we gather to influence others.

We seek to influence policy in the countries where we work and on the international stage, bringing data from our work and presenting this to policy makers and practitioners. Policy influencing is a pillar of development programming; the dynamism of the rural sector has been a major



contributor to overall growth in most developing countries, and experience shows that policy is a key ingredient for the emergence of a vibrant rural economy.

We use our data from our programmes to contribute to best practice and knowledge generation.

We work with local and international researchers to understand the impact of our work and share those lessons widely. For example, in 2016 SHA in Zambia collaborated with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) to produce case studies looking at the influence of climate considerations on farmer cropping strategies for the Irish Aid/IIED Climate Change Learning Platform.

We use a variety of approaches to capture information, depending on what is appropriate to the project goals and context.

All data is collected and stored securely to maintain confidentiality. The most common tools we use are:

- **Crop surveys:** Every year we measure the crops households are producing, their yields, farming practices, and their access to finance and markets. This helps us to assess whether the training and support we provide is starting to make a difference.
- **Individual Household Method (IHM):** A quantitative tool that looks at key metrics of the household economy including household disposable income, and if the household is above or below a locally calculated poverty line.
- **Qualitative Impact Protocol (QUIP):** A qualitative double blind evaluation approach that helps us understand the positive and negative changes beneficiaries have experienced in recent years, and to what, or whom they attribute those changes.
- **Food consumption score:** A household dietary diversity survey, which

assesses a household's diet, and helps us to gauge the influence of our programmes on nutrition.

- **Voice, choice and control assessment:** Which helps us to see if women are gaining more control over decision making in their home and community.
- **Organisational capacity assessment:** Which explores the strengths and weaknesses of partner organisations or cooperatives, in order to help us target our support.

We strive for the highest quality standards in our work. We encourage a culture of constant learning and improvement within the organisation, providing our staff with a wide range of resources to support this, including: online learning platforms, online resource libraries, support for piloting technologies and approaches. We have established communities of practice so that expertise and practical advice can be shared across all our country programmes.

Innovation that works for the poor

Finding effective solutions to poverty in Africa requires innovative thinking and a pragmatic approach. SHA is committed to exploring innovative solutions to the problems smallholders face.

Increasing access to extension services using mobile phones

In Malawi, SHA has established its reputation as a lead player in the field of ICT-enabled agricultural messaging and content. Working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, telecoms companies and international NGOs, SHA coordinates the development of agricultural content for mobile communications platforms, with over 300,000 farmers accessing content through their mobile phones in 2015. SHA is now using the same technology in Zambia, Burkina Faso and Uganda.

Dealing with crop pests and diseases

SHA has worked with the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI) to implement an innovative plant clinic approach to address the challenge of post harvest losses resulting from pests and diseases. Run by specially trained extension staff, a network of plant clinics helps to anticipate

and reduce the impact of pests and associated losses by offering farmers advice and support. Following a successful pilot in Uganda, SHA is now implementing plant clinics in Malawi, Zambia and Burkina Faso and will shortly commence in Kenya.

Unlocking markets to benefit farmers

SHA is a majority stakeholder in TruTrade; an innovative social enterprise that provides a structured and transparent agricultural trading service. Operating in Kenya and Uganda, TruTrade uses a secure and transparent payment service and its own network of recognised brokers who collect and deliver produce. The model works for everyone; producers receive fairer prices, brokers develop their businesses and buyers get quality and volume and the ability to trace produce to source. In 2016 TruTrade traded US\$500,000 of produce; the price paid to farmers for their crops was an average of 17% above market rate.

Ethical solutions in global trade

Partner Africa, a wholly owned subsidiary of Self Help Africa, is a not-for-profit social enterprise that delivers ethical audits, training and consultancy services across Africa and the Near East. Partner Africa works with local suppliers and producers and leading international brands such as Coca Cola, SAB Miller, Diageo and Tesco. Its training and consultancy services enable local suppliers and producers to increase their presence in the global market by ensuring compliance with Western buyers' ethical trade standards, while its auditing and consultancy services help international businesses to ensure their suppliers are compliant and provide an insight into the context, culture, regulations, standards and working practices in their countries of operation.

Our plans for 2017–2021

SHA is enormously proud of the achievements it has made over the past five years and the positive impact we continue to have on rural communities across Africa, but we know there is still more work to be done.

Our strategic plan for the next five years sets out an ambitious target: we want to support one million smallholder households.

We have three key aims for 2017–2021:

1. Improved food, nutrition and income security for smallholder farmers
2. The development of inclusive, sustainable and profitable agri-business
3. An improved policy environment for smallholder farmers

In working towards our goals, we have developed a two-pronged approach that will see us expand our food, nutrition and income security work

into more fragile areas (within existing countries of operation and in new countries), while in developing economies we will take a market-based approach working to build farmer enterprise and agribusinesses. Building on our success in Ethiopia as part of the emergency seed committee set up in response to the El Niño crisis, we will respond to emergencies where appropriate – bridging the gap between emergency and development work. On the policy environment we will advocate with and on behalf of farmers, using our position as experts in agricultural development to raise awareness of the needs of farmers and challenges they face.

This work is all underpinned by four cross cutting themes:

- **Gender and inclusion:** Working to address inequalities in the communities where we work
- **Youth:** Specifically targeting and engaging young people in our programmes
- **Climate Smart Agriculture:** Increasing productivity sustainably and increasing resilience to climate change
- **Innovation and technology:** Using technological advances to the benefit of farmers



Sambiani Telate, Tigba Kidi Womens Corporation, Togo, 2015.



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