

Zimbabwe: Staying afloat in a crisis

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Introduction

This chapter considers the impact of integrated approaches to urban upgrading in two urban areas in Zimbabwe, carried out by Practical Action. The two areas are quite different – Chitungwiza is a dormitory town 25km south of Harare characterized by high-density settlements. Epworth is a largely unplanned, informal, peri-urban settlement just outside the Harare city boundary. Interventions in the two settlements differed too. Practical Action has worked in Chitungwiza since 1996, but in Epworth only since 2002. In Chitungwiza, there was an existing structure (a housing cooperative) with an urgent need to build houses for its members. This made for a smoother connection between income-generating activities (financial capital) and housing and services (physical capital). In Epworth, the work started later (2002) and has been operating in an even less favourable political and economic environment.

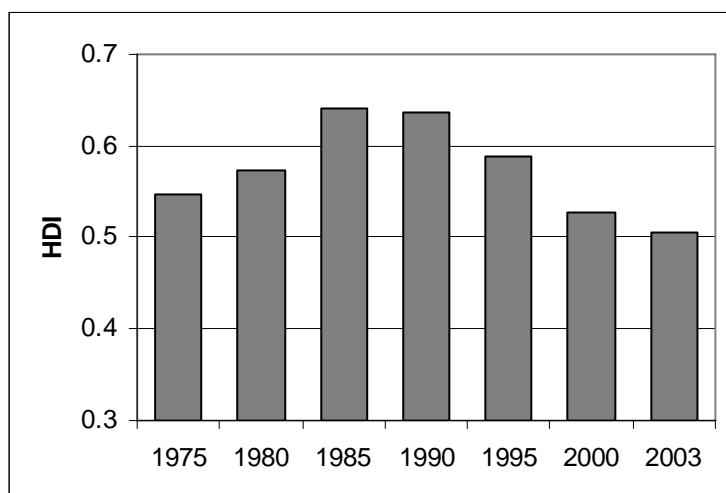
The approach that was adopted was explicitly informed by the sustainable livelihoods framework. It aimed to help people achieve better housing and services by building their capacity organize themselves and boosting incomes from informal sector businesses. Much of this focused around businesses in the building materials and construction industry, so it was hoped that the connections between the businesses and improving housing would be very close. The benefits would be spread by the demonstration effect of successful businesses and cheaper building materials that others could take up. Uptake would be facilitated by some general training and support to organisations such as the housing cooperative. The external environment has presented significant challenges to the project, and the approach needed to be adapted to accommodate the changing circumstances. The experience highlighted how the economic crisis has limited the success of the project in improving livelihoods. Despite the problems, however, there are some positive signs that the project has helped to give people a sense of hope, and keep their ‘heads above water’.

Context

Zimbabwe is a country rich in natural resources that should be capable of achieving sustained economic growth. The country used to be a net exporter of food, and during the first 10 years after independence in 1980 the economy performed relatively well. The government poured investment into schools and health care, and improvements were reflected in a rising Human Development Index (HDI) (see Figure 1). However, since the early 1990s, the country has faced a range of economic problems. These built up during the 1980s and were in part caused by external factors including a series of droughts, coupled with global recession and falling demand for Zimbabwe’s exports. Between 1991

and 1995, the government adopted an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme supported by the IMF and World Bank. This was followed by home-grown programmes of 'Economic and Social Transformation' (1998) and the Millennium Economic Recovery Programme in 2001. However, by 2000 the country's economy was in severe decline. The average annual income fell from US\$950 in 1980, to just US\$400 by 2000. Life expectancy declined from 56 years in 1970-75, to 37 years in 2000-2005 (UNDP, 2005), and by 2003 the HDI was lower than at independence.

Figure 1: Human Development Index, Zimbabwe



Against this background the government began to implement its land reform programme in 2000, and the agricultural sector collapsed. The economy has been shrinking with GDP declining at an average of 5 per cent per year between 2000 and 2004. Inflation has been rampant and was measured at over 600 per cent in January 2004. By December 2005 it was still at around 350 per cent. Foreign investment has dried up as companies close down and others relocate. Exports have been crippled by the land reform programme and lack of investment, so foreign exchange is in very short supply. This contributes to crippling shortages of fuel and medicines. There has been turmoil in the financial sector where six commercial banks have been put under curatorship or closed down. Many Zimbabweans are now seeking work outside the country. At the last census in 2002 the country had a population of 14 million, of which an estimated 3 million were living overseas. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is taking its toll too, with one in four adults now HIV positive.

The situation of the urban poor was difficult throughout the 1990s but has got significantly worse in the last five years. Political hostilities and economic decline exacerbated existing livelihood struggles. From 1999 the government pursued a vigorous but poorly planned land reform policy (replacing large-scale white farmers with black Zimbabweans). This formed the backdrop to the formation of an opposition political party, the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change). The

MDC's electoral support was primarily urban and the government increasingly came to view the urban poor as a potential threat. The situation was not entirely negative, political competition resulted in many local government councillors seeking to be more responsive to their electorate. In some towns and cities there was support to improve access to land and services for the urban poor. However, political tensions remained and many low-income settlements experienced considerable insecurity and violence (due to conflicts between the MDC and ZANU-PF) particularly at election time.

Poverty is pervasive in both rural and urban areas of Zimbabwe. Urban populations have been affected as industries have closed and unemployment has risen. By 2004, 70 per cent of the urban population were officially unemployed and 75 per cent were living below the poverty line (Tibaijuka, 2005). The informal sector has become saturated. In towns, people rely on buying their food and services, so hyperinflation and shortages of basic commodities have had serious impacts. In 2003, 64 per cent of the total urban population were food insecure (they could not meet a minimum caloric requirement of 2,100 Kcal/person/day), and 57 per cent were eating two or less meals a day (ZNVAC, 2004). At the same time, the land reform programme, droughts and economic crisis in rural areas have drawn people to towns and cities, which are now growing at an estimated 6-8 per cent per year. The urban population has risen from 3.6 million in 1995 to an estimated 5.4 million in 2005 (Tibaijuka, 2005).

In May 2005, the national government launched *Operation Murambatsvina* (restore order), strengthening the climate of fear and vulnerability in low-income settlements. Its objective was to 'clean up' the nation's cities. It claimed to be targeted at illegal structures and 'illicit' business activities. The UN fact-finding mission in July 2005 estimated that 700,000 people lost their homes, their source of livelihood or both, and that 'a further 2.4 million people were affected in varying degrees' (Tibaijuka, 2005). The full effects of this have yet to emerge, but they have included desperate economic circumstances for those whose homes and businesses were destroyed, and for families whose homes were not damaged, but who had to accommodate additional relatives and friends. This was followed by *Operation Garikai / Hlanlani Kuhle* (good living), which aims to resettle the homeless and provide better trading sites for small businesses. At the time of writing, the effectiveness of the rebuilding operation has yet to be seen. The number of houses built is unlikely to match demand, and the criteria for allocating new houses is not clear. Also, where the urban poor have been allocated land, they are now being required to consolidate their developments more rapidly if they wish to be certain of being allowed to stay.

The environment for NGOs operating in Zimbabwe has also been very restrictive. All NGOs are required to register with the government and get approval from local authorities before beginning any project. Following the Private Voluntary Organisations Bill passed in 2004, human rights organisations and those focusing on 'political governance' are banned,

unless they are funded from local sources. A tight reign is kept on all NGOs which are often called to account for their activities and funding. Working conditions are difficult, with all gatherings of more than a few people requiring police approval.

Project locations

Chitungwiza was established in the colonial era as a dormitory town, 25km south of Harare. Three African townships were amalgamated to form the town in 1978, making it the youngest, but fastest growing town in the country. The population of Chitungwiza was 321,000 at the census in 2002. Planning processes and service provision have not kept up with the rapid growth. The sewerage system, roads, waste disposal, schools and health centres are now completely inadequate. Zengeza is one of Chitungwiza's three main suburbs. The area is defined as a 'high density suburb'. It has suffered from the same economic and political crises affecting the country as a whole. Assuming it is similar to other such high-density suburbs nationwide, 68 per cent of the population were food insecure in 2003 (ZNVAC, 2004).

Practical Action's interventions focused on the residents of Zengeza 3 Extension. This area was initially a dump site, but was allocated to members of the Cone Textiles Housing Cooperative (CTHC), formed in 1988. The members of the cooperative were all low-income employees at the Cone Textiles factory. They were keen to pool their savings and build houses through a self-help approach. Crisis struck in 1994 when, partly as a result of economic liberalisation under the structural adjustment programme, Cone Textiles went into liquidation, leaving the entire workforce unemployed. The factory re-opened a year later under new management and a new name (Modzone Enterprise). However, it only employed a fraction of the previous numbers, and very few of the retrenched workforce were taken back. By this time, the cooperative had been allocated 938 residential stands, but many members had not completed paying the fees for them. They risked repossession unless they could complete their payments, or there was visible evidence of construction taking place. There were few opportunities for the men to find other formal employment, and few had useful skills or experience for running their own businesses. Even more vulnerable were the wives of the mainly male employees when their husbands either left to look for employment elsewhere, or died as the HIV/AIDS pandemic began to take its toll.

Practical Action began its involvement with Zengeza 3 Extension in 1996. The 'Integrated Urban Development Project' (IUDP) from 1997-2000 funded by Comic Relief and DFID, was followed by the EC-funded 'Integrated Approaches to Housing with the Urban Poor' (IAHP) from 2000-2006. The initial IUDP project aimed to deal with the immediate crisis by addressing the urgent income-generation needs of the residents. It also aimed to help them build houses by reducing the costs of housing through using alternative building technologies.

To help assess the impact of the work in Zengeza 3 Extension, a control area called 'Unit D' was selected which had enjoyed little or no NGO involvement. This area is one of the most impoverished in Chitungwiza. It has a population of about 2,500, and includes many makeshift shelters. Overcrowding is a serious problem, and income poverty is higher than in surrounding areas. A study was carried out in late 2003 to compare Unit D with Zengeza 3 Extension. Other information on the impact of the work in Zengeza 3 Extension was gleaned from the mid-term evaluation of the IAHP project in March 2004, and an impact study in mid-2005.

The second location where Practical Action has been working is Epworth. This is currently one of the largest areas of informal settlement in the country with a rapidly growing population estimated to be around 500,000. It is located 12km south-east of Harare city centre, just outside the city boundaries. The land was originally owned by the Methodist Church as a mission station. Most of the original residents were engaged in agriculture and market gardening. In the late 1970s, however, the Church opened the area for refugees fleeing the colonial war. Since independence in 1980 the settlement has continued to grow rapidly as people from both rural areas and the high-density suburbs of Harare arrived in search of a cheaper place to live. There is a division within Epworth, therefore, between the 'originals' who mostly live in the formal, planned part of the settlement where the local authority has provided some services; and 'late-comers', an estimated 380,000 of whom have settled informally.

The area is governed by a Local Board, the smallest management unit of local authorities in urban areas (below city councils, municipalities and town councils). Epworth Local Board (ELB) was established in 1986 after the Methodist Church donated the land to the government. The area is divided into six wards, each with a commissioner appointed by the Ministry of Local Government and National Housing. There was an attempt to hold elections for local councillors, but this was aborted after violence between residents, as 'originals' argued that 'late-comers' in the informal settlements should not be allowed to vote. The worst electoral disturbances were in the run-up to the parliamentary elections in 2000 and the presidential elections of 2002.

Practical Action has worked in Epworth since 2002 under a project jointly funded by the EC (IAHP project, which was extended to include Epworth) and the UK National Lottery 'Big Lottery Fund' Improving Urban Livelihoods project (IUL). The organisation concentrated on three areas of informal settlement of mostly 'latecomers': Domboramwari, Chizungu, and Gada. A fourth area, Balancing Rocks, was originally included. However, ELB were unhappy about any NGO activity there, because the area is designated a National Monument, and falls under the jurisdiction of the National Museum. It was deemed unsuitable for settlement.

When the baseline study was carried out in Epworth in 2002, of those employed around 37 per cent were working as labourers in the formal sector, and 63 per cent in the informal sector. Popular activities included brick moulding and sand harvesting to service the construction industry. The majority of houses (over 70 per cent) were built of farm bricks, which are roughly made local bricks burnt in makeshift kilns. Houses mostly had two rooms (88 per cent), often with a separate structure, which served as a kitchen. A few stands, particularly in Domboramwari, accommodated additional families as lodgers. Residents in Chitungu and Domboramwari had access to piped tap water, while those in Gada and Balancing Rocks relied on unprotected wells. Even where tap water was available, some households could not afford to pay the fees for installation of a meter or had their tap locked for non-payment of fees. The majority of residents used unventilated pit latrines, and these were often dug too near to wells, contaminating the water source. Some of the wells dry up during the dry, winter season.

Project design

The project design was influenced by holistic, integrated livelihoods-based approaches that linked income generation to investments in housing and services. The design was different in Chitungwiza and Epworth given the differences in the political and economic environments when they both started. These are highlighted in the sections that follow. This section presents an outline of the generic process.

Mobilisation phase: building social capital

The projects started with initial studies of the two areas, and participatory work with the communities to identify priority issues. From these general meetings, groups were identified for further training. Selection was partly based on community discussions, and partly on those who were interested coming forward. Once identified, groups were supported to register with the Ministry of Youth Development and Employment Creation and to open bank accounts. Studies were also carried out to identify viable business opportunities, and more detailed plans drawn up with all the relevant partners.

Training phases: building human and financial capital

A second phase involved training in small enterprise activities. In Chitungwiza this was at two levels: more intensive training for a small group (15), and general guidance for a larger group (63). In Epworth there were ambitious plans for training to reach large numbers of people (1,650). However, it was decided that for the demonstration effect from successful businesses to work, staff would need to concentrate their efforts on a far smaller group. Around 100 people were given an intensive package of training courses. This including 'training for transformation', which is designed to boost confidence, team-working, gender awareness and conflict resolution skills. Separate courses were run on gender

awareness, leadership and business management. A modification of the International Labour Organization's 'Start and Improve Your Business' model was adopted. Technical training followed for specific businesses, with most trained in producing cheaper building materials. Groups were provided with a start-up kit of equipment and materials.

Training extended to others in a second phase. In both areas people were trained in construction during the building of demonstration houses. In Epworth environmental and health issues were also tackled through training in participatory health and hygiene education, and workshops to raise awareness about ecological sanitation options. Demonstration units at two institutions (a school and a clinic), and two houses were also built.

On-going support and capacity building

Once the businesses had begun to operate, they were given on-going support, advice and refresher training. Exchange visits between the groups were organized for peer learning. They were helped in lobbying the Local Authority for the allocation of stands. The housing-cooperative in Chitungwiza was supported to continue to offer services to its members despite the hyper-inflation which eroded their savings. Attempts to replicate this in Epworth partnership with micro-credit organizations were not successful, largely because of the problems of inflation. Technology demonstration workshops were held to promote wider uptake of the cheaper building materials promoted by the project.

Partnerships: linking with policies, institutions and processes

Throughout the project, the team sought to strengthen partnerships with a range of organisations (Table 1). The most important of these were the local authorities: Chitungwiza Municipality and Epworth Local Board. Assistance was given to Epworth Local Board through a job evaluation process with recommendations about the training needs and staffing, and organisation of the Board. The team made sure that the local authorities were aware of all the activities, and that all the correct procedures were followed, for example, for approving the building of demonstration houses. Other NGOs also helped by providing training in specialized areas. Through these partnerships, the project team were able to lobby government. One of the main successes of these activities has been the national government's official approval of low-cost building materials, backed up by evidence from the Standards Association of Zimbabwe.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At all stages in the project process, the groups themselves, and all relevant partners were involved in planning and review workshops. This ensured that the direction of the project was agreed by everyone and that there was accountability to the beneficiaries.

Table 1: Roles of partners and collaborators in the projects

	Partners and Collaborators	Roles
Government	Chitungwiza Municipality	Aware of and approved all project activities. Provided land for construction and business stands, and supervised construction works. Approved use of low-cost building materials and eco-san toilets. Promoted acceptance of these in central government.
	Epworth Local Board	
	Ministry of Science and Technology	Endorsed and adopted the low-cost building materials, and helped groups exhibit at tradefairs.
	Ministry of Local Government and Urban Development	Invited project staff to policy discussion forums, and taken up some technologies in national housing initiatives.
NGOs and Associations	Civic Forum on Housing	Capacity building for groups. Helping to get them registered. Advocacy on urban upgrading issues, and acceptance of eco-san technology
	Fambidzanayi Permaculture Centre	Training on permaculture for agricultural group
	Just Youth Foundation	Promoting fuel-efficient stoves Promotion of herbal medicine at community level HIV/AIDS awareness raising
	Housing People of Zimbabwe	Capacity-building of housing cooperatives.
	Zimbabwe Women in Construction Association (ZWICA)	Promoting networking between women's groups in the project, and advocating for acceptance of low-cost building materials.
Para-	Scientific & Industrial Research and Development Centre (SIRDC)	Adopted and commercialized the production of micro-concrete roofing tiles.
	Forestry Commission	Assistance on environmental awareness issues.
Other	Zimbabwe Development Bank	Training on credit and other financial issues
	Zimbabwe Women's Bureau	Training on credit and other financial issues for women's groups.
	UN-Habitat	Invited Practical Action to co-host the official World Habitat Day celebrations in Epworth in October 2005.

Chitungwiza

By the time Practical Action started working with CTHC, the cooperative had already acquired stands. It was also beginning to organize, in conjunction with the Municipal Council, the provision of water, sewerage and electricity. Following the company's liquidation, Practical Action's support focused on income-generation activities, assisting with house designs and low-cost building materials, and building the capacity of residents to lobby for a more enabling environment to support their enterprise and housing activities.

In the first phase of the intervention in 1997, general training in business management and marketing, and cooperative management was given to 63 members of CTHC. In addition, three group enterprises involving 22 people were selected to be piloted: peanut-butter making (7), brick-making (11) and welding (4). The members were trained in technical skills, business management and marketing, and were helped to acquire production equipment. By the end of the IUDP project, the welding business had not survived, but the other two were doing well. They involved nine people. The brick-making group had gone on to train another 12 people, who were now finding casual work. Two demonstration houses were built, and used as a means of training people in brick and tile-making and house construction.

In the second phase from 2000, continuing support was given to the peanut-butter and brick-making enterprises. Practical Action had given CTHC brick and tile-making equipment for the use of its members, and there was a conflict between the cooperative and Kundayi (one of the groups who were members of the cooperative) who wanted to use the machines as a business-making venture. Under the new project, Kundayi were given basic equipment as start-up capital. All the groups received further training in marketing and business skills. One new business was supported. A women's group started manufacturing *freezits*, a kind of ice lolly. A further two demonstration houses were built, and were used partly as a training exercise for the Wadzanayi Builders Association – a group of women (and one man) who planned to use their skills in construction to earn an income, and who planned to build houses for each other.

No.	Name	Business	Year formed	Original members	Current members	Comments
1	n/a	Welding	1996	2 men	0	Folded.
2	Fadzavanhu Enterprises	Peanut-butter	1997	7 women	3 women	Not active since about 2002. Now hiring out their machine to a former group member.
3	Kundayi Brick and Tile Moulding	Bricks and tiles	1996	11	4 (3W, 1M)	Now a private company
4	Wadzanayi Builders Association	Bricks and tiles	2002	18	18 (17W, 1M)	Doing well. Making bricks for sale, and building houses for members
5	Cone Textiles Widows Association (CTWA)*	<i>Freezits</i>	2002	7 women*	7 women	Seasonal market. Marginal profits due to high input costs.

* Note: The members of CTWA are also members of the Wadzanayi Builders Association.

Impact on livelihoods

The impact of the project's activities on livelihoods needs to be seen at different levels: 1) on the members of the group enterprises trained by Practical Action; and 2) on the wider community of Zengeza 3 Extension. The purpose of training a small number of people in new skills and helping them to set up enterprises (only 38 over both phases of the project)

was partly to inspire others about what was possible. A larger number were given a short course in business training. It was hoped that this spreading of ideas would lead to more enterprises and higher incomes generally, enabling the majority of residents to finish building their houses.

Business performance and financial assets:

The five businesses supported through direct training from Practical Action have enjoyed varying levels of success. After some initial problems, Kundayi is now the most successful and in 2004, it registered as a formal private enterprise. Profits for the year in 2005 were around Z\$11 million (£170) from three large contracts, with another Z\$20 million (£308) coming from work on *Operation Garikai*. Wadzanayi did well too, making Z\$35 million (£540) including their work on *Operation Garikai* (see box), but this had to be split between 18 members, rather than the 4 in Kundayi. The peanut butter makers (Fadzavanhu) have fared worse and in late 2005 had stopped production and instead were making money by hiring out the machine to a former member of the group. In turn, this person is doing well, supplying large retail chain stores, and has extended his house. The welding enterprise struggled to get started at all.

The incomes per person per month (Z\$646,000 for Kundayi and Z\$162,000 for Wadzanayi) were a fraction of the average reported per household per month for other residents (around Z\$4 million in December 2005). This suggests that these businesses were not the only source of income for the households. The women in Wadzanayi tended to use the money for investments in housing and other one-off expenses, using other income sources to pay for day-to-day expenses (see Box). Their income was topped up by the money that some of them made from selling *freezits*. The same is true in Kundayi where the members say they use the money to pay for building and school fees.

The groups have faced a range of problems. In the early stages, a number dropped out when it became clear that the benefits would not be immediate. Expectations were also very high of the assistance they would get from Practical Action, and some were disappointed when the small team was not able to live up to these expectations. Another indicator of the problems of breaking this dependency came when the peanut butter group gave up when Practical Action did not meet their request to source peanuts for them. The external environment has also been very difficult, with the lack of availability of inputs such as peanuts, sugar and cement.

There is a striking gender bias, with almost all the current members being women. Practical Action tried to encourage women as much as men to get involved initially, and in fact it was the women who showed greatest interest after the initial meetings. They were also less likely to drop out when problems arose. Reasons could include the greater responsibilities placed on women for helping bring in money to support their households. Their confidence was boosted

by the gender awareness and training for transformation training given by Practical Action. They perhaps also see greater value than men in the value belonging to a group in terms of moral support and practical help.

Box: Wadzanayi Builders Association

Wadzanayi (meaning 'work together') was formed in July 2001, when a group of women came together because they had heard about training offered by Practical Action and hoped it would help them achieve their dream of building a 'proper' house, and support their families financially. They all owned stands, but none of them had managed to build anything yet. Most of them heard about the project through their husbands who were members of CTHC. Others were widows and heard about it from friends. Many people came to the initial meeting, but 18 registered and have stuck with the project since then.

The 17 women and 1 man took part in various training courses: Training for Transformation, gender awareness, and practical technical training in making stabilized soil blocks and micro-concrete roofing tiles. They were trained and supervised in building during the construction of two demonstration houses on plots owned by two of the group members. During this time, they made a little money from selling bricks and tiles, and also used their savings to buy building materials, window and door frames.

As the economic situation worsened, they realized that in order to continue to build, they needed to find more income from somewhere. Initially the money they made could almost all go towards building because their husbands were earning enough to pay for household needs. However, seven of the group were widows, and by early 2006 four members' husbands were unemployed. In other families, the income from their husbands' unskilled jobs had plummeted. The women were finding the responsibility for household expenses was falling increasingly to them on top of money for building.

They received business training in 2002, and started more serious efforts to sell their bricks and tiles. During 2005 they made a profit of around Z\$ 35 million (around £540) which was shared between the members. Their incomes were boosted greatly in late 2005 / early 2006 as they got contracts in the *Garikai / Hlalani Kuhle* process. In 2002 six of the women also started a group called the 'Cone Textiles Widow's Association' making *freezits*. These sources of income were added together with money from individual income-earning activities such as fruit and vegetable vending, cross-border trading, and selling second-hand clothes. From 2004, some also borrowed from the CTHC revolving fund. Mrs RM (a widow with one child), for example, borrowed to buy more stock for her second-hand clothes business. She sold the stock for twice what she bought it for, helping her repay the loan and buy quarry stones for the foundation of her house.

Each member buys their own building materials, but they help each other out when it comes to building. They work at each other's stands to make blocks and tiles, and to do the construction, trying to be fair about helping each other in turn, depending on who has materials. So far, all 18 have finished the foundations. Seven have started the walls, and two houses are half-finished. Two houses have been completely finished in addition to the two demo houses.

The women feel very proud of their achievements, particularly when they stand back to admire the houses they have built. Many of the men in the area were dubious when they saw the training taking place, but attitudes are now beginning to change. It has taken a lot of hard work on top of their other domestic responsibilities, and sometimes their husbands complain, but all the members now know that this is the path towards achieving their goals.

Significance of income-generating activities to economy of Zengeza 3 Extension

A wider impact from the project has been to stimulate the start of new businesses. By 2000, a further 60 people had formed their own enterprises. There were 48 small productive enterprises (including 9 peanut-butter processors), and another 32 involved in retail. Average earnings were well above (nearly twice) the minimum wage in industry. The mid-term evaluation in 1999 found that 65 per cent of those running family businesses had attended at least one training session with Practical Action. Of those moulding bricks, only 29 per cent had been trained by Practical Action, and the rest had learned the skill from their peers. Women occupied over 60 per cent of informal jobs created. By 2005, over three quarters of the households were making an income from various informal sector businesses (Table 2). Just under a fifth (19 per cent) was making money from the types of enterprise supported by the project. Other kinds of vending and petty trade were also important, including women involved in cross-border trading where products are bought in South Africa and Botswana, and brought into Zimbabwe for sale (a risky but potentially high-profit activity). Patterns of informal business in Unit D were similar except that in Zengeza 3 Extension, but Unit D residents were more likely to be involved in cross-border trading (26 per cent), and they had a smaller range of income-generating activities.

Table 2: Source of informal-sector incomes in Zengeza 3 Extension, 2005

Informal sector businesses	%
n/a	23.5
Initiated by Practical Action:	
Brick and tile moulding	7.8
Peanut-butter making	4.9
Welding	2.9
<i>Freezit</i> making	2.9
Sub-total	18.5
Other activities	
Vending (petty trade)	16.7
Cross-border trading	11.8
Sewing	10.8
Poultry rearing	2.0
Other	16.7
Sub-total	58.0

Physical assets: housing

By March 2000, out of the 938 stands 117 housing units had been built, together with 300 cottages, built as temporary accommodation on the allocated plots while the main house was being constructed. By mid-2005, a survey of 102 residents found that 37 per cent had completed their houses (CFH, 2005). Most of these are large, with seven rooms. Of these, only around 37% had used the cheaper stabilized soil blocks introduced by Practical Action. Only 16 per cent had used micro-concrete roofing tiles. Reasons included the lack of moulding machines and the slow speed of production of the materials, which could not keep up with the use of materials when a builder had been hired. It appears that income was not a constraint affecting the choice of materials.

People have been able to build incrementally, as money becomes available. For example, during the mid-term evaluation in 2004, residents described some of the improvements they had made to their houses in the last two years, which ranged from putting in an additional room, right up to building the main house. Smaller activities included painting, installing electricity, walling, and building an inside toilet.

In comparison with Unit D, the main houses in Zengeza 3 Extension are larger (7 rooms on average compared with 4 in Unit D), and the average number of people per stand is lower (6 compared with 10). Residents rent their rooms out at a higher rate, and can afford to house fewer lodgers (Table 3).

Table 3: Rooms, tenants and rent in Unit D and Zengeza 3 Extension, 2003

	AREA	
	UNIT D	ZENGEZA 3 EXT
PEOPLE		
Average household size per residential stand	6	5
Average number of lodgers per residential stand	4	1
Average number of people per residential stand	10	6
ROOMS		
Average number of main house rooms	4	7
Average number of outbuildings/rooms	4	2
Average number of rooms per residential stand	8	9
RENT		
Average number of rooms rented to lodgers	4	2
Average rent per main house room	Z\$1,500	Z\$1,800
Average rent per outbuilding room	Z\$1,000	Z\$1,300

*NOTE: US\$1 = Z\$6,200 (parallel market rate in November 2003)

CTHC did not initially use its funds as a revolving credit source. It used most of its savings from the monthly contributions of members to pay contractors to service the stands. Additional funds to pay for this were raised through the sale of some stands where members no longer wanted to stay. Members needed to fund house construction from

their own resources (Table 4). Over a quarter of residents (28 per cent) used the income from their informal business as the main source of funds for building their houses. Some used their retrenchment packages from Cone Textiles. It is clear that income from tenants (Table 3) is also an important source of funds for building. Just 15 per cent used funds from the cooperative to assist with building. None had accessed building society loans. CTHC had been able to assist in a range of other ways too, with 90 per cent saying they received *some* assistance. Apart from money, others had been assisted with plumbing materials when water and sewerage were installed (23 per cent), or received help in moulding bricks (42 per cent).

Table 4: Source of finance for house building, Zengeza 3 Extension, 2005

Source of finance	%
Wages / salaries	30.4
Income-generation projects	27.5
Family savings	14.7
Cooperative assistance	14.7
Pension / retrenchment package	7.8
Others	4.9

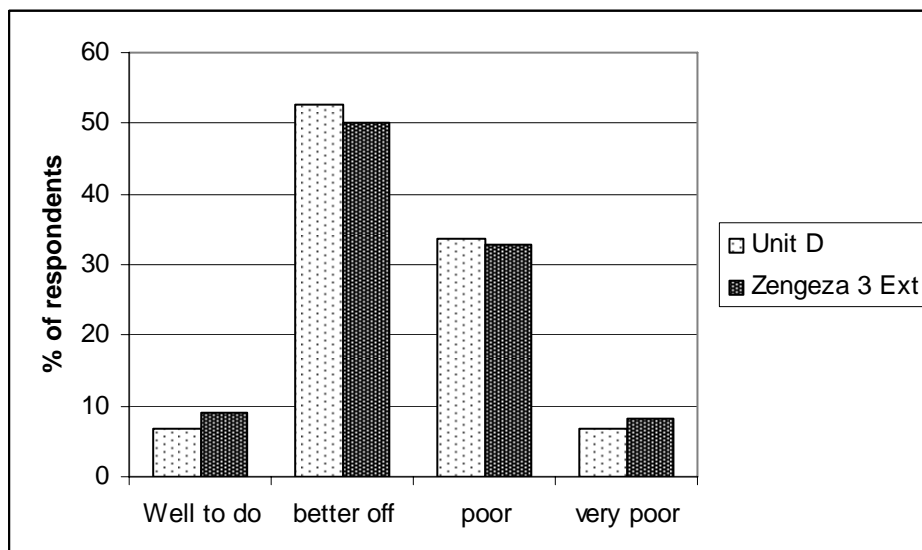
From 2004, CTHC began to operate a revolving fund to help provide credit for its members' small businesses, and to assist with buying building materials. By mid-2005, 38 people (21 men and 17 women) have taken loans, and 51 loans have been made. Although fewer women than men have taken loans, they borrow slightly more on average (Z\$259,000 per loan compared to Z\$231,000), and a higher proportion have borrowed more than once (35 per cent compared with 29 per cent of men). The fund has faced severe difficulties as hyperinflation constantly erodes the value of its savings. While commercial banks are charging as much as 400 per cent interest, the rate for the revolving fund has been pegged at 30 per cent. The management committee, therefore, decided to embark on 'fundraising' initiatives to try to maintain the value of the fund. So far they have hosted one party with the proceeds being added to the fund.

Operation Murambatsvina affected Zengeza 3 Extension in two ways. First, businesses that had been allocated stands by the Municipality were evicted, and the premises destroyed. Second, many of the out-buildings adjacent to the main houses were destroyed. If anything positive can be taken from the experience it is that the positive relationship between CTHC and the Municipal Council meant that the businesses were given warning and were able to move stock and equipment. Also, the main house structures had been fully approved throughout the process of land ownership, servicing and construction, and were not affected.

Wealth categories

During the comparative study between Zengeza 3 Extension and Unit D, respondents were asked to define different wealth categories. The 'very poor' were defined as having no reliable source of income, difficulties in paying school fees, not managing to build even the foundations of a formal house, and only affording one meal a day. The findings were that similar patterns of poverty existed. In both settlements 41 per cent of residents were categorized as 'poor' or 'very poor'. This highlights the extent to which the rapidly deteriorating economic conditions have affected all households in Zimbabwe. Other indicators, however, showed that those in Zengeza 3 Extension were better off. For example, higher proportions had been able to afford to buy domestic appliances, with 84 per cent owning an electric stove compared with 70 per cent in Unit D.

Figure 2: Wealth categories in Zengeza 3 Extension and Unit D, 2003



Social assets: community capacity

Apart from working with the individual enterprises, Practical Action invested in building the capacity of CTHC to help it become an effective community-based organisation. This training has helped in various ways. Conflicts have occasionally arisen, but the group has been able to resolve them. For example there were disputes over ownership and control of the building materials equipment between CTHC and Kundayi. This was part of a larger argument about the independence of the groups from the cooperative, especially as some grew and became more successful. Democratic processes within CTHC are strong too. They have protected it from any accusations by members of fraud, and the transparent process of choosing which members should be helped next has meant that executive committee members have been the last to benefit. Another important aspect of the capacity of CTHC has been its relationship with the

municipal council. This has been good despite changes in the council membership as a result of local government elections. This relationship enabled the allocation of business stands to members (although these were later repossessed) and helped them save some of their business assets during *Operation Murambatsvina*.

One weakness, however, has been the extent to which the cooperative has focused exclusively on the needs of its own members. It does not see its mandate as extending beyond that to assist communities elsewhere in Chitungwiza. It will offer advice when asked, but is not active in sharing its experiences. This has led to criticism of Practical Action by residents of Unit D, for example, who felt more should have been done for the wider community in Chitungwiza.

Epworth

Activities in Epworth began in 2002. Initial mobilisation and the first phase of training took place that year. Overall 93 people (47 men and 46 women) received the full training package of training for transformation, gender awareness, and business training. A total of 16 group enterprises received support and training (Table 5). Most (9) were in Gada, with 5 in Domboramwari and 2 in Chizungu. Technical training was given in producing SSBs and MCR tiles (ten groups), and permaculture techniques for urban agriculture including growing medicinal herbs (two groups). Another group was trained in laying floor and wall tiles.

Table 5: Groups trained in Epworth

No.	Name	Business	Year formed	Members	Employees	Comments
1	Chihoro Construction	Bricks & construction	1996	2 (1m 1w)	35	Successful
2	ROCPET	Bricks & construction	2002	7 men	7	Fully operational in both SSBs and construction
3	Shellers	Bricks & construction	2002	4 (3m 1w)	12 (temp)	Doing well.
4	Zamayi	Bricks & tiles	2003	7 (6m 1w)	7 (temp)	Not doing well due to poor health of group leader. His wife now at the forefront.
5	Kumboyedza	Bricks & tiles	2002	11 (1m 10w)	4	Goal of housing. Joined by Simba
6	Hamamaoko	Bricks & gardening	2002	3 women	10 (temp)	Doing OK.
7	Five Star	Bricks & tiles	2002	6 men	-	Leader died. Group folded due to conflicts.
8	ATLAS	Bricks & tiles	2002	9 (8m 1w)	-	Folded
9	Kuwirirana	Brick making	2002	5	-	Folded

				(3m 2w)		
10	Maulani	Brick making	2002		-	Folded
11	Chimbila Shoes	Shoe-making	2002	4 men	0	Doing quite well.
12	Samaz	Shoe-making	1999	5 men	0	Doing well.
13	Chizungu floor and wall tiling group	Floor & wall tiles	2003	27 (9m 18w)	0	Not much activity. Drop-outs. Some individuals getting occasional work.
14	Just Youth	Medicinal herbs	2000	5 men	0	Active in HIV/AIDS awareness.
15	Gada sowing group	sowing group	2001		-	Folded
16	Peanut butter	Peanut butter	2001		-	Folded
17	Shingiso	Bricks	2004	7 (1m 6w)	9	Split from Kumboyedza. Now a registered company.
18	Makorekore	Bricks	2005	3 (2m 1w)	8	Trained by Chihoro. Branched out on own during <i>Garikai</i>

In a second phase, 32 men and women were trained in construction during the building of two demonstration houses. The households to benefit from these houses were selected in close consultation with the community. About half the trainees (42) went on refresher courses for business planning and management, and 18 were trained in revolving fund management. About 75 people attended the technology demonstration workshops. Other activities focused around sanitation and health issues. Over 200 were trained in participatory health and hygiene education. Ecological-sanitation latrines were promoted through a workshop, and examples were built at a school and clinic and at the two demonstration houses.

Impact on livelihoods

In Epworth, it has been difficult to identify evidence of the uptake of income-generating ideas in the wider community. The impact has been restricted to the jobs created and additional group members trained by the core of beneficiaries. On the other hand, most families already relied on informal sector small enterprises before the project began (unlike in Chitungwiza), so any general increase in informal sector activity would be hard to attribute to the project alone.

Business performance: financial assets

Of the 16 initial groups, by early 2006 six had folded and two were struggling to survive. The other eight were enjoying varying levels of success, with some doing very well and taking on employees. Quite a lot of this employment (75 people altogether) is linked to the work under *Operation Garikai*, but some of it may prove more long-lasting. Two new groups started and were doing well: one after members split from an existing group, and the other after some people trained

by the original group started their own business. The groups that are still operational involve 85 members. This excludes the additional 32 trained in construction.

Levels of income between the groups vary. A sample of five of the brick-making groups found profits for the year 2005 excluding *Operation Garikai*, ranged between Z\$7.5 and Z\$70 million (£116 to £1,080). At the lowest end this translates into around £1.40 per member per month, up to a maximum of £12.80. These low levels per month highlight one of the problems with brick-making businesses which is that contracts and payments come irregularly. Groups reported that they had one contract per month, or at most one in two months. The result is that members tend to use the income from these businesses for emergencies, medication or school fees. Others use some of the income to make more building materials which they plan to use in their own homes. The shoe-making businesses were doing better with profits of Z\$80 and Z\$95 million (£1,230 and £1,460) – the equivalent of £20-30 per member per month. *Operation Garikai* brought significant opportunities in Epworth for the brick-making businesses, which had made an average of Z\$37 million (£566) by February 2006. This translates into around £88 per person.

The businesses in Epworth have faced a range of challenges, many of which relate to the wider economic environment. For example, businesses have struggled with the high cost and shortage of basic materials – cement in particular for building materials businesses. Agreeing sensible prices and contracts for work is very difficult in the context of unpredictable and always-rising prices. Some have got round this problem by insisting that the customer should provide the materials, and just pay the group for their labour. Other problems relate in part to poor infrastructure. Many groups mentioned transport problems for raw materials as a result of poor roads in Epworth. Internal conflicts have been a major challenge for some. One group split into two as a result (Hamamaoko), and others folded altogether (Five Star and Atlas). Many of the conflicts arise once the group begins to earn money. This is particularly true for building materials companies where work and therefore money comes in the form of fairly infrequent but large contracts. The temptation to steal some of it, divide it unfairly, or use it all up for immediate needs without considering the need to buy more inputs can be very strong. Training for transformation deals with overcoming conflicts, and it is perhaps because of this that only a few have folded.

Others have struggled because they have not been allocated business stands from which to operate. Seven business stands were allocated to projects by the Local Board. However, most of these were destroyed during *Operation Murambatsvina*. Many of the groups are now working for *Operation Garikai*, but their long-term location has not been resolved. Currently government policy seems to insist on all informal businesses formalising themselves by registering as formal private companies. This is a big step which only one of the businesses in Epworth has been able to achieve.

Physical assets: housing

The ultimate goal of the project was to help families achieve improvements in housing and services, and it imagined that they would be able to use their increased incomes and skills in making building materials and in construction to achieve this. Two four-roomed demonstration houses were built for beneficiaries selected by the community. Their purpose was partly to show the quality of finish that can be achieved with cheaper materials to promote their uptake, and partly to serve as training centres for those learning construction. However, the costs of a house of this size are beyond the reach of the beneficiaries – especially in the absence of a credit fund.

However, the mid-term evaluation (2004) revealed that 6 of the 36 project participants interviewed (17 per cent) had made improvements to their houses in the past two years. One woman has been able to add a room and a latrine using SSBs. Perhaps the project should also have given greater attention and technical assistance with the smaller-scale, more incremental improvements that some have managed.

Operation Murambatsvina affected Epworth unequally. One area, Balancing Rocks, all the houses were completely destroyed. Elsewhere in Epworth households had one or two of the buildings on their plots destroyed. This was in fact a lucky escape because the bulldozers only reached Epworth towards the end of the process. The more limited destruction was associated with the start of the international outcry against the operation.

Gender impact

The project adopted a policy of promoting gender equality throughout, for example through gender awareness training and encouraging women to participate in work that was traditionally seen as a male domain. Of the 85 members of the groups still functioning in late 2005, 50% were women. Table 6 shows that a higher proportion of women in households involved in the project were contributing to the household income (80 per cent) than in households not involved in the project (45 per cent). On the other hand, young unmarried women in particular, were less enthusiastic about some kinds of work. They were the least keen on construction, followed by building materials manufacture, and most keen on floor and wall tiling. This illustrates that deeply entrenched stereotypes cannot be quickly overturned. Women's contribution to the household income had a range of impacts on the balance of relationships in the home. Their confidence and morale were boosted. However, for some, the commitment of time for participating in the project was a burden on top of their existing daily responsibilities.

Comparing impacts on project beneficiaries with others

There are some indications from the impact studies that participants in the project are doing as well or slightly better than their neighbours. Incomes are at similar levels, particularly when we consider the more reliable median as an

average, rather than the mean which is distorted by a few very high values. Similar proportions are able to afford three meals a day. The difference in ownership of televisions and other appliances suggests that those sampled outside the project were better off.

Table 6: Livelihoods impacts on those in and outside the project, Epworth

Data from Impact Study 2005	In project (N=10)	Not in project (N=11)
% households with a member working in the formal sector	20%	18%
% of households where women contribute to income	80%	45%
Average monthly income	Z\$2,317,000 (N=7) Median: Z\$3,000,000	Z\$5,464,000 Median: Z\$3,000,000
Average monthly income from informal activities	Z\$2,429,000 (N=6) Median: Z\$3,000,000	Z\$3,580,000 Median: Z\$2,750,000
Television ownership (%)	10%	36%
Radio ownership (%)	80%	64%
Acquired appliances or furniture in the last 3 years (%)	13%	40%
Data from mid-term evaluation (2004)	In project (N=36)	Not in project (N=14)
Made improvements to their houses in the last 2 yrs (%)	17%	0%
Three meals per day	42%	36%

Improving access to services

A number of initiatives were taken to begin to improve access to services in Epworth. Access to water and sanitation is a particular problem in the targeted wards. A serious constraint to addressing the problem has been the lack of an agreed Master Plan for many of the informally-settled areas (Domboramwari and Gada). Without this, ELB does not permit the construction of permanent structures. The project has limited itself to training of 208 residents in participatory health and hygiene education (PHHE); and promoting eco-sanitation toilets through demonstration models and training workshops. The impact studies did not document the difference made by PHHE training. Similarly, the toilets have only recently been put into operation, so there is little information on their use and acceptability. However, the Local Board has welcomed the technology and hopes to be able to include it in some of its future development plans for areas where mainline sewer connections are not feasible.

Partnerships and raising the voices of the poor

In the current political climate in Zimbabwe, good partnerships with ministries and local authorities are essential for any NGO to operate. Practical Action has succeeded in building a positive working relationship with the Local Board laying a good foundation for future engagement. At other times the Local Authority has not shared relevant information with Practical Action or the groups. All the land in Gada, for example, was sold to a private developer in 2004 without

any residents or other stakeholders being informed. The plans are for low- and medium-density housing. Current residents would be evicted, and moved to a new area to be developed from the profits of this development, but which would only cater for half the number of current residents. However, by late 2005, the developer had still not taken the plans any further.

The Local Board has a mandate from central government to provide services for the residents, gradually regularising the settlement; and to promote public participation in civic affairs. Given the politically volatile situation in the settlement, and the lack of elected representatives, ELB has been wary of inviting widespread, active public participation. Indeed the deal over Gada shows that their interests are less towards current residents, and more towards attracting higher income groups. Practical Action's focus on small enterprise groups has also not lent itself to more widespread political engagement. However, this has become a more pressing concern as the issue of land tenure has come to the fore as a result of *Operation Murambatsvina*. Practical Action is now pressing for wider public participation in discussions over the Master Plan, the future for residents in Gada, and other choices over, for example, options for service delivery.

The government in general, and the Local Board itself, have been open to some ideas promoted and demonstrated by the project, in particular the low-cost technologies. SSBs and MCR tiles have been approved by the Zimbabwe Standards Association, and accepted by the Board, as suitable for buildings in Epworth. Many of the groups trained by Practical Action have had the confidence to push themselves forward and secure contracts under *Operation Garikai* for producing these low cost materials. The project has been visited by high profile delegations including from the Malawian Ministry of Science and Technology. It hosted the national World Habitat Day celebrations in October 2005 attended by senior government ministers.

Conclusion

There are two aspects of the approach to urban development which are central to the case studies from Chitungwiza and Epworth. One is the support to small enterprises. The second is the link between income generation and housing. In both these aspects, the broader vision for development was around the demonstration effect, encouraging others to take up the ideas.

In both Chitungwiza and Epworth most of the support to businesses was focused on a relatively small number of beneficiaries. An advantage appears to be the greater encouragement of women that this allows. Giving them greater skills and confidence is proving essential at a time where more and more responsibility is falling to women to provide

for their families. A disadvantage, however, is the pressure the model put on the small team of Practical Action staff because of the high expectations for on-going support that it generated.

The businesses have enjoyed varying levels of success. In the context of the disastrous economic situation facing the country, the extent to which the groups have stayed together and continued to operate has been encouraging. It is clear that all households need to adopt livelihood strategies based on diverse sources of income, and that the businesses have played a part in that. The social capital generated within the groups, and fostered by gender awareness training and training for transformation, has been an important coping mechanism too.

In Chitungwiza a larger number of people were given business training alone, without the rest of the package of technical training and training for transformation. In Epworth broader training only extended to a few sessions around how to officially register and run informal community groups, and some technology demonstration workshops. There appeared to be a wider uptake of business ideas in Chitungwiza. However, this cannot be attributed to the training alone. There was a sense of urgency because people had recently lost formal jobs. They also had some assets to start with in the form of retrenchment packages.

A second aspect is the link between incomes and housing. This differed between the two case studies. In Chitungwiza impressive progress has been made in building large houses, while in Epworth (admittedly over a shorter time span), only a few made small improvements to their houses. Explanations must lie in the greater advantages the residents of Zengeza 3 Extension had. Although they had just lost their jobs at the start of the project, they owned land, had some savings in their housing cooperative and some additional money to invest from retrenchment packages. They had a functioning area-wide community organisation which lobbied on their behalf, and gave them access to cheap credit. Once built, their houses were a source of further income from lodgers.

Epworth enjoyed none of these advantages, and the gap between the costs of housing (even when made cheaper with alternative building materials) and incomes remains wide. This is despite the relative success in terms of the promotion of alternative building materials, with the government now keen to adopt them in its rebuilding programme. Some of the factors blocking the link between incomes and housing, and blocking the wider uptake of materials were hard to overcome such as the land tenure situation, and the difficulties of launching effective savings and credit schemes in the context of hyper-inflation. The delicate political situation made it more difficult to mobilise large area-wide organizations. Plans for future work in Epworth intend to tackle some of this through helping communities engage with the government over the planning process.

Meaningful change on a larger scale, however, will be difficult to achieve in a political environment in which the government actively discourages gradual, incremental processes of development. Instead it sets standards and regulations for small businesses, housing and services unrealistically high and actively penalizes the majority when they fail to reach them. This can make the task of supporting improvements for the urban poor feel like swimming against the tide. The government needs to be persuaded that a long-term solution requires: 1) recognising that the urban poor are an asset to city and national economies; and 2) supporting integrated approaches which include a community-driven process of planning and development, and support for small enterprise.

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ABBREVIATIONS used in this chapter:

HDI: Human Development Index

HIV/AIDS

CTHC: Cone Textiles Housing Cooperative

IUDP: Integrated Urban Development Project'

DFID: Department for International Development

EC: European Commission

R8257 Understanding Urban Livelihoods

IAHP: Integrated Approaches to Housing with the Urban Poor

IUL: Improving Urban Livelihoods

ILO: International Labour Organisation

CTWA: Cone Textiles Widow's Association

SSB: Stabilized Soil Block

MCR: Micro-concrete roofing (tile)

ELB: Epworth Local Board

PHHE: Participatory Health and Hygiene Education